



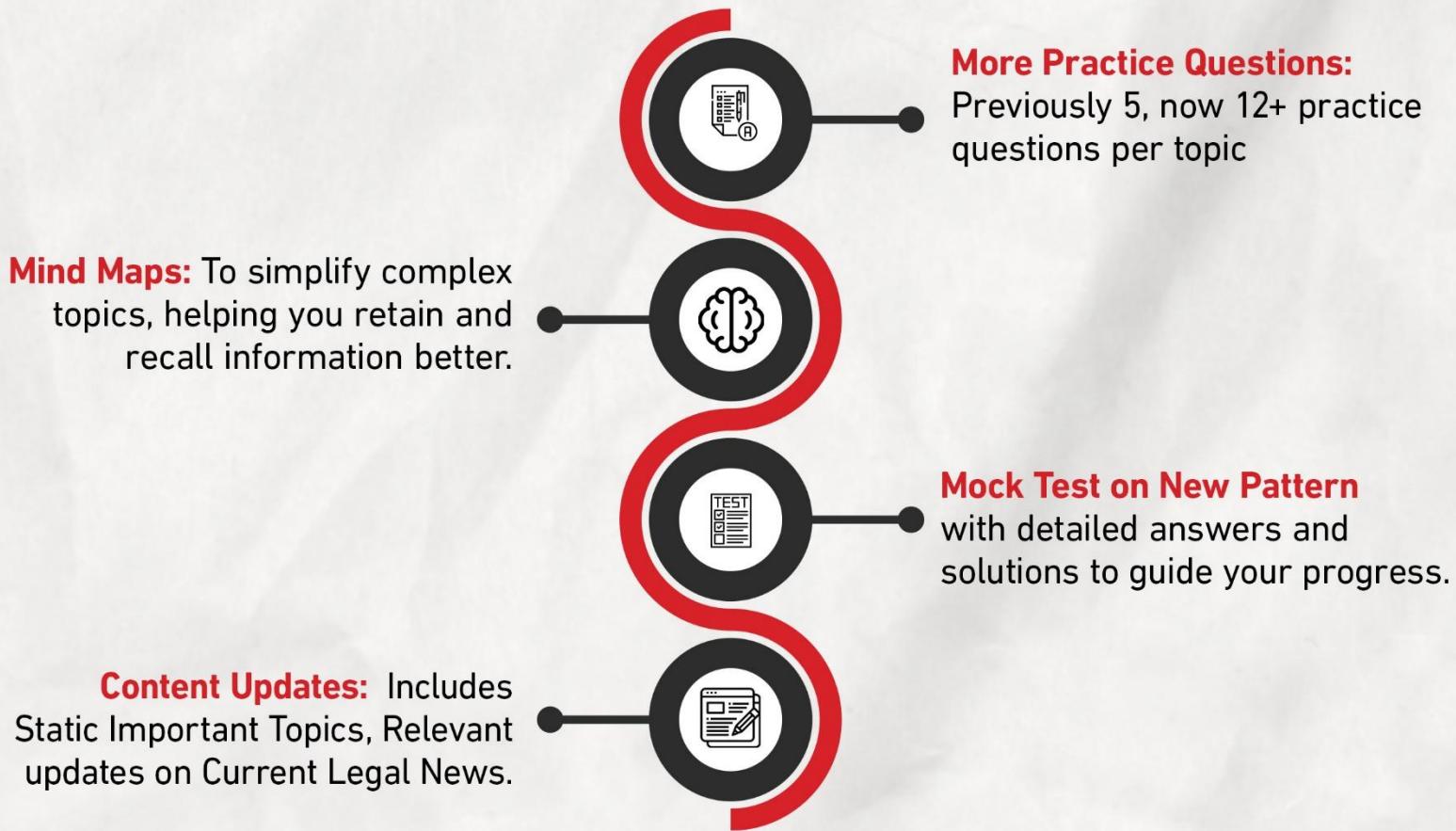
THE CLAT POST⁺

JANUARY '25 EDITION

The “+” in CLATPost

Keeping up with the ever-evolving CLAT Pattern/Syllabus we gave CLATPost a massive upgrade. The “+” in CLATPost signifies the new energy we've infused into it, LEveling up to make it more useful, relevant, and in tune with the evolving CLAT Pattern.

Here's how we're revolutionizing your prep:



At LegalEdge, we are constantly striving to be the best version of ourselves. We embrace continuous improvement because we believe that adapting and evolving is the key to helping you succeed.

TO BEING BETTER AND KEEP IMPROVING

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Polity and Governance (Including Current Legal Knowledge)	03	
1. Supreme Court Rebukes Centre Over Farmers' Protests.....	03	
2. First India Maritime Heritage Conclave 2024.....	08	
3. 72nd Plenary Meeting of the North Eastern Council (NEC).....	13	
4. Justice (Retd.) V Ramasubramanian, appointed as the Chairperson NHRC.....	16	
5. Foundation Stone for Ken-Betwa River Link Project laid Down.....	19	
6. ECI Releases Granular Data of Lok Sabha Elections 2024	25	
7. Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES) 2023-24	32	
8. Panchayat Se Parliament 2.0	29	
9. Karnataka HC held transgender can change their name and gender on birth certificates	32	
10. Bhopal Gas Tragedy Hazardous Waste Removal	35	
11. Arunachal Pradesh Freedom of Religion Act, 1978	39	
12. CBI Exempt from State Consent for Central Employees	42	
13. Centre Scraps 'No Detention' Policy	47	
14. Maha Kumbh	52	
15. Republic Day 2025.....	58	
2. Economy & Governance	64	
16. 55th GST Council Meeting.....	64	
17. Business Ready (B-READY) Report 2024.....	69	
3. International Affairs	72	
18. Global Arms Producer Report: SIPRI	72	
19. Israel-Hamas ceasefire.....	76	
20. Donald Trump Assumes the Presidential Office	84	
21. Indonesia becomes Official Member of BRICS.....	91	
22. 20 Years of QUAD.....	94	
23. Yemen Nurse Case	98	
4. Environment & Biodiversity	101	
24. India State of Forest Report 2023	101	
5. Science & Technology	106	
25. ISRO's SpaDeX.....	106	
26. NTPC to explore thorium-based nuclear energy solutions.....	109	
27. NASA's Parker Solar Probe	112	
28. HMPV Virus.....	116	
6. Static Scoop	121	
29. Disintegration of the Soviet Union	121	
7. Miscellaneous	125	
30. National Sports Awards 2024 Recognize Excellence in Indian Sports	125	
31. Dr. Manmohan Singh	129	
32. Surya Kiran 18 Focuses on Urban Warfare and Counterterrorism.....	132	
8. Important One Liners.	135	
9. CLAT POST Mock Test		
33. Question Paper	153	

Polity & Governance

Supreme Court Rebukes Centre Over Farmers' Protests

News Highlights:

In a landmark observation, the Supreme Court of India has questioned the government's reluctance to address farmers' grievances.

- With protests reigniting over the legal guarantee for **Minimum Support Price (MSP)**, this issue underscores critical intersections of governance, economic policy, and constitutional rights. The matter holds importance for agricultural reforms, rural justice, and India's food security.

Division Bench



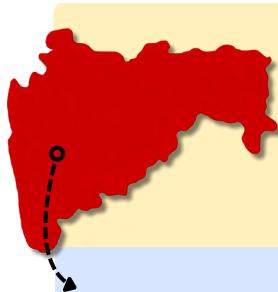
Justice Surya Kant



Justice Ujjal Bhuyan

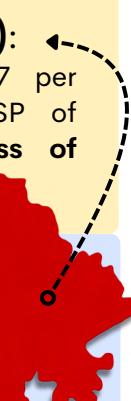
Key Highlights of the News

- A bench of **Justices Surya Kant** and **Ujjal Bhuyan** criticized the Centre for not considering the **genuine grievances** of farmers.
- Solicitor General **Tushar Mehta**, representing the government, emphasized existing measures to address farmer welfare but avoided direct promises on the **MSP guarantee**.
- Jagjit Singh Dallewal**, a prominent farmer leader, has filed a plea demanding the government implement its **2021 proposal**, which included an assurance on MSP.
- The **petition** refers to promises made after the repeal of the contentious **farm laws** during the 2020–2021 protests.
- Farmers led by **Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM)** and **Kisan Mazdoor Morcha** have been protesting at **Shambhu and Khanauri borders** since February 2024.
- Dallewal's indefinite hunger strike**, ongoing since November 2024, has intensified pressure on the government.
- A **high-powered committee**, including experts in agriculture and economics, has been tasked to mediate. Despite its formation, the **lack of dialogue** between the government and farmers persists.



Moong (Rajasthan):

Farmers received ₹6,467 per quintal against the MSP of ₹8,682, incurring a **loss of ₹2,215** per quintal.



Jowar (Maharashtra):

Farmers sold at ₹2,456 per quintal, ₹915 below MSP.



Legal and Policy Analysis

Why MSP Matters?

It guarantees **economic security** for farmers in the face of volatile market prices.



Core Demand: Farmers want MSP to be a **legal right**, obligating the government to intervene if market prices fall below the minimum benchmark.

- **Minimum Support Price (MSP)** is the guaranteed price set by the government to protect farmers from price fluctuations. It ensures that farmers receive a minimum income for their produce.
- MSP was introduced in **1965** during the Green Revolution to encourage wheat and paddy production.
- MSP is announced for **22 crops annually**, including paddy, wheat, pulses, and oilseeds.
- Sugarcane has a separate price called the Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP).
- MSP is not legally binding, and implementation largely depends on state-level procurement.
- The **Standing Committee on Agriculture** recommended making MSP legally binding.
- The **Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP)**, an advisory body under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, recommends MSPs for various crops. The CACP considers factors such as production costs, demand and supply dynamics, and market price trends, both domestic and international. The final decision on MSP levels is made by the **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)**, led by the Prime Minister.
- As of now, **Commission for Agricultural Costs & Prices (CACP)** recommends MSPs of **23 commodities**, which comprise 7 cereals (paddy, wheat, maize, sorghum, pearl millet, barley and ragi), 5 pulses (gram, tur, moong, urad, lentil), 7 oilseeds (groundnut, rapeseed-mustard, soyabean, seasmum, sunflower, safflower, nigerseed), and 4 commercial crops (copra, sugarcane, cotton and raw jute).



Types of Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP): The **Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP)** evaluates various production costs when recommending the **Minimum Support Price (MSP)** for crops. These costs are categorised as follows:

1. **A2 Cost:** Encompasses all **paid-out expenses** directly incurred by farmers, including:
 - Seeds, Fertilizers, Pesticides, Hired labor, Fuel, Irrigation charges, Leased land costs, Miscellaneous inputs
2. **A2+FL Cost:** Includes **A2 Cost** plus the **imputed value of unpaid family labor**.
 - This accounts for the contributions of family members working on the farm without direct remuneration.
3. **C2 Cost:** A comprehensive measure that comprises:
 - **A2+FL Cost, Rentals** for owned land, **Interest** on fixed capital assets
 - This reflects the **opportunity cost** of land and capital, providing a more complete picture of production expenses.
 - While the CACP considers all three cost metrics, it primarily uses **A2+FL** to calculate returns and **C2** as a benchmark to ensure MSPs cover production costs in major producing states.

Previous Committees and Their Recommendations

National Commission on Farmers (Swaminathan Commission):

- **Chairperson:** Prof. M.S. Swaminathan.
- **Key Recommendation:** Set **MSP at least 50% higher than the weighted average cost of production (C2 costs)** to ensure fair compensation for farmers. This recommendation is also known as the **C2+50% formula**.

High-Level Committee on Restructuring of FCI (Shanta Kumar Committee):

- **Year:** 2015.
- **Observations:**
 - Only 6% of farmers benefit from MSP, primarily in regions with robust procurement infrastructure like Punjab and Haryana.
 - Recommended better price support for pulses and oilseeds and suggested competitive MSPs concerning imports.

Committee on Doubling Farmers' Income (Ashok Dalwai Committee):

- **Recommendation:** Adopt the Model Agricultural Land Leasing Act, 2016, to formalize land leasing, thereby enabling tenant farmers to access institutional support, including MSP benefits.

Challenges to Legalizing MSP:

- **Fiscal Implications:** Critics argue that guaranteeing MSP would strain the national budget, with estimated costs of up to ₹2 lakh crore annually.
- **Operational Feasibility:** Opponents say enforcing MSP could disrupt market dynamics and increase food inflation.



Food Procurement and MSP: Only **6% of farmers in India benefit** from procurement at MSP, with the rest relying on open markets.

Global Parallels: Countries like **China** and the **EU** implement price support mechanisms for farmers, ensuring agricultural stability.

MSP and Food Security: MSP played a critical role in stabilizing food production during the **COVID-19 pandemic**, preventing large-scale food shortages.

Parliamentary Standing Committee recommendations on MSP and Debt Waiver

On December 17, 2024, the **Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, and Food Processing**, chaired by **former Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi**, presented its **first report** in the **18th Lok Sabha**.

- The report addressed **demands for grants** for the **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare** for 2024-25, proposing a range of measures to improve the **welfare of farmers**.
- This report comes amidst ongoing **protests by farmers' organizations** at **Punjab-Haryana borders**, demanding a **legal guarantee for Minimum Support Price (MSP)**.

Farmers' Protests

- Protests by organizations such as **Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM)** and **Kisan Mazdoor Morcha (KMM)** have persisted since **February 2024**, especially at **Khanauri and Shambhu** on the **Punjab-Haryana border**.
- The primary demand is a **legal guarantee for MSP** to ensure **fair crop prices** and protection against **market volatility**.

Farmer Debt and Distress

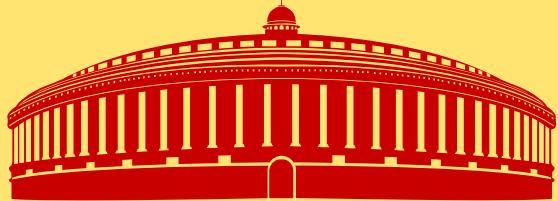
- Rising **debts** and **financial pressures** have led to increased **farmer suicides**.
- The **NABARD Survey (2022-23)** reported that over **52% of rural families** depend on **loans**, reflecting the **financial strain** on agricultural households.

Departmentally Related Standing Committees (DRSCs) of the Indian Parliament

The **Departmentally Related Standing Committees (DRSCs)** play a crucial role in the parliamentary system of India by ensuring detailed scrutiny of governmental functioning and policies, which is often not feasible in the broader legislative debates due to time constraints.

Establishment and Evolution

- Formation Year:** The DRSC system was introduced in **1993** under the leadership of then Speaker of the Lok Sabha, **Shivraj Patil**. The aim was to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability of the parliamentary system.
- Initial Structure:** Initially, **17 DRSCs** were formed, each focusing on different areas of government departments.
- Expansion:** In **2004**, the number of DRSCs was increased from 17 to 24 to cover all Ministries/Departments. This restructuring was based on the recommendations of the **Rules Committee of the Lok Sabha**, aiming to provide more focused oversight over the expanded and increasingly complex portfolio of government activities.
- The **Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, and Food Processing** is a **Departmentally Related Standing Committee (DRSC)** of the Parliament of India.
- Established to provide detailed scrutiny of matters related to agriculture and its allied sectors, the committee plays a pivotal role in shaping policies and overseeing their implementation.



Composition and Leadership

- Membership:** The committee comprises **31 members**—**21 from the Lok Sabha** (House of the People) and **10 from the Rajya Sabha (Council of States)**. Members are nominated by the **Speaker of the Lok Sabha and the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha**, respectively.
- Chairperson:** As of the **18th Lok Sabha (2024–2025)**, the committee is chaired by **Charanjit Singh Channi**, a member of the Indian National Congress representing the Jalandhar constituency.

Mandate and Functions:

The committee's primary responsibilities include:

- Examination of Bills:** Scrutinizing bills referred to it by the Speaker or Chairman that pertain to agriculture, animal husbandry, and food processing.
- Budgetary Oversight:** Reviewing the Demands for Grants of the related ministries and making recommendations.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Who chaired the Parliamentary Standing Committee that presented a report on agriculture in the 18th Lok Sabha on December 17, 2024?

(a) Navjot Singh Sidhu (b) Charanjit Singh Channi
 (c) Amarinder Singh (d) Bhagwant Mann
- What is the proposed new name for the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare according to the recommendations?

(a) Department of Agricultural Development
 (b) Ministry of Rural and Agricultural Welfare
- (c) Department of Farm Economy and Labour
 (d) Department of Agriculture, Farmers, and Farm Labourers Welfare
- When was the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, and Food Processing originally established?

(a) 1983
 (b) 1993
 (c) 2003
 (d) 2013

ANSWER KEY

1. (b) 2. (d) 3. (b) 4. (c) 5. (b) 6. (b) 7. (a) 8. (c)
9. (d) 10. (c) 11. (b) 12. (c)

First India Maritime Heritage Conclave 2024

News Highlights:

The inaugural **India Maritime Heritage Conclave (IMHC) 2024** was convened on **December 11-12, 2024**, at the **Yashobhoomi Convention Center** in New Delhi.

- Organized by the **Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW)**, this seminal event aimed to celebrate India's rich maritime legacy and deliberate on its future trajectory in global maritime affairs.
- Theme:** The theme for IMHC 2024 was "**Towards Understanding India's Position in Global Maritime History**," focusing on India's historical and contemporary contributions to global maritime trade, culture, and innovation.

Participation

- International Representation:** Representatives from **11 countries**, including Greece, Italy, and the United Kingdom, participated, highlighting the event's global significance.
- Domestic Collaboration:** The conclave saw participation from key Indian ministries such as Labour and Employment, Youth Affairs and Sports, Education, and Culture and Tourism, fostering a unified approach to maritime heritage.

India's Maritime History

Ancient Maritime Traditions

- Indus Valley Civilization (c. 3300–1300 BCE):** The inhabitants of the Indus Valley Civilization established **maritime trade links with Mesopotamia**. Excavations at Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa have revealed evidence of flourishing maritime activities during this period. Notably, the discovery of a **dry dock at Lothal**, dating back to **around 2300 BCE**, indicates advanced knowledge of tides, winds, and nautical factors. **This dock is regarded as the world's first known facility equipped to berth and service ships.**
- Vedic Period (c. 1500–500 BCE):** The Rig Veda, composed around **1500 BCE**, credits **Varuna, the deity of water**, with knowledge of ocean routes and describes naval expeditions. References to ships with a hundred oars and stabilizing side wings called 'Plava' suggest sophisticated shipbuilding and navigation techniques.

Classical and Medieval Maritime Endeavors

- Maurya Empire (322–185 BCE):** Under **Emperor Chandragupta Maurya**, the establishment of an Admiralty Division marked the formal organization of naval power. The Mauryan navy facilitated diplomatic missions and protected maritime trade routes, extending India's influence across the Indian Ocean.
- Chola Dynasty (c. 9th–13th centuries CE):** The Cholas were renowned for their naval prowess, undertaking extensive maritime expeditions that **reached Southeast Asia**. They established control over strategic maritime routes, promoting trade and cultural exchanges, and leaving a lasting impact on regions like present-day Indonesia and Malaysia.

Maritime Trade and Cultural Exchanges

- Trade Routes:** India's strategic location facilitated the development of significant maritime trade routes, such as the Spice Route, connecting the East and the West. Indian ports became hubs for the exchange of spices, textiles, and other commodities, fostering economic prosperity and cultural diffusion.
- Shipbuilding:** Indian shipbuilders were renowned for constructing large vessels capable of carrying substantial cargo. The introduction of the flushed deck design in Bengal rice ships during the Mughal era resulted in stronger hulls less prone to leaks, influencing shipbuilding practices globally.

Colonial Era and Maritime Transition

- European Arrival:** The advent of European powers in the 16th century marked a shift in India's maritime dynamics. The Portuguese, followed by the Dutch, French, and British, established control over key ports and trade routes, leading to the decline of indigenous naval powers.
- British Colonial Period:** During the British Raj, Indian shipbuilders continued to construct significant vessels, such as the HMS Trincomalee and HMS Cornwallis, which were inducted into the Royal Navy. However, the dominance of the British maritime forces overshadowed India's traditional naval capabilities.



India's Maritime Background After Independence

Formation and Evolution of the Indian Navy

- At independence, the Royal Indian Navy comprised **32 aging vessels** and approximately **11,000 personnel**, primarily focused on coastal defense.
- In **1958**, Vice Admiral R.D. Katari became the **first Indian Chief of Naval Staff**, marking a shift towards indigenization. Subsequently, India initiated programs to develop its shipbuilding industry, leading to the construction of various classes of vessels, including destroyers, frigates, and submarines.

Economic Importance

- Trade Volume:** The maritime sector is instrumental in facilitating India's trade, with ports handling about **95% of the country's trade by volume and 70% by value**.
- Cargo Handling Capacity:** Indian ports collectively manage approximately **1,200 million tonnes of cargo annually**, highlighting the sector's capacity and efficiency.
- Logistics Performance:** According to the **World Bank's 2023 Logistics Performance Index (LPI) Report**, India achieved the **22nd position globally** in the "**International Shipments**" category, a significant improvement from the 44th rank in 2014.

Port Infrastructure and Services

- Port Network:** India's extensive coastline of approximately **7,500 kilometers** is dotted with **13 major ports** and over **200 non-major ports**, facilitating a robust maritime infrastructure.
- Services Supported:** These ports are integral to various services, including exports and imports, international trade, coastal shipping, and cruise shipping, thereby supporting diverse economic activities.

Strategic and Security Importance

- Geopolitical Influence:** The **Indian Ocean Region (IOR)** is a theater of international power rivalry, with significant global trade routes passing through it. Maintaining a strong naval presence is crucial for India's strategic interests.
- Naval Expansion:** India plans to build a **175-ship strong naval force by 2035**, focusing on domestically produced components to enhance maritime security and counter regional threats.

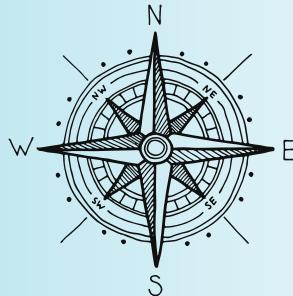
Ranking of India's Maritime Sector

- Global Standing:** India is recognized as the **16th largest maritime country globally**, reflecting its substantial role in international shipping and trade.
- Ship Recycling Industry:** India has emerged as the **world's second-largest ship recycler**, accounting for **approximately 33% of the global market share** in ship-breaking activities. The **Alang Ship Recycling Yard in Gujarat** stands as the **world's largest facility of its kind**, underscoring India's prominence in this industry.

Future Prospects

- Blue Economy Potential:** With the global blue economy projected to reach **USD 6 trillion by 2030**, India's maritime sector is poised to significantly contribute to the nation's ascent as one of the world's leading economies.
- Green Initiatives:** The **Maritime India Vision 2030** includes plans for promoting green and sustainable maritime practices, aligning with global environmental standards.

National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC) at Lothal



- Significance of Lothal:** Lothal, a prominent city of the ancient Harappan civilization dating back to **2600 BCE**, houses the **world's oldest known man-made dockyard**, reflecting India's ancient maritime prowess.
- Features of NMHC:** The complex aims to be one of the **world's largest maritime complexes**, integrating historical and modern maritime activities. It will feature **14 thematic galleries**, an open aquatic gallery, a lighthouse museum, eco-resorts, theme parks, and maritime research institutes.

LEADS 2024 Report

On **January 3, 2025**, Shri Piyush Goyal, Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, unveiled the **6th edition of the LEADS (Logistics Ease Across Different States) 2024 Report**.

- The report serves as a comprehensive assessment of **the logistics performance of Indian states and Union Territories**, aimed at enhancing infrastructure, services, and operational efficiency in the logistics ecosystem.
- The Minister emphasised the adoption of cutting-edge technologies, sustainable practices, and collaborative frameworks to prepare India for its economic aspirations by 2047.

Performance Insights

The states and UTs are classified into Coastal, Landlocked, North-Eastern, and Union Territories groups. They are further categorized as Achievers, Fast Movers, or Aspirers based on their overall performance.

Coastal Group:

- Achievers:** Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Odisha, Tamil Nadu. These states are recognized for their advanced infrastructure and robust logistics networks.
- Fast Movers:** Andhra Pradesh, Goa, which have shown significant improvements in logistics performance.
- Aspirers:** Kerala, West Bengal, which have potential but face challenges in scaling logistics operations.

Landlocked Group:

- Achievers:** Haryana, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, excelling in creating seamless supply chain networks despite geographic constraints.
- Fast Movers:** Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, showing commendable progress in improving connectivity and services.
- Aspirers:** Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, with scope for targeted interventions to boost logistics efficiency.

North-Eastern Group:

- Achievers:** Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, which have made strides in overcoming geographical and infrastructure challenges.
- Fast Movers:** Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura, demonstrating potential for growth with improved connectivity.
- Aspirers:** Manipur, highlighting the need for greater investments and policy support.

Union Territories:

- Achievers:** Chandigarh, Delhi, leading with urbanized logistics models.
- Fast Movers:** Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, Jammu and Kashmir, Lakshadweep, Puducherry, showing steady progress.
- Aspirers:** Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Ladakh, needing strategic focus to address isolation and logistical bottlenecks.

The LEADS 2024 Report aims to improve logistics performance across the country by identifying strengths and challenges at the state and UT levels. It evaluates logistics efficiency using **four key pillars**:



The 4 key pillars of LEAD 2024

Sustainable Logistics

Highlighting environmentally friendly and resource-efficient logistics practices.

Logistics Infrastructure

Assessing the quality and capacity of transport, warehouses, and supply chains.

Operating Environment:

Reviewing policies, regulations, and frameworks impacting logistics.

Logistics Services:

Evaluating the quality and availability of freight, warehousing, and intermodal services.

Green Logistics Initiative

A significant highlight of the report was the emphasis on **green logistics**, aimed at making the sector environmentally sustainable. The Minister encouraged states to:

Develop regional and **city-level logistics plans** to address last-mile connectivity challenges.

Promote **sustainable transportation solutions**, such as electric vehicles and low-emission technologies.

Establish **multi-modal logistics hubs** using public-private partnerships (PPPs) for efficient resource utilization and cost reduction.

Government Initiatives Supporting Logistics

- **Sagarmala Project (2015)**: Enhancing port-led development to reduce EXIM logistics costs.
- **Bharatmala Project (2017)**: Improving road connectivity to facilitate seamless freight movement.
- **National Logistics Policy (2022)**: Laying a comprehensive framework to reduce inefficiencies and costs in logistics.
- **Dedicated Freight Corridors (DFCs)**: Increasing the speed and capacity of freight movement through specialized rail corridors.
- **PM GatiShakti National Master Plan (2021)**: Adopting a whole-of-government approach to integrate multi-modal infrastructure planning.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. What was the theme of the inaugural India Maritime Heritage Conclave (IMHC) 2024?
 - (a) Fostering Global Maritime Partnerships
 - (b) Navigating Future Maritime Challenges
 - (c) Towards Understanding India's Position in Global Maritime History
 - (d) Reviving Ancient Maritime Routes
2. Where was the inaugural India Maritime Heritage Conclave (IMHC) 2024 held?
 - (a) India International Centre, New Delhi
 - (b) Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi
 - (c) Yashobhoomi Convention Center, New Delhi
 - (d) Pragati Maidan, New Delhi

3. How many major ports does India have along its coastline?
(a) 8 (b) 10 (c) 13 (d) 15
4. Which facility in India is recognised as the world's largest ship recycling yard?
(a) Kochi Shipyard (b) Mumbai Port Trust
(c) Alang Ship Recycling Yard (d) Visakhapatnam Port
5. What significant achievement did India make in the World Bank's 2023 Logistics Performance Index (LPI) Report, as discussed during the India Maritime Heritage Conclave (IMHC) 2024?
(a) India ranked 1st in the "International Shipments" category
(b) India was ranked 22nd globally in the "International Shipments" category
(c) India maintained the 44th position from 2014 in the "International Shipments" category
(d) India dropped to the 44th position in the "International Shipments" category
6. How many countries participated in the India Maritime Heritage Conclave (IMHC) 2024?
(a) 8 (b) 10 (c) 11 (d) 15
7. What significant archaeological find from the Indus Valley Civilization indicates advanced knowledge of maritime activities?
(a) The Great Bath of Mohenjo-Daro
(b) The Dock at Lothal
(c) The Seals of Harappa
(d) The Granary of Mohenjo-Daro
8. During which period is the Rig Veda, which credits Varuna as the deity of water, believed to have been composed?
(a) 2000-1500 BCE (b) 1500-1000 BCE
(c) 1500-500 BCE (d) 1000-500 BCE
9. Which empire under Emperor Chandragupta Maurya organized India's first formal naval power?
(a) Gupta Empire (b) Mughal Empire
(c) Maurya Empire (d) Harappan Civilization
10. The Chola Dynasty, known for its naval prowess, was prominent during which centuries?
(a) 4th-6th centuries CE (b) 9th-13th centuries CE
(c) 7th-10th centuries CE (d) 5th-8th centuries CE
11. Which of the following was a key factor in the transition of India's maritime history during the colonial era?
(a) The decline of Mughal naval power
(b) The introduction of steam navigation
(c) The control of trade routes by European powers
(d) All of the above
12. Who became the first Indian Chief of Naval Staff in 1958?
(a) Vice Admiral R.D. Katari (b) Sardar Patel
(c) Admiral Sunil Lanba (d) Vice Admiral Ramdas
13. What is India's rank according to the 2023 Logistics Performance Index (LPI) Report?
(a) 20th (b) 38th (c) 24th (d) 26th
14. What percentage of the world's ship recycling market share does India hold?
(a) 15% (b) 23% (c) 33% (d) 40%
15. How long is India's coastline, which is dotted with major ports and over 200 non-major ports?
(a) 5,000 kilometers (b) 6,100 kilometers
(c) 7,500 kilometers (d) 8,000 kilometers

ANSWER KEY

1. (c) 2. (c) 3. (c) 4. (c) 5. (b) 6. (c) 7. (b) 8. (c)
9. (c) 10. (b) 11. (d) 12. (a) 13. (b) 14. (c) 15. (c)

72nd Plenary Meeting of the North Eastern Council (NEC)

News Highlights:

The 72nd North Eastern Council (NEC) Plenary Session commenced on December 20, 2024, in Agartala, Tripura, for the second time since 2008.

- The session, chaired by **Union Home Minister Amit Shah**, included Union DoNER Minister **Jyotiraditya Scindia**, MoS DoNER **Dr. Sukanta Majumdar**, Governors, Chief Ministers, and senior officials of the **eight northeastern states**.
- The plenary aimed to address **regional development, peace-building**, and economic integration with a focus on the **Prime Minister's vision of 'Ashta Lakshmi'** for the North Eastern Region (NER).

Key Themes and Discussions

Combating the Drug Menace	Peace and Security	Act East Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amit Shah's Call: A complete eradication of drugs in the region is crucial for long-term development. Concerns Highlighted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cross-border smuggling of narcotics through international borders. The need for district-level committees to strengthen anti-drug initiatives. Message: Eliminating the "Kalank" (stain) of drugs will pave the way for peace and progress in the region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achievements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10,574 insurgents have surrendered since 2014. 20 peace agreements signed with various militant and ethnic groups. A significant 86% decline in terrorism-related deaths over the last decade. Shah's Vision: Transition from combating militancy to ensuring justice and building trust in the policing culture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approach: Guided by the principles of "Act East, Act Fast, and Act First", the session emphasized aligning NER with India's broader economic goals, including the \$5 trillion economy target. Vision: Bridging the emotional distance between the Northeast and the rest of India while reducing physical distances through infrastructure projects.

Economic and Infrastructure Development

- Connectivity Initiatives:**
 - Strengthened regional ties with **Bangladesh** for trade and transit through the **Chittagong port**.
 - Development of **airports, roads, and rail networks** to enhance global connectivity.
- Industrial Focus:**
 - Establishment of **semiconductor units** in the region, including a **₹27,000 crore Tata Semiconductor facility** in Assam.
 - Development of **75 international tourist destinations** to boost local economies and employment.

Historical Context

The NEC, established in **1971** and inaugurated in **1972** by Prime Minister **Indira Gandhi**, initially served as an **advisory body** but now acts as a **regional planning authority**.

Key achievements include:

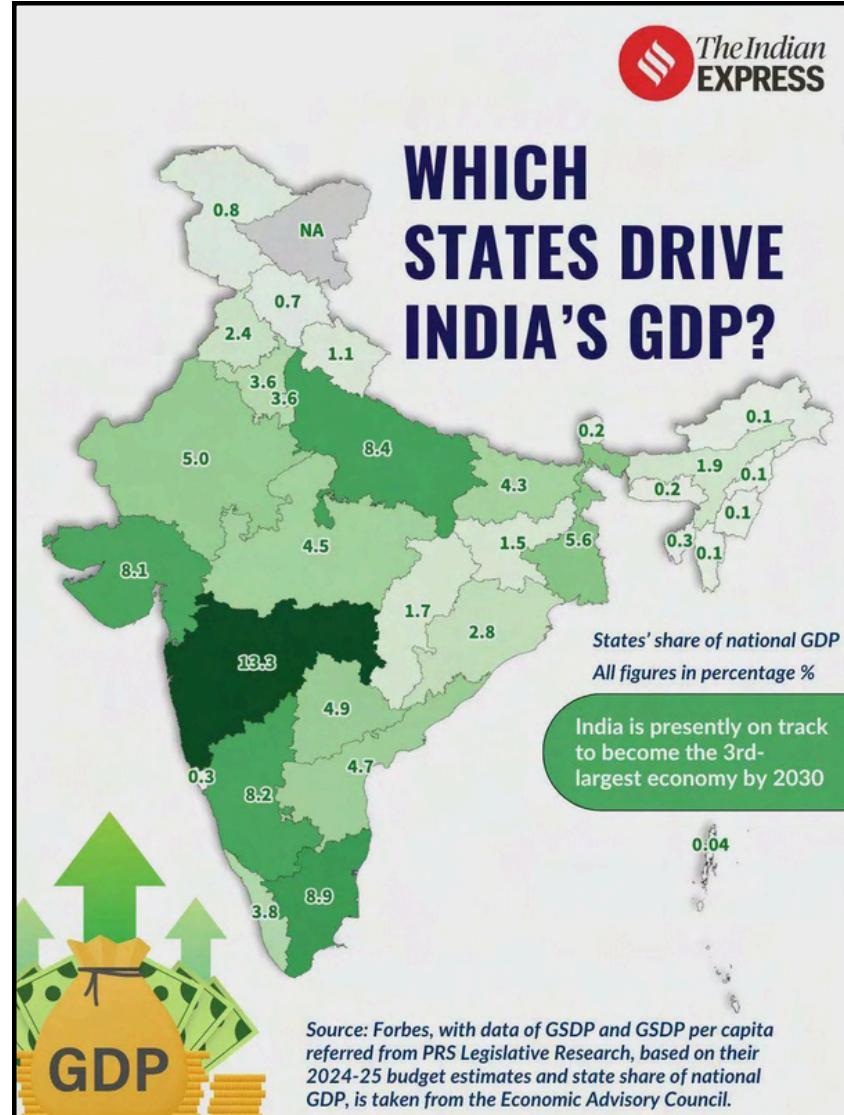
- Construction of **11,500 kilometers of roads**.
- Development of institutions like the **Regional Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS)** and North Eastern Electrical Power Corporation (NEEPCO).

Current and Upcoming Initiatives

- Organic Farming:** Promote eco-friendly agricultural practices to leverage the region's natural resources.
- Completion of Existing Projects:** The Home Minister assured the completion of all ongoing schemes within **three years**.
- PM-devINE Scheme:** The initiative aims to address critical development gaps in the region.

Development in Eastern States

- Low Industrial Contribution:**
 - Bihar's industrial GDP is **15%**, significantly below the national average of **25%**.
 - Jharkhand and Odisha, despite rich mineral resources, struggle with underdeveloped industries due to infrastructure deficits.
- Poverty Levels:**
 - Bihar has a **poverty rate of 33.74%**, the highest among Indian states.
 - States like Odisha and Jharkhand rank low in terms of per capita income, with Jharkhand's per capita income at **₹78,500** (2023), compared to the national average of **₹1,70,620**.
- Connectivity Gaps:**
 - The India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway, expected to boost trade, has faced repeated delays.
 - Inadequate railway and road penetration: Bihar has only **21.7 km of railway lines per 1,000 sq. km**, compared to the national average of **44.3 km**.
- Power Deficits:**
 - Power availability in Odisha is **1,200 kWh per capita**, lower than the national average of **1,200 kWh per capita**.
- Education:**
 - Literacy rates: Bihar at **61.8%** (2021) remains the lowest in India.
- Healthcare:**
 - States like Odisha report only **0.4 doctors per 1,000 people**, below the WHO recommended standard of **1 per 1,000 people**.
- Corruption and Bureaucratic Inefficiency:**
 - Bihar ranked **second-worst** in India on the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) in 2022.
- Frequent Natural Disasters:**
 - Bihar and Assam are among the most flood-prone regions, with **76%** of Bihar's population affected by annual floods.



- Odisha faces **average annual cyclonic losses of ₹8,000 crores**, as per World Bank estimates.
- Insurgency:**
 - Nagaland and Manipur have seen a decline in insurgency but still reported **70 insurgency-related incidents** in 2023.
- Cross-border Smuggling:**
 - Drugs and human trafficking across borders with Bangladesh and Myanmar remain persistent challenges. (source: Narcotics Control Bureau, 2023)

Current Economic Landscape

Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) and Economic Contribution

- West Bengal:** As of 2023-24, West Bengal's share in India's GDP has declined to **5.6%**, down from **10.5%** in 1960-61.
- Odisha:** The state contributes approximately **2.91%** to India's total economy.
- Bihar:** Bihar's contribution to the national GDP is around **2.81%**.
- Jharkhand:** Jharkhand accounts for about **2.58%** of India's GDP.

Per Capita Net State Domestic Product (NSDP)

- West Bengal:** In 2023-24, the per capita NSDP is **₹154,119**, reflecting a **10.5%** growth from the previous year.
- Odisha:** The per capita NSDP stands at **₹163,101**, marking a **13.4%** increase.
- Bihar:** With a per capita NSDP of **₹60,337**, Bihar shows a **12.8%** growth, yet remains the lowest among Indian states.
- Jharkhand:** The state's per capita NSDP is **₹105,274**, indicating a **9.1%** rise.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- What was one of the key focuses of Amit Shah during the 72nd North Eastern Council (NEC) Plenary Session in terms of regional issues?
 - Complete eradication of poverty
 - Full employment for all citizens
 - Complete eradication of drugs
 - Universal education access
- During the 72nd North Eastern Council (NEC) Plenary Session, which initiative was highlighted by Union Home Minister Amit Shah as a priority to boost regional development in the North Eastern Region?
 - Elimination of drug trafficking
 - Expansion of digital services
 - Introduction of new agricultural techniques
 - Increase in solar energy projects
- Which of the following states has the highest poverty rate among Indian states?
 - Odisha
 - Jharkhand
 - Bihar
 - West Bengal
- What percentage of Bihar's population is affected by annual floods?
 - 50%
 - 65%
 - 86%
 - 76%
- What is the power availability per capita in Odisha?
 - 1200 kWh
 - 800 kWh
 - 1000 kWh
 - 1400 kWh
- What was the focus of the Prime Minister's vision discussed during the 72nd NEC Plenary Session for the North Eastern Region (NER)?
 - Navaratna
 - Ashta Lakshmi
 - Panch Mahabhoot
 - Saptarishi
- What of the following infrastructure development is being established in Assam as part of the economic initiatives?
 - A new hydroelectric power plant
 - A large-scale solar farm
 - Tata Semiconductor facility
 - An international shipping dock
- Which Prime Minister inaugurated the NEC?
 - Lal Bahadur Shastri
 - Indira Gandhi
 - Rajiv Gandhi
 - Atal Bihari Vajpayee
- Which of the following states faces average annual cyclonic losses estimated by the World Bank at ₹8,000 crores?
 - Bihar
 - Assam
 - Odisha
 - West Bengal
- Which of the following state had the highest per capita NSDP in the year 2023-24?
 - West Bengal
 - Odisha
 - Bihar
 - Jharkhand

ANSWER KEY

- | | | | | | | | |
|--------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1. (c) | 2. (a) | 3. (c) | 4. (d) | 5. (a) | 6. (b) | 7. (c) | 8. (b) |
| 9. (c) | 10. (b) | | | | | | |

Justice (Retd.) V Ramasubramanian, appointed as the Chairperson NHRC

News Highlights:

- Justice V. Ramasubramanian, retired Supreme Court judge, has been appointed as the 9th Chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) for a three-year tenure until December 2027.
- The post was vacant since June 1, 2024, following the retirement of Justice Arun Mishra.
- President of India made the appointment based on recommendations from a high-power committee chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, with participation from Leaders of Opposition, including Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi.



Profile of Justice V.Ramasubramanian

Justice V. Ramasubramanian is a distinguished Indian jurist who has significantly contributed to the country's judiciary. Born on **June 30, 1958**, in **Mannargudi, Tamil Nadu**, he pursued a **Bachelor of Science in Chemistry** from **Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda College**, Chennai, followed by a **Bachelor of Laws (LL.B.)** from **Madras Law College**.

- **Advocacy:** Enrolled as a member of the Bar on **February 16, 1983**, Justice Ramasubramanian practiced for approximately 23 years in the **Madras High Court** and other judicial forums, specializing in civil and constitutional matters, with a focus on service law.
- **Judicial Appointments:**
 - Appointed as an **Additional Judge** of the **Madras High Court** on **July 31, 2006**, and became a **Permanent Judge** on **November 9, 2009**.
 - Transferred to the **High Court of Judicature at Hyderabad** for the States of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh on **April 27, 2016**, upon his request.
 - Following the bifurcation, he served as a Judge of the **Telangana High Court** starting **January 1, 2019**.
 - Elevated as the **Chief Justice of the Himachal Pradesh High Court** on **June 22, 2019**.
 - Appointed as a **Judge of the Supreme Court of India** on **September 23, 2019**, serving until his retirement on **June 29, 2023**.
- **Notable Contributions:**
 - During his tenure at the Supreme Court, **Justice Ramasubramanian authored 102 judgments** and was part of benches that deliberated on significant issues, including the **2016 Demonetization policy** and the **validity of circumstantial evidence in bribery cases**.
 - He has also contributed to Tamil literature, authoring a book titled "**Kambanil Sattamum Neethiyum**," which explores the principles of **law and justice in the Kamba Ramayana**.



Justice V.Ramasubramanian

Composition and Appointment Process

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) of India is a statutory body established on October 12, 1993, under the Protection of Human Rights Act (PHRA), 1993.

The Chairperson and members of the NHRC are appointed by the President of India based on the recommendations of a high-level committee comprising:

- **Prime Minister** (Chairperson)
 - **Speaker of the Lok Sabha**
 - **Union Home Minister**
 - **Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha**
 - **Leaders of the Opposition** in both Houses of Parliament

Composition:

- **Chairperson:** A person who has been the Chief Justice of India or a Judge of the Supreme Court.
 - **Members:**
 - One member who is, or has been, **a Judge of the Supreme Court of India.**
 - One member who is, or has been, **the Chief Justice of a High Court.**
 - Three members, out of which **at least one shall be a woman, appointed from among persons** having knowledge of, or practical experience in, matters relating to human rights.

Functions and Powers:

The NHRC is mandated to:

- **Investigate** complaints of human rights violations, either *suo motu* or on petitions presented by victims or any person on their behalf.
 - **Intervene** in any proceeding involving allegations of human rights violations pending before a court, with the court's approval.
 - **Visit** any jail or detention facility to study the living conditions of inmates and make recommendations.
 - **Review** the safeguards provided under the Constitution or any law for the protection of human rights and recommend measures for their effective implementation.
 - **Study** treaties and other international instruments on human rights and make recommendations for their effective implementation.
 - **Undertake** and promote research in the field of human rights.
 - **Spread** human rights literacy among various sections of society and promote awareness through publications, media, seminars, and other available means.
 - **Encourage** the efforts of non-governmental organizations and institutions working in the field of human rights.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

3. Which of the following is not an ex-officio member of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)?
(a) Chairperson of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes
(b) Chairperson of the National Commission for Minorities
(c) Chairperson of the National Commission for Health
(d) Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities
4. Which of the following former NHRC Chairperson advocated for women's rights and played a pivotal role in addressing issues related to gender justice?
(a) Justice K.G. Balakrishnan
(b) Justice M.N. Venkatachaliah
(c) Justice S. Rajendra Babu
(d) None of the above
5. Who was the first chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) of India?
(a) Justice M.N. Venkatachaliah
(b) Justice J.S. Verma
(c) Justice S. Rajendra Babu
(d) Justice Ranganath Misra
6. Until what year is Justice V. Ramasubramanian appointed as the Chairperson of the NHRC?
(a) 2025
(b) 2026
(c) 2027
(d) 2028
7. Which court did Justice V. Ramasubramanian serve as a Chief Justice before being appointed to the Supreme Court of India?
(a) Madras High Court
(b) Telangana High Court
(c) Himachal Pradesh High Court
(d) Andhra Pradesh High Court
8. What is the title of the book authored by Justice V. Ramasubramanian that explores the principles of law and justice in Tamil literature?
(a) "Kambanil Sattamum Neethiyum"
(b) "Tamil Ilakkiya Neethi"
(c) "Vidhiyin Marupakkam"
(d) "Niti and Sattam"
9. Which of the following is NOT an ex-officio member of the NHRC?
(a) National Commission for Scheduled Castes
(b) National Commission for Urban Housing
(c) National Commission for Women
(d) National Commission for Backward Classes
10. What function is the NHRC mandated to perform?
(a) Issue directives to the judiciary on human rights laws
(b) Investigate complaints of human rights violations
(c) Appoint judges to the Supreme and High Courts
(d) Regulate NGO funding in India

ANSWER KEY

1. (c) 2. (b) 3. (c) 4. (a) 5. (d) 6. (c) 7. (c) 8. (a)
9. (b) 10. (b)

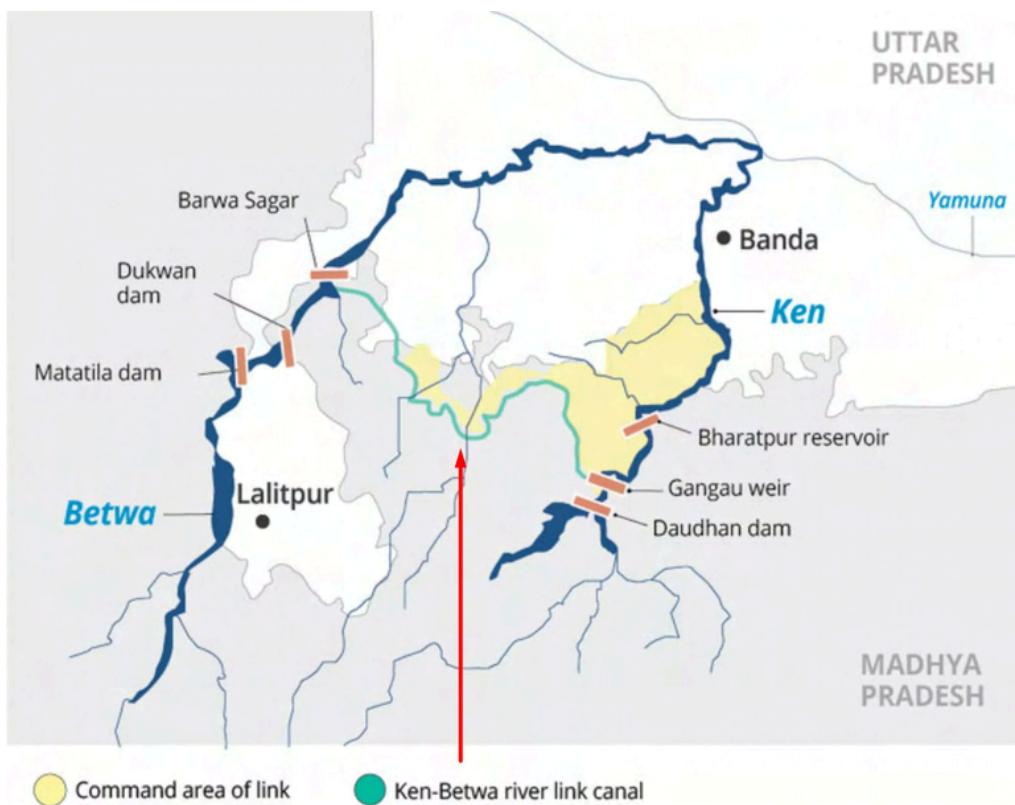
Foundation Stone for Ken-Betwa River Link Project laid Down

News Highlights:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of the **Ken-Betwa River Linking Project (KBLP)** on **December 25, 2024**, coinciding with the 100th birth anniversary of former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee.
- The project is a flagship initiative under the **National Perspective Plan (NPP)** for interlinking rivers, aiming to address the water woes of the **Bundelkhand region** in Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.
- While the project promises significant economic and irrigation benefits, it faces intense scrutiny over its potential **environmental impact**, particularly on the Panna Tiger Reserve.

Purpose and Scope:

- The KBLP envisions transferring water from the **Ken River** to the **Betwa River**, both tributaries of the Yamuna.
- A **221 km canal**, including a **2 km tunnel**, will connect the rivers to ensure water transfer.
- The project will provide **annual irrigation** to **10.62 lakh hectares** of land (8.11 lakh ha in Madhya Pradesh, 2.51 lakh ha in Uttar Pradesh).
- The project will provide **drinking water** for **62 lakh people**.
- The project will provide **Hydropower generation** of **103 MW** and **27 MW** of solar power.



Cost and Timeline:

- Approved at an estimated cost of **₹44,605 crore** (2020-21 prices).
- Expected to be completed in **eight years**.

Phases of Development:

- Phase I:** Construction of the **Daudhan Dam** and associated infrastructure like the Ken-Betwa Link Canal.
- Phase II:** Construction of the **Lower Orr Dam, Bina Complex Project, and Kotha Barrage**.

Historical Context

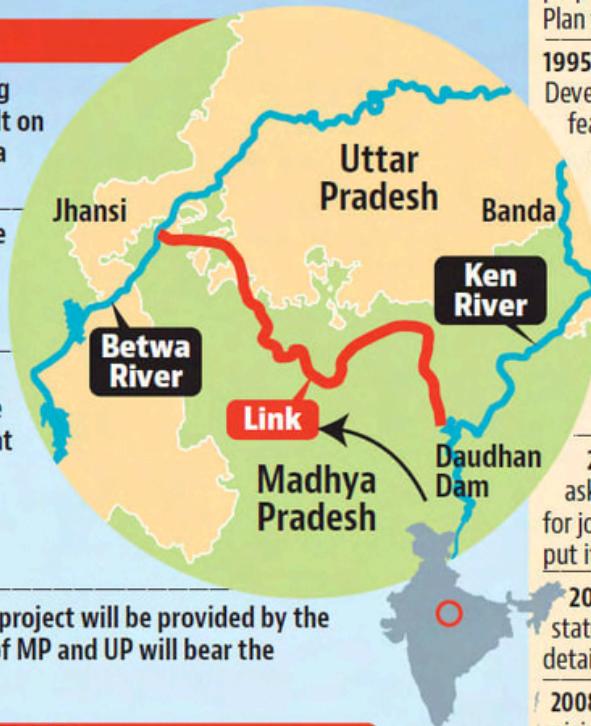
- The project was conceptualized under the **National Perspective Plan for River Linking** (1980) to mitigate drought and water scarcity in India.
- A **tripartite Memorandum of Understanding** between the Centre, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh was signed in **2005** for the Detailed Project Report (DPR).
- In **2018**, a comprehensive DPR for both phases was prepared and approved.
- The project primarily targets the Bundelkhand region, a drought-prone area spanning **13 districts in Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh**.
- Key districts in Madhya Pradesh:** Panna, Tikamgarh, Chhatarpur, Sagar, Damoh, Datia, Vidisha, Shivpuri, Raisen.
- Key districts in Uttar Pradesh:** Banda, Mahoba, Jhansi, Lalitpur.

The Ken-Betwa Link Project is the first project under the National Perspective Plan for interlinking of rivers

₹44,605 cr project to link Ken and Betwa rivers

KEY FEATURES

- 77m-high and 2.13km-long Daudhan Dam will be built on the Ken river in the Panna Tiger Reserve
- 221-km canal will take the excess water from Ken river to Betwa in UP through the dam
- As per the interstate agreement of 1981, of the 2,225 Mm³ water stored at Daudhan Dam, 850 Mm³ will be provided to Uttar Pradesh and 1,375 Mm³ to Madhya Pradesh
- 90% of the funds for the project will be provided by the Centre, while the states of MP and UP will bear the remaining amount



HOW WILL IT HELP?

6.2mn people across UP and MP to get drinking water



1mn hectares of farm land in 2,000 villages to get irrigation



103mw of hydropower and 27 MW of solar energy will be generated



HISTORY

1970: Union irrigation minister Dr KL Rao in the Indira Gandhi govt suggests transferring surplus water from a river to a water-deficit area

1980: The irrigation ministry prepares a National Perspective Plan for inter-basin water transfer

1995: The National Water Development Authority conducts a feasibility study to divert surplus water of Ken basin to Betwa river

1999-2000: The Atal Bihari Vajpayee-led govt appoints a panel to iron out differences between the govt of MP and UP



2002: The Supreme Court asks the Centre to finish a plan for joining rivers by 2003 and put it into action by 2016

2005: The Centre and both states sign an MoU to prepare a detailed feasibility report

2008: The Union water resources ministry declares it a national project

2010: NWDA completes the feasibility study for Phase 1

2014: The Cabinet approves the project, but faced resistance from environmentalists

2021: UP and MP sign a revised MoU with the Centre

2023: Project receives the forest approval from the environment ministry



Environmental and Social Concerns

Impact on Panna Tiger Reserve:

- Approximately **98 sq. km** of the Panna Tiger Reserve will be submerged, affecting critical habitats.
- Over **23 lakh trees** will be felled for construction.
- Concerns include disruption to tiger corridors, vulture nesting sites, and gharial populations in the **Ken Gharial Sanctuary**.

Hydrological Challenges:

- Experts have questioned the assumption of surplus water in **the Ken River**.
- A study by **IIT Bombay** suggested that such projects could alter local land-atmosphere dynamics, reducing rainfall by up to **12%**.

Community Displacement:

- The Daudhan Dam will submerge **9,000 hectares**, displacing **5,228 families** in Chhatarpur and **1,400 families** in Panna.
- Protests have emerged over claims of inadequate compensation and low benefits for the affected communities.

Economic Viability:

- The **Central Empowered Committee (CEC)** of the Supreme Court has raised concerns about the project's cost-effectiveness, recommending alternative irrigation methods within the Ken Basin.

Ken and Betwa Rivers

Ken River

Geographical Details:

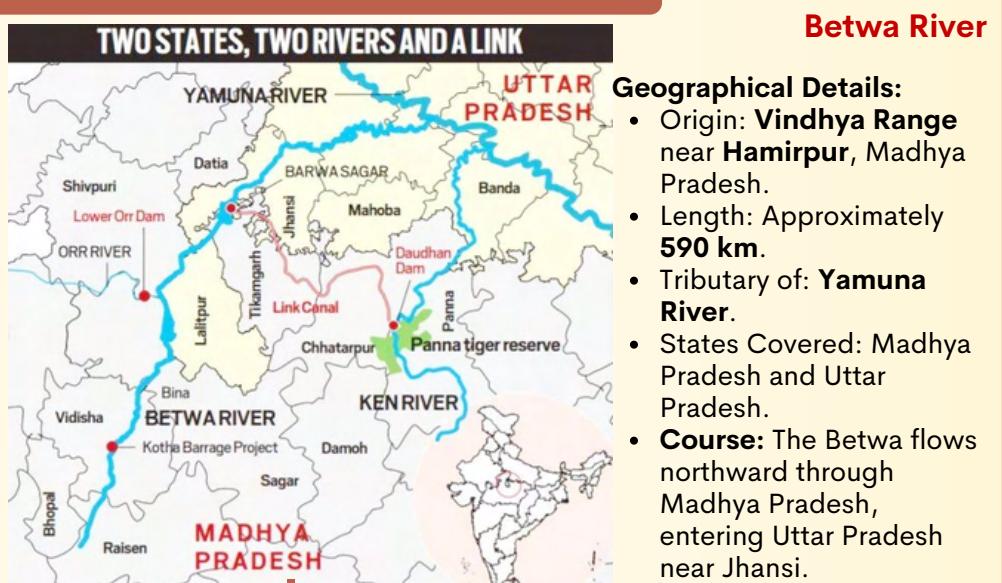
- Origin: **Ahirgawan** village near **Jabalpur**, Madhya Pradesh.
- Length: Approximately **427 km**.
- Tributary of: **Yamuna River**.
- States Covered: Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.

Course:

- The Ken River flows through **Panna district**, known for its scenic beauty and including the Panna Tiger Reserve.
- Confluence: Merges with the Yamuna River at **Chilla village** near Fatehpur in Uttar Pradesh.

Key Features:

- Known for its **clear water** and seasonal flow.
- Significant tributaries: **Sonar**, **Bearma**, and **Baghain** rivers.
- Notable Landmarks:
 - Panna National Park**: A critical wildlife habitat.
 - Raneh Falls**: A prominent waterfall on the Ken.



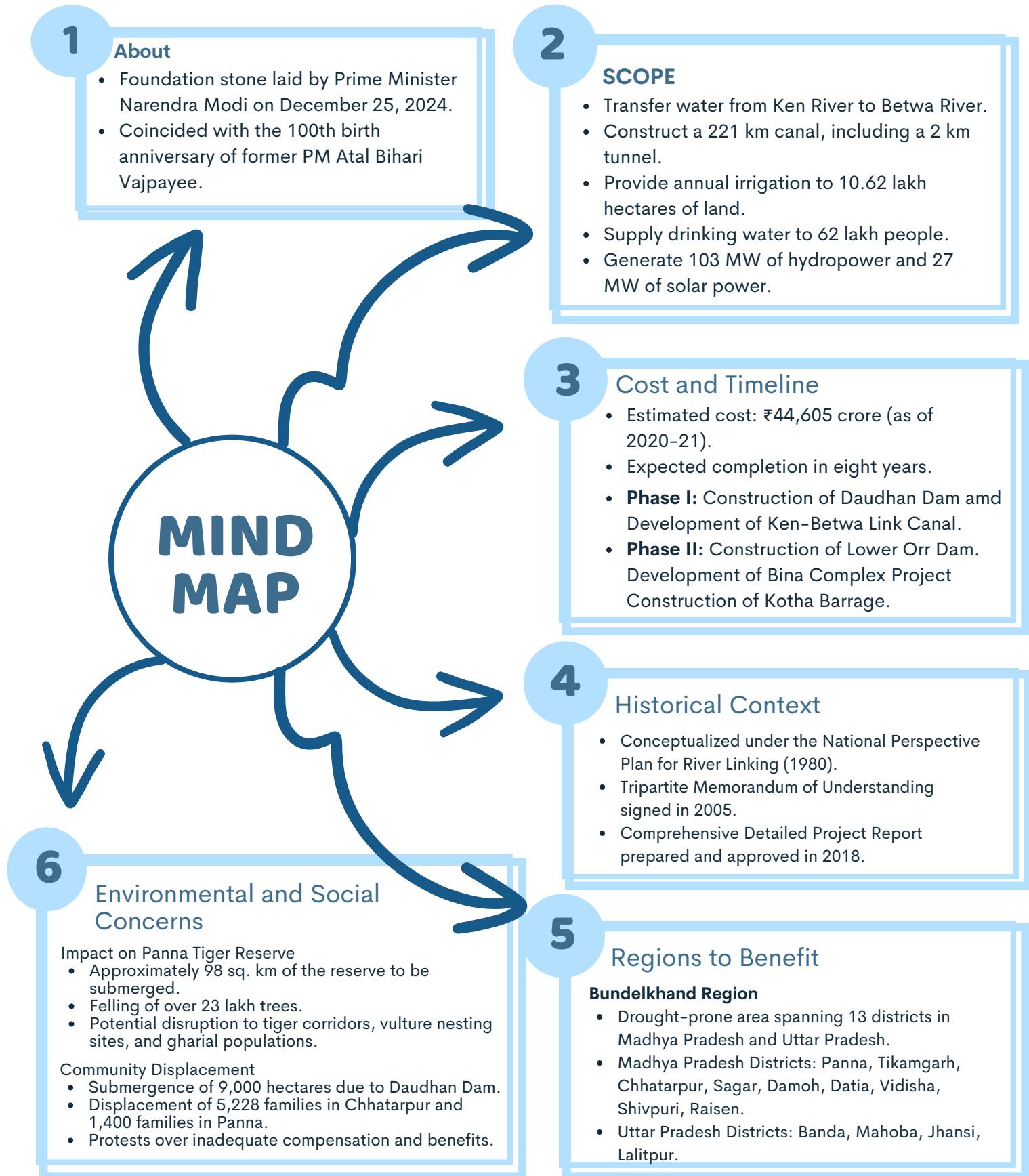
Betwa River

Geographical Details:

- Origin: **Vindhya Range** near **Hamirpur**, Madhya Pradesh.
- Length: Approximately **590 km**.
- Tributary of: **Yamuna River**.
- States Covered: Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.
- Course: The Betwa flows northward through Madhya Pradesh, entering Uttar Pradesh near Jhansi.
- Confluence: Joins the Yamuna River near **Hamirpur town** in Uttar Pradesh.

Key Features:

- Name Meaning: Derived from the Sanskrit word "Vetravati," meaning "**river of reeds**."
- Significant Tributaries: **Dhasan** and **Jamni** rivers.
- Notable Landmarks:
 - Orchha**: A historic town along its banks, known for its architecture and temples.
 - Raja Bhoj Dam**: Built across the Betwa for irrigation.



PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone for the Ken-Betwa River Linking Project (KBLP) on the birth anniversary of which of the following former PM?

(a) H. D. Deve Gowda (b) Inder Kumar Gujral
 (c) Atal Bihari Vajpayee (d) Indira Gandhi
2. How will the Ken-Betwa River Linking Project affect the Panna Tiger Reserve?

(a) It will lead to an expansion of the reserve area.
 (b) Approximately 98 sq. km of the reserve will be submerged.
 (c) It will introduce new species to the reserve.
 (d) It will not affect the reserve.
3. Which region is primarily targeted to benefit from the Ken-Betwa River Linking Project?

(a) Marathwada (b) Vidarbha
 (c) Bundelkhand (d) Malwa
4. Where does the Ken River originate?

(a) Ahirgawan village, Madhya Pradesh
 (b) Vindhya Range, Madhya Pradesh
 (c) Sagar, Madhya Pradesh
 (d) Kaimur Range, Madhya Pradesh
5. The name Betwa is derived from which of the following sanskrit terms?

(a) Yamunavati (b) Vetravati
 (c) Saraswati (d) Shivnathi
6. Under which plan is the Ken-Betwa River Linking Project included as a flagship initiative?

(a) National Perspective Plan
 (b) National Development Plan
 (c) National Water Plan
 (d) National Infrastructure Plan
7. What is a major environmental concern associated with the Ken-Betwa River Linking Project?

(a) Impact on the Panna Tiger Reserve
 (b) Air pollution increase
 (c) Noise pollution during construction
 (d) Increased urban heat island effect
8. How long is the expected completion timeline for the Ken-Betwa River Linking Project?

(a) 5 years (b) 6 years
 (c) 8 years (d) 10 years
9. What is the total estimated cost of the Ken-Betwa River Linking Project?

(a) ₹34,605 crore (b) ₹44,605 crore
 (c) ₹54,605 crore (d) ₹64,605 crore
10. When was the tripartite Memorandum of Understanding for the Ken-Betwa River Linking Project signed?

(a) 1995 (b) 2000 (c) 2005 (d) 2010
11. How many square kilometers of the Panna Tiger Reserve are expected to be submerged due to the Ken-Betwa River Linking Project?

(a) 50 sq. km (b) 75 sq. km
 (c) 98 sq. km (d) 120 sq. km
12. Who is credited with initiating the river-linking initiative that includes the Ken-Betwa River Linking Project?

(a) Dr. B.R. Ambedkar (b) Jawaharlal Nehru
 (c) Atal Bihari Vajpayee (d) Narendra Modi
13. What is the length of the Ken River?

(a) 327 km (b) 427 km
 (c) 527 km (d) 627 km
14. Which of the following tributaries is associated with the Ken River?

(a) Tapti (b) Sonar
 (c) Kosi (d) Ghaghara
15. What notable landmark is found along the Ken River?

(a) Kaziranga National Park
 (b) Gir Forest National Park
 (c) Jog Falls
 (d) Raneh Falls
16. What is the meaning of the name "Betwa"?

(a) River of gold (b) River of life
 (c) River of reeds (d) River of stones

17. How long is the Betwa River?

- (a) 390 km
- (b) 490 km
- (c) 590 km
- (d) 690 km

18. What is the source of the Betwa River?

- (a) Aravalli Range near Jaipur, Rajasthan
- (b) Satpura Range near Hoshangabad, Madhya Pradesh
- (c) Nilgiri Hills in Tamil Nadu
- (d) Vindhya Range near Hamirpur, Madhya Pradesh

ANSWER KEY

- | | | | | | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1. (c) | 2. (b) | 3. (c) | 4. (a) | 5. (b) | 6. (a) | 7. (a) | 8. (c) |
| 9. (b) | 10. (c) | 11. (c) | 12. (c) | 13. (b) | 14. (c) | 15. (d) | 16. (c) |
| 17. (c) | 18. (d) | | | | | | |

ECI Releases Granular Data of Lok Sabha Elections 2024

News Highlights:

- The Election Commission of India (ECI) has released a comprehensive dataset for the **2024 Lok Sabha elections** and **four simultaneous state assembly elections** (Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Odisha, and Sikkim).
- This move, part of the ECI's initiative to promote **transparency** and **public trust**, includes a total of **42 statistical reports** for the Lok Sabha elections and **14 reports** for each state assembly election.

Key Data Highlights

Total Registered Electors:

 **7.43%**

In the **2024 Lok Sabha elections**, there was a substantial increase in the number of registered voters, with a total of **97.97 crore** electors compared to **91.19 crore** in 2019, marking a significant rise of **7.43%** in the electorate size.

 **64.64 Cr**

The total **voter turnout** reached **64.64 crore**, surpassing the **61.4 crore** voters recorded in the previous 2019 elections. Of these, **64.21 crore** votes were cast via **EVMs**, while **42.81 lakh** votes were cast through **postal ballots**.

The turnout was highly varied across different constituencies, with the **highest turnout recorded in Dhubri, Assam (92.3%)** and the **lowest turnout in Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir (38.7%)**, which, despite being the lowest, showed a remarkable improvement from the **14.4% turnout in 2019**.

Polling Stations and Nominations



A total of **10,52,664** polling stations were established for the **2024 elections**, showing a slight increase from **10,37,848** in **2019**.

40 Stations

The election saw minimal disruptions, with repolling conducted at just **40 polling stations**, accounting for only **0.0038%** of the total polling stations.



The state with the **highest number of polling stations** was **Uttar Pradesh**, which had **1,62,069 polling stations**, while **Lakshadweep** had the fewest with just **55 polling stations**.

Female Contesting Candidates

800
726

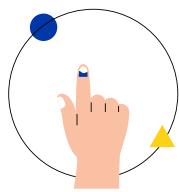
A total of **800 women** contested the **2024 Lok Sabha elections**, a noticeable increase from **726 women** in **2019**.

Maharashtra

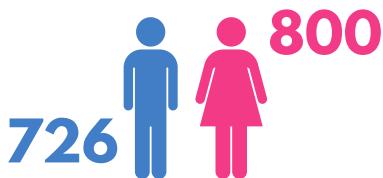
The state of **Maharashtra** recorded the **highest number of female candidates** at **111**, followed by **Uttar Pradesh (80)** and **Tamil Nadu (77)**.

152

However, **152** constituencies still had no female candidates contesting in the elections.



The number of **female electors** in **2024** reached **47.63 crore**, representing **48.62%** of the total electorate, which marks an increase from **48.09%** in **2019**.



The **female voter turnout** in **2024** was **65.78%**, slightly higher than the **male turnout** of **65.55%**, marking the **second time in history** that female voter participation has outpaced male participation in a Lok Sabha election.

Women's Participation



States like **Puducherry** and **Kerala** recorded the **highest percentage of female electors**, with **Puducherry** leading at **53.03%**, followed closely by **Kerala** at **51.56%**.

946  **1000** 

The **female-to-male elector ratio** reached a record high of **946 female electors per 1,000 male electors**, an improvement from **926** in **2019**, marking a steady shift toward **gender balance** in India's electoral system.

Voter Turnout

92.17%

The highest female voter turnout was recorded in **Dhubri, Assam** with **92.17%**, followed by **Tamluk, West Bengal** at **87.57%**. This is a significant achievement in promoting **female enfranchisement**.



The **Election Commission of India** was established on **January 25, 1950** under **Article 324** of the Indian Constitution.

Composition

- **Members:** The Commission consists of:
 - **Chief Election Commissioner (CEC):** The head of the Commission.
 - **Two Election Commissioners:** The Commission was initially a single-member body but became a three-member body in **1989**.
- **Appointment:** The President of India appoints the Chief Election Commissioner and the Election Commissioners.

Constitutional Role

- **Autonomy:** It is an independent body under the Constitution, tasked with overseeing the conduct of elections in India.
- **Election Administration:** It conducts elections for the **Lok Sabha (House of the People)**, **Rajya Sabha (Council of States)**, State Legislative Assemblies, and Presidential and Vice-Presidential elections.
- **Electoral Rolls:** The ECI is responsible for the preparation and regular updating of the **electoral rolls**, ensuring that all eligible voters are registered.
- **Monitoring Parties and Candidates:** It monitors political parties, candidates, and the electoral process to ensure adherence to the **Model Code of Conduct** and other legal provisions.
- **Voter Education:** The ECI promotes voter awareness, including educating voters about their rights and responsibilities.

More data from the Report

Third Gender Voters:

- The number of registered **third-gender electors** in **2024** rose to **48,324**, marking a **23.5% increase** from **39,075** in **2019**.
- Voter turnout** among the third-gender community nearly doubled, reaching **27.09%** compared to **14.64%** in **2019**, indicating greater **inclusivity** in the electoral process for marginalized groups.

Persons with Disabilities (PWD):

- The total number of registered **PwD electors** in **2024** surged to **90,28,696**, a **significant increase** from **61,67,482** in **2019**, reflecting efforts to better accommodate and involve differently-abled citizens in the electoral process.

Overseas Electors:

- 1,19,374 overseas electors** were registered in **2024**, marking a **20% increase** from **99,844** in **2019**, including voters from various countries, with notable contributions from **Male (1,06,411)**, **Female (12,950)**, and **Third-Gender (13)** electors.

Polling and Party Performance

Political Parties:

- A total of **6 national parties** participated in the **2024 Lok Sabha elections**, securing **63.35%** of the total valid votes.
- In contrast, **3,921 independent candidates** contested, but only **7** were elected. This highlights the significant dominance of national parties in India's electoral system.

Independent Female Candidates:

- Of the **3,921 independent candidates**, **279 were female**, though **152 constituencies** had no female contestants, which calls for further attention to **gender equality** in political representation.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- When was the Election Commission of India (ECI) established?
 (a) January 26, 1950 (b) January 25, 1950
 (c) January 1, 1950 (d) January 15, 1950
- Which constituency recorded the highest voter turnout in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections?
 (a) Dhubri, Assam
 (b) Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir
 (c) Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh
 (d) Lakshadweep
- Which state recorded the highest percentage of female electors in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections?
 (a) Kerala (b) Puducherry
 (c) Maharashtra (d) Tamil Nadu
- How many national parties participated in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections?
 (a) 5 (b) 6 (c) 7 (d) 8
- How many members constitute the Election Commission of India (ECI)?
 (a) 5 (b) 6 (c) 7 (d) 8
- How many total registered electors were there in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections?
 (a) 87.97 crore (b) 97.97 crore
 (c) 107.97 crore (d) 117.97 crore
- How many women contested in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections?
 (a) 700 (b) 726 (c) 800 (d) 850
- Which state recorded the highest number of female candidates in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections?
 (a) Maharashtra (b) Uttar Pradesh
 (c) Tamil Nadu (d) West Bengal
- Under which article of the Indian Constitution is the Election Commission of India founded?
 (a) Article 312 (b) Article 324
 (c) Article 356 (d) Article 368
- Who appoints the Chief Election Commissioner and the Election Commissioners?

ANSWER KEY

1. (b) 2. (a) 3. (b) 4. (b) 5. (d) 6. (b) 7. (c) 8. (a)
9. (b) 10. (c) 11. (c) 12. (c) 13. (b) 14. (b) 15. (c) 16. (b)

Panchayat Se Parliament 2.0

News Highlights:

The Panchayat Se Parliament 2.0 program was inaugurated on January 6, 2025, by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, commemorating the 150th birth anniversary of tribal leader Birsa Munda.

- This initiative aims to empower 502 elected women representatives from Scheduled Tribes across 22 states and Union Territories, equipping them with knowledge of constitutional provisions, parliamentary procedures, and governance.
- Panchayat Se Parliament Tak 1.0 was conducted in January 2024 with over 500 participants.

Key Highlights of Panchayat Se Parliament 2.0

Event Features:

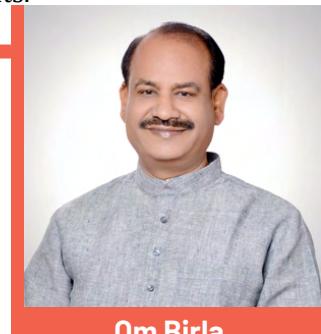
- Organized by the National Commission for Women (NCW), in collaboration with the Lok Sabha Secretariat and the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.
- Participants engaged in interactive workshops, sessions moderated by experts and MPs, and guided tours of key locations like the new Parliament House, Samvidhan Sadan, Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya, and Rashtrapati Bhavan.

Inauguration and Key Figures:

- Inaugurated by Om Birla, Speaker of the Lok Sabha.
- Attended by prominent figures including Annapurna Devi, Minister of Women and Child Development, and Vijaya Rahatkar, Chairperson of the National Commission for Women.
- Tribal Affairs Minister Jual Oram addressed the second session, emphasizing the importance of women's leadership in governance.

Program Objectives:

- Strengthen participants' understanding of constitutional values, democratic principles, and parliamentary procedures.
- Foster leadership skills, particularly among women from Scheduled Tribes, and encourage active participation in local governance.
- Highlight the role of women leaders in promoting education, rural development, and gender equality.



Om Birla



Vijaya Rahatkar



Jual Oram

Key Features of the Program

- Interactive Sessions:** Workshops led by Members of Parliament (MPs) and subject experts. and Discussions on parliamentary procedures, governance frameworks, and constitutional provisions.
- Significant Locations:** Participants toured the new Parliament House, Samvidhan Sadan, and Rashtrapati Bhavan to gain insights into the functioning of India's democratic institutions.
- Preamble Reading:** Delegates joined the Lok Sabha Speaker in a ceremonial reading of the Preamble to the Constitution of India.
- Diversity and Inclusion:** Ensured representation from 502 elected women representatives from Scheduled Tribes, creating a platform for learning and collaboration.

Birsa Munda

Life and Contributions:

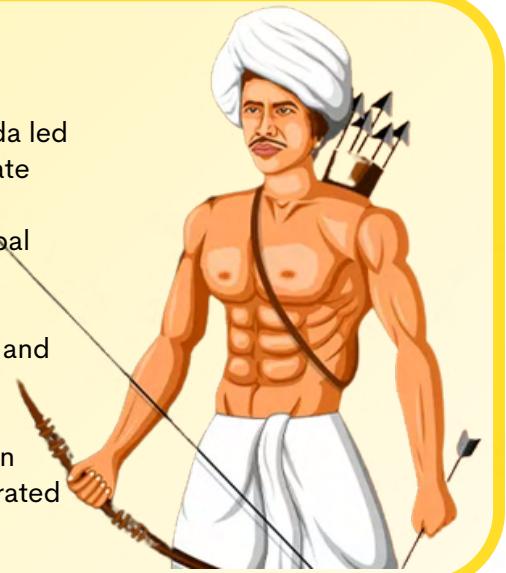
- A revered tribal leader from the **Chhotanagpur Plateau**, Birsa Munda led the **Munda Rebellion (Ulgulan)** against British colonial rule in the late 19th century.
- Advocated for tribal rights, resisting exploitation, and preserving tribal customs and culture.

Religious Leadership:

- Founded the **Birsait faith**, blending tribal beliefs with social reform, and emphasized worship in **sacred groves (sarna)**.

Legacy:

- Known as '**Dharti Aba**' (**Father of the Earth**), his birth anniversary on **November 15** marks the creation of Jharkhand in 2000 and is celebrated as '**Janjatiya Gaurav Divas**' since 2021.



Panchayat Se Parliament: Legacy of 2024

The **Panchayat Se Parliament 2024** initiative successfully engaged **500 women sarpanches** from across India. Building on this success, the **2025 edition** broadens the scope to include elected women representatives from Scheduled Tribes, focusing on leadership in **Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs)** and **urban local bodies (ULBs)**.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- What is the primary objective of the Panchayat Se Parliament 2.0 program inaugurated in 2025?
 - To promote rural infrastructure development
 - To empower elected women representatives from Scheduled Tribes
 - To provide financial assistance to tribal communities
 - To commemorate the contributions of freedom fighters
- Which tribal leader's 150th birth anniversary was commemorated during the inauguration of Panchayat Se Parliament 2.0?
 - Birsa Munda
 - Rani Gaidinliu
 - Tantia Bhil
 - Sidhu Murmu
- What title is Birsa Munda famously known by, reflecting his contributions to tribal rights?
 - Jan Nayak (Leader of the People)
 - Dharti Aba (Father of the Earth)
 - Munda Raja (King of the Mundas)
 - Tribal Hero
- In which year was the National Commission for Women (NCW) established?
 - 1990
 - 1994
 - 1994
 - 1992
- What was a unique feature of the Panchayat Se Parliament 2.0 program in 2025?
 - Focus on only urban governance
 - Inclusion of women representatives from Scheduled Tribes
 - Training for political party candidates
 - Celebration of World Women Leaders Day
- How many elected women representatives from Scheduled Tribes are targeted for empowerment through the Panchayat Se Parliament 2.0 program?
 - 302
 - 402
 - 502
 - 602
- From how many states and Union Territories are the women representatives participating in the Panchayat Se Parliament 2.0 program?
 - 12
 - 22
 - 32
 - 42

8. Who inaugurated the Panchayat Se Parliament 2.0 program?
(a) Om Birla
(b) Narendra Modi
(c) Jual Oram
(d) Vijaya Rahatkar
9. Which organization collaborated with the Lok Sabha Secretariat and the Ministry of Tribal Affairs to organize the Panchayat Se Parliament 2.0 program?
(a) National Commission for Women
(b) National Human Rights Commission
(c) National Commission for Scheduled Tribes
(d) Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
10. Who is the Minister of Women and Child Development who attended the inauguration of the Panchayat Se Parliament 2.0 program?
(a) Smriti Irani
(b) Annapurna Devi
(c) Nirmala Sitharaman
(d) Maneka Gandhi
11. What faith did Birsa Munda found?
(a) Birsait faith
(b) Hinduism
(c) Sikhism
(d) Buddhism
12. What was the name of the rebellion led by Birsa Munda against British colonial rule?
(a) The Sepoy Mutiny
(b) The Non-Cooperation Movement
(c) The Munda Rebellion
(d) The Quit India Movement
13. What year was the National Commission for Women (NCW) established?
(a) 1980
(b) 1985
(c) 1990
(d) 1992

ANSWER KEY

1. (b) 2. (a) 3. (b) 4. (d) 5. (b) 6. (c) 7. (b) 8. (a)
9. (a) 10. (b) 11. (a) 12. (c) 13. (d)

Karnataka HC held transgender can change their name and gender on birth certificates

News Highlights:

The Karnataka High Court recently directed authorities to allow a transgender woman to **change her name and gender** on her birth certificate, a move that aligns with the provisions of the **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019**.

Background



The petitioner, a transgender woman diagnosed with **gender dysphoria**, underwent **sex-reassignment surgery** and updated her name and gender in other official documents, such as her Aadhaar card, driving license, and passport.

- Her request to amend her **birth certificate** was rejected by the Registrar of Births and Deaths in Mangalore under the **1969 Act**.
- She argued that the refusal violated her **right to life with dignity** under **Article 21 of the Constitution** and forced her to live a "dual life."

This decision came after the petitioner challenged the **Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969**, which previously allowed changes only for "erroneous," "fraudulent," or "incorrect" entries under Section 15.

Court's Interpretation

- The court ruled that the **Transgender Persons Act, 2019**, a **special law**, takes precedence over the **1969 Act**, a general law, as per the principle "**generalia specialibus non-derogant**" (special laws override general laws).
- It directed the Registrar to recognize certificates issued under **Sections 6 and 7** of the Transgender Act and update the birth certificate accordingly.



Key Provisions of the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019

Certificate of Identity:

- Under **Section 6**, transgender individuals can apply for a certificate of identity through the **District Magistrate**, affirming their self-perceived gender identity.
- Section 7** allows individuals who have undergone **sex-reassignment surgery** to apply for a **revised certificate of identity**.

Certificate of Identity:

- Under **Section 6**, transgender individuals can apply for a certificate of identity through the **District Magistrate**, affirming their self-perceived gender identity.
- Section 7** allows individuals who have undergone **sex-reassignment surgery** to apply for a **revised certificate of identity**.

Rule 8 of the Transgender Rules, 2020:

- The **Transgender Persons Rules, 2020**, supplement the Act by detailing the application process for obtaining identity certificates. This includes:
 - Filing an application with an affidavit to the **District Magistrate**.
 - Issuance of the certificate within **30 days** of application submission.

Key Issues Highlighted by the Case

Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969:

- This Act does not explicitly allow voluntary changes to birth certificates except for correcting errors or fraudulent entries under **Section 15**.
- It disproportionately affects transgender individuals as birth certificates are essential for many legal and social purposes.
- Transgender Persons Act, 2019:**
 - Provides explicit provisions for **gender identity recognition** and changes in official documents, including birth certificates.

Legal Anomalies

- The Karnataka High Court identified a **lacuna** in the 1969 Act that creates a barrier to implementing the Transgender Persons Act. The court directed **amendments** to the 1969 Act to bring it in line with the Transgender Act.
- The petitioner highlighted how discrepancies in documents reflecting her **previous name and gender** caused harassment and discrimination, undermining her **right to dignity**.

Application Process for Transgender Identity Changes

- **For Certificate of Identity:**
 - Submit an application with an affidavit to the **District Magistrate**.
 - The certificate must be issued within **30 days**.
- **For Revised Certificate Post-Surgery:**
 - Obtain a **medical certificate** from the Chief Medical Officer after surgery.
 - Apply to the District Magistrate for a revised identity certificate, which must be issued within **15 days**.
- **For Changes in Official Documents:**
 - Submit the certificate to relevant authorities (e.g., Aadhaar, passport offices, Registrar of Births and Deaths).
 - Changes must be reflected in official documents within **15 days** of application.

Legal Implications of the Ruling

- Precedence of Special Laws:** The court reaffirmed the principle that special laws (like the Transgender Act) override general laws (like the 1969 Act) in cases of conflict.
- Mandated Compliance:** Registrars across Karnataka are now required to update birth certificates for transgender individuals if applications are accompanied by valid identity certificates under the Transgender Act.
- Right to Dignity:** The judgment reinforces **Article 21** by recognizing the **right to self-identity** as fundamental to living with dignity.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which Constitutional Article ensures the right to life and personal liberty, including the right to live with dignity?

(a) Article 14	(b) Article 21
(c) Article 19	(d) Article 25
- Under which section of the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019, can transgender individuals apply for a certificate of identity affirming their self-perceived gender identity?

(a) Section 4	(b) Section 6
(c) Section 7	(d) Section 8
- What does Article 21 of the Indian Constitution guarantee, as reaffirmed in the Karnataka High Court's judgment?

(a) Right to Equality	(b) Right to Education
(c) Right to Life with Dignity	(d) Right to Freedom of Religion
- Which landmark case recognized transgender individuals as the 'third gender' in India?

(a) Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India (2018)	(b) Chinmayee Jena v. State of Odisha (2020)
(c) National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) v. Union of India (2014)	
- (d) Vyjayanti Vasanta Mogli v. State of Telangana (2023)
- What is the timeline for issuing a revised identity certificate after sex-reassignment surgery under the Transgender Persons Rules, 2020?

(a) 7 days	(b) 15 days
(c) 30 days	(d) 45 days
- What principle did the Karnataka High Court cite to justify that the Transgender Persons Act, 2019, takes precedence over the Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969?

(a) Lex specialis derogat legi generali	(b) Generalia specialibus non-derogant
(c) Audi alteram partem	(d) Nemo judex in causa sua
- What other official documents had the petitioner already updated her name and gender on before seeking to amend her birth certificate?

(a) Voter ID and PAN card	(b) Aadhaar card, driving license, and passport
(c) School certificates and college diplomas	(d) Property deeds and vehicle registration

8. According to the Transgender Persons Rules, 2020, within how many days must the District Magistrate issue the certificate of identity after the application submission?
- (a) 15 days
 - (b) 20 days
 - (c) 30 days
 - (d) 60 days
9. Under which rules are the procedures detailed for obtaining an identity certificate for transgender individuals?
- (a) Transgender Persons Rules, 2020
 - (b) National Identity Rules, 2018
 - (c) Civil Rights Rules, 2019
 - (d) Gender Recognition Rules, 2021
10. Which section of the Transgender Persons Act, 2019 allows for the application of a revised certificate of identity after sex-reassignment surgery?
- (a) Section 5
 - (b) Section 6
 - (c) Section 7
 - (d) Section 8
11. Within how many days must a revised identity certificate be issued post-sex-reassignment surgery according to the procedures outlined?
- (a) 5 days
 - (b) 10 days
 - (c) 15 days
 - (d) 20 days
12. What was the landmark decision made by the Supreme Court in National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) v. Union of India (2014)?
- (a) Decriminalization of same-sex relationships
 - (b) Recognition of transgender individuals as the 'third gender'
 - (c) Criminalization of gender discrimination
 - (d) Prohibition of same-sex marriage
13. What significant legal change resulted from the Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India (2018) Supreme Court judgment?
- (a) Decriminalization of consensual same-sex relations
 - (b) Legalization of same-sex marriage
 - (c) Implementation of gender-neutral laws
 - (d) Abolition of the death penalty for gender-based crimes
14. In Chinmayee Jena v. State of Odisha (2020), what right did the Orissa High Court uphold for transgender individuals?
- (a) Right to government employment
 - (b) Right to cohabit with partners of their choice
 - (c) Right to change gender without surgery
 - (d) Right to mandatory education

ANSWER KEY

- | | | | | | | | |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|
| 1. (b) | 2. (b) | 3. (c) | 4. (c) | 5. (b) | 6. (b) | 7. (b) | 8. (c) |
| 9. (a) | 10. (c) | 11. (d) | 12. (b) | 13. (a) | 14. (b) | | |

Bhopal Gas Tragedy Hazardous Waste Removal

News Highlights:

The hazardous 337 metric tonnes of toxic waste from the **1984 Bhopal Gas Tragedy** site is being transported to **Pithampur, Madhya Pradesh**, for incineration, marking the end of a **40-year delay**.

- Rumors of a missing container spread via social media but were debunked by authorities, confirming all **12 sealed containers** are intact and accounted for.
- Protests erupted in Pithampur against the waste disposal, with local groups citing concerns over potential harm to **residents, waterbodies, and the environment**.

Background

- The **Bhopal Gas Tragedy**, occurring on the night of **December 2-3, 1984**, in **Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India**, stands as the world's worst industrial disaster.
- A catastrophic leak of approximately 45 tons of **methyl isocyanate (MIC)** gas from the Union Carbide India Limited (UCIL) pesticide plant led to immediate and long-term devastation.

Key Facts and Figures:

Immediate Impact:

- The gas leak resulted in the immediate deaths of thousands. Official records initially reported **5,479** fatalities. However, subsequent estimates suggest that between **15,000 to 20,000 people** died over time due to gas-related illnesses.



Injuries and Health Effects:

- Over **500,000** people were exposed to the toxic gas. A government affidavit in 2006 reported **558,125 injuries, including 38,478 temporary partial injuries** and approximately 3,900 severe and permanently disabling injuries.
- Survivors suffered from respiratory problems, eye irritation, blindness, and other chronic health issues.



Environmental Impact:

- The area surrounding the plant remains contaminated with toxic chemicals, affecting soil and groundwater. Efforts to clean up the site have been ongoing for decades.



Legal and Financial Repercussions

- In 1989, **Union Carbide Corporation (UCC)** settled with the Indian government for **\$470 million** to resolve litigation related to the disaster.
- Activists and victims' groups have long criticized the settlement as inadequate and have continued to seek additional compensation and accountability.



Key Events Leading to Waste Relocation

Legal Tangles and Delays: The first petition for waste removal was filed in **2004**, but legal and administrative delays extended the process for four decades.

- The **Madhya Pradesh High Court** issued a deadline in **December 2024**, ordering the government to shift the waste within four weeks.
- **Transportation of Waste:**
 - The waste was packed into **12 large containers** and transported from Bhopal to **Pithampur** on **January 1, 2025**, via a **green corridor** covering Sehore, Dewas, and Indore districts.
- **Incineration Site:**
 - The waste is to be incinerated at **Pithampur Waste Management Pvt. Ltd.**, in collaboration with **Re Sustainability Ltd.** (formerly Ramky Enviro Engineers), in **Tarapura village**.
 - The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) outlined a detailed process for incineration under strict monitoring.

Incineration Process and Safety Measures

- **Trial Incineration:**
 - The CPCB will oversee a **90-kilogram trial incineration**, testing the furnace's ability to handle the toxic waste at **1,200°C**. The process will proceed gradually based on successful trials.
- **Safety Protocols:**
 - The waste, primarily solid material mixed with sand and soil, was securely packed and transported.
 - Monitoring ensures that **fumes from the furnace** do not mix with fresh air, preventing environmental contamination.

Key Legal and Administrative Details

Supreme Court and High Court Involvement:

- The **Supreme Court of India** had ordered waste incineration trials at Pithampur in **2015**, which were deemed successful.
- The **Madhya Pradesh High Court** set the recent deadline for waste relocation, expressing dissatisfaction with prolonged delays.

Historical Efforts:

- Earlier proposals to incinerate the waste in **Gujarat** were rejected in **2007** due to public opposition.
- In 2015, a trial incineration of **10 metric tonnes** of the waste at Pithampur demonstrated the facility's capability to handle hazardous material.

Historical Context and Impact

- The Union Carbide factory was abandoned after the disaster, with Warren Anderson, the company head, fleeing the country amid public outrage.
- The site remains contaminated, with **85 acres** of land still harboring toxic residues.
- **Community Impact:** Survivors of the tragedy continue to suffer from health issues, with local activists emphasizing the need for comprehensive site cleanup.
- **Timeline for Incineration:** If trials proceed as planned, the entire **337 metric tonnes of waste** is expected to be incinerated within **4-5 months**.
- **Government Initiatives:** The Madhya Pradesh government is tasked with amending regulations to ensure streamlined processes for waste disposal in the future.

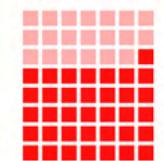
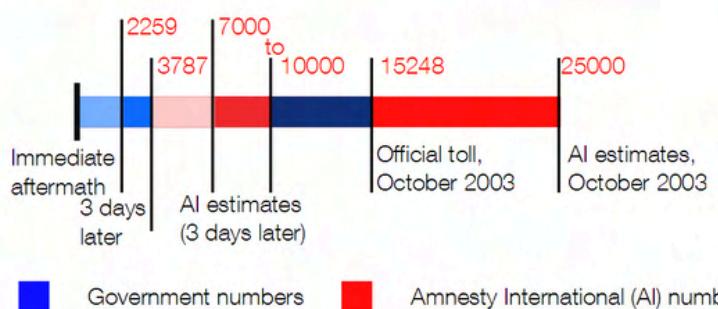
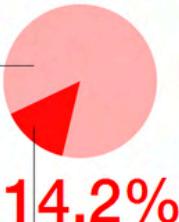
3
DECEMBER
1984



UNION
CARBIDE

- 1984/12/04 Case registered against UCIL
9 arrested, incl. W. Anderson
- 1985/02 Claim filed for \$3.3 bn. in US court
- 1986 US district Court transfers all litigation to India
- 1987/12/01 CBI Files chargesheet against Anderson and 8 others
- 1989/02 UCC and Indian govt in \$470 mn out-of court settlement
- 1992 Only part compensation disbursed by Govt. of India
- 1994 UCC sells stake in UCIL to McLeod Russell (India) Ltd.
- 1999 UCC announces merger with Dow Chemicals
- 2004/06 US rejects extradition request for Anderson filed in 2003
- 2004/10/26 Supreme Court sets 15 Nov deadline for compensation payouts
- 2010/07/07 Bhopal court declares all 8 accused guilty

\$2000 fine



36/56

wards declared Gas-affected



63%

of 895,000 people exposed to Gas

Tons of gases dispersed

24.5 11.8

Methyl Isocyanate

Reaction products

Most likely:

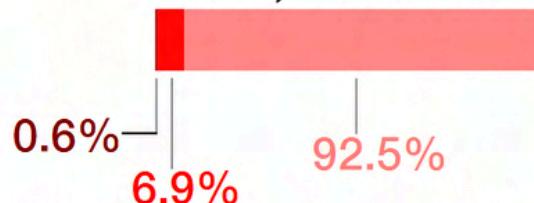
Hydrogen Cyanide
Carbon Monoxide
Ammonia

Effects

Ophthalmic	■
Respiratory	■
Immunological	■
Neurological	■
Neuromuscular	■
Cancers	■
Gynecological	■
including Stillbirths Miscarriages	

Immediate
Long-term

558,125 cases



Permanent Disability
Rs. 500,000

Temporary Partial Disablement
Rs. 200,000

Minor Injury
Unspecified

October 2006 Affidavit filed in Supreme Court by GOI

Rs. 15.49 bn

disbursed amongst

574,366 cases

MP State Govt. report, 2009

Created by Prolific Dyslexic
for VisualData

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. What was the primary chemical involved in the 1984 Bhopal Gas Tragedy?
 (a) Methyl isocyanate (MIC) (b) Carbon monoxide (CO)
 (c) Ammonium nitrate (d) Sulfur dioxide (SO₂)

2. How many metric tonnes of toxic waste are being relocated from the Bhopal Gas Tragedy site for incineration?
 (a) 150 metric tonnes (b) 500 metric tonnes
 (c) 337 metric tonnes (d) 1,000 metric tonnes

3. Where is the toxic waste from the Bhopal Gas Tragedy being incinerated?
 (a) Gujarat Waste Management Facility
 (b) Pithampur Waste Management Pvt. Ltd.
 (c) Bengaluru Hazardous Waste Facility
 (d) New Delhi Pollution Control Site

4. Which court set the recent deadline for relocating the toxic waste from the Bhopal Gas Tragedy site?
 (a) MP High Court (b) Supreme Court of India
 (c) Indore District Court (d) National Green Tribunal

5. What was the outcome of the 2015 trial incineration of waste at Pithampur?
 (a) It was deemed unsuccessful due to emissions issues.
 (b) The facility demonstrated the capability to handle hazardous material.
 (c) It caused significant environmental contamination.
 (d) The trial was canceled due to public protests.

6. How many sealed containers are being used to transport the toxic waste from the Bhopal Gas Tragedy site?
 (a) 10 (b) 12 (c) 15 (d) 20

7. When did the Bhopal Gas Tragedy occur?
 (a) December 2, 1984 (b) November 2, 1986
 (c) January 1986 (d) March 1987

8. What was the amount of the settlement between Union Carbide Corporation and the Indian government in 1989?
 (a) \$200 million (b) \$370 million
 (c) \$470 million (d) \$570 million

9. Which organization outlined the detailed process for the incineration of the Bhopal Gas Tragedy waste?
 (a) Indian Environmental Society
 (b) Central Pollution Control Board
 (c) Greenpeace India
 (d) World Health Organization

10. Which company is involved in the incineration of the toxic waste at Pithampur?
 (a) Pithampur Waste Management Pvt. Ltd.
 (b) Re Sustainability Ltd.
 (c) Both A and B
 (d) None of the above

11. Which court did a group of doctors petition to halt the waste disposal in Pithampur?
 (a) Supreme Court of India
 (b) Madhya Pradesh High Court
 (c) Chattisgarh High Court
 (d) None of the above

12. Who was the head of Union Carbide who fled the country after the Bhopal Gas Tragedy?
 (a) John Browne (b) Warren Anderson
 (c) Tony Hayward (d) Bob Dudley

ANSWER KEY

- | | | | | | | | |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1. (a) | 2. (c) | 3. (b) | 4. (a) | 5. (b) | 6. (b) | 7. (a) | 8. (c) |
| 9. (b) | 10. (c) | 11. (b) | 12. (b) | | | | |

BUDGET BEFORE BUDGET SESSION



LE HAZRATGANJ



Arunachal Pradesh Freedom of Religion Act, 1978

News Highlights:

The Arunachal Pradesh Freedom of Religion Act, 1978, is being brought back into focus by the state government after **46 years** of dormancy. The government is framing rules for its implementation after a **Public Interest Litigation (PIL)** filed in **2022** highlighted the failure to enforce the Act.

- The Act prohibits **forceful religious conversion** through inducement or fraud and mandates that all conversions be reported to the **Deputy Commissioner**. Non-compliance is penalized with imprisonment and a fine.
- The revival of the Act has reignited debates on **religious freedom**, the preservation of **indigenous cultures**, and the role of the **state** in regulating faith-based practices.

Arunachal Pradesh Freedom of Religion Act, 1978

Enacted:

- The Act was passed by the **first Legislative Assembly of Arunachal Pradesh** in **1978**.
- **Purpose:** To prevent the **forceful conversion** of people from one religion to another through **fraudulent or coercive means**.



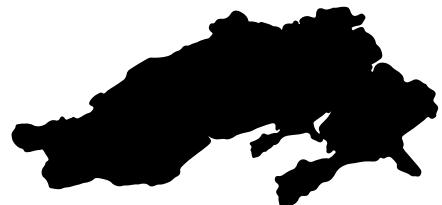
Provisions:

- **Punishment:** The Act stipulates **imprisonment for up to two years** and a fine of up to **₹10,000** for individuals involved in such conversions.
- **Reporting:** All conversions must be reported to the **Deputy Commissioner**, and failure to do so can lead to punishment for the person performing the conversion.
- **Indigenous Faiths:** The Act recognizes and protects indigenous religions such as Buddhism, Donyi Polo (nature worship), and Vaishnavism.



Why Was the Arunachal Pradesh Freedom of Religion Act Introduced?

The Arunachal Pradesh Freedom of Religion Act, 1978, is being brought back into focus by the state government after **46 years** of dormancy. The government is framing rules for its implementation after a **Public Interest Litigation (PIL)** filed in **2022** highlighted the failure to enforce the Act.



- The Act prohibits **forceful religious conversion** through inducement or fraud and mandates that all conversions be reported to the **Deputy Commissioner**. Non-compliance is penalized with imprisonment and a fine.
- The revival of the Act has reignited debates on **religious freedom**, the preservation of **indigenous cultures**, and the role of the **state** in regulating faith-based practices.

Why Has the Act Remained Dormant?

- **Opposition from Christian Groups:** The Arunachal Christian Forum, formed shortly after the Act's introduction, has consistently opposed the Act, calling it "anti-Christian". The organization argued that the Act could be misused and unfairly target Christian converts.
- **Political Sensitivity:** Successive **Chief Ministers** of Arunachal Pradesh avoided implementing the Act due to the **political sensitivity** surrounding the **growing Christian population** (which constitutes **30.26%** of the state's population as per the **2011 Census**). Fear of alienating voters in a state with a significant Christian population led to inaction on the law.
- **External Influences:** The **BJP government** and **RSS** have been involved in promoting **indigenous faiths** and have renewed interest in the Act, supporting efforts to document and institutionalize indigenous religious practices.

Why is the Act Being Revived Now?

- **Legal Push:** In 2022, advocate Tambo Tamin filed a **PIL** in the **Gauhati High Court** urging the state government to implement the Act. The court directed the state to finalize **draft rules** for the Act within six months, setting the stage for the law's revival.
 - **Cultural Preservation:** Advocates of the Act, such as **Maya Murtem** from the Indigenous Faiths and Cultural Society of Arunachal Pradesh (IFCSAP), argue that the Act is necessary to **preserve indigenous cultures** amid **rising conversions**, especially in districts with high conversion rates. The law is seen as an "**armor**" against the erosion of traditional practices.
 - **RSS's Role:** The **RSS** has supported the **documentation** and **institutionalisation** of indigenous faiths, which proponents see as a step toward preserving cultural identity. However, critics are wary of the broader political agenda behind these efforts.

Why is the Act Being Revived Now?

- **Legal Push:** In 2022, advocate Tambo Tamin filed a PIL in the Gauhati High Court urging the state government to implement the Act. The court directed the state to finalize **draft rules** for the Act within six months, setting the stage for the law's revival.
 - **Cultural Preservation:** Advocates of the Act, such as **Maya Murtem** from the Indigenous Faiths and Cultural Society of Arunachal Pradesh (IFCSAP), argue that the Act is necessary to **preserve indigenous cultures** amid **rising conversions**, especially in districts with high conversion rates. The law is seen as an "**armor**" against the erosion of traditional practices.
 - **RSS's Role:** The RSS has supported the **documentation** and **institutionalisation** of indigenous faiths, which proponents see as a step toward preserving cultural identity. However, critics are wary of the broader political agenda behind these efforts.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

8. Which organization has supported the documentation and institutionalization of indigenous faiths in Arunachal Pradesh?

(a) The RSS (b) The IFCSAP
(c) UNESCO (d) The Indian Government

9. What is the capital city of Arunachal Pradesh?

(a) Guwahati (b) Kohima
(c) Itanagar (d) Shillong

10. What was Arunachal Pradesh known as during the British colonial era?

(a) Bengal Frontier
(b) North-East Frontier Agency
(c) East India Territory
(d) Assam Province

11. Which crop is not listed as a major agricultural product of Arunachal Pradesh?

(a) Tea
(b) Rice
(c) Maize
(d) Sugarcane

12. Who is the Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh as of July 2016?

(a) Dorjee Khandu
(b) Kalikho Pul
(c) Pema Khandu
(d) Gegong Apang

ANSWER KEY

1. (b) 2. (b) 3. (a) 4. (b) 5.. (c) 6. (d) 7. (c) 8. (a)
9. (c) 10. (b) 11. (a) 12. (c)

CBI Exempt from State Consent for Central Employees

News Highlights:

- The Supreme Court of India ruled that the **Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)** does not require **state government consent** to file an **FIR** (First Information Report) against **Central government employees** working within the jurisdiction of a state.
- The Court's ruling overturned a **2023 judgment by the Andhra Pradesh High Court**, which had quashed **two FIRs** filed against **Central government employees** accused of corruption, due to the lack of consent from the Telangana government.
- The case stemmed from allegations of corruption by employees working in **Andhra Pradesh**, but the FIRs were registered in **Hyderabad, Telangana**.

Understanding the Consent Mechanism:

Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946:

- Section 6 of the DSPE Act requires state consent for the CBI to investigate crimes that occur within a state's jurisdiction. However, the requirement for state consent applies primarily to cases involving state government employees or crimes within state jurisdiction.
- Exception:** Consent is not required when investigating crimes under Central legislation involving Central government employees, irrespective of the location of the crime.
- General Consent:** A state can grant **general consent** for CBI to investigate cases without requiring specific approval for each investigation. This is the usual arrangement in many states.
- Case-Specific Consent:** States may also provide **case-specific consent**, where the CBI must seek permission for each individual case.
- Withdrawal of General Consent:** Some states, such as **West Bengal, Kerala, and Telangana**, have **withdrawn general consent**, meaning the CBI cannot investigate in these states without specific permission from the state government.



IPS Officer Praveen Sood

Current Director: The CBI is headed by a Director, an IPS officer with a rank of **Director general of police**. The current director of CBI is **Praveen Sood**, who was the former DG and IGP of Karnataka state police.

Background of the Case

The FIRs in Question:

- The **CBI** had registered FIRs against two **Central government employees** working in Andhra Pradesh, accusing them of **corruption under the Prevention of Corruption Act (PC Act)**.
- The FIRs were challenged on the grounds that **Telangana** (after bifurcation) had not given consent for such investigations, as the alleged offences took place in the state of Andhra Pradesh, which had granted general consent to the CBI prior to bifurcation.

Andhra Pradesh High Court's Ruling:

- The Andhra Pradesh High Court ruled that as of **June 2, 2014**, when the state was bifurcated into Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, only **Andhra Pradesh** could grant the CBI consent to investigate crimes in its territory. The court concluded that consent from Telangana was necessary to proceed with the investigation.

Supreme Court's Ruling

- The Supreme Court ruled that **state consent is not necessary for CBI to investigate cases involving Central government employees under a Central Act, such as the Prevention of Corruption Act**. The Court emphasized that even if the offence occurs in the state's jurisdiction, the Central government employee is still subject to investigation under Central laws.

Bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana:

- The Court also clarified that laws made by the undivided **Andhra Pradesh** prior to bifurcation should continue to apply to both states unless altered by them, thus **continuing the applicability of general consent** for the CBI from the undivided state of Andhra Pradesh.

Implications of the Judgment

CBI's Authority:

- The ruling strengthens the **CBI's authority** to investigate cases under **Central laws** without requiring state consent for cases involving **Central government employees**.
- This decision is significant in **corruption cases** where the accused are **Central employees**, ensuring that investigations are not impeded by the state's withdrawal of consent.
- This judgment specifically deals with **Central government employees**, so it does not override state policies in cases involving **state government employees** or crimes under **state legislation**.
- States that have withdrawn general consent** (e.g., West Bengal, Kerala, Telangana) still prevent the CBI from investigating cases within their jurisdiction unless they grant specific permission.

Central Bureau of Investigation

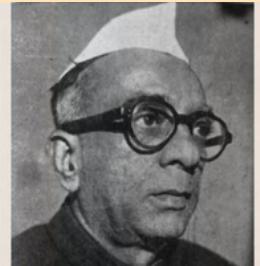


Established:	1963
Recommended by:	Santhanam Committee on Prevention of Corruption (1962-1964)
Previously known as:	<p>Special Police Establishment (SPE)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established in 1941 To investigate cases of bribery and corruption in transactions with the War & Supply Department of India during World War II
Legal Framework:	<p>Established through a resolution of the Ministry of Home Affairs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Later given statutory status with the enactment of the Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act, which defines the CBI's powers, privileges, and liabilities.
Operational Scope:	Initially, the CBI's jurisdiction was limited to anti-corruption cases. Over time, its mandate expanded to include cases of serious fraud, multi-state organised crime, major financial scams, and international cases requiring coordination with Interpol.
Administrative Control:	Under Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CBI Director is protected by a tenure of two years, as prescribed by the CVC Act of 2003, ensuring a degree of independence.
Governmental Bodies Involved:	Central Vigilance Commission: Oversees CBI operations under the Prevention of Corruption Act.

Committees Related to the CBI

Santhanam Committee (1962-1964)

- **Formation:** Established by the **Government of India in 1962** under the chairmanship of **K. Santhanam**.
- **Objective:** To examine the prevalence of corruption within the central government and its various departments.
- **Outcome:** This committee's recommendations led to the creation of the **Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) in 1964**. It also highlighted the need for a specialized agency to handle corruption cases, influencing the future role of the CBI.



L.P. Singh Committee (1977)

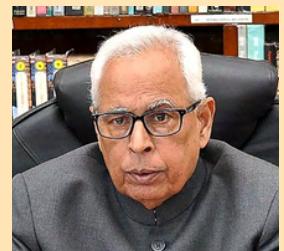
- **Formation:** Set up by the **Janata Party government** that came to power after the Emergency.
- **Objective:** To review the administrative arrangement and functioning of the CBI, especially to address concerns about **its misuse during the Emergency period**.
- **Outcome:** Recommended measures to ensure the CBI's autonomy and to safeguard it against political misuse, although many of these suggestions were not fully implemented.

Dinesh Goswami Committee (1991)

- **Formation:** Headed by **Dinesh Goswami, the then Union Minister of Law and Justice**.
- **Objective:** Primarily focused on electoral reforms but also addressed issues related to the functioning of enforcement agencies like the CBI.
- **Recommendations:** Advocated for giving statutory status to the CBI to ensure its operational independence.

Independent Review Committee (1997)

- **Formation:** This committee was established in the aftermath of the **Jain Hawala scandal**.
- **Chairman:** **N.N. Vohra**, who later became the **Governor of Jammu and Kashmir**.
- **Objective:** To review the agency's functioning in the light of its failures to effectively handle high-profile cases.
- **Outcome:** Suggested that the CBI be given more autonomy and recommended that it report directly to the **Ministry of Home Affairs**.



Vineet Narain v. Union of India (1997):

- Known as the "Jain Hawala Case."
- **Key Issue:** Investigated allegations of corruption involving top politicians and bureaucrats.
- **Judgment Highlights:**
 - Strengthened the autonomy of the CBI by bringing it under the **superintendence of the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC)**.
 - Directed the creation of a fixed tenure for the CBI Director to prevent undue political influence.

Subramanian Swamy v. Director, CBI (2014):

- **Key Issue:** Questioned the independence of the CBI and the appointment process for its Director.
- **Judgment Highlights:** Mandated a **three-member high-powered committee** comprising the Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition, and Chief Justice of India for selecting the CBI Director.

Central Bureau of Investigation v. State of Kerala (2022):

- **Key Issue:** Challenged whether state governments could revoke general consent for CBI investigations.
- **Judgment Highlights:** Upheld that states could withdraw general consent, but the CBI could still investigate if directed by the courts or in cases involving central government employees.

Notable Achievements

- The CBI has been instrumental in solving high-profile cases, including economic offenses, corruption scandals, and complex criminal cases.
- The agency's conviction rate has seen an upward trend, reaching **74.59% in 2022**, up from **68% in 2018**.

Training and Capacity Building:

- The **CBI Academy**, established in **1996** in **Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh**, provides training to CBI officers and other law enforcement personnel.

Recent Developments:

- On **January 7, 2025**, the CBI launched the **Bharatpol platform**, aimed at enhancing communication between **local law enforcement agencies and Interpol**.
- This platform facilitates rapid and secure transmission of Interpol notices and integrates references from 195 countries to assist in combating transnational crimes.

Bharatpol Portal

- Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation **Shri Amit Shah** inaugurated the **BHARATPOL portal**, developed by the **Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)**, on **January 7, 2025**, at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.
- BHARATPOL** is a transformative initiative aimed at enhancing international cooperation for law enforcement agencies and streamlining investigations against transnational crimes.
- The portal connects Indian law enforcement agencies with **INTERPOL's network of 195 countries**, enabling faster and more efficient international collaboration.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Which committee suggested the establishment of the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) to oversee the functioning of the CBI?
 - Santhanam Committee (1964)
 - L.P. Singh Committee (1978)
 - Vohra Committee (1993)
 - Madhava Menon Committee (2008)
- Under which Act does the CBI require state government consent to investigate crimes occurring within a state's jurisdiction?
 - Indian Penal Code, 1860
 - Criminal Procedure Code, 1973
 - Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946
 - Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988
- What year was the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) established?
 - 1953
 - 1963
 - 1973
 - 1983
- Which Act was cited in the FIRs against Central government employees for alleged corruption, as per the Supreme Court's clarification?
 - Unlimited Consent
 - General Consent
 - Specific Consent
 - Unconditional Consent
- What is the significant impact of the Supreme Court ruling on CBI investigations into Central government employees?
 - State consent is required for all investigations.
 - CBI can investigate without state consent under Central laws.
 - Investigations are limited to state employees only.
 - All investigations must be approved by the Central government.
- Which section of the Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act specifies the need for state consent for CBI investigations?
 - Section 4
 - Section 5
 - Section 6
 - Section 7
- Which type of consent allows the CBI to investigate cases in a state without specific approval for each case?
 - Unlimited Consent
 - General Consent
 - Specific Consent
 - Unconditional Consent

ANSWER KEY

1. (a)

9. (c)

2. (c)

10. (c)

3. (b)

11. (d)

4. (d)

5. (b)

6. (c)

7. (d)

8. (c)

Centre Scraps 'No Detention' Policy

News Highlights:

- The Ministry of Education has notified changes under the Right to Education (RTE) Act, allowing detention of students in Classes 5 and 8 who fail their exams.
- The 2019 amendment to the RTE Act gave States and the Centre authority to decide detention policies.
- The decision has sparked debates about its impact on student learning and the education system.

What is the 'No-Detention' Policy?

- Introduced under Section 16 of the Right to Education Act, 2009, the policy prohibited detention of students until they completed elementary education (Class 8).
- Objective:** Ensure uninterrupted schooling for children aged 6–14 by reducing fear of failure and dropouts.
- Assessment relied on Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) to monitor student progress holistically.

Key Changes Under the Amended RTE Rules (2024)

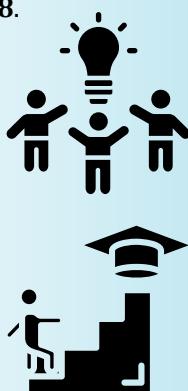
Year-End Examinations:

- Regular exams introduced for Classes 5 and 8.
- Failing students will receive remedial instruction and a re-exam opportunity within two months.
- Persistent failure may result in detention, but expulsion is still prohibited until Class 8.



Competency-Based Assessments:

- Exams will prioritize holistic development over rote memorization.



Specialized Support:

- Teachers must provide targeted interventions for students with learning gaps.
- School heads must monitor progress and maintain records of detained students.



Facts and Stats:

- In 2023-24, after Delhi scrapped the policy, nearly 20% of Class 8 students failed their exams.
- 65 lakh students in India failed Class 10 and 12 in 2023, exposing widespread learning gaps.
- The CCE system, central to the policy, was designed to emphasize continuous feedback over high-stakes testing.



Rationale for Scrapping the Policy

- Declining Learning Outcomes:** Reports like the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) showed a decline in basic competencies (e.g., reading skills dropped by 10% between 2010–2013).
- Misinterpretation:** The 'no-detention' clause was often seen as "no assessments," reducing accountability for teachers and students.
- State Feedback:** 18 of 23 States/UTs surveyed by the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) supported modifying the policy due to lack of seriousness among students.
- The 2016 TSR Subramanian Committee recommended limiting the policy to Class 5 for better learning outcomes.

Current Implementation Status

States/UTs Retaining the Policy: Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, and Maharashtra.

States/UTs Scrapping the Policy: Delhi, Gujarat, and Madhya Pradesh.

Pending Decisions: Haryana and Puducherry are yet to finalize their stance.

Arguments For and Against the Policy

In Favor of No-Detention:

- **Increased Enrollment:** Improved **Gross Enrollment Ratios (GER)**, particularly among **marginalized groups**.
- **Dropout Prevention:** Encourages students to remain in the education system for at least **eight years**.
- **Systemic Issues:** Failures are often attributed to **infrastructure** and **teacher quality**, not the policy.

Against No-Detention:

- **Low Accountability:** Discourages **academic rigor** among students and teachers.
- **Learning Deficits:** High failure rates in **higher classes** highlight foundational learning gaps.
- **State Recommendations:** States like **Punjab** and **Madhya Pradesh** advocate **board exams** in Classes 5 and 8 for academic discipline.

Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (Amendment) Rules, 2024



The **Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (Amendment) Rules, 2024** were officially notified by the Ministry of Education on December 16, 2024.

These amendments introduce significant changes to the existing Right to Education (RTE) framework, particularly concerning the **abolition of the no-detention policy** for students in **Classes 5 and 8**.

Competency-Based Assessments:

- Both regular examinations and re-examinations will be competency-based, focusing on holistic development rather than rote memorization.

No Expulsion Clause:

- No child shall be expelled from school until the completion of elementary education, ensuring every child's right to education is upheld.

Key Provisions of the Amendment:

Regular Examinations:

- Annual examinations will be conducted for students in Classes 5 and 8 at the end of each academic year.

Remedial Instruction and Re-examination:

- Students who do not meet the promotion criteria will receive additional instruction.
- A re-examination opportunity will be provided within two months from the date of result declaration.

Detention Policy:

- If a student fails to meet the promotion criteria even after the re-examination, they may be detained in the same class (either 5th or 8th).

Specialized Support:

- Class teachers are required to guide detained students and their parents, providing specialized inputs to address identified learning gaps.
- School heads must maintain a list of detained students and monitor the provision of specialized support to ensure progress.

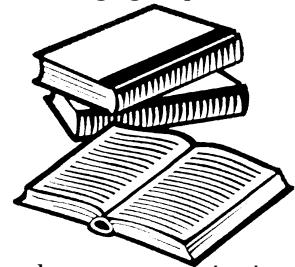
Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009

The **Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009** is a landmark legislation in India that enshrines education as a **fundamental right for children aged 6 to 14**.

- Enacted on **August 4, 2009**, and implemented from **April 1, 2010**, the Act operationalises **Article 21A of the Indian Constitution**, which mandates the provision of free and compulsory education for this age group.

Key Features of the RTE Act:

- Free and Compulsory Education:** Ensures that no child is required to pay any kind of fee or charges that may prevent them from completing elementary education.
- Neighbourhood Schools:** Mandates the establishment of schools within accessible distance to ensure children are not deprived of education due to geographical barriers.
- Infrastructure Norms:** Specifies standards for school infrastructure, including adequate classrooms, sanitation facilities, safe drinking water, and a prescribed pupil-teacher ratio to maintain quality education.
- Teacher Qualifications and Training:** Requires the appointment of appropriately trained and qualified teachers to maintain educational standards.
- Curriculum Development:** Advocates for a curriculum that fosters the all-round development of children, making them free of fear, trauma, and anxiety through a child-friendly and child-centered learning approach.
- Prohibition of Unfair Practices:** Bans physical punishment, mental harassment, screening procedures for admission, capitation fees, private tuition by teachers, and running schools without recognition.



Constitutional Provisions and Amendments Related to Education:

- Article 21-A:** Introduced by the **86th Amendment Act of 2002**, this article makes education a fundamental right for children **aged 6 to 14 years**, mandating the state to provide free and compulsory education in a manner determined by law.
- Article 45:** Part of the **Directive Principles of State Policy**, it originally directed the state to provide **free and compulsory education** for all children until they complete the age of **14 years**. Post the **86th Amendment**, it emphasizes early childhood care and education for children **below six years**.
- Article 46:** Mandates the promotion of educational and economic interests of **Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes**, and other weaker sections, protecting them from social injustice and exploitation.
- Article 29 and 30:** Protect the **cultural and educational rights of minorities**, allowing them to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.
- 42nd Amendment Act of 1976:** Transferred education from the **State List** to the **Concurrent List**, enabling both the central and state governments to legislate on educational matters.

Significant Committees on Education:

- Kothari Commission (1964-66):** Formulated a comprehensive education policy for India, leading to the establishment of the **10+2+3 system**.



Daulat Singh Kothari

- National Knowledge Commission (2005-2009):** Aimed at transforming India into a knowledge society, recommending reforms in **education, research, and innovation**.



- T.S.R. Subramanian Committee (2016):** Reviewed the education policy, providing inputs for the formulation of **NEP 2020**.

Key Government Schemes and Initiatives:



Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA): Launched to achieve universalization of elementary education, SSA aims to provide free and **compulsory education to children aged 6 to 14 years.**



Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA): Focused on enhancing access to **secondary education and improving its quality.**



Mid-Day Meal Scheme: Provides **nutritious meals to school children**, aiming to enhance **enrollment, retention, and attendance** while improving nutritional levels.



Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao: Aimed at promoting the **education of girl children** and ensuring their **survival and protection.**



PM eVidya: Launched to **unify digital and online education**, providing **multi-mode access** to education.

National Education Policy (NEP) 2020: Introduces reforms across all levels of education, emphasizing **multidisciplinary learning, flexibility, and skill development.**



PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. When was the 'No-Detention' policy introduced under the Right to Education Act?
 (a) 2005 (b) 2012 (c) 2009 (d) 2015
2. Which committee recommended limiting the 'No-Detention' policy to Class 5 for better learning outcomes?
 (a) Kothari Commission
 (b) TSR Subramanian Committee
 (c) Mudaliar Commission
 (d) Radhakrishnan Commission
3. Which states have scrapped the no-detention policy for students in Classes 5 and 8 as of the latest amendments?
 (a) Karnataka, Kerala, and Maharashtra
 (b) Delhi, Gujarat, and Madhya Pradesh
 (c) Haryana and Puducherry
 (d) None of the above
4. What key initiative aims to achieve universalization of elementary education in India?
5. Which amendment to the Indian Constitution introduced Article 21-A, making education a fundamental right for children aged 6 to 14 years?
 (a) 86th Amendment Act of 2002
 (b) 42nd Amendment Act of 1976
 (c) 73rd Amendment Act of 1992
 (d) 61st Amendment Act of 1989
6. In which classes has the Right to Education (RTE) Act allowed for the detention of students as per the recent notification?
 (a) Classes 3 and 6 (b) Classes 4 and 7
 (c) Classes 5 and 8 (d) Classes 6 and 9
7. Under which section of the Right to Education Act was the 'No-Detention' Policy introduced?

ANSWER KEY

1. (c) 2. (b) 3. (b) 4. (d) 5. (a) 6. (c) 7. (b) 8. (b)
9. (c) 10. (c)

Maha Kumbh

News Highlights:

- The Maha Kumbh Mela 2025, the **world's largest** religious gathering, **45-day spiritual festival**, commenced on **January 13, 2025**, and will conclude on **February 26, 2025**, at Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh.
- The event is expected to draw approximately **400 million visitors**, including pilgrims, tourists, and devotees, over its **six-week duration**.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi** launched developmental projects worth **₹5500 crore in Prayagraj** for the **Maha Kumbh Mela**, including enhanced infrastructure and **AI-powered tools** like the **Kumbh Sah'Al'yak Chatbot** for visitor assistance.
- As security measures, **2,300 CCTV cameras** for crowd management, incident reporting, and cleanliness. **99 temporary parking lots** and **1.45 lakh toilets** to manage the crowd.

Maha Kumbh



Cultural and Historical Significance of Maha Kumbh:

Cultural Importance:

- The **Maha Kumbh Mela** is a key cultural event in Hinduism, symbolising spiritual unity, religious fervor, and a connection to India's ancient heritage.
- It brings together people from diverse backgrounds, transcending caste, creed, and region. The sense of togetherness is one of the festival's core aspects.
- The festival is celebrated at the confluence of sacred rivers, **primarily the Ganges, Yamuna, and the mythical Saraswati river in Prayagraj**, making it a site of profound cultural and spiritual significance.
- Devotees gather to perform rituals like **Shahi Snan** (Royal Bath), chant devotional songs (Sankirtan and Bhajans), and engage in meditation and yoga.
- The timing of the Kumbh Mela is determined by specific **planetary alignments**. Ancient Indian astronomers and astrologers calculated the positions of the Sun, Moon, and Jupiter to decide the dates, ensuring the most auspicious time for spiritual activities.

Historical Origins

- The event is rooted in the **Amrit Manthan** (Churning of the Ocean) myth, where drops of the sacred nectar of immortality (amrita) are said to have fallen at four locations: Haridwar, Ujjain, Nashik, and Prayagraj.
- During the churning, the **demi-god Dhanvantari** emerged from the ocean holding the **pot of Amrit (nectar of immortality)**. In the ensuing battle for the nectar, drops of Amrit spilled at four locations in India: **Prayagraj, Haridwar, Ujjain, and Nashik**.
- The **Maha Kumbh** is considered the most sacred of these gatherings, as it **occurs once every 12 years** at Prayagraj, where the **confluence of the three rivers** is believed to hold exceptional spiritual power.
- Prayagraj, in particular, holds a unique place in this mythology due to its position at the **Sangam**, the confluence of three rivers: **Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati**.
- The story emphasises the role of **Dhanvantari**, revered as the **first doctor in the world**, in bringing forth the Amrit, linking the Kumbh Mela to the broader cultural heritage of **healing and spirituality**.

- The origin of the **Kumbh Mela** is attributed to **eighth-century Hindu philosopher Adi Shankaracharya**, who promoted regular gatherings of spiritual leaders and ascetics, and also instituted **the monastery system and the 13 akharas (warrior-saint sects)**.
- Historical Texts:** The importance of the Kumbh Mela is reflected in ancient Hindu texts, such as the **Mahabharata** and the **Puranas**, which mention its significance in purifying the soul and **granting Moksha (liberation)**.
- Ancient Practices:** The gathering has been occurring for thousands of years, evolving from a small ritualistic gathering to one of the largest religious events globally. The first **Maha Kumbh Mela** post-independence was held in **1954 at Prayagraj**, drawing over **40 lakh devotees** despite a tragic stampede.
- In 2017, the Kumbh Mela was recognized as an **Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity** by UNESCO, emphasizing its role as an important part of global cultural and religious heritage.

Akharas and the Shahi Snan

- Since the eighth century, a large gathering of **sadhus (monks) from various akharas** have been seen at **Prayagraj to perform the Shahi Snan (holy dip)** at a stipulated time on auspicious days.
- Led by the **Naga Sadhus** – ascetics who smear ashes over their naked bodies and sport weapons like tridents, swords, and lances, as well as conches and drums – the sadhus from various akharas hold traditional processions to the river for bathing.
- The 13 recognised akharas partaking in the Shahi Snan include the **Shaivite akharas— Nirvani, Atal, Niranjani, Anand, Juna, Awahan and Agni; the Vairagi akharas — Nirmohi, Digambar Ani and Nirvani Ani, the two Udasin Akharas (Naya and Bada) and the Nirmala Akhara**.
- In 2019, a 14th sect, the **Kinnar Akhara** — a group of **15-20 transgender saints with Mahamandaleshwars (chief monks)** from Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Assam, Tamil Nadu, Odisha, Maharashtra and others were included in the Shahi Snan order. The group, which was first recognised by the **Juna Akhara**, took part in **the Shahi Snan** and henceforth is part of Kumbh festivities.
- From **the ninth to the eighteenth centuries**, it was the akharas which organised the month-long Kumbh festivities and the order for the Shahi Snan was a friction point.
- Several violent clashes occurred between akharas over this hierarchy, even resulting in fatalities. While the order is still decided by the akharas, it has been institutionalised by authorities.
- During the Shahi Snan, the **Mahamandaleshwars (chief monks) of the akharas**, seated on guilded chariots, palanquins, elephants, and/or horses lead the Shahi Snan into the icy waters in the early hours on special days like **Makar Sankranti, Paush Purnima, Mauni Amavasya, Vasant Panchami, Maghi Purnima and Mahashivratri**.
- General devotees participate in the holy dip on any of the auspicious days during the month-long Kumbh festival.

Types of Kumbh Mela:

- Maha Kumbh Mela:** The most sacred and largest of all, the **Maha Kumbh Mela occurs once every 12 years at Prayagraj (Allahabad), Uttar Pradesh**. It is held at the confluence of three sacred rivers: Ganga, Yamuna, and the mythical Saraswati.
- Purna Kumbh Mela:** Also referred to simply as the Kumbh Mela, this event is held every **12 years at four different locations in rotation**: Haridwar on the Ganges in Uttarakhand, Ujjain on the Shipra in Madhya Pradesh, Nashik on the Godavari in Maharashtra, and Prayagraj at the confluence of the three sacred rivers.
- Ardh Kumbh Mela:** Occurring every **six years**, the Ardh (half) Kumbh Mela is held only in two locations: **Haridwar and Prayagraj**.
- Kumbh Mela:** Often just called the Kumbh, this event is held **every three years**, rotating through the four locations of Haridwar, Ujjain, Nashik, and Prayagraj. Each location thus hosts the Kumbh Mela once **every 12 years**.



World Records over the years

Prayagraj Kumbh Mela 2019:

- **Largest Traffic and Crowd Management Plan:** The event implemented an extensive plan to manage the massive influx of pilgrims, ensuring smooth transportation and safety.
- **Biggest Painting Exercise of Public Sites ("Paint My City" Initiative):** Approximately 7,664 participants collaborated to beautify public spaces, showcasing cultural and artistic expressions.
- **Largest Sanitation and Waste Disposal Mechanism:** A comprehensive sanitation system was established, including the deployment of 10,000 sanitation workers who conducted a synchronized cleaning drive across multiple locations.

Maha Kumbh Mela 2025: The **Prayagraj Mela Authority** has announced plans to set four new **Guinness World Records** during the 2025 festival:

- **Largest Synchronized Sweeping Drive:** Involving **15,000 participants** in a coordinated cleaning effort to emphasize cleanliness and environmental stewardship.
- **Largest E-Vehicle Parade:** A procession featuring **1,000 e-rickshaws and e-vehicles**, promoting sustainable transport solutions.
- **Most Handprint Paintings in 8 Hours:** An artistic endeavor aiming to create the highest number of handprint paintings within a specified time.
- **Largest River-Cleaning Campaign:** Engaging **300 volunteers** across multiple locations to clean and preserve the holy rivers.



Naga Sadhus

- Naga Sadhus are ascetic warriors in **Hinduism**, known for their extreme renunciation of material life. They often practice nakedness to symbolise detachment from worldly possessions.
- **Role in Kumbh Mela:** They lead the **Shahi Snan (Royal Bath)** during the **Kumbh Mela**, being the **first** to dip in the sacred rivers, symbolising spiritual purity and divine grace.
- **Spiritual Practices:** Their practices include meditation, yoga, asceticism, and **fire-walking**. Many observe silence (mauna) to focus on inner peace and enlightenment.
- **Lifestyle:** Naga sadhus live in ashrams or camps, wearing minimal clothing and following austere routines of prayer, meditation, and physical exercises, renouncing material possessions.
- **Philosophy:** They belong to various **Akhadas (spiritual sects)**, focusing on **Moksha (liberation)** through self-discipline, detachment, and devotion to **Lord Shiva**.
- **Martial Tradition:** Historically, they were trained as warrior monks, skilled in martial arts and armed combat, defending temples and spiritual practices.
- **Akhadas and Leadership:** Naga sadhus are part of organized groups called Akhadas, each with its hierarchy, led by a chief who guides the sect's rituals and practices.

Maha Kumbh: At a Glance

WHEN?

The Maha Kumbh Mela 2025, held in **Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh**, is the world's largest religious gathering, spanning 45 days from January 13 to February 26, 2025.

EVENT OVERVIEW

- **Expected Attendance:** Approximately 400 million visitors over six weeks.
- **Budget:** ₹5,500 crore allocated for infrastructure enhancements.
- **Facilities:** Installation of 1.45 lakh toilets and 99 temporary parking lots to manage the massive influx of pilgrims.
- **Security:** Deployment of 2,300 CCTV cameras for crowd management and incident reporting.

HISTORICAL ROOTS

- Rooted in the **Amrit Manthan** (**Churning of the Ocean**) myth, where drops of the sacred nectar of immortality (amrita) are said to have fallen at four locations: **Haridwar, Ujjain, Nashik, and Prayagraj**.
- During the churning, the demi-god Dhanvantari emerged from the ocean holding the pot of **Amrit** (**nectar of immortality**). In the ensuing battle for the nectar, drops of Amrit spilled at these four locations.
- In historical terms, the organised form of the Kumbh Mela is credited to the **8th-century Hindu philosopher and reformer Adi Shankaracharya**.

MAHAKUMBH

- **Maha Kumbh Mela:** Held every 12 years at Prayagraj.
- **Purna Kumbh Mela:** Occurs every 12 years, rotating among Haridwar, Ujjain, Nashik, and Prayagraj.
- **Ardh Kumbh Mela:** Takes place every six years at Haridwar and Prayagraj.

UNESCO RECOGNITION:

In 2017, the Kumbh Mela was recognized as an Intangible Cultural **Heritage of Humanity** by UNESCO, emphasizing its role as an important part of global cultural and religious heritage.

AKHARAS

The **13 recognized akharas** partaking in the Shahi Snan include:

- **Shaivite Akharas:** Nirvan, Atal, Niranjan, Anand, Juna, Awahan, and Agni.
- **Vairagi Akharas:** Nirmohi, Digambar Ani, and Nirvan Ani.
- **Udasin Akharas:** Naya and Bada.
- Nirmala Akhara.
- In 2019, a **14th sect, the Kinnar Akhara**—a group of 15-20 transgender saints with Mahamandaleshwars (chief monks) from various states—was included in the Shahi Snan order.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

15. Which new akhara participated in the Shahi Snan for the first time in 2019?
(a) Kinnar Akhara
(b) Shaivite Akhara
(c) Udasin Akhara
(d) Vairagi Akhara
16. Which Chinese traveler documented Emperor Harsha's grand assembly at Prayagraj?
(a) Zheng He
(b) Fa-Hien
(c) Xuanzang
(d) Wang Xuance

ANSWER KEY

1. (c) 2. (c) 3. (a) 4. (b) 5. (a) 6. (c) 7. (a) 8. (b)
9. (c) 10. (b) 11. (b) 12. (b) 13. (b) 14. (a) 15. (a) 16. (c)

Republic day 2025

News Highlights:

- India celebrated its **76th Republic Day on January 26, 2025**, with grand festivities at **Kartavya path** in New Delhi, showcasing the nation's military strength and cultural diversity. The event commemorated the adoption of India's Constitution on January 26, 1950.
- Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto was the chief guest.** Notably, a **342-member band and marching contingent** from the **Indonesian National Armed Forces** participated in the parade, marking the first time troops from an ASEAN country joined the event.
- Sixteen tableaux from **12 States and 4 Union Territories** and **15 from central ministries and departments** participated in the parade, reflecting the **confluence of tradition and development**.
- The event featured **5,000 artists performing cultural dances**, creating a **Guinness World Record**.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi** emphasized the theme of '**Viksit Bharat by 2047**', highlighting the role of citizens in national progress.

Historical Context of Republic Day

- After gaining independence from **British rule on August 15, 1947**, India was governed by **the Government of India Act 1935**.
- Recognising the need for a comprehensive constitution, a **Constituent Assembly** was formed to draft a document that would reflect the aspirations of its people.
- The **Assembly adopted the Constitution on November 26, 1949**, but it was decided to implement it on **January 26, 1950**, to honor **the Purna Swaraj**.
- The Indian National Congress declared '**Purna Swaraj' (Complete Independence)** as its goal during **the Lahore Session held in December 1929**. This historic session was presided over by **Jawaharlal Nehru**.
- On **December 31, 1929**, Nehru hoisted the tricolor flag on **the banks of the Ravi River in Lahore**, symbolising the commitment to **complete self-rule**. The Congress then proclaimed **January 26, 1930**, as '**Purna Swaraj Day**' and urged Indians to celebrate it as Independence Day.

Tableaux of States and Union Territories

State	Theme
Goa	Cultural Heritage of Goa
Uttarakhand	Uttarakhand: Cultural Heritage and Adventure Sports
Haryana	Showcasing Bhagwad Gita
Jharkhand	Swarnim Jharkhand: A Legacy of Heritage and Progress
Gujarat	Swarnim Bharat: Virasat Aur Vikas
Andhra Pradesh	Etikoppaka Bommalu- Eco-Friendly Wooden Toys
Punjab	Punjab as the land of knowledge and wisdom

Uttar Pradesh	Mahakumbh 2025 – Swarnim Bharat Virasat aur Vikas
Bihar	Swarnim Bharat: Virasat Aur Vikas (Nalanda Vishwavidyalaya)
Madhya Pradesh	Madhya Pradesh's Glory: Kuno National park- The land of Cheetahs
Tripura	Eternal Reverence: The worship of 14 Deities in Tripura – Kharchi Puja
Karnataka	Lakkundi: Cradle of Stone craft
West Bengal	The 'Lakshmir Bhandar' & 'Lok Prasar Prakalpa' - Empowering Lives and Fostering Self-Reliance in Bengal
Chandigarh	Chandigarh: A Harmonious Blend of Heritage, Innovation and Sustainability
Delhi	Quality Education
Dadra Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu	Daman Aviary Bird Park along with Kukri Memorial- a tribute to the valiant sailors of the Indian Navy

Tableaux of Ministries/Departments

Departments/Ministries	Theme
Department of Social Justice and Empowerment	The Constitution of India, a cornerstone of our Virasat (Heritage), Vikas and Path-Pradarshak
Ministry of Tribal Affairs	Janjatiya Gaurav Varsh
Ministry of Women & Child Development	Multifaceted journey of women and children nurtured under the Ministry's comprehensive schemes
Ministry of New & Renewable Energy	Swarnim Bharat: Heritage and Development
Ministry of Rural Development	Lakhpatti Didi
Department of Financial Services	India's remarkable journey in financial evolution
Ministry of Earth Sciences (IMD)	Modern Science forecasting extreme weather conditioning- saving lives and livelihood

Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying	Golden India Heritage and Development Honouring India's Indigenous Bovine Breeds as Icons of Sustainable Rural Growth
Ministry of Culture	Swarnim Bharat: Heritage and Development
CPWD	Multifaceted journey of women and children nurtured under the Ministry's comprehensive schemes

Best Marching Contingents & Tableaux of Republic Day 2025

1

- **Best Marching Contingent among Services** - Jammu & Kashmir Rifles Contingent
- **Best Marching Contingent among CAPFs/other auxiliary forces** - Delhi Police Marching Contingent

2

Top three tableaux (States/UTs)

- 1st - Uttar Pradesh (Mahakumbh 2025 - Swarnim Bharat: Virasat aur Vikas)
- 2nd - Tripura (Eternal Reverence: The worship of 14 Deities in Tripura - Kharchi Puja)
- 3rd - Andhra Pradesh (Etikoppaka Bommalu - Eco-Friendly Wooden Toys)

3

Best Tableau from Central Ministries/Departments

- Ministry of Tribal Affairs (Janjatiya Gaurav Varsh)

Special Prize:

- Central Public Works Department (75 years of Constitution of India)
- 'Jayati Jai Mamah Bharatam' Dance Group



The results for the best **Marching Contingents and Tableaux of Republic Day Parade 2025** have been announced. **Three panels of judges were constituted** to assess the performance of **Marching Contingents from the Services & Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF)/other auxiliary forces and tableaux from various States/Union Territories (UTs) & Ministries/Departments of the Central Government.** The panels have declared the following results:

4

In addition, an **online poll** was conducted on the **MyGov portal from January 26 to 28, 2025** for the citizens to vote for their favourite tableau and Marching Contingents as '**Popular Choice Category**'. The results are as under:

- **Best Marching Contingent among Services** - Signals Contingent
- **Best Marching Contingent among CAPFs/other auxiliary Forces** - CRPF Marching Contingent

Top three tableau (States/UTs)

- 1st - Gujarat (Swarnim Bharat: Virasat Aur Vikas)
- 2nd - Uttar Pradesh (Mahakumbh 2025 - Swarnim Bharat: Virasat aur Vikas)
- 3rd - Uttarakhand (Uttarakhand: Cultural Heritage and Adventure Sports)

Key Highlights of the Awards Presented

Padma Awards:

- **Total Padma Awards:** 139 awards were conferred, including **Padma Vibhushan**, **Padma Bhushan**, and **Padma Shri**.
- **Padma Vibhushan:** Awarded for exceptional and distinguished service. It is the highest honor, followed by **Padma Bhushan** for distinguished service of high order, and **Padma Shri** for distinguished service in any field.
- **Padma Awards Hierarchy:** The Padma Vibhushan is the highest in the hierarchy, followed by Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri. These awards are announced annually on Republic Day.

Gallantry Awards and Defence Decorations:

- **Gallantry Awards:** A total of **93 Armed Forces and Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF)** personnel were conferred Gallantry awards. These include:
 - **Kirti Chakra**, **Shaurya Chakra**, **Bar to Sena Medal**, **Sena Medals**, **Nao Sena Medals**, and **Vayu Sena Medals**.
- **Wartime Awards:** These awards honor bravery in the face of the enemy and are primarily for armed forces personnel. Notable awards include:
 - **Param Vir Chakra** (highest wartime award),
 - **Mahavir Chakra**, and **Vir Chakra**.
- **Peacetime Awards:** These recognize bravery in non-wartime situations and include:
 - **Ashoka Chakra**, **Kirti Chakra**, and **Shaurya Chakra**.
 - These awards can be given to armed forces, paramilitary forces, police, and civilians.
- **Other Gallantry Awards:**
 - **Sena Medal (Gallantry)**: Honors distinguished service in the **Indian Army**, with a **Bar to Sena Medal** for subsequent acts of bravery.
 - **Nao Sena Medal (Gallantry)**: Awarded for courage or duty in the **Navy**.
 - **Vayu Sena Medal (Gallantry)**: Recognizes bravery or exceptional service in the **Air Force**.
- **Defence Decorations:** The President conferred **305 defence decorations**, including:
 - **Param Vishisht Seva Medals** (recognizing exceptional service),
 - **Uttam Yudh Seva Medals** (for distinguished service during war),
 - **Ati Vishisht Seva Medals** (distinguished service of exceptional order),
 - **Yudh Seva Medals** (distinguished service during hostilities),
 - **Bar to Sena Medal (Devotion to Duty)**, **Sena Medals (Devotion to Duty)**, and **Vishisht Seva Medals**.
- **PTM and TM Medal:** The President conferred the **President's Tatrakshak Medal (PTM)** and **Tatrakshak Medal (TM)** for Indian Coast Guard personnel, recognizing gallantry, devotion to duty, and distinguished service.

Police, Fire Services, and Correctional Services:

- **Total Personnel:** A total of **942 personnel** from **Police, Fire Services, Home Guard & Civil Defence (HG&CD)**, and **Correctional Services** were awarded Gallantry and Service Medals.
- **Police Gallantry Medals:** These are announced twice a year, recognizing bravery and exemplary conduct by police personnel.
 - **President's Medal for Gallantry** is awarded for exceptional courage in saving lives or preventing crime.
 - **Police Medal for Gallantry** is awarded for acts of bravery during duty.
- **President's Medal for Distinguished Service (PSM):** Awarded for special distinguished service records.
- **Medal for Meritorious Service (MSM):** Given for valuable service characterized by dedication and devotion to duty.

Jeevan Raksha Padak Awards:

- **Total Awards:** 49 **Jeevan Raksha Padak Awards** were conferred, recognizing civilian bravery in saving lives.
- **Categories of Awards:**
 - **Sarvottam Jeevan Raksha Padak:** Awarded for conspicuous courage in saving a life under very dangerous circumstances.
 - **Uttam Jeevan Raksha Padak:** For courage and prompt action in saving a life under great danger.
 - **Jeevan Raksha Padak:** For courage and prompt action in saving a life under conditions involving grave bodily injury.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

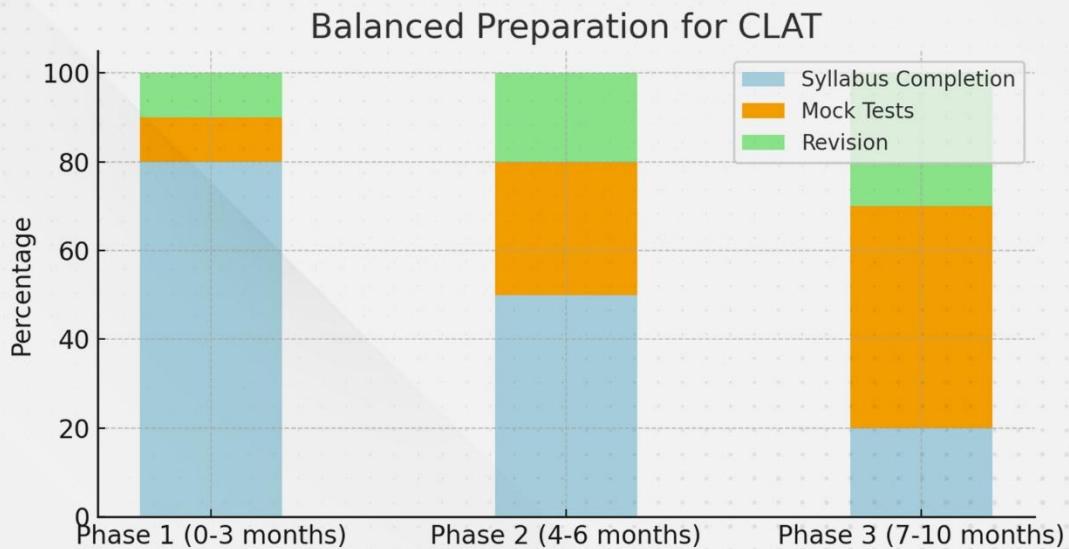
1. What was the theme of India's 76th Republic Day celebrations in 2025?
 - (a) Aatmanirbhar Bharat
 - (b) Viksit Bharat by 2047
 - (c) Shashakt Bharat
 - (d) Incredible India
2. Who was the chief guest at India's 76th Republic Day celebrations?
 - (a) Russian President Vladimir Putin
 - (b) Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto
 - (c) French President Emmanuel Macron
 - (d) U.S. President Joe Biden
3. Which State's tableau featured the reintroduction of cheetahs?
 - (a) Bihar Tableau
 - (b) Madhya Pradesh Tableau
 - (c) Uttar Pradesh Tableau
 - (d) Haryana Tableau
4. Which tableau highlighted the 75th anniversary of India's Constitution?
 - (a) CPWD's Flower Tableau
 - (b) Ministry of Tribal Affairs Tableau
 - (c) Delhi Tableau
 - (d) Uttar Pradesh Tableau
5. Which State's tableau showcased the Nalanda University ruins and Buddhist heritage?
 - (a) Uttar Pradesh
 - (b) Bihar
 - (c) Gujarat
 - (d) Jharkhand
6. What was the main theme of Uttar Pradesh's tableau in the 2025 Republic Day parade?
 - (a) Mahatma Gandhi
 - (b) Maha Kumbh 2025
 - (c) Swarnim Bharat: Virasat Aur Vikas
 - (d) Smart Cities
7. What did the Tri-Services tableau emphasize during the Republic Day parade?
 - (a) India's cultural heritage
8. Which of the following is NOT part of the DRDO tableau featured during Republic Day 2025?
 - (a) Quick Reaction Surface-to-Air Missile
 - (b) Medium Power Radar - Arudhra
 - (c) Indigenous Unmanned Aerial Systems
 - (d) Arjun Main Battle Tank
9. Which state tableau featured the Lakshmi Bhandar scheme?
 - (a) Punjab
 - (b) West Bengal
 - (c) Gujarat
 - (d) Haryana
10. What was the Popular Choice Best State Tableau based on online poll results?
 - (a) Gujarat
 - (b) Uttar Pradesh
 - (c) Andhra Pradesh
 - (d) Tripura
11. How many Padma Awards were conferred in 2025?
 - (a) 120
 - (b) 139
 - (c) 150
 - (d) 175
12. Who were conferred Gallantry Awards during the 2025 Republic Day?
 - (a) Government officials
 - (b) Armed Forces and Central Armed Police Forces personnel
 - (c) School children
 - (d) Foreign dignitaries
13. What does the Republic Day flag unfurling symbolize?
 - (a) India's transition to independence
 - (b) The establishment of a democratic republic
 - (c) Celebration of the Constitution's enactment
 - (d) India's victory in war

14. What was awarded for saving lives in dangerous circumstances during the Republic Day awards?
(a) Padma Shri
(b) Gallantry Medals
(c) Jeevan Raksha Padak Awards
(d) Police Medal for Gallantry
15. How many Jeevan Raksha Padak Awards were conferred in 2025?
(a) 30
(b) 49
(c) 56
(d) 62

ANSWER KEY

1. (b) 2. (b) 3. (b) 4. (a) 5. (b) 6. (b) 7. (b) 8. (d)
9. (b) 10. (a) 11. (b) 12. (b) 13. (b) 14. (c) 15. (b)

5 Mistakes to Avoid for CLAT 2026



1. "I Have Time" Trap: Don't Start Late!

With 10 months left for CLAT, you might think, "I'll start later; there's plenty of time!" But trust me, this mindset can backfire. The syllabus is vast; the earlier you start, the stronger your foundation will be.

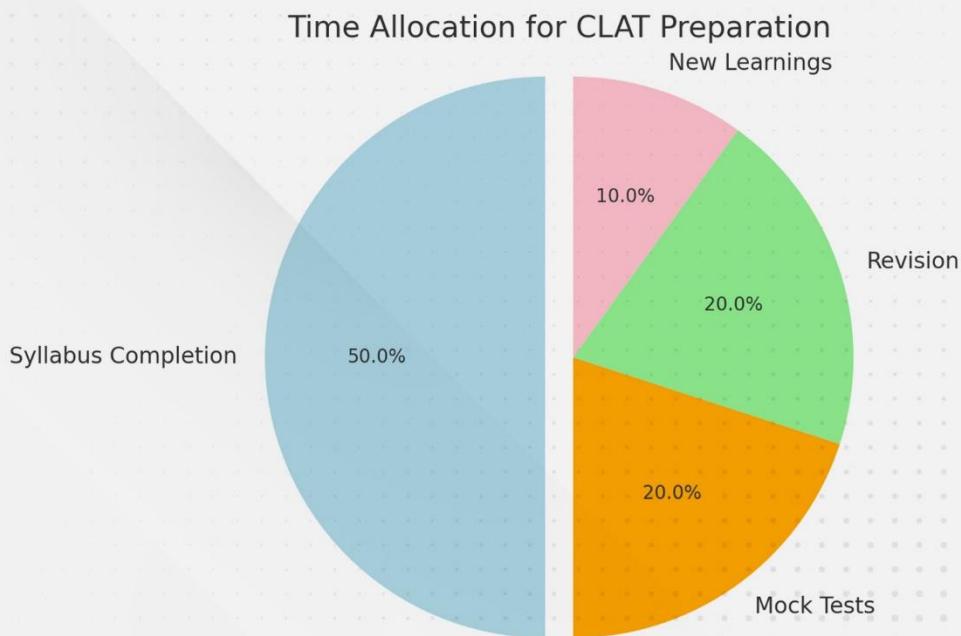
What to do instead: Break your preparation into small, manageable chunks. Focus on completing the syllabus in the first 6 months and leave the last 4 months for mock tests and revisions. Start taking mocks once you've covered at least half the syllabus—you'll thank yourself later!

2. Studying Without Variety = Boredom and Weak Prep

Let's be honest: reading the same boring study materials daily is not effective—and it's not enough for CLAT. You need to shake things up! Don't skip reading newspapers, building vocabulary, or practicing QT.

What to do instead:

- » Spend 45-60 minutes daily on newspapers like The Hindu or Indian Express (trust me, it's not as dull as it sounds).
 - » Learn 5-10 new words daily using apps or flashcards.
 - » Mix things up—read blogs, editorials, or even novels. This will help with tricky passages in CLAT and keep you engaged.
- When it comes to study material, less is more! Pick quality resources and
- » stick to them. Do not refer to more than 3 materials for one subject.



3. Mock Tests: Your Best Friend, If You Use Them Right

Taking mock tests but skipping analysis? Big mistake. Mock tests are not just about practice—they teach you what you're doing wrong. If you don't review your mistakes, you'll keep repeating them.

What to do instead:

- » Treat every mock like a game. After you're done, spend time analyzing what went wrong.
- » Keep a "Mistake Diary" where you jot down errors and weak areas. Look back at it & work on your mistakes to track progress.
- » Mock tests are your secret weapon to improve speed, accuracy, and confidence. Don't waste them

4. No Revision, No Results

Imagine preparing for months and then forgetting everything in the exam because you didn't revise. Scary, right? Many students cram new stuff till the last minute and skip revision, which is a recipe for disaster.

What to do instead:

- » Set aside 1-2 days every week for revision. Go over GK notes, QT formulas, Concepts & theories and legal principles again and again until they're stuck in your head.
- » Play around with strategies during mock tests. For example, try doing your strongest section first in one mock and your weakest section first in another to see what works best for you.

5. Don't Burn Out—Take Care of Yourself!

CLAT prep is a marathon, not a sprint. If you study 10 hours a day with no breaks, you'll feel exhausted and frustrated in no time. Also, don't think you can do it all alone—expert guidance makes a HUGE difference.

What to do instead:

- » Take breaks, get 7-8 hours of sleep, eat healthy, and add a bit of exercise to your day (even a walk will do). A healthy mind = better performance.
- » Talk to mentors who can guide you. Get tips and feedback to boost your prep. You don't have to do it all alone—help is out there!

Quick Pep Talk: You've got 10 months to crush CLAT. Stay consistent, mix up your study routine, take care of yourself, and don't forget to have some fun along the way. If you avoid these mistakes, you'll be setting yourself up for success. Go get it! 

Economy & Governance

55th GST Council Meeting

News Highlights:

- The 55th GST Council meeting was held on December 21, 2024, in Jaisalmer.
- The meeting featured key decisions, including tax exemptions, clarifications on GST applicability, and policy deferrals for major issues like rate rationalization, GST cuts on health and life insurance premiums, and the inclusion of aviation turbine fuel (ATF) under GST.
- Retrospective amendments to the Central Goods and Services Tax (CGST) Act were introduced, reversing a Supreme Court judgment with significant implications for businesses.

Key Decisions and Clarifications

Tax Adjustments



- Reduction in GST on Fortified Rice Kernels:** The GST rate on fortified rice kernels was reduced from 18% to 5% to promote the consumption of fortified foods aimed at combating malnutrition.
- Exemption for Gene Therapy:** Gene therapy procedures were exempted from GST to support advanced medical treatments.
- Support for Merchant Exporters:** The compensation cess rate was reduced to 0.1% for supplies by merchant exporters to boost exports.
- Concessional Rate for Food Welfare Schemes:** The 5% GST rate on food inputs supplied under government welfare schemes was extended to maintain affordability and support social programs.
- Clarifications on Popcorn Taxation:** Popcorn was categorized under different tax slabs:
 - Unpackaged salted/spiced: 5% GST.
 - Pre-packaged and labeled: 12% GST.
 - Caramelize popcorn: 18% GST (classified as sugar confectionery).

Exemptions and Clarifications

- Penal Charges by Banks and NBFCs:** Penal charges imposed by banks and non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) on borrowers for non-compliance with loan terms were clarified as non-taxable under GST.
- GST Exemption for Payment Aggregators:** Payment aggregators regulated by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) were exempted from GST for payments below ₹2,000, though the exemption does not apply to payment gateways.
- Vouchers Recognized as Actionable Claims:** The Council classified vouchers as actionable claims, exempting them from GST to align with trade practices.
- Continued IGST Exemption for LRSAM Systems:** The Integrated GST (IGST) exemption for components used in Long Range Surface-to-Air Missile (LRSAM) systems was extended, supporting the defense sector.

Retrospective Amendments and Legal Implications

- The Council reversed the Supreme Court's judgment in the **Safari Retreats case**, which had allowed input tax credit (ITC) on construction costs for rental properties.
- A retrospective amendment was introduced to the CGST Act, effective from July 1, 2017, replacing the phrase "plant or machinery" with "plant and machinery."
- This change addressed a revenue impact of approximately ₹10,000 crore and required businesses to reassess their ITC eligibility, impacting compliance and financial planning.

At the GST Council's 55th meeting, members agreed to some changes in the indirect tax regime, while deferring a decision on many broader issues



D-day: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman chairs GST Council meeting in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan.

SETTLED	NOT SETTLED
 Popcorn taxation – Savoury to attract 5% or 12% GST, 18% levy on sweetened varieties  Gift vouchers are not taxable	 Levy on fortified rice kernels to be reduced from 18% to 5%  Tax on used cars , including electric ones, raised from 12% to 18%
	 Review of the GST levied on health and life insurance premiums  Future of Compensation Cess levies after March 2026 sunset

Out of the 55th GST Council Meeting Summarised

Deferred Decisions

- **Rate Rationalization:** The long-awaited **rate rationalization** for **148 items** was deferred due to incomplete recommendations by the **Group of Ministers (GoM)**.
 - The delay has caused **uncertainty** in consumption trends and **investment planning**.
- **GST on Life and Health Insurance Premiums:** The decision to reduce GST on **health and life insurance premiums** was deferred, pending inputs from the **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)**.
- **Inclusion of Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) Under GST:** The proposal to include **ATF under GST** was deferred as **states opposed the move**, citing similarity to other excluded petroleum products like **petrol** and **diesel**.
- **Taxability of Delivery Charges:** The decision on taxing **delivery charges** collected by **quick commerce platforms** was deferred, leaving the existing notices for **non-payment of GST** valid.

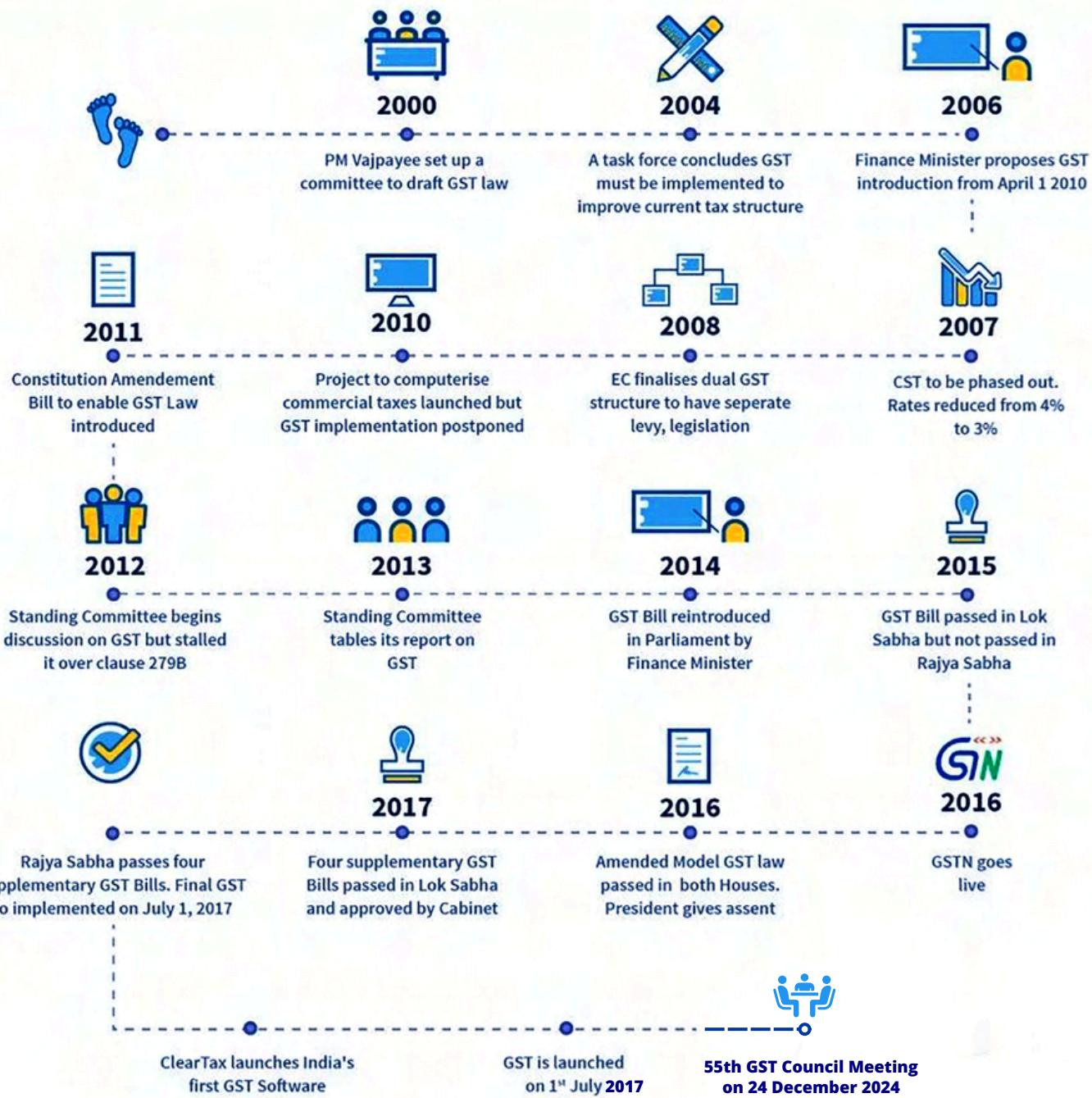
Special Proposals

- **Disaster-Related Additional GST Levy:** Andhra Pradesh proposed a **1% additional GST levy** for disaster management, modeled after **Kerala's flood cess (2019)**. This proposal was referred to a **Group of Ministers** for further deliberation.

Industry Reactions

- **Retrospective Amendments:** The amendment restricting **ITC on construction costs** has created compliance complexities for businesses, deterring **investments in real estate**.
- **Simplifications and Exemptions:** Measures such as exempting **vouchers** and simplifying processes for **merchant exporters** were appreciated.

History of GST



GST Council

- The **Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council** is a constitutional body in India, established under **Article 279A** of the Indian Constitution.
- Its primary role is to make recommendations to the Union and State Governments on issues related to the Goods and Services Tax. The Council is a key instrument in facilitating cooperative federalism in the country.

Composition of the GST Council

- Chairperson:** Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, the Union Finance Minister.
- Union Minister of State (Finance):** Shri Pankaj Chaudhary.
- State Representatives:** Each state and union territory with legislative assemblies appoints a representative, typically the Finance Minister or a minister nominated by the state government. For instance:
 - Andhra Pradesh:** Shri Payyavula Keshav, Minister for Finance & Planning, Commercial Taxes, and Legislative Affairs.
 - Arunachal Pradesh:** Shri Chowna Mein, Deputy Chief Minister.
 - Assam:** Shri Ajanta Neog, Minister for Finance.
 - Bihar:** Shri Vijay Kumar Chaudhary, Minister for Finance.
 - Chhattisgarh:** Dr. Raman Singh, Minister for Commercial Tax

Functions and Powers

The GST Council is entrusted with several key functions:

- Tax Rate Decisions:** Determining the GST rates applicable to various goods and services, including any exemptions.
- Policy Formulation:** Developing and modifying policies related to GST to ensure its smooth implementation and addressing any issues that arise.
- Revenue Distribution:** Facilitating the distribution of GST revenue between the Union and the States.
- Dispute Resolution:** Resolving disputes that may arise between the Union and States or among States regarding GST implementation.
- The Council aims to establish the highest standards of cooperative federalism in its functioning, being the first constitutional federal body vested with powers to take all major decisions relating to GST.

Important Tax Terms

- Adjusted Gross Income (AGI):** This is your total gross income minus specific deductions. AGI is used to determine your taxable income.
- Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT):** A special tax designed primarily to prevent the wealthy from using so many legal tax breaks that their regular tax bill is reduced to little or nothing.
- Basis:** This refers to the amount of your investment in property for tax purposes.
- Capital Gains Tax:** A tax on the profit realized from the sale of a non-inventory asset.
- Excise Tax:** A special tax on using or selling certain products or services. One example of excise taxes is luxury taxes.
- Progressive Tax:** A tax based on a percentage of income. The higher your income, the larger a percentage you pay. This is our current federal income tax system.
- Proportional Tax:** Another term for Flat Tax; a tax which takes the same income percentage from all income groups.
- Tax Credit:** An amount of money that taxpayers can subtract directly from the taxes they owe to the government.
- Tax Deduction:** A reduction of income that is able to be taxed, commonly resulting from various expenses incurred by a taxpayer.
- Withholding Tax:** An amount that an employer withholds from employees' wages and pays directly to the government. The amount withheld is a credit against the income taxes the employee must pay during the year.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Under which article of the Indian Constitution is the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council established?
 (a) Article 279A (b) Article 279
 (c) Article 279B (d) Article 279C
2. Where was the recent 55th GST Council meeting held?
 (a) New Delhi (b) Mumbai
 (c) Jaisalmer (d) Kolkata
3. What type of tax system is described by a tax based on a percentage of income, where the higher your income, the larger percentage you pay?
 (a) Progressive Tax (b) Proportional Tax
 (c) Capital Gains Tax (d) Excise Tax
4. What GST rate was set for caramelized popcorn following the recent tax adjustments?
 (a) 5% (b) 12% (c) 16% (d) 18%
5. What recent decision did the GST Council defer regarding the taxation of aviation turbine fuel (ATF)?
 (a) The inclusion of ATF under GST
 (b) A reduction in GST rate for ATF
 (c) An increase in GST rate for ATF
 (d) No changes to the current taxation of ATF
6. What is the GST rate on unpackaged salted or spiced popcorn as clarified during the meeting?
 (a) 0% (b) 5% (c) 12% (d) 18%
7. Which medical procedure was exempted from GST during the 55th GST Council meeting?
 (a) Gene therapy (b) Cosmetic surgery
 (c) Cardiac bypass surgery (d) Dental implants
8. What clarification was provided regarding penal charges imposed by banks and NBFCs on borrowers for non-compliance with loan terms?
 (a) They are taxable under GST
 (b) They are non-taxable under GST
 (c) They are subject to a special GST rate of 5%
 (d) They are exempt for loans below ₹1,000
9. What proposal related to disaster management was brought forward by Andhra Pradesh during the meeting?
 (a) A 1% additional GST levy for disaster management
 (b) A special exemption on disaster relief materials
 (c) A fund allocation for flood-prone regions
 (d) A 5% GST reduction for disaster recovery services
10. Who represents Assam in the GST Council?
 (a) Shri Chowna Mein (b) Shri Ajanta Neog
 (c) Shri Vijay Chaudhary (d) Dr. Raman Singh
11. Which type of tax is based on the profit from the sale of a non-inventory asset?
 (a) Excise Tax (b) Withholding Tax
 (c) Capital Gains Tax (d) Proportional Tax
12. What does Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) represent in taxation?
 (a) Total income before any deductions
 (b) Total gross income minus specific deductions
 (c) Taxable income after applying credits
 (d) The amount owed in taxes

ANSWER KEY

- | | | | | | | | |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1. (a) | 2. (c) | 3. (a) | 4. (d) | 5. (a) | 6. (b) | 7. (a) | 8. (b) |
| 9. (a) | 10. (b) | 11. (c) | 12. (b) | | | | |

Business Ready (B-READY) Report 2024

News Highlights:

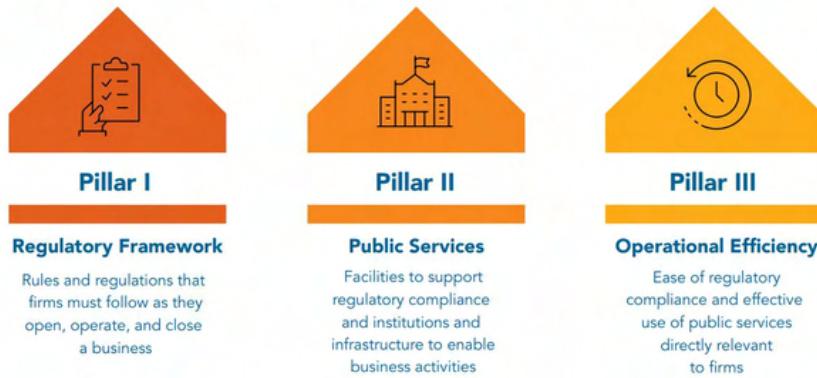
The World Bank has launched the **Business Ready (B-READY)** Index, its **flagship report replacing the Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) rankings**.

- India, preparing for inclusion in the index, faces challenges in areas like business entry, labor regulations, and international trade, as highlighted by the **Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI)**.

What is the B-READY Index?

- A World Bank initiative benchmarking the business environment and investment climate globally.
- It evaluates 10 key business areas, including business entry, location, labor, taxation, trade, dispute resolution, and environmental sustainability.

It Focuses on three pillars:



Differences from EoDB Rankings:

Scope:

Targets private sector development rather than just SMEs.

Assessment:

Examines both regulatory burdens and quality of regulations.

Methodology:

Combines expert insights and firm surveys for balanced data.

It currently assesses 50 economies and will expand to 180 by 2026. India is preparing for its inclusion in the index.

India's Unique Position

- EoDB to B-READY Transition:** India ranked 63rd in the last EoDB report in 2019 but faces challenges under B-READY due to stricter evaluation criteria.
- Business Entry Challenge:** In Singapore, starting a business takes less than a day online, while in India, it involves multiple steps despite ongoing digitization efforts

Challenges for India:

- Customs Delays:** India's average export clearance time is **72 hours**, compared to **Singapore's 12 hours**, highlighting the need for faster trade processes.
- Logistics Costs:** India's logistics costs stand at **14% of GDP**, higher than the **global average of 8-10%**.

Strengths of India in B-READY:



Quality of Regulations:

India's reforms in taxation and public service delivery are expected to score well.



Effectiveness of Public Services:

Improvements in e-governance and service delivery mechanisms.



Operational Efficiency:

Enhanced digital adoption in public services and financial transactions.

India's Strength

- Startup Ecosystem:** India is home to over **100 unicorns**, ranking **third globally after the US and China**.
- Digital Revolution:** India's UPI system processes over **9 billion transactions monthly**, showcasing its digital prowess.
- Regulatory Quality:** Simplified tax regimes and public services like **Aadhaar-based verification** could improve India's score under **B-READY**.

World Bank

Structure of the World Bank Group

The World Bank operates under the umbrella of the World Bank Group (WBG), which comprises five distinct institutions:



International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD): Provides loans and financial services to middle-income and creditworthy low-income countries.

International Development Association (IDA): Offers concessional loans and grants to the world's poorest countries.

Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA): Provides political risk insurance and credit enhancement to encourage foreign investment in developing countries.

International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID): Facilitates the arbitration and conciliation of investment disputes between governments and foreign investors.

Origin:

- Founded in **1944 during the Bretton Woods Conference**, the World Bank's initial mission was to **aid in the reconstruction of war-torn Europe and Japan**.
- Its first loan was extended to **France in 1947**.
- Over time, the institution shifted its focus towards the **economic development of developing nations**, emphasising poverty reduction and sustainable development.



Membership and Governance

- The World Bank comprises **189 member countries**, each represented by a governor, typically the country's finance minister.
- The institution is headquartered in **Washington, D.C.**, and operates in over **100 countries worldwide**. The President of the World Bank, traditionally a U.S. citizen, is nominated by the **President of the United States** and serves a **renewable five-year term**.
- As of **December 2024**, **Ajay Banga** serves as the **14th President of the World Bank**.



PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- What report has the World Bank launched to replace the Ease of Doing Business rankings?
 - Global Trade Efficiency Report
 - Business Stability Index
 - Business Ready Index
 - International Business Operations Report
 - Where is the headquarters of the World Bank located?
 - New York, USA
 - Geneva, Switzerland
 - Paris, France
 - Washington D.C., USA
 - What is one of the key differences between the B-READY Index and the former Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) rankings?
 - B-READY focuses only on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)
 - B-READY assesses regulatory burdens and the quality of regulations
 - B-READY uses a simpler assessment methodology based solely on expert insights
 - B-READY evaluates fewer economies compared to EoDB
 - How does India's average export clearance time compare to Singapore according to the B-READY Index challenges?
 - India's average is 6 times longer than Singapore's
 - India's average is the same as Singapore's
 - India's average is half as long as Singapore's
 - There is no available comparison in the B-READY report
 - Which of the following is NOT listed as one of India's strengths in the B-READY Index?
 - Quality of Regulations
 - Operational Efficiency
 - Low logistics costs
 - Effectiveness of Public Services
 - During which conference was the World Bank established?
 - Paris Peace Conference
 - Bretton Woods Conference
 - San Francisco Conference
 - Yalta Conference
 - How many member countries are part of the organization as of 2025?
 - 150
 - 175
 - 189
 - 200
 - How many institutions make up the World Bank Group (WBG)?
 - Three
 - Four
 - Six
 - Five
 - What is one of the flagship global reports published by the World Bank Group?
 - World Economic Outlook
 - Global Competitiveness Report
 - World Development Report
 - Human Development Report
 - Who is the current President of the World Bank Group (as of 2025)?
 - David Malpass
 - Ajay Banga
 - Kristalina Georgieva
 - Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala
 - What is one notable project in India funded by the World Bank?
 - Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor
 - Bharatmala Pariyojana
 - Ganga Action Plan
 - Smart Cities Mission

ANSWER KEY

1. (c) 2. (d) 3. (b) 4. (a) 5. (c) 6. (b) 7. (c) 8. (d)
9. (c) 10. (b) 11. (a)

VOCAB IMPROVEMENT SESSION



LE INDORE



International Affairs

Global Arms Producer Report: SIPRI

News Highlights:

According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), three Indian defense public sector undertakings—**Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)**, **Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)**, and **Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL)**—collectively reported arms sales totaling **\$6.74 billion in 2023**, marking a **5.8% increase** from \$6.37 billion in 2022.

Key Findings:

- **Record-High Military Spending:** Global military expenditure reached **\$2,443 billion** in 2023, marking a **6.8% increase** in real terms from the previous year. This represents the highest level ever recorded by SIPRI.
- **Regional Increases:** For the first time since 2009, all five geographical regions experienced a rise in military spending.
- **Top Spenders:**
 - The **United States** remained the largest military spender, allocating **\$916 billion** in 2023.
 - **China** followed with an estimated expenditure of **\$296 billion**.
 - **Russia's** military spending grew by **24%**, reaching an estimated **\$109 billion**, equivalent to **5.9%** of its GDP.
 - **India** and **Saudi Arabia** also ranked among the top five spenders.
- **NATO Expenditure:** Military spending by NATO member states totaled **\$1,341 billion**, accounting for **55%** of global military expenditure. Notably, **11 out of 31 NATO members** met the alliance's target of allocating **2% of GDP** to military spending, an increase from seven members in 2022.
- **Ukraine's Military Spending:** Amid ongoing conflict, Ukraine's military expenditure surged by **51%**, totaling **\$64.8 billion**, which represents **37%** of its GDP.
- **Nuclear Arsenal Developments:** The number of operational nuclear weapons increased as countries advanced their force modernization and expansion plans. Of the estimated **12,512 nuclear warheads** globally in January 2023, approximately **9,576** were in military stockpiles for potential use, an increase of **86 warheads** from the previous year.
- **Arms Industry Revenue:** The top 100 arms-producing companies reported combined revenues of **\$632 billion** in 2023, a **4.2% increase** from 2022. This growth was largely driven by heightened demand due to conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza. Notably, smaller producers were more agile in responding to the surge in demand.

Key Facts

- The arms revenues of the **SIPRI Top 100 arms-producing** and military services companies totalled **\$632 billion in 2023**, an increase of **4.2 per cent** in real terms compared with **2022**. Arms revenues went up in all regions covered by the ranking.
- The **total arms revenues of the 41 Top 100 companies** headquartered in the **United States** grew by **2.5 per cent** to **\$317 billion in 2023**.
- The **27 European companies** in the Top 100 recorded growth in arms revenues of **0.2 per cent to reach \$133 billion**.
- The arms revenues of the **two Russian companies** for which data was available went up by **40 per cent** to an estimated **\$25.5 billion** due to a significant increase in orders and production.
- The **23 companies based in Asia and Oceania** in the **Top 100** increased their arms revenues by **5.7 per cent to \$136 billion**. At **\$103 billion**, Chinese companies had the **second largest aggregate arms** revenues after US companies. However, they recorded **their lowest level of growth (+0.7 per cent) since 2019** due to the country's slowing economy. Companies in South Korea (+39 per cent), Japan (+35 per cent) and Taiwan (+27 per cent) increased their arms revenues substantially.
- The **six Middle Eastern companies** in the **Top 100** increased their aggregate arms revenues by **18 per cent to \$19.6 billion**. The war in Gaza pushed Israeli companies' arms revenues to record levels.

Annex 1. The SIPRI Top 100 arms-producing and military services companies in the world, 2023

Revenue figures are in millions of constant (2023) US dollars and are rounded to the nearest \$10 million.

Rank 2022	Rank 2023	Company	Country	Arms revenue 2023 (\$ bn)	Change (%)
1	1	Lockheed Martin	US	60.81	-1.6
2	2	RTX	US	40.66	-1.3
3	3	Northrop Grumman	US	35.57	5.8
4	4	Boeing	US	31.1	2.0
5	5	General Dynamics	US	30.2	3.2
43	43	Hindustan Aeronautics	India	3.71	6.9
65	67	Bharat Electronics	India	1.94	0.5
96	94	Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders	India	1.09	12.4

Note:
Revenue
figures are
in billion of
constant
(2023) US
dollars
Source:
Sipri

Key Items in India's Defense Exports

- Annual Defense Production:** In FY24, India's defense production reached nearly **Rs 1.27 trillion**, marking a **16.7% increase** from the previous year and achieving over **40% of the ambitious target of Rs 3 trillion set for FY29**.
- Expansion:** The defense-industrial base in India now includes more than **430 licensed companies and 16,000 MSMEs**, with the **private sector accounting for 21% of the expansion** in arms production capacity.
- Export Destinations:** India exports to over 100 nations, with the top three destinations for the fiscal year being the USA, France, and Armenia.

Key Export Products

- BrahMos Missiles:** India's significant export includes the **BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles**. In a notable deal, India delivered the **first batch of these missiles to the Philippines as part of a USD 375 million agreement** for **three shore-based, anti-ship missile batteries**. The ASEAN region and some Gulf countries have shown increased interest in acquiring these missiles due to their advanced capabilities.
- Dornier-228 Aircraft:** The Dornier-228 aircraft, known for its versatility and reliability, is exported for both defense and civilian applications. This aircraft is a key component of India's defense export portfolio.
- Subsidiary Aircraft Parts:** India exports critical subsidiary parts like fuselage and wings to major defense manufacturers such as **Boeing and Lockheed Martin**, integrating into the global supply chain and fulfilling offset commitments.
- Software and Electronic Equipment:** This category includes specialised software and electronic equipment for defense applications, exported to countries like France, enhancing India's footprint in the high-tech defense market.
- 155mm Artillery Guns:** These artillery units are another major export, with countries like **Armenia purchasing these advanced systems**, showcasing India's capability in heavy armaments.
- Akash Missile System:** The Akash air defense missile system and its variant, **Akash-1S**, have seen significant export activity, with Armenia being a notable international customer.
- Pinaka Rocket Systems:** The Pinaka multi-launch rocket systems have also been exported, with **Armenia being a significant buyer**, indicating the effectiveness and demand for India's rocket artillery.

Initiatives to Boost Defense Indigenization and Exports

- Liberalized FDI Policy:** In 2020, the FDI limit in the defense sector was increased to 74% through the automatic route and up to 100% through the government route, facilitating access to modern technology.
- Defense Acquisition Procedure (DAP) 2020:** Emphasizes domestic procurement of capital items to boost local manufacturing.
- Positive Indigenization Lists:** This was introduced under DAP 2020. It Includes items that are to be domestically sourced, supporting the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' (Self-Reliant India) initiative.

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)

Establishment

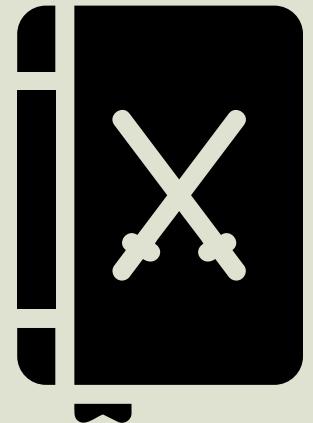
The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) is an independent international institute established in 1966 by the Swedish Parliament.

Aim

Its aim is to research conflict, armaments, arms control, and disarmament. SIPRI provides authoritative data, analysis, and recommendations to policymakers, researchers, and the general public.

Headquarters

Stockholm, Sweden



Key Authorities and Leadership:

- SIPRI is governed by a **Governing Board**, responsible for overseeing research agendas, organizational policies, and financial administration.
- The **Director and Deputy Director** manage daily operations. Notable recent leadership includes **Dan Smith**, serving as SIPRI's Director **(as of 2025)**.

Research Areas and Publications

SIPRI focuses on:

- Armament and Disarmament:** Addressing nuclear weapons, emerging technologies, and arms trade control.
- Conflict and Security:** Covering peace operations and regional conflicts.
- Peace and Development:** Exploring pathways to long-term peace.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Who is India's largest arms supplier, providing 45% of the country's total imports between 2018–2022?

(a) United States (b) France
 (c) Russia (d) Germany
- Which department under the Ministry of Defence (MoD) is responsible for overseeing the production of defense equipment?

(a) Department of Defence (DoD)
 (b) Department of Military Affairs (DMA)
 (c) Department of Defence Research and Development (DDR&D)
 (d) Department of Defence Production (DDP)
- Which indigenous fighter aircraft developed by India is designed for air combat and offensive air support?

(a) HAL Rudra (b) HAL Tejas
- Which country was among the top five military spenders in 2023, as mentioned in a recent SIPRI report, along with India?

(a) Saudi Arabia (b) United Kingdom
 (c) Germany (d) Japan
- Which country developed the BrahMos Supersonic Cruise Missile in collaboration with India?

(a) United States (b) Russia
 (c) France (d) Israel
- Which country had the highest military expenditure in 2023, according to SIPRI?

(a) China (b) Russia
 (c) India (d) United States

ANSWER KEY

1. (c) 2. (d) 3. (b) 4. (a) 5. (b) 6. (d) 7. (b) 8. (b)
9. (c) 10. (c) 11. (c) 12. (b)

Israel-Hamas ceasefire

News Highlights:

A ceasefire agreement was reached between **Israel and Hamas**, with the deal brokered by **Egypt, Qatar, and the United States**, and announced jointly by outgoing U.S. President Joe Biden, President-elect Donald Trump, and Qatar.

- Further, Israel's government, led by **Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu**, approved a plan to **double the population** in the **occupied Golan Heights** on December 15, 2024, citing increased threats from Syria following the ousting of **President Bashar al-Assad**.
- The **annexed territory**, captured during the **1967 Six-Day War**, remains a contentious issue globally.
- Despite **Syria's demands for Israel to withdraw**, Israel has increased its presence in a demilitarised zone created after the **1973 Arab-Israeli war**.

ISRAEL'S WAR ON GAZA

Gaza ceasefire proposal approved by Hamas

Al Jazeera has seen a copy of the Gaza ceasefire proposal Hamas accepted. Israel says it doesn't agree with it but will join further talks while it continues its assault on Gaza.

The three stages of the deal:

FIRST STAGE (42 days)

- Temporary cessation of hostilities
- Withdrawal of Israeli forces eastwards
- Unhindered entry of humanitarian aid
- Displaced Palestinians to return home
- Israeli planes and drones stop flying over Gaza for 10 hours a day
- Hamas releases 33 captives - women, the sick, and male civilians aged below 19 and above 50
- Israel releases 30 Palestinian prisoners for each civilian captive and 50 for every captive female soldier
- Reconstruction begins in Gaza
- Allowing at least 60,000 temporary homes and 200,000 tents in Gaza



SECOND STAGE (42 days)

- Military operations end permanently, Israel withdraws from Gaza completely
- Exchange of remaining captive Israeli men and soldiers for Palestinian prisoners



THIRD STAGE (42 days)

- Exchange of remains of captives and prisoners held by both sides
- Three-to-five-year Gaza reconstruction plan begins
- Siege of the Gaza Strip ends completely



First Phase: Initial Ceasefire and Exchanges

- Ceasefire Duration:** A 42-day (six-week) ceasefire will be implemented, during which both parties agree to halt hostilities.
- Hostage Release by Hamas:** Hamas will release 33 Israeli captives, prioritising all living Israeli children under 19, civilian women, elderly individuals over 50, and female Israeli soldiers. If the total number of living individuals in these categories is less than 33, the remainder will be made up by releasing the bodies of deceased Israelis.
- Prisoner Release by Israel:** In exchange, Israel will release up to 1,904 Palestinian security prisoners, including 737 individuals serving life sentences.
- Humanitarian Aid:** Israel will permit the entry of 600 trucks of humanitarian aid daily into Gaza, with 300 designated for the northern region. This aid includes fuel necessary for operating the power plant, trade, and equipment needed for rubble removal, rehabilitation, and operation of hospitals, health centers, and bakeries throughout Gaza.
- Military and Civilian Movements:** Displaced unarmed Palestinians will be allowed to return to their homes. Israel will gradually withdraw its forces from certain areas of Gaza and suspend military flights over Gaza for 10-12 hours daily.

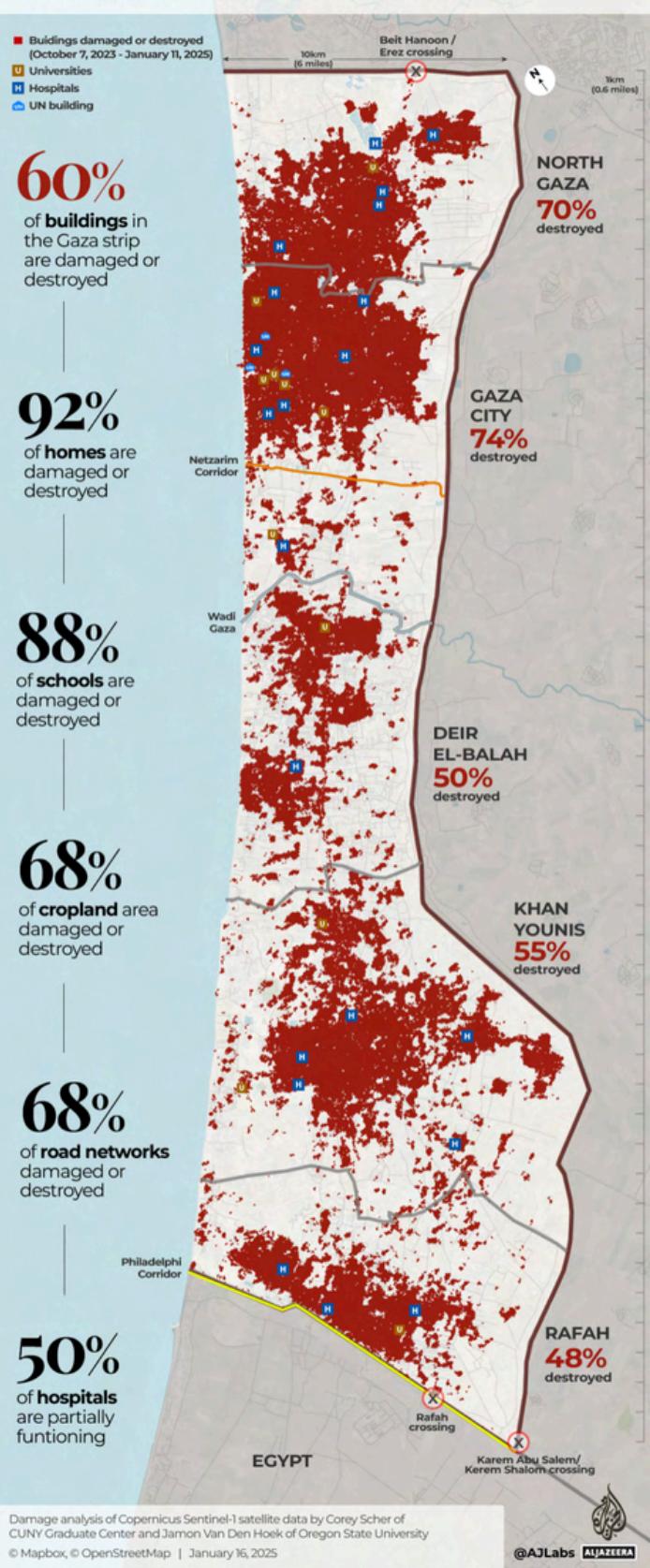
Second Phase: Further Releases

- Hostage Release by Hamas:** Hamas will release all remaining living male Israeli captives, both civilians and soldiers.
- Prisoner Release by Israel:** Israel will release an agreed-upon number of Palestinian prisoners.
- Conditions:** Both parties will agree upon and announce a "sustainable calm," leading to the complete withdrawal of remaining Israeli soldiers from the Gaza Strip.

Third Phase: Lifting of Blockade

- Exchange of Remains:** Hamas will return all remains of deceased Israeli captives, and Israel will reciprocate by returning the remains of deceased Palestinians it holds.
- Lifting of Blockade:** Israel will end the blockade of the Gaza Strip.
- Demilitarization:** Hamas agrees not to rebuild its military capabilities.

What is left of Gaza?





The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has deep historical roots, with significant events shaping its trajectory over centuries. Below is a timeline highlighting key events:

1880s-1900: The roots of the conflict trace back to the rise of nationalist movements, including Zionism among Jews and Arab nationalism among Arabs living in the Ottoman Empire. Zionists sought to establish a national homeland for Jews in Palestine.

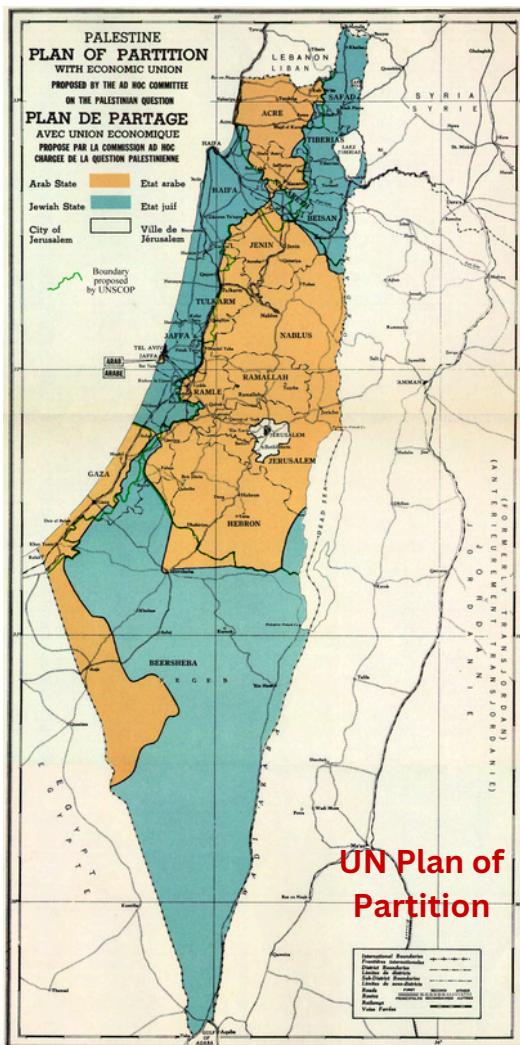
1917: Balfour Declaration

On November 2, 1917, British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour issued a statement expressing the British government's support for the establishment of a "national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine.

- This declaration was made in a letter to **Lord Rothschild**, a leader of the British Jewish community, and became a cornerstone for future Jewish immigration to the region.

1920: British Mandate for Palestine

Following World War I, the League of Nations granted Britain the mandate over Palestine, formalizing British administrative control and incorporating the Balfour Declaration's principles, thereby facilitating increased Jewish immigration.



1936-1939: Arab Revolt: In response to growing Jewish immigration and land purchases, Palestinian Arabs initiated a revolt against British rule and Jewish communities, seeking to end both and establish an independent Arab state.

1947: UN Partition Plan

The United Nations proposed partitioning Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states, with Jerusalem under international administration.

- Jewish leaders accepted the plan, while Arab leaders rejected it, leading to escalating tensions.

1948: Establishment of Israel and First Arab-Israeli War

On May 14, 1948, Israel declared independence. The following day, neighboring Arab countries invaded, resulting in a war that led to significant territorial changes and the displacement of approximately 700,000 Palestinians, an event Palestinians refer to as the **Nakba**, or "catastrophe."

1964: Palestine Liberation Organization

In 1964, the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) was established during the first Arab League summit in Cairo.

- Its founding charter called for the **destruction of the State of Israel** and the establishment of a **secular Palestinian State**.

1967: Six-Day War

In June 1967, Israel fought against Egypt, Jordan, and Syria in a conflict known as the Six-Day War.

- Israel captured the **West Bank, East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, the Sinai Peninsula, and the Golan Heights**, significantly altering the region's geopolitical landscape.

1987-1993: First Intifada

A Palestinian uprising, known as the **First Intifada**, erupted against Israeli occupation in the **West Bank and Gaza Strip**.

- It involved widespread protests, civil disobedience, and violence, leading to increased international attention on the Palestinian quest for statehood.

1993: Oslo Accords

- Israel and the **Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO)** signed the **Oslo Accords**, aiming to establish a framework for future relations and the eventual creation of a Palestinian state.
- The agreement included mutual recognition and the establishment of the **Palestinian Authority for self-governance** in parts of the **West Bank and Gaza**.

2000-2005: Second Intifada

- The failure of peace talks and ongoing tensions led to the **Second Intifada**, a period of intensified Israeli-Palestinian violence, including

suicide bombings and military operations, resulting in significant casualties on both sides.

2005: Gaza Disengagement

- Israel unilaterally withdrew its settlers and military presence from the **Gaza Strip**, aiming to improve security and international standing.
- However, the move led to internal Palestinian power struggles and did not resolve broader conflicts.

2006: Hamas Electoral Victory

Hamas won the **Palestinian legislative elections**, leading to a **political rift with Fatah**. This division resulted in **Hamas taking control of Gaza**, while the **Palestinian Authority**, dominated by **Fatah**, maintained authority in the **West Bank**.

2008-2009: Gaza War (Operation Cast Lead)

Israel launched a **military operation in Gaza** in response to rocket fire, aiming to weaken Hamas.

- The conflict caused significant destruction and loss of life, drawing international concern over humanitarian conditions.

2014: Gaza War (Operation Protective Edge)

Another major conflict erupted between Israel and Hamas, leading to extensive casualties and infrastructure damage in Gaza. Ceasefires were brokered but failed to address underlying issues.

2023: Hamas Attack and Subsequent War

On October 7, 2023, Hamas launched a large-scale offensive against Israel, including rocket attacks and ground incursions, resulting in significant Israeli casualties and hostages.

- Israel declared war and conducted extensive military operations in Gaza, leading to a high Palestinian death toll and widespread displacement.

2025: Ceasefire Agreement

After 15 months of conflict, Israel and Hamas agreed to a ceasefire involving the **exchange of Israeli hostages** for Palestinian prisoners.

- The truce allowed for the delivery of humanitarian aid to Gaza and was seen as a potential step toward ending hostilities, though challenges remained.

- **Strategic Corridors:** The **Netzarin Corridor** and the **Philadelphi Corridor** are key locations for Israeli withdrawal. The Philadelphi Corridor is significant due to its role in arms smuggling and border security.
- **Israel's Domestic Politics:** Prime Minister **Benjamin Netanyahu** faces political challenges from far-right allies opposing the ceasefire. Previous deals like the **2011 Gilad Shalit exchange** involved 1,027 Palestinian prisoners for a single IDF soldier.
- **International Law:** Netanyahu faces **International Criminal Court (ICC)** charges related to alleged war crimes in Gaza. The ceasefire agreement could impact ongoing investigations and diplomatic relations.
- **Impact on Regional Dynamics:** The ceasefire has implications for Iran's "**Axis of Resistance**," including **Hezbollah**. Reconstruction in Gaza will require international aid, with Egypt and Qatar taking prominent roles.

CEASEFIRE AT A GLANCE

2025 CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT

FIRST PHASE: INITIAL CEASEFIRE AND EXCHANGES

- 42-day ceasefire with halted hostilities.
- **Hamas:** Release of 33 Israeli hostages (children, women, elderly, soldiers).
- **Israel:** Release of 1,904 Palestinian prisoners (including 737 with life sentences).
- **Humanitarian aid:** 600 trucks/day, 300 for northern Gaza, fuel supply, rubble removal equipment.
- Return of displaced Palestinians; Israeli military withdrawal from some Gaza areas.

SECOND PHASE: FURTHER RELEASES

- Release of remaining Israeli male captives (civilians & soldiers).
- Additional Palestinian prisoners released.
- Declaration of "sustainable calm" Complete Israeli withdrawal from Gaza.

THIRD PHASE: LIFTING OF BLOCKADE

- Exchange of remains of deceased captives (both Israeli & Palestinian).
- Full lifting of Gaza blockade.
- Hamas agrees not to rebuild military capabilities.

HISTORICAL TIMELINE

- **1880s-1900:** Rise of nationalist movements (Zionism and Arab nationalism).
- **1917:** Balfour Declaration supporting a Jewish homeland in Palestine.
- **1920:** British Mandate for Palestine, facilitating Jewish immigration.
- **1936-1939:** Arab Revolt against British rule and Jewish settlements.
- **1947:** UN Partition Plan proposing separate Jewish and Arab states (accepted by Jews, rejected by Arabs).
- **1948:** Establishment of Israel First Arab-Israeli War Nakba (700,000 Palestinians displaced).
- **1964:** Formation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) advocating for Israel's destruction.
- **1967:** Six-Day War Israel captured West Bank, Gaza, Sinai, Golan Heights.
- **1987-1993:** First Intifada (Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation).
- **1993:** Oslo Accords Mutual recognition between Israel and PLO, establishment of Palestinian Authority.
- **2000-2005:** Second Intifada with intensified violence.
- **2005:** Israel's Gaza Disengagement withdrawal from Gaza Strip.
- **2006:** Hamas electoral victory Control of Gaza, political split from Fatah.
- **2008-2009:** Gaza War (Operation Cast Lead) Israel-Hamas conflict.
- **2014:** Gaza War (Operation Protective Edge).
- **2023:** Hamas Attack on Israel Large-scale war, significant casualties on both sides.
- **2025:** Ceasefire Agreement Exchange of hostages and prisoners, humanitarian aid.

Key Developments in the Golan Heights

In December 2024, the Israeli government, led by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, approved a plan to double the settler population in the occupied Golan Heights.

- This initiative involves an investment of over 40 million shekels (approximately \$11 million) to encourage demographic growth in the region.
- Current demographics:**
 - 31,000 Israelis residing in settlements.
 - 24,000 Druze, an Arab minority, most of whom identify as Syrian.
- Israeli leadership cites "new threats" following the **Syrian regime change** as the rationale for bolstering its hold over the region.
- Defense Minister Israel Katz** highlighted risks from rebel leaders despite their "moderate image."

Historical Context of the Golan Heights

The **Golan Heights** is a strategically significant plateau located in southwestern Syria, bordering Israel, Lebanon, and Jordan.

Geographical Overview

- Location:** The Golan Heights spans approximately 1,800 square kilometers (700 square miles) and overlooks the upper Jordan River valley to the west.
- Topography:** The region features a basaltic plateau with elevations ranging from 400 to 1,700 feet (120 to 520 meters) in the northeastern section. **Mount Hermon**, Israel's highest peak, is situated here.

Historical Timeline

- 1967 Six-Day War:** In June 1967, Israel captured the Golan Heights from Syria, gaining a strategic advantage and control over vital water resources.
- 1973 Yom Kippur War:** Syria launched an offensive to reclaim the Golan Heights but was repelled by Israeli forces, leading to a ceasefire and the establishment of a United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) buffer zone.



Source: Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, 2016 Pew Research Center study, UNDOF.org

- **1981 Annexation:** Israel unilaterally extended its laws to the Golan Heights through the **Golan Heights Law**, effectively annexing the territory. This move was declared "null and void" by **United Nations Security Council Resolution 497**.
- **2019 U.S. Recognition:** The United States, under President Donald Trump, recognized Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights, a decision not widely accepted by the international community.

Demographics and Current Status

- **Population:** As of recent estimates, the Golan Heights is home to approximately 55,000 residents, including around 24,000 Druze Arabs and 31,000 Israeli settlers.
- **International Stance:** The United Nations and the majority of the global community consider the Golan Heights to be Syrian territory under Israeli occupation, with ongoing calls for a negotiated settlement to determine its final status.

Military and Security Developments

- **Buffer Zone Incursion:** Israeli forces entered a demilitarised zone, including the Syrian side of **Mount Hermon**, under the pretext of border security.
- **Targeted Strikes:** Israel has conducted **hundreds of airstrikes** on strategic Syrian weapons stockpiles and infrastructure to prevent use by rebel factions linked to **Al-Qaeda** or **ISIS**.

Global and Regional Implications

- The move exacerbates tensions in an already volatile region, undermining potential diplomatic solutions.
- The Golan Heights' strategic value, including its elevation overlooking **Damascus** and significance for **water resources**, makes it a critical asset for Israel's security calculus.

India's Stance on the Golan Heights

- **India does not recognize Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights**, adhering to United Nations Security Council **Resolution 497 (1981)**, which declared Israel's move "null and void."
- India continues to view the Golan Heights as **Syrian territory under Israeli occupation**, consistent with the global consensus and international law.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. What event led to Israel capturing the Golan Heights from Syria?
 (a) 1948 Arab-Israeli War (b) 1967 Six-Day War
 (c) 1973 Yom Kippur War (d) 1981 Annexation
2. Which year did the United States recognize Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights?
 (a) 1981 (b) 1991 (c) 2020 (d) 2019
3. How does the United Nations currently classify the Golan Heights in relation to Israel?
 (a) As Israeli sovereign territory
 (b) As disputed territory between Israel and Syria
 (c) As Syrian territory under Israeli occupation
 (d) As an independent region under UN control
4. What was the primary reason cited by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for the plan to double the population in the Golan Heights in 2024?
 (a) To respond to increased threats from Syria
 (b) To improve economic stability in the region
 (c) To promote tourism in the area
 (d) To comply with United Nations requests
5. What is India's official stance on Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights?
 (a) India recognizes Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights
 (b) India considers the Golan Heights Israeli territory under Syrian occupation
 (c) India views the Golan Heights as Syrian territory under Israeli occupation
 (d) India has no official stance on the matter
6. What is the primary focus of Phase 1 in the 2025 Israel-Hamas ceasefire agreement?

- (a) Reconstruction of Gaza and the establishment of international partnerships to rebuild infrastructure and provide humanitarian aid.
- (b) Release of hostages by Hamas and Palestinian detainees by Israel, along with the partial withdrawal of Israeli forces from key areas in Gaza.
- (c) Establishment of a Palestinian state with agreed-upon borders and mutual recognition by Israel and Hamas.
- (d) Signing of a formal peace treaty to permanently end hostilities between Israel and Hamas, supported by international mediators.
7. When was Hamas formed, and what event marked its emergence?
- (a) 1975, during the Yom Kippur War
(b) 1987, during the First Intifada
(c) 2000, during the Second Intifada
(d) 2007, during the Gaza Takeover
8. Which of the following countries have supported Hamas in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?
- (a) Iran (b) Japan (c) India (d) US and Russia
9. Which two strategic corridors are central to Israeli withdrawal under the ceasefire agreement?
- (a) Golan Heights Corridor and West Bank Corridor
(b) Jordan Valley Corridor and Sinai Peninsula Corridor
(c) Erez Crossing Corridor and Rafah Crossing Corridor
(d) Netzarim Corridor and Philadelphi Corridor
10. What is one of Hamas' main gains from the ceasefire agreement in 2025?
- (a) Complete military dominance in Gaza
(b) Total independence from international mediators
(c) A pause in military operations to regroup and replenish resources
(d) Permanent removal of Israeli forces from Gaza
11. What is the timeline for each stage of the ceasefire deal?
- (a) 30 days (b) 42 days (c) 50 days (d) 60 days
12. What is one of the key actions in the third phase of the ceasefire agreement?
- (a) Deployment of additional troops in Gaza
(b) Lifting the blockade of the Gaza Strip
(c) Rebuilding Israeli settlements in Gaza
(d) Freezing all reconstruction efforts in Gaza
13. When was the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) founded?
- (a) 1947 (b) 1956 (c) 1964 (d) 1973
14. When was the British Mandate for Palestine established?
- (a) 1917 (b) 1920 (c) 1936 (d) 1947
15. What led to the Second Intifada in 2000-2005?
- (a) The signing of the Oslo Accords
(b) The failure of peace talks and ongoing tensions
(c) Hamas winning the Palestinian elections
(d) The annexation of East Jerusalem by Israel
16. What was the name of the Israeli military operation launched in 2008-2009 in Gaza?
- (a) Operation Cast Lead
(b) Operation Protective Edge
(c) Operation Defensive Shield
(d) Operation Black Arrow
17. Which war led to Israel capturing the Golan Heights from Syria?
- (a) Six-Day War (b) Yom Kippur War
(c) First Arab-Israeli War (d) Lebanon War
18. What significant geographical feature is located in the Golan Heights?
- (a) Dead Sea (b) Mount Hermon
(c) Jordan River Basin (d) Negev Desert
19. Which country recognized Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights in 2019?
- (a) Russia (b) United Kingdom
(c) United States (d) France

ANSWER KEY

- | | | | | | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1. (b) | 2. (d) | 3. (c) | 4. (a) | 5. (c) | 6. (b) | 7. (b) | 8. (a) |
| 9. (d) | 10. (c) | 11. (b) | 12. (b) | 13. (c) | 14. (b) | 15. (b) | 16. (a) |
| 17. (a) | 18. (b) | 19. (c) | | | | | |

Donald Trump Assumes the Presidential Office

News Highlights:

On **January 20, 2025**, Donald J. Trump was sworn in as the **47th President of the United States**, marking his historic return to office after serving non-consecutive terms.

- The oath ceremony was held in the **Capitol Rotunda** due to extreme weather conditions.
- The decision marks the **first indoor inauguration since 1985**, when **President Ronald Reagan**, facing historically frigid temperatures, opted to take his second oath of office away from the biting winds and bitter cold that gripped Washington.



Donald John Trump

Donald John Trump was born on June 14, 1946, in Queens, New York City, to Fred and Mary Trump.

- He is one of five siblings. His father was a successful real estate developer, which influenced Trump's future career path.

- He attended the **New York Military Academy** during his teenage years, where he developed discipline and leadership skills. Trump later transferred to the **Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania**, graduating in **1968 with a degree in economics**.
- After college, Trump joined his father's real estate business, focusing on residential projects in Brooklyn and Queens. He later expanded into Manhattan, developing notable properties such as the **Grand Hyatt Hotel and Trump Tower**. His ventures extended to casinos, golf courses, and branding deals, establishing him as a prominent figure in the business world.
- Trump gained national recognition as the host of the reality television show "**The Apprentice**," which premiered in **2004**. The show's success bolstered his public image and introduced his catchphrase, "**You're fired.**" His media presence played a significant role in shaping his public persona.
- In **2016**, Trump entered politics, running as **the Republican nominee for President**. He won the 2016 presidential election, defeating Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton, and served as the 45th President of the United States from January 20, 2017, to January 20, 2021.
- After an unsuccessful re-election bid in 2020, he ran again in 2024 and was re-elected, **becoming the 47th President in 2025**. This non-consecutive second term makes **him the second U.S. president to achieve such a feat, after Grover Cleveland, who served from 1885–1889 and 1893–1897**.
- During his 2024 presidential campaign, **Trump survived two assassination attempts**. The first occurred on July 13, 2024, at a rally near Butler, Pennsylvania, where **he was shot and wounded in the upper right ear by 20-year-old Thomas Matthew Crooks**, who fired multiple rounds from an **AR-15-style rifle**. Crooks was shot and killed by the U.S. Secret Service's Counter Sniper Team shortly after opening fire.
- The second attempt took place on **September 15, 2024**, at the **Trump International Golf Club in West Palm Beach, Florida**. A Secret Service agent observed a rifle barrel protruding from bushes on the golf course and opened fire in that direction. The suspect, identified as **Ryan Wesley Routh**, fled the scene but was later apprehended on Interstate 95.
- Trump has been married three times: to Ivana Trump, Marla Maples, and currently to Melania Trump. He has five children: Donald Jr., Ivanka, Eric, Tiffany, and Barron. His family has been actively involved in his business and political endeavors.

Executive orders by Donald Trump on Day 1

1

Withdrawal from International Agreements

- **Paris Climate Agreement:** President Trump signed an executive order directing **the United States' withdrawal** from the **Paris Climate Agreement**, citing concerns over economic impacts and national sovereignty.
- **World Health Organization (WHO):** Another order initiated the process **to withdraw the U.S. from the WHO**, reflecting the administration's dissatisfaction with the organization's handling of global health issues.

2

Immigration and Border Security

- **Deployment of U.S. Troops to the Southern Border:** An executive order authorized the deployment of **U.S. military personnel to the southern border** to enhance security measures and address illegal immigration.
- **Designation of Mexican Drug Cartels as Terrorist Organizations:** President Trump designated specific Mexican drug cartels as foreign terrorist organizations, aiming to intensify efforts against drug trafficking and related violence.
- **Ending Birthright Citizenship:** Through the "**Protecting the Meaning and Value of American Citizenship**" executive order, the administration sought to end birthright citizenship for children born in the **U.S. to non-citizen parents**, a move anticipated to face legal challenges.

3

Social Policies

- **Rescinding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Programs:** An executive order dismantled **DEI initiatives within federal agencies**, placing DEI staff on leave and eventually terminating their positions, aligning with the administration's emphasis on merit-based systems.
- **Reversing Transgender Protections:** The "**Defending Women From Gender Ideology Extremism And Restoring Biological Truth To The Federal Government**" order redefined federal recognition of sex and gender, limiting it to biological definitions and rolling back protections for transgender individuals.

4

Energy and Environmental Policies

- **Revocation of Electric Vehicle Targets:** An executive order revoked previous targets for electric vehicle adoption, signaling a shift in the administration's approach to energy and environmental policy.
- **Unleashing American Energy:** This order aimed to promote domestic energy production by reducing regulations and encouraging the development of fossil fuels.

5

Federal Workforce and Governance

- **Federal Hiring Freeze:** President Trump implemented a hiring freeze across federal agencies, with the intent to reduce government size and spending.
- **Reclassification of Federal Employees:** An order reclassified certain federal positions to make it easier to hire and fire employees, aiming to increase accountability within the federal workforce.

6

Pardons and Legal Actions

- Pardoning January 6 Defendants:** The President issued pardons to individuals convicted in connection with the January 6 Capitol attack, a move that sparked significant controversy.

7

Technology and Social Media

- Temporary Pause on TikTok Ban:** An executive order **delayed the federal ban** on the social media platform **TikTok by 75 days to reassess its implications** and explore potential security measures.

Trump interest in Canada and Greenland

U.S. President Donald Trump suggested that Canada consider becoming the 51st U.S. state. This proposal was made during a meeting with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau at Mar-a-Lago, where Trump discussed trade deficits and border security concerns. He implied that if Trudeau felt upcoming U.S. tariffs would harm Canada's economy, joining the United States could be a solution.

- In a Christmas message on his social media platform, Truth Social, **Trump reiterated his proposal**, stating that if Canada became the 51st state, its taxes would be reduced by "more than 60%," businesses would "immediately double in size," and the country would receive exceptional military protection. He also suggested that NHL legend Wayne Gretzky should run to become the Prime Minister of Canada.
- These comments were met with strong opposition from Canadian political leaders. Prime Minister Trudeau firmly rejected the idea, stating there was "not a snowball's chance in hell" of **Canada joining the United States**. Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre affirmed, "Canada will never be the 51st state. Period. We are a great and independent country."



Furthermore, Trump also reignited his interest in **acquiring Greenland**, an autonomous territory of Denmark. This renewed proposal led to a **tense 45-minute phone call with Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen**, during which Trump aggressively pressed for the purchase. Frederiksen firmly rejected the idea, emphasizing that Greenland is not for sale.

- Trump highlighted this intention when announcing **PayPal co-founder Ken Howery as the US Ambassador to Denmark**.

The United States has a history of interest in Greenland:

- **1867: President Andrew Johnson** considered purchasing Greenland.
- **1910: President William Taft** explored the idea of acquiring the territory.
- **1946: The Truman administration** offered **Denmark \$100 million for Greenland**, citing its strategic importance during the early Cold War period.

Territorial Acquisitions by the United States

Louisiana Purchase (1803)

- **Background:** The **Louisiana Purchase** was a monumental acquisition by the **US**, nearly doubling the country's size. Originally owned by **Spain**, the territory was ceded to **France** under **Napoleon Bonaparte**. Napoleon's plans for the region were disrupted by the **Haitian revolution** and the declining **French military**.
- **Details:** On **April 30, 1803**, the **US** purchased **828,000 square miles** of land for **\$15 million**, which amounts to approximately **4 cents per acre**. This land extended from the **Mississippi River** to the **Rocky Mountains** and played a key role in American **westward expansion**.



- **Key Figures:**
 - **Thomas Jefferson** – US President at the time, who was instrumental in the purchase.
 - **James Monroe** and **Robert Livingston** – US diplomats who negotiated the purchase with **France**.
- **Significance:** This acquisition secured control of the **Mississippi River** and **New Orleans**, crucial for trade and transport, and marked a turning point in the **US's territorial expansion**.

The Gadsden Purchase (1853-1854)

- **Background:** The **Gadsden Purchase** involved the acquisition of land in modern-day **southern Arizona** and **southwestern New Mexico**. This was the final major territorial acquisition in the **contiguous United States**.
- **Details:** On **December 30, 1853**, US Ambassador **James Gadsden** negotiated the purchase with **Mexico**. The deal was ratified by the **US Senate** in **1854**, acquiring about **30,000 square miles**.
- **Key Figures:**
 - **James Gadsden** – US Ambassador to Mexico.
 - **President Franklin Pierce** – President during the acquisition.
- **Significance:** The land was vital for the construction of a **southern transcontinental railroad** and helped resolve lingering disputes post-**Mexican-American War**.

Alaska Purchase (1867)

- **Background:** Russia, facing financial difficulties, sought to sell its **Alaskan territory**. The **US**, eager to expand westward, negotiated the purchase.
- **Details:** On March 30, 1867, the **US** bought **Alaska** from **Russia** for \$7.2 million, securing nearly **600,000 square miles**. This was a significant acquisition at less than **2 cents per acre**.
- **Key Figures:**
 - **William H. Seward** – US **Secretary of State**, who negotiated the purchase.
 - **Edouard de Stoeckl** – Russian **Minister to the United States**.
- **Significance:** Although initially derided as "**Seward's Folly**," the discovery of **gold** and other resources in **Alaska** later proved the purchase's immense value, boosting **US influence** in the **Asia-Pacific region**.

Other Notable Territorial Acquisitions

- **Treaty of Paris (1783):** The **Treaty of Paris** marked the end of the **American Revolution** and secured **US independence**, granting control over lands east of the **Mississippi River**, including present-day **Canada** and the **Gulf of Mexico**.
- **Annexation of Texas (1845):** Following the **Texas Revolution**, the **US** annexed the **Republic of Texas**, leading to the **Mexican-American War**.

Trump on H-1B

As of January 2025, during his second term, **President Trump has revisited the H-1B visa program**.

- A significant debate has emerged within the Republican Party regarding the program's future. Prominent figures like Elon Musk advocate for the continuation of the H-1B program, emphasizing its importance in filling critical positions in the tech industry.
- Conversely, others, such as Steve Bannon, call for restrictions, labeling the program a "scam" that undermines American workers.

H-1B Visa Program:

- The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa for foreign workers in **specialised fields**. It applies to fields like **technology, engineering, finance, and architecture**. Applicants need a **valid job offer from a U.S. employer**.
- A bachelor's degree or equivalent experience in the field is required. Employers must prove a lack of qualified local candidates for the role. The visa has an **annual cap of 85,000: 65,000 regular visas and 20,000 for advanced U.S. degree holders**. It is valid for **3 years** and can be extended up to **6 years**.
- Fields commonly **utilising H-1B visas include technology, engineering, and medical sciences**.
- The program was established under the **Immigration Act of 1990**, signed into law by **President George H.W. Bush**, to help U.S. companies address labor shortages in specialised fields.

Key Facts and Figures:

- Indians account for over **70% of all H-1B approvals since 2015**, with **China** a distant second at around **12-13%**.
- Nearly 70% of H-1B petitions for Indian professionals in 2023 were for salaries below **\$100,000 annually**.
- Many petitions for "continuing employment" (renewals or extensions) are not subject to the annual cap.
- In **FY 2023, 118,948 new H-1B petitions** were approved, alongside 267,370 petitions for continuing employment.

Significance of H-1B Visa Program:

- The **H-1B visa program** addresses **talent shortages** by filling gaps in critical sectors like **technology** and **engineering**.
- **STEM talent** from **India** and **China** dominates globally, with **India** producing **2.55 million STEM graduates** annually compared to the **U.S.'s 820,000**.
- It also provides a **pathway to immigration**, allowing **skilled workers** to gain **permanent residency** in the **U.S.** **H-1B holders** can apply for **Green Cards**, enabling their **family members** to **live and work** in the **U.S.**

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. U.S. Withdrawal from International Agreements?
 - (a) Paris Climate Agreement
 - (b) Kyoto Protocol
 - (c) UNESCO
 - (d) Trans-Pacific Partnership

2. What is the capital of Greenland?
 - (a) Nuuk
 - (b) Reykjavik
 - (c) Copenhagen
 - (d) Stockholm

3. What was the cost of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803?
 - (a) \$28 million
 - (b) \$15 million
 - (c) \$10 million
 - (d) \$25 million

4. Greenland is of strategic importance in the Arctic for several reasons. Which of the following is NOT a reason contributing to its geopolitical value?
 - (a) Its location provides key access to the Arctic shipping routes
 - (b) It serves as an important base for monitoring military activities in the Arctic region
 - (c) Its abundant tropical biodiversity attracts significant tourism
 - (d) Its natural resources and potential untapped energy reserves

5. Which intergovernmental forum, established in 1996, is dedicated to fostering cooperation among Arctic states on environmental protection, sustainable development, and scientific research?
 - (a) The Arctic Treaty Organization
 - (b) The Northern Environmental Alliance
 - (c) The Arctic Council
 - (d) The Polar States Forum

6. Which prominent figure has voiced support for the H-1B visa program, highlighting its role in addressing STEM talent shortages in the U.S.?
 - (a) Jeff Bezos
 - (b) Mark Zuckerberg
 - (c) Elon Musk
 - (d) Bill Gates

7. Who initiated the H-1B visa program in the United States?
 - (a) George H.W. Bush
 - (b) Ronald Reagan
 - (c) Bill Clinton
 - (d) Barack Obama

8. How long is the initial validity period of an H-1B visa?
 - (a) 1 year
 - (b) 2 years
 - (c) 4 years
 - (d) 3 years

9. Which country's nationals hold the largest number of H-1B visas in the United States?
 - (a) India
 - (b) China
 - (c) Canada
 - (d) Mexico

10. What is the purpose of the H-1B visa in the United States?
 - (a) To allow international tourists extended stays
 - (b) To permit foreign nationals to work in specialized fields
 - (c) To grant permanent residency to skilled workers
 - (d) To enable foreign students to attend U.S. universities

11. During Trump's 2024 campaign, how many assassination attempts did he survive?
 - (a) One
 - (b) Two
 - (c) Three
 - (d) Four

12. What notable change was made to Trump's 2025 inauguration due to extreme weather conditions?
 - (a) It was held in Florida
 - (b) It was canceled
 - (c) It was held indoors in the Capitol Rotunda
 - (d) It was delayed to a later date

13. What television show helped Donald Trump gain national recognition?
 - (a) Shark Tank
 - (b) The Apprentice
 - (c) Survivor
 - (d) America's Got Talent

14. Which international agreement did Donald Trump sign an executive order to withdraw from on Day 1 of his presidency?
 - (a) WHO
 - (b) NATO
 - (c) United Nations
 - (d) Trans-Pacific Partnership

15. What action did Trump authorize regarding U.S. troops in his immigration and border security executive orders?
- (a) Withdrawal from foreign bases
 - (b) Deployment to the southern border
 - (c) Training for cybersecurity defense
 - (d) Reduction of military personnel
16. What did the executive order on social policies aim to reverse regarding gender identity?
- (a) Affirming protections for transgender individuals
 - (b) Redefining biological recognition of sex and gender
- (c) Expanding gender diversity programs
(d) Promoting gender-neutral language in federal laws
17. Which U.S. president explored the idea of acquiring Greenland in 1910?
- (a) Andrew Johnson
 - (b) Harry Truman
 - (c) Theodore Roosevelt
 - (d) William Taft

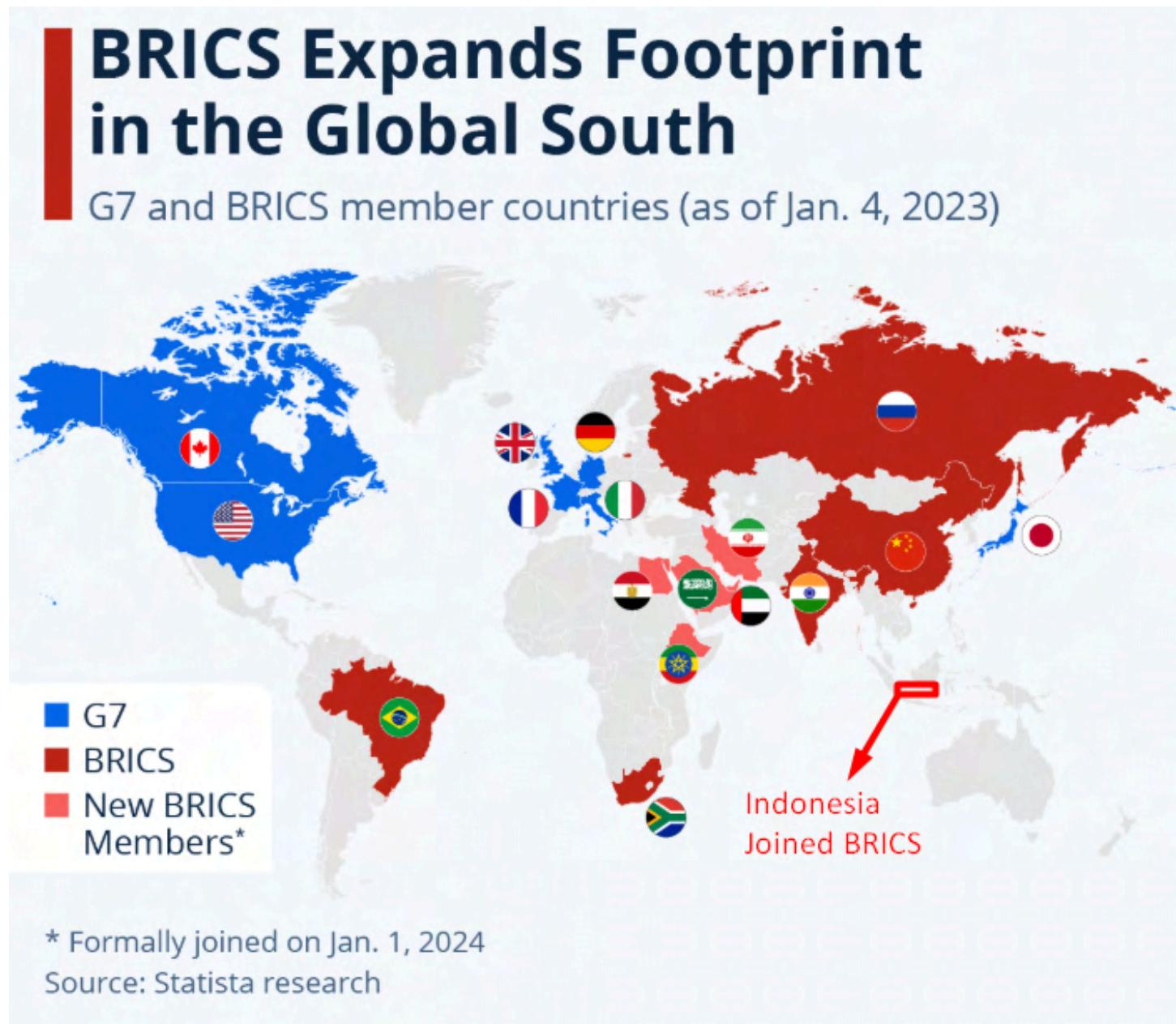
ANSWER KEY

- | | | | | | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1. (a) | 2. (a) | 3. (b) | 4. (c) | 5. (c) | 6. (c) | 7. (a) | 8. (d) |
| 9. (a) | 10. (b) | 11. (b) | 12. (c) | 13. (b) | 14. (a) | 15. (b) | 16. (b) |
| 17. (d) | | | | | | | |

Indonesia becomes Official Member of BRICS

News Highlights:

- Indonesia has been admitted as a full member of the BRICS bloc, marking a significant development for the group of developing nations. The announcement was made by Brazil on **January 6, 2025**, with Indonesia's candidacy having been endorsed in **August 2023**.
- This marks another step in **BRICS' expansion**, which has seen several nations join in recent years, positioning the group as a counterweight to Western-led economic frameworks.



- **Regional Representation:** With **273 million people**, Indonesia is the **largest economy and most populous nation in Southeast Asia**. Its membership enhances BRICS' representation in the Asia-Pacific region.
- **Economic Impact:** Indonesia contributes significantly to **South-South trade and cooperation**, aligning with BRICS' goals of fostering economic growth in the **Global South**.

Key Details on Indonesia's Admission to BRICS

BRICS Expansion:

- In **2023**, BRICS further broadened its membership by admitting **Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, and the United Arab Emirates**.
- Indonesia**, the **world's fourth-most populous nation**, was officially welcomed as a full member during a summit in **August 2023**, although the formal decision to join was made after the formation of its **new government** in **2024**.



**Indonesian President
Prabowo Subianto**

Rationale Behind Indonesia's Membership:

- Indonesia's entry** strengthens BRICS' influence in **Southeast Asia**, with its **large population** and **economy**.
- Indonesia shares common interests with BRICS members, particularly in areas like **reforming global governance institutions** and advancing **South-South cooperation**.
- Brazil, as the **presiding nation** of BRICS in **2024**, emphasized Indonesia's role in contributing to these shared goals.

Political Context:

- BRICS countries, especially **Russia** and **China**, have been seeking alternatives to the **US dollar**, a development that has caused concern in some Western circles.
- The **US** has expressed its opposition to the idea of a new currency emerging from BRICS, with former President **Donald Trump** warning that any such moves could face punitive tariffs on exports to the US.

Future Prospects for BRICS:

- As the bloc grows, **Turkey, Azerbaijan, and Malaysia** have also expressed interest in joining, with **Saudi Arabia** having been invited but yet to join.
- The BRICS expansion reflects the increasing influence of emerging economies on the global stage, especially in terms of economic policies and alternative financial systems.



2001	Term “ BRIC ” coined by economist Jim O’Neill to denote emerging economies.
2006	First informal meeting during the G8 Outreach Summit in Russia.
2009	First BRIC Summit held in Yekaterinburg, Russia .
2010	South Africa joined, rebranding the group as BRICS .
2014	Launch of the New Development Bank .
2023	Expansion to BRICS+ with six new members.

• Strategic Importance:

- A counterbalance to Western-dominated groups like the G7.
- Platform for South-South Cooperation and reduced dependency on Western powers.

• New Development Bank (NDB):

- Established in 2014, with an initial capital of \$100 billion.
- Funded infrastructure projects worth \$30 billion across member nations.

• Economic Cooperation:

- Enhanced trade and investment among members.
- Promoted local currency trade, with 92% of Russia-China trade conducted in national currencies.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. When was the BRICS organization officially founded with its first summit?
 (a) 2001 (b) 2006 (c) 2009 (d) 2010
2. Which country joined the BRICS group, becoming its fifth member?
 (a) Brazil (b) Russia (c) India (d) South Africa
3. What is the capital of Indonesia?
 (a) Bangkok (b) Manila
 (c) Kuala Lumpur (d) Jakarta
4. Which country announced Indonesia's admission as the latest member of the BRICS bloc?
 (a) Brazil (b) Russia
 (c) India (d) South Africa
5. Which of the following countries were admitted to BRICS alongside Indonesia in 2023?
 (a) Turkey, Azerbaijan, and Malaysia
 (b) Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, and the United Arab Emirates
 (c) Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Iran
 (d) Malaysia, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia
6. What does Indonesia's inclusion in BRICS enhance in terms of regional representation?
 (a) Middle Eastern presence
 (b) European influence
 (c) Asia-Pacific representation
 (d) African partnerships
7. How does Indonesia's membership contribute economically to BRICS?
 (a) By introducing advanced technologies
 (b) By fostering South-South trade and cooperation
 (c) By focusing on North-South partnerships
 (d) By replacing the US Dollar as the global reserve currency
8. What percentage of the world's population is represented by BRICS countries?
 (a) 35% (b) 42% (c) 50% (d) 60%
9. Who coined the term "BRIC"?
 (a) Jeffrey Sachs (b) Jim O'Neill
 (c) Paul Krugman (d) Joseph Stiglitz
10. How often are BRICS summits held?
 (a) Every six months (b) Annually
 (c) Every two years (d) Biennially

ANSWER KEY

- | | | | | | | | |
|--------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1. (c) | 2. (d) | 3. (d) | 4. (a) | 5. (b) | 6. (c) | 7. (b) | 8. (b) |
| 9. (b) | 10. (b) | | | | | | |

20 years of QUAD

News Highlights:

The Quad Foreign Ministers of India, the US, Australia, and Japan have reaffirmed their commitment to a **free, open, and peaceful Indo-Pacific** region in light of **China's assertive behavior**.

- This statement was made during a joint declaration marking the **20th anniversary of Quad cooperation**. Initially formed to provide aid after the **2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami**, the coalition later evolved into the **Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad)**.
- The ministers emphasized the importance of **regional stability, prosperity, and effective regional institutions**, and underscored their support for ASEAN's central role in the region.

Key Pledges and Goals

1

- **Commitment to a Free and Open Indo-Pacific:** The Quad countries vowed to work together towards a **peaceful, stable, and prosperous Indo-Pacific**, emphasizing the region's openness and freedom.

2

- **Support for ASEAN:** The ministers reaffirmed their unwavering support for the **Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)**, recognizing its centrality in shaping the regional architecture. They also committed to implementing the **ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific**.

3

- **Backing Pacific-Led Regional Architecture:** The Quad members expressed strong support for Pacific Islands Forum, a Pacific-led regional architecture, and the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), highlighting the significance of inclusive regional cooperation.

4

- **Health Security:** In response to global health challenges, the Quad nations have pledged to donate more than **1.2 billion vaccine doses** globally. They are also leading ambitious projects to help partners address pandemics and disease, aiming to strengthen health security across the region.

5

- **Climate Change:** Addressing climate change is a significant focus, with initiatives aimed at promoting clean energy, sustainable infrastructure, and environmental conservation to mitigate the impacts of climate change in the Indo-Pacific.

6

- **Infrastructure Development:** The Quad aims to provide high-quality infrastructure support to countries in the Indo-Pacific, ensuring that development projects are sustainable, transparent, and adhere to international standards.

7

- **Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR):** Building on their collaboration during the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, the Quad nations continue to work together to provide timely and effective humanitarian assistance and disaster relief in the Indo-Pacific region.

Quadrilateral Security Dialogue

Formation and Early Development (2004–2008)

- 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami Response:** The collaboration among the four nations began with the formation of the "**Tsunami Core Group**" to coordinate humanitarian assistance following the devastating tsunami in December 2004.
- 2007 Formalisation Efforts:** In 2007, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe proposed a formal quadrilateral dialogue, leading to the first official meeting during the ASEAN Regional Forum in Manila. This initiative faced challenges due to varying levels of commitment among the members and concerns over China's perception of the grouping.

Dormancy Period (2008–2017)

- Hiatus:** Following initial engagements, the Quad became inactive, primarily due to Australia's withdrawal in 2008, influenced by concerns over regional dynamics and relations with China.

Revival and Strengthening (2017–2020)

- 2017 Re-establishment:** Amid growing regional security concerns, particularly regarding China's assertiveness, the Quad was revived in November 2017 with a meeting on the sidelines of the ASEAN Summit in Manila.
- 2019 Ministerial-Level Engagement:** The first ministerial-level meeting occurred in September 2019 in New York, signaling a deepening of the partnership.



Expansion of Scope and Institutionalization (2021–Present)

- 2021 Leaders' Summit:** The inaugural leaders' summit was held virtually in March 2021, focusing on critical issues such as COVID-19 vaccine distribution, climate change, and emerging technologies.
- 2022 In-Person Summit:** The first in-person leaders' summit took place in September 2022 in Washington, D.C., further solidifying the Quad's commitment to regional security and cooperation.
- 2024 Wilmington Summit:** The 6th Quad Leaders' Summit was held in September 2024 in Wilmington, Delaware, USA, where leaders adopted the 'Quad Wilmington Declaration,' emphasizing collective efforts to address regional and global challenges.

Next Summit

- The United States will host the **2025 Quad Foreign Ministers Meeting**, and India will host the **2025 Quad Leaders Summit**.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. What was the primary focus of the Quad's 20th anniversary declaration in 2025?
 - (a) Economic growth in Asia
 - (b) Regional stability, prosperity, and ASEAN's role
 - (c) Strengthening trade relations
 - (d) Military cooperation
2. When was the first official meeting of the Quad held?
 - (a) 2004
 - (b) 2007
 - (c) 2017
 - (d) 2020
3. Which event initially led to the formation of the Quad?
 - (a) Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami (2004)
 - (b) Cold War tensions
 - (c) Regional trade negotiations
 - (d) Formation of ASEAN
4. In which year was the Quad revived after its initial dissolution?
 - (a) 2015
 - (b) 2017
 - (c) 2010
 - (d) 2008
5. Which region's security is a key concern for the Quad nations?
 - (a) Indo-Pacific
 - (b) Middle East
 - (c) Africa
 - (d) South America
6. Which of the following was NOT one of the Quad's key collaborative efforts as of its 20th anniversary?
 - (a) Counter-Terrorism
 - (b) Infrastructure and Connectivity
 - (c) Cybersecurity
 - (d) Trade Liberalization
7. What is one of the Quad's key goals regarding regional maritime security?
 - (a) Promoting naval races
 - (b) Enhancing maritime domain awareness
 - (c) Establishing naval bases in the Indo-Pacific
 - (d) Creating maritime trade blocs
8. Which of the following regional organizations does the Quad strongly support?
 - (a) United Nations
 - (b) ASEAN
 - (c) NATO
 - (d) G20
9. What is the Quad's stance on the freedom of navigation in the Indo-Pacific?
 - (a) Not a priority for the Quad
 - (b) Strongly advocates for freedom of navigation
 - (c) Focuses on restricted maritime rights
 - (d) Supports only regional trade routes
10. What was the Quad initially formed to provide after the 2004 Indian Ocean disaster?
 - (a) Military aid
 - (b) Humanitarian assistance
 - (c) Economic aid
 - (d) Refugee support
11. What is one of the Quad's key areas of focus for addressing non-traditional security challenges?
 - (a) Nuclear disarmament
 - (b) Climate change
 - (c) Space exploration
 - (d) Military defense against China
12. Which of the following is a focus area for the Quad's infrastructure initiatives in the Indo-Pacific?
 - (a) Development of military bases
 - (b) Promoting sustainable and quality infrastructure
 - (c) Trade agreements
 - (d) Enhancing regional military alliances
13. In what year is the next Quad Summit expected to be hosted by India?

(a) 2025	(b) 2024
(c) 2023	(d) 2026
14. Which country was involved in the first official Quad meeting in 2007?
 - (a) China
 - (b) Russia
 - (c) India
 - (d) Brazil

15. Which Pacific initiative does the Quad support to enhance regional cooperation?

- (a) Pacific Islands Forum
- (b) Pacific Trade Agreement
- (c) Pacific Defense Pact
- (d) Pacific Free Trade Area

ANSWER KEY

1. (b) 2. (b) 3. (a) 4. (b) 5. (a) 6. (d) 7. (b) 8. (b)
9. (b) 10.(b) 11.(b) 12. (b) 13.(a) 14. (c) 15. (a)

Yemen Nurse Case

News Highlights:

Nimisha Priya, a Kerala nurse from Palakkad, is facing a **death penalty** in **Yemen** for the murder of **Talal Abdo Mehdi**, a Yemeni citizen, in **2017**.

- The Yemeni President, **Rashad al-Alimi**, has **approved** the death sentence, but Nimisha's only remaining option is to seek **blood money** from the victim's family.
- This option is grounded in **Islamic law** and offers a chance for **pardon** in exchange for monetary compensation. The Indian government is extending **all possible assistance** to help secure her release.

How the case unfolded



THE MURDER CHARGE

Nimisha Priya from Kerala went to Yemen in 2009 to work as a nurse. She set up a clinic in 2015 along with Yemeni national Talal Abdo Mehdi. Media reports have said there was a falling out between the two in 2017 and she murdered him. She was arrested the same year.



THE RESCUE EFFORTS

Priya's family was required to pay a pre-negotiation fee of \$40,000 to Mehdi's kin following talks. Priya's family raised over \$19,800 through collective efforts and paid it in July.

THE DEATH SENTENCE

She was sentenced to death by a court in 2020. After efforts to secure her release through the Islamic tradition of "diyah", or paying "blood money" to the victim's family, stalled, Yemen's President Rashad al-Alimi approved her death sentence on Monday.

What is 'Blood Money'?

- Definition:** Under **Islamic law**, the victim's family has the option to pardon the murderer in exchange for **monetary compensation**. This compensation is known as **diyya** or **blood money**, as outlined in the **Quran** (Surah 2:178). The amount is typically decided through **negotiation** between the families of the victim and the accused.
- Purpose:** The concept aims to promote **forgiveness** and **reparative justice**, with the compensation intended to offer a form of **closure** for the victim's family while sparing the offender from the death penalty.
- Negotiation:** While the Quran does not specify a fixed amount for blood money, it is generally determined through **negotiations**. Some Islamic countries may set **minimum amounts** for such compensation, but it is ultimately a matter of agreement between the families.



- **Background:** Nimisha Priya moved to **Yemen** in **2008** after qualifying as a nurse. She married **Tomy Thomas** in **2011** and returned to Yemen, where they both worked in the medical field. Their goal was to start their own clinic but due to Yemeni laws, they needed a **local partner**, **Talal Abdo Mehdi**, who helped open a clinic in Yemen.
- **Conflict with Talal Abdo Mehdi:** Mehdi allegedly **refused to share his income** from the clinic with Priya and forged documents presenting her as his wife. Priya's family claims that she was subjected to **physical and sexual abuse** by Mehdi, who also **confiscated her passports** and **restricted communication with her family** in Kerala. This left Priya trapped in an abusive situation.
- **The Murder:** After enduring **abuse**, Priya, with the help of fellow nurse **Hannan**, reportedly **attempted to sedate** Mehdi to retrieve her travel documents. However, the overdose **resulted in his death**. In panic, they allegedly **dismembered his body** and disposed of it in a **water tank**.
- **Legal Proceedings:** Priya was arrested while attempting to flee Yemen. She was sentenced to death in **2020**, and her **appeal** was rejected by Yemen's **Supreme Judicial Council** in **November 2023**.

Diplomatic Efforts

- The **Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)** of India has confirmed that it is providing **all necessary assistance** to Nimisha Priya and her family. The Indian government is working to explore **all legal options to secure her release**.
- **Indian Embassy's Role:** The case is being handled by **Yemeni authorities**, and since **Sana'a**, the capital city of Yemen, is controlled by the **Iran-backed Houthi militia**, the legal and political situation is complicated, as the **Yemeni president** has not ratified the death sentence.

Current Situation

- Nimisha Priya is currently imprisoned in **Sana'a**, the capital of Yemen, which is under Houthi control. The **death sentence** is yet to be ratified by **President Rashad al-Alimi**.
- Priya's **only remaining option** for avoiding the death penalty is for **Talal Abdo Mehdi's family** to agree to accept **blood money**, which would **pardon** her and potentially spare her life.

Pardoning Mechanisms

Aspect	Yemen	India
Legal Basis for Pardoning	Blood money (diyya) as per Sharia law	Article 72 of the Indian Constitution grants the President the power to grant pardons
Authority for Pardoning	Victim's family or a court-appointed body	The President of India
Conditions for Pardoning	The family can forgive in exchange for blood money	The President may commute, pardon, or remit a sentence based on mercy petitions
Role of Religion	Strongly linked to Islamic law and Sharia	Secular , no religious basis for pardoning

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- What is the concept of 'Blood Money' under Islamic law?
 - Compensation for loss of property
 - Monetary compensation to avoid legal punishment
 - A fine imposed on the accused
 - Payment to settle a civil case
 - Who is the victim in the case involving Nimisha Priya?
 - Hannan
 - Tomy Thomas
 - Talal Abdo Mehdi
 - A fellow nurse
 - What is Nimisha Priya's only remaining option to avoid the death penalty?
 - Appeal to the Indian President
 - Seek asylum in another country
 - Seek blood money from the victim's family
 - Flee Yemen again
 - When was Nimisha Priya sentenced to death?
 - 2017
 - 2020
 - 2023
 - 2025
 - What was the initial reason for the conflict between Nimisha Priya and Talal Abdo Mehdi?
 - Dispute over the clinic's ownership
 - Mehdi refusing to share income from the clinic
 - Personal disagreements
 - Financial mismanagement of funds
 - How did Nimisha Priya allegedly kill Talal Abdo Mehdi?
 - Shooting
 - Overdosing him with sedatives
 - Poisoning his food
 - Strangulation
 - What is the role of the Indian government in this case?
 - To negotiate the blood money
 - To extend diplomatic and legal assistance
 - To settle financial compensation
 - To oversee the legal proceedings in Yemen
 - What is the significance of Article 72 of the Indian Constitution in this case?
 - It allows Indians to seek blood money
 - It grants the President the power to grant pardons
 - It provides immunity for Indians abroad
 - It allows for international legal interventions
 - Which of the following cases involved blood money to reduce a death sentence for an Indian?
 - Arjunan Athimuthu in Kuwait
 - Abdul Rahim in Saudi Arabia
 - Indians in UAE
 - All of the above
 - Which of the following best describes the legal framework for pardoning in India?
 - Blood money as per Islamic law
 - Mercy petitions submitted to the President of India
 - Family negotiations with the victim
 - Court-driven decisions based on legal norms
 - Which authority has the power to grant pardons under Indian law?
 - The Ministry of External Affairs
 - The President of India
 - The Prime Minister of India
 - The Supreme Court of India
 - What does the concept of 'diyya' in Islamic law represent?
 - A form of punishment
 - A penalty imposed on the accused
 - Monetary compensation for the victim's family
 - A financial settlement between two parties
 - In which city is Nimisha Priya currently imprisoned?
 - Sana'a
 - Cairo
 - Riyadh
 - Abu Dhabi
 - Which of the following is an example of an Indian pardoned through blood money?
 - Nimisha Priya
 - Arjunan Athimuthu
 - Abdul Rahim
 - Both (b) and (c)
 - How is the blood money amount determined under Islamic law?
 - It is fixed by the court
 - It is decided by the government
 - It is negotiated between the families
 - It is based on the accused's ability to pay

ANSWER KEY

1. (b) 2. (c) 3. (c) 4. (b) 5. (b) 6. (b) 7. (b) 8. (b)
9. (d) 10. (b) 11.(b) 12. (c) 13. (a) 14. (d) 15. (c)

Environment & Biodiversity

India State of Forest Report 2023

News Highlights:

- Shri Bhupender Yadav, the Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, officially released the India State of Forest Report 2023 (ISFR 2023) at the Forest Research Institute in Dehradun.

Key Findings of the ISFR 2023

Forest and Tree Cover

Total Forest and Tree Cover



The **total forest and tree cover** in India stands at **8,27,357 sq km**, which constitutes about **25.17%** of the country's total geographical area.

Separate Tree and Forest Cover



This figure includes **forest cover** of **7,15,343 sq km**, which makes up **21.76%** of India's geographical area, and **tree cover** of **1,12,014 sq km**, which accounts for **3.41%** of the country's area.

Increase in Forest/ Tree Cover



The report highlights an increase of **1445 sq km** in India's forest and tree cover compared to the previous assessment done in **2021**. This increase includes an addition of **156 sq km** in forest cover and **1289 sq km** in tree cover.

Maximum Increase in Forest Cover



The states showing the greatest increase in forest cover include **Mizoram** (242 sq km), **Gujarat** (180 sq km), and **Odisha** (152 sq km).

Maximum Increases in Forest and Tree Cover



The states that have seen the largest increase in forest and tree cover are **Chhattisgarh** (with an increase of 684 sq km), followed by **Uttar Pradesh** (559 sq km), **Odisha** (559 sq km), and **Rajasthan** (394 sq km).

States with Largest Forest and Tree Cover



In terms of overall **forest and tree cover**, the states with the largest areas are **Madhya Pradesh** (85,724 sq km), **Arunachal Pradesh** (67,083 sq km), and **Maharashtra** (65,383 sq km).

States with Largest Decrease



Madhya Pradesh (612.41 sq km) followed by **Karnataka** (459.36 sq km), **Ladakh** (159.26 sq km), and **Nagaland** (125.22 sq km).

States with Largest Forest Cover

States with Largest Forest Cover (Area Wise)	Percentage of Forest Cover Relative to Geographic Area
 <p>The states with the most extensive forest cover are Madhya Pradesh (77,073 sq km), Arunachal Pradesh (65,882 sq km), and Chhattisgarh (55,812 sq km).</p>	 <p>In terms of forest cover percentage relative to total geographical area, Lakshadweep has the highest forest cover at 91.33%, followed by Mizoram (85.34%) and the Andaman & Nicobar Islands (81.62%).</p>

Other Covers

Mangrove Cover	Carbon Stock	Bamboo Area
 <p>The report reveals that India has a total mangrove cover of 4,992 sq km, which is crucial for biodiversity conservation and coastal protection.</p>	<p>The total carbon stock of India's forests is estimated to be 7,285.5 million tonnes. This marks an increase of 81.5 million tonnes in carbon stock compared to the previous assessment. The growing carbon stock indicates India's significant contribution toward carbon sequestration.</p>	 <p>The bamboo-bearing area in India is reported to cover 1,54,670 sq km, which represents an increase of 5,227 sq km in bamboo area compared to the 2021 assessment.</p>

Carbon Sequestration and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)

- **Carbon Sequestration Achievement:** The report further reveals that India's **carbon stock** has now reached **30.43 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent**, which exceeds the target of **2.5 to 3.0 billion tonnes** of additional carbon sink by **2030** under India's **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)**.
- The achievement shows an additional **2.29 billion tonnes** of carbon sink compared to the baseline year of **2005**.

Concerns of the Report

- **Forest Governance and Development Pressure:** While the report provides an optimistic view of India's **forest cover**, experts argue that **industrial development** and pressures from **climate change** have negatively impacted forest governance in India. There is concern that the government has been **distorting** the definition of forests to exclude **community forests** and instead include **plantations** and **orchards**, which often have lower ecological value.
- **Forest Loss and Biodiversity** There are ongoing concerns regarding **forest loss** in highly biodiverse regions like the **Western Ghats**, **Nilgiris**, and **northeastern India**, which face significant challenges due to **urbanization**, **deforestation**, and **climate change**. Additionally, the **mangrove ecosystems** in **Kutch** and the **Andamans** have been shrinking, further threatening India's biodiversity.

- Economic Growth vs Environmental Safeguards:** Critics argue that India's current **economic growth model** is undermining critical **environmental safeguards**. They point to recent changes such as the **Forest (Conservation) Amendment Act 2023**, which weakens the provisions of the **Forest (Conservation) Act 1980** and allows developmental projects to bypass important forest protection

Forest Survey of India (FSI)



Establishment: The **Forest Survey of India (FSI)** was established in **1981** under the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)**, Government of India. It is headquartered in **Dehradun**, Uttarakhand.

- FSI originated from the "**Pre-Investment Survey of Forest Resources (PISFR)**", a project initiated in **1965** as a joint endeavor by the **Government of India, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**.
- The primary objective was to conduct surveys and assessments of forest resources to support national planning and the implementation of social forestry projects.

Mandate and Function:

- FSI is responsible for the **assessment and monitoring** of India's **forest resources**. It conducts forest cover assessments, forest fire monitoring, and provides data for forestry and conservation management.
- It plays a key role in the preparation of the **India State of Forest Report (ISFR)**, which is published biennially. This report gives insights into **forest cover, tree cover, carbon stock**, and other important data.
- The **India State of Forest Report (ISFR)**, which is released by FSI, has been published every two years since **1987**, making it one of the oldest and most comprehensive national assessments of forest resources in the world.

Remote Sensing and GIS:

- FSI uses advanced **remote sensing technology** and **Geographic Information System (GIS)** to gather data about forest resources. This helps in analyzing forests from space, tracking changes, and managing forest cover efficiently.
- FSI conducts its assessments based on satellite data and field-based **National Forest Inventory (NFI)**.

Major Reports and Surveys:

- FSI conducts several surveys including **National Forest Inventory (NFI)**, **Bamboo Resource Survey**, and **Mangrove Resource Inventory**.
- The **India State of Forest Report (ISFR)** is one of FSI's most widely recognized reports, which provides comprehensive data about forest and tree cover across India.

Key Schemes and Committees for Forest Conservation in India

National Afforestation Programme (NAP)

- Objective:** To promote afforestation and increase the green cover of India, focusing on the conservation and enhancement of forest resources.
- Key Details:**
 - Launched in **2000** under the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)**.
 - Aimed to **restore degraded forests** and involve local communities in the process of forest management.
 - Funds are provided to **State Forest Departments, Forest Development Corporations, and NGOs** for afforestation activities.

Green India Mission (GIM)

- Objective:** To increase India's forest and tree cover, enhance carbon sequestration, and improve the livelihoods of local communities dependent on forests.
- Key Details:**
 - One of the **eight missions** under the **National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC)**.
 - Launched in **2014**, with a goal to **increase forest and tree cover by 5 million hectares**.
 - Aims to **enhance ecosystem services**, restore ecological balance, and **mitigate the impact of climate change**.
 - Target was to **sequester 50 to 60 million tonnes of carbon dioxide** annually by **2020**.

National Bamboo Mission (NBM)

- **Objective:** To promote the **sustainable cultivation** and **processing** of bamboo, enhancing rural livelihoods and boosting the bamboo industry in India.
 - **Key Details:**
 - Launched in **2006**, under the **Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare**.
 - Focuses on **bamboo farming**, **post-harvest management**, and creating **market linkages**.
 - The scheme seeks to promote the **bamboo sector** as a key economic contributor, especially in states like **Northeastern India**, **Madhya Pradesh**, and **Chhattisgarh**.

Forest Conservation Act, 1980

- **Objective:** To protect and conserve forests by regulating the diversion of forest lands for non-forest purposes.
 - **Key Details:**
 - Enacted to restrict and regulate the deforestation and diversion of forest land for non-forest purposes like infrastructure development and mining.
 - Requires **prior approval** of the **Central Government** before the diversion of forest land for non-forest activities.
 - The **Forest Advisory Committee (FAC)** provides recommendations for the approval of forest land diversion requests.

Forest Advisory Committee (FAC)

- **Ms Leena Nandan** is the current Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
 - **Objective:** To advise the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)** on the diversion of forest land for non-forest purposes and other forest-related policies.
 - **Key Details:**
 - The FAC was established under the **Forest Conservation Act, 1980** to examine and give recommendations on proposals involving the diversion of forest land.
 - It plays an important role in the **environmental clearance process** by ensuring that forest land diversion occurs only in exceptional cases.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

7. Which regions in India face significant challenges due to urbanization and deforestation?
 (a) Western Ghats and Nilgiris
 (b) Northern plains
 (c) Lakshadweep and Andaman Islands
 (d) Rajasthan and Gujarat
8. What law has been criticized for weakening forest protections in India?
 (a) Forest Conservation Amendment Act 2023
 (b) Wildlife Protection Act 1972
 (c) Environment Protection Act 1986
 (d) Biodiversity Conservation Act 2023
9. Where is the headquarters of the Forest Survey of India (FSI) located?
 (a) New Delhi
 (b) Bengaluru
 (c) Dehradun
 (d) Mumbai
10. What is the primary objective of the National Afforestation Programme (NAP)?
 (a) Protect wildlife
 (b) Increase India's forest cover
 (c) Promote urban forestry
 (d) Create new national parks
11. Which mission under the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) focuses on increasing forest and tree cover?
 (a) Green India Mission
 (b) National Solar Mission
 (c) National Water Mission
 (d) National Mission on Sustainable Habitat
12. Which body is responsible for approving forest land diversion under the Forest Conservation Act, 1980?
 (a) National Green Tribunal
 (b) Forest Advisory Committee
 (c) Ministry of Rural Development
 (d) Central Pollution Control Board
13. Which ministry oversees the implementation of the National Bamboo Mission (NBM)?
 (a) Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
 (b) Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare
 (c) Ministry of Rural Development
 (d) Ministry of Tribal Affairs
14. Who is the current Secretary of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change?
 (a) Ramesh Pandey (b) Dr. Anil Kumar
 (c) Ms. Leena Nandan (d) Rajiv Gauba

ANSWER KEY

- | | | | | | | | |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|
| 1. (b) | 2. (a) | 3. (a) | 4. (c) | 5. (d) | 6. (c) | 7. (a) | 8. (a) |
| 9. (c) | 10. (b) | 11. (a) | 12. (b) | 13. (b) | 14. (C) | | |

Famile Round Up

Fami**LE** GROWS BIGGER

FROM 19

Now in

23 CITIES

NEW MEMBERS

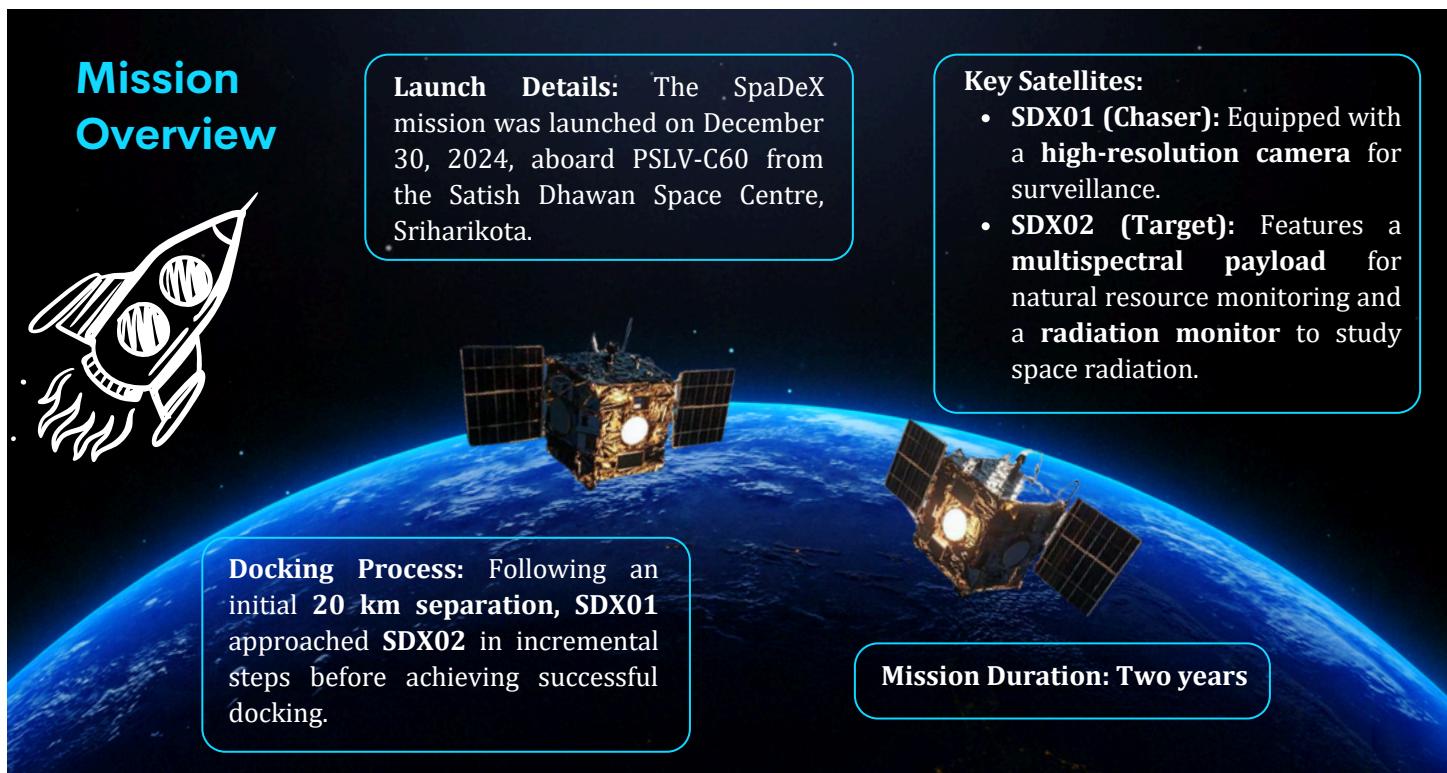


Science & Technology

ISRO's SpaDeX

News Highlights:

- On **January 16, 2025**, ISRO successfully executed the **Space Docking Experiment (SpaDeX)**, making **India** the fourth country to achieve satellite docking in space after the **USA, Russia, and China**.
- The mission demonstrated the docking of two satellites, **SDX01 (Chaser)** and **SDX02 (Target)**, marking a significant milestone in **India's space exploration** capabilities.
- This experiment paves the way for future missions involving **space stations, lunar exploration, and advanced satellite systems**.



Mission Design

Deployment:

- SpaDeX uses **PSLV-C60** to deploy two satellites, **SDX01** and **SDX02**, into a **470 km orbit**.
- The satellites will gradually approach each other, docking at distances from **20 km to 3 meters**.

Bharatiya Docking System:

- Uses an **androgynous docking mechanism**, enabling identical systems on both satellites.
- Employs advanced sensors like **Laser Range Finder, Rendezvous Sensor, and Proximity and Docking Sensor** for precise measurements.
- Reduces motor usage compared to international standards (**2 motors vs. 24 in IDSS**).

POEM (PS4 Orbital Experiment Module):

- Demonstrated **24 new technologies**, including **10 developed by startups and educational institutions**.
- Featured payloads such as the **Compact Research Module for Orbital Plant Studies (CROPS)** and **Relocatable Robotic Manipulator-Technology Demonstrator (RRM-TD)**.

What is Space Docking?

- Space docking involves maneuvering two fast-moving spacecraft into the same orbit, bringing them closer, and joining them to form a single unit.
- Essential for:
 - Assembling large structures** like the **International Space Station (ISS)**.
 - Delivering supplies, crew, and modules to maintain ISS operations.
 - Returning crew and equipment to Earth.

Historical Context

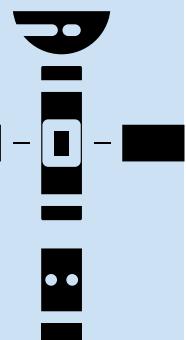
- USA:** NASA's Gemini VIII conducted the first-ever docking in space in 1966.
- Russia:** Soyuz 4 and Soyuz 5 (1969) performed the first crewed transfer via spacewalk.
- China:** Tiangong-1 and Tiangong-2 modules facilitated China's first docking experiments.
- The International Docking System Standard (IDSS)** was established in 2010 to facilitate interoperability in international missions.

Scientific Objectives

- Space Exploration:**
 - Enables advanced missions, including **Chandrayaan-4**, **Gaganyaan**, and the **Bharatiya Antariksh Station**.
 - Facilitates experiments with **modular space stations** and international collaborations.
- Technological Leadership:**
 - Positions India as a key player in **global space research** and innovation.
 - Provides valuable data to improve Earth's understanding of **space phenomena** and **resource management**.

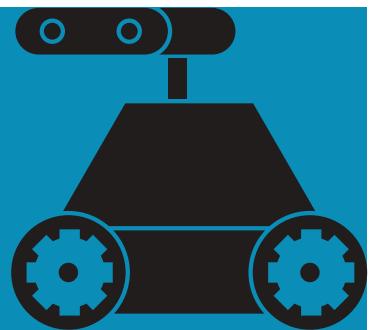
Scientific Objectives

- Docking Technology:**
 - Essential for missions involving **multiple rocket launches** and assembling modules in space.
 - Supports India's future **space station project** and **Chandrayaan-4**, which aims to bring **lunar samples back to Earth**.
- Space Research:**
 - Advanced studies on **space radiation**, **vegetation monitoring**, and **debris management**.
 - Exploration of **microgravity's effects** on biological processes through experiments like the growth of **cowpea seedlings**.



Beyond the Nugget: Third Launch Pad at Sriharikota

- Approval and Purpose:**
 - The Union Cabinet approved the construction of a **third launch pad at Sriharikota** for **Rs. 3,984.86 crore**.
 - Supports next-generation **semi-cryogenic launch vehicles** and heavier payloads like the **NGLV** and **LVM3**.
- Strategic Importance:**
 - Critical for India's plans to establish the **Bharatiya Antariksh Station by 2035** and execute manned lunar missions **by 2040**.
 - Enhances **satellite preparation, vehicle assembly, and fueling facilities**.
- Timeline:**
 - Expected to be completed within **four years**.



PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Which country was the first to achieve satellite docking in space?
(a) USA (b) Russia (c) China (d) India
 - What is the name of the docking system used in the SpaDeX mission?
(a) International Docking System Standard (IDSS)
(b) Advanced Proximity Docking System (APDS)
(c) Bharatiya Docking System
(d) Space Mechanism Integration System
 - What was the initial separation distance between SDX01 and SDX02 during the docking process in the SpaDeX mission?
(a) 10 km (b) 15 km (c) 5 km (d) 20 km
 - Which country conducted the first-ever space docking, and in which mission?
(a) Russia, Soyuz 4 and Soyuz 5
(b) USA, Gemini VIII
(c) China, Tiangong-1
(d) India, SpaDeX
 - Who is the newly appointed Chairman of ISRO as of January 14, 2025?
(a) K. Sivan (b) S. Somanath
(c) V. Narayanan (d) G. Madhavan Nair
 - Which country performed the first crewed transfer via spacewalk between Soyuz 4 and Soyuz 5?
(a) USA (b) Russia (c) China (d) India
 - What is the name of the experiment conducted by ISRO on January 16, 2025, that demonstrated satellite docking capabilities?
(a) SpaDeX (b) SpaRex
(c) SpaceX (d) SpaTex
 - Which module on the SpaDeX mission demonstrated 24 new technologies, including those developed by startups and educational institutions?
(a) PS4 Orbital Experiment Module (POEM)
(b) Advanced Technology Module (ATM)
(c) Satellite Technology Exposure Facility (STEF)
(d) Research and Development Module (RDM)
 - What was the first-ever docking in space conducted by NASA?
(a) Apollo 11 (b) Gemini VIII
(c) Skylab (d) STS-1
 - What is the purpose of the third launch pad being constructed at Sriharikota?
(a) To support space tourism
(b) To facilitate lunar missions
(c) To launch commercial satellites
(d) To enhance space research capabilities

ANSWER KEY

1. (b) 2. (c) 3. (d) 4. (b) 5. (c) 6. (a) 7. (a) 8. (b)
9. (c) 10. (b)

NTPC to explore thorium-based nuclear energy solutions

News Highlights:

India's **NTPC Limited**, the nation's largest power generator, has partnered with **Clean Core Thorium Energy (CCTE)** to develop and deploy **Advanced Nuclear Energy for Enriched Life (Aneel)** fuel. This **thorium-based nuclear energy initiative** aligns with India's three-stage nuclear power program, leveraging the country's vast thorium reserves to ensure sustainable, clean, and efficient energy generation. This collaboration aims to address **energy security, environmental concerns, and cost-effectiveness** in nuclear power generation.

Key Highlights of the Partnership

The Technology:

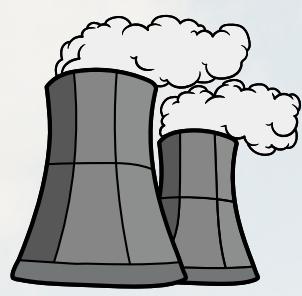
- **Aneel Fuel:** Combines thorium with small amounts of enriched uranium to power **Pressurized Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs)**.
- **Benefits:**
 1. **Reduced nuclear waste** and higher energy output.
 2. **Enhanced safety** through improved proliferation resistance and stability.
 3. **Cost efficiency** by lowering operational costs of reactors.

Strategic Significance:

- Supports NTPC's transition to **clean and dispatchable baseload energy sources**.
- Strengthens India's energy independence by utilizing **domestically available thorium reserves**.



**एनटीपीसी
NTPC**



Approval Pending:

- The deployment of Aneel fuel requires regulatory approval from **India** and the **United States**.



Collaborative Goals:

- Develop and deploy thorium-based fuel solutions.
- Enhance India's **nuclear energy capabilities** with cutting-edge technology.

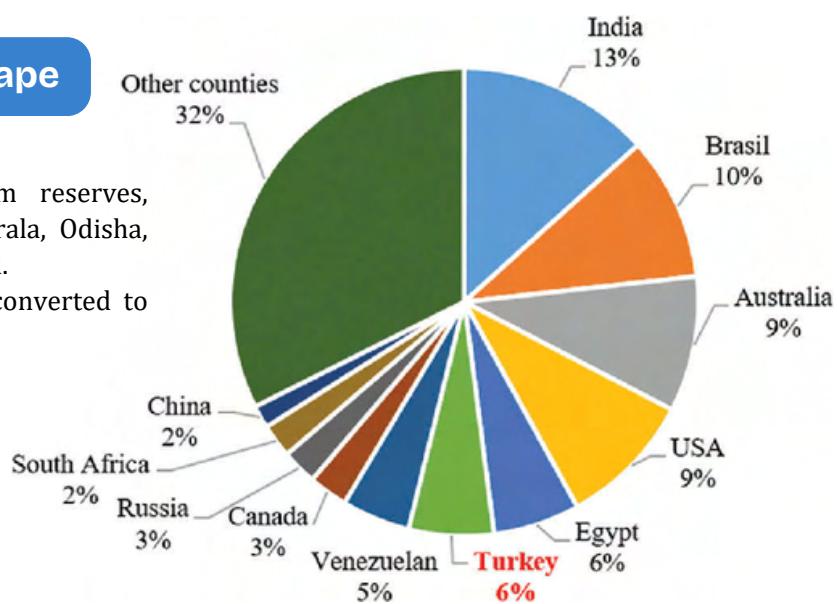
Thorium in India's Energy Landscape

India's Thorium Reserves:

- India holds 25% of the world's thorium reserves, particularly in monazite sands found in Kerala, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal.
- Thorium is a fertile material and must be converted to uranium-233 for use in nuclear reactors.

Challenges:

- High extraction costs and dependence on external fissile materials like uranium-235 or plutonium-239.
- Limited operational experience and infrastructure for thorium reactors.



Thorium Advantages:

- High extraction costs and dependence on external fissile materials like uranium-235 or plutonium-239.
- Limited operational experience and infrastructure for thorium reactors.

India's Three-Stage Nuclear Program

Stage I

- Uses natural uranium (U-238) in PHWRs, with heavy water as coolant and moderator.
- Spent fuel is reprocessed to extract plutonium.

Stage II

- Employs Fast Breeder Reactors (FBRs), utilizing plutonium to generate energy and breed uranium-233 from thorium.

Stage III

- Involves thorium-based reactors fueled by uranium-233, marking a transition to thorium as India's primary nuclear fuel.

India has World's Largest Share of Thorium

Top 5 thorium reserves in the world



Thorium reserves in India

India has abundance of thorium reserves along the eastern coast



Source: World Nuclear Association,

Lok Sabha answers

Graphic: Sarfaraz, Samrat Sharma

International Developments in Thorium

Energy

China's Thorium Reactor:

- Gobi Desert Plant: The world's first thorium molten salt nuclear power station will launch in 2025.
- Advantages:

1. Uses liquid salt or CO₂ for cooling, eliminating water dependency.
2. Reduces meltdown risks significantly.

Global Significance:

- Thorium-based reactors are viewed as the next-generation solution to global energy demands, ensuring sustainability, safety, and environmental protection.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. What is the name of the thorium-based fuel developed by NTPC Limited and CCTE?
 - (a) Aneel Fuel
 - (b) Thor Fuel
 - (c) Heavy Water Fuel
 - (d) Enriched Uranium Fuel

2. Which type of reactors will use the Aneel fuel according to the partnership?
 - (a) Boiling Water Reactors
 - (b) Fast Breeder Reactors
 - (c) Pressurized Heavy Water Reactors
 - (d) Liquid Metal Reactors

3. What strategic significance does the Aneel fuel project hold for NTPC?
 - (a) It supports NTPC's transition to renewable energy sources.
 - (b) It supports NTPC's transition to clean and dispatchable baseload energy sources.
 - (c) It marks NTPC's move away from nuclear power.
 - (d) It initiates NTPC's exploration into oil and gas.

4. Which of the following is a goal of the collaboration between NTPC and CCTE?
 - (a) To phase out nuclear energy in India.
 - (b) To develop and deploy thorium-based fuel solutions.
 - (c) To decrease India's energy independence.
 - (d) To focus solely on solar energy.

5. Which state is NOT mentioned as a location for thorium reserves in India?
 - (a) Kerala
 - (b) Odisha
 - (c) Gujarat
 - (d) Tamil Nadu

ANSWER KEY

1. (a) 2. (c) 3. (b) 4. (b) 5. (c) 6. (b) 7. (c) 8. (a) 9. (b)

NASA's Parker Solar Probe

News Highlights:

- NASA's Parker Solar Probe achieved a historic milestone by making the closest-ever approach to the Sun on December 24, 2024.
- The probe came within 3.8 million miles (6.2 million kilometers) of the Sun's surface, enduring extreme temperatures and radiation.
- The flyby is a crucial step in understanding solar phenomena, including the Sun's corona and solar wind.
- Communication with the spacecraft will resume on December 28, 2024, to confirm its status.

MISSION 'TO TOUCH THE SUN'

Nasa's Parker Solar Probe

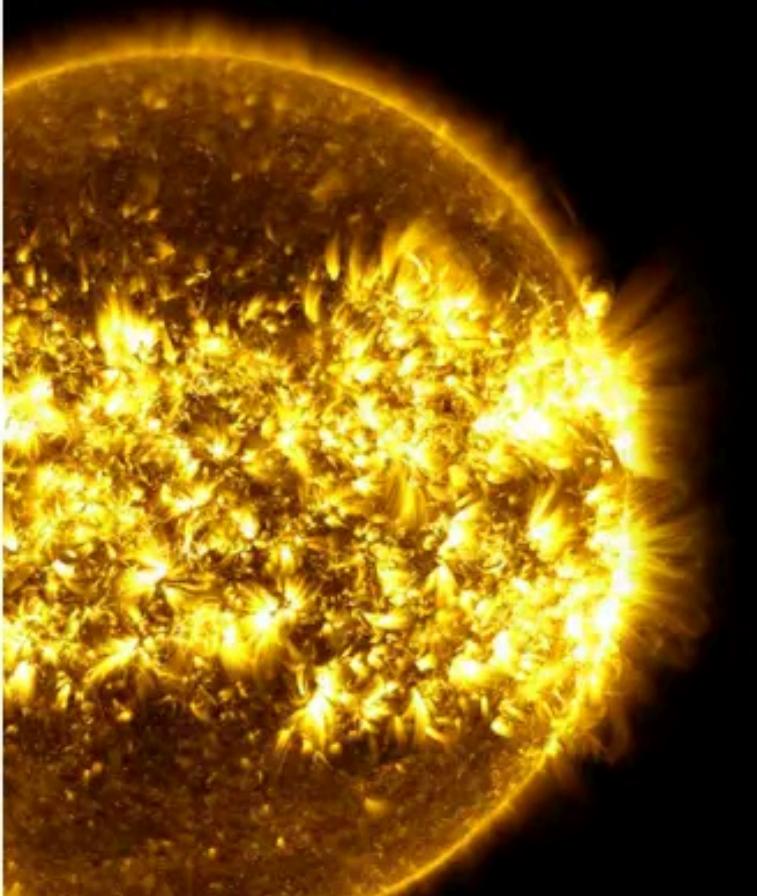
6.12 million km Closest Parker mission will get to Sun

43 million km Previous closest probe (Helios-2, in 1976)

1,300C Expected temperature on protective front heatshield

190km/s Super-fast speed Parker will attain (120mi/s)

60 Years since a mission like Parker first proposed



Mission Overview

- **Launch Details:** Parker Solar Probe was launched on August 12, 2018, as part of NASA's mission to study the Sun.
- **Objective:** To "touch" the Sun by flying through its corona and collect data on solar wind, magnetic fields, and solar activity.
- **Record-Breaking Speed:** The probe reached speeds of 430,000 mph (692,000 km/h), making it the fastest human-made object in history.
- **Protection Mechanism:** Equipped with a 4.5-inch (11.5 cm) carbon-composite shield, the probe withstands temperatures up to 1,400°C (2,500°F).

Scientific Goals

- **Understanding the Corona:** The Sun's corona is millions of degrees hotter than its surface; the mission seeks to uncover the reasons behind this anomaly.

- **Solar Wind Research:**
 - Investigates how the solar wind, a constant stream of charged particles, is generated.
 - Examines its effects on Earth, such as **auroras and geomagnetic storms**.
- **Space Weather Prediction:**
 - Studies coronal mass ejections (CMEs) to understand their structure.
 - Aims to improve predictions of space weather events that can disrupt communication and power systems on Earth.

Technological Features

- **Cooling Systems:**
 - Maintains interior systems at room temperature despite external temperatures reaching **1,400°C**.
 - Utilizes a water-based cooling mechanism for solar arrays.
- **Autonomous Operation:** Operates independently during closest approaches due to communication blackout caused by proximity to the Sun.

Future Prospects

- **Upcoming Flybys:**
 - Two additional close approaches are planned for March 22 and June 19, 2025.
 - Data from these flybys will refine our understanding of solar phenomena.
- **Impact on Science:**
 - Provides a unique laboratory to study the Sun and other stars in the universe.
 - Aids in understanding the interaction between stars and their planets.

India's Space Mission for SUN

India's inaugural solar mission, **Aditya-L1**, marks a significant milestone in the nation's space exploration endeavors. Launched by the **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** on **September 2, 2023**, this mission is dedicated to studying the Sun from a unique vantage point.

Mission Overview:

- **Launch Details:**
 - **Date:** September 2, 2023
 - **Time:** 11:50 IST
 - **Launch Vehicle:** Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV-C57)
 - **Launch Site:** Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota, India
- **Spacecraft Specifications:**
 - **Mass:** Approximately 1,472 kg
 - **Payloads:** Seven scientific instruments designed to observe various aspects of the Sun, including the photosphere, chromosphere, and corona.

Mission Objectives:

Aditya-L1 aims to enhance our understanding of the Sun's dynamics and its influence on space weather. The primary objectives include:

- **Studying the solar corona** to understand the mechanisms of coronal heating and mass ejections.
- **Observing solar flares** and their impact on the interplanetary medium.
- **Measuring the solar wind** and its interaction with the Earth's magnetosphere.
- **Investigating the dynamics of the solar atmosphere** to comprehend the processes leading to solar eruptions.

Significance and Journey:

- Aditya-L1 is India's first dedicated mission to study the Sun, marking a pivotal step in space-based solar observations.
- The data collected is anticipated to provide valuable insights into solar activities and their effects on space weather,

which can influence satellite operations, communications, and power grids on Earth.

- The spacecraft is set to travel approximately **1.5 million kilometers** from Earth to position itself at the **Lagrange Point 1 (L1)**, a location that offers an uninterrupted view of the Sun.
- This journey is expected to take about four months, with the spacecraft reaching its destination in early January 2024.

South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) is an independent agency of the U.S. federal government responsible for the nation's civilian space program, as well as aeronautics and aerospace research.

NASA

In response to the Soviet Union's launch of **Sputnik 1** in 1957, the United States recognised the need for a dedicated space agency.

This led to the creation of NASA through the **National Aeronautics and Space Act**, signed into law by **President Dwight D. Eisenhower** on **July 29, 1958**.

The agency became operational on October 1, 1958, absorbing its predecessor, the **National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA)**.

Key Achievements

- **Apollo Moon Landings (1969-1972):** NASA's **Apollo program** successfully landed twelve astronauts on the Moon, marking a significant milestone in human space exploration.
- **Space Shuttle Program (1981-2011):** The reusable **Space Shuttle** fleet facilitated numerous missions, including satellite deployments, scientific research, and the construction of the International Space Station (ISS).
- Mars Exploration: Robotic missions, such as the Curiosity and Perseverance rovers, have provided valuable insights into the geology and potential habitability of Mars.
- **James Webb Space Telescope (2021):** Launched in 2021, this advanced telescope offers unprecedented views of the universe, aiding in the study of galaxy formation, exoplanets, and cosmic phenomena.

Current Initiatives

- **Artemis Program:** Aiming to return astronauts to the Moon, including the first woman and the next man, and establish a sustainable human presence by the end of the decade.
- **Mars Sample Return:** In collaboration with international partners, NASA plans to retrieve samples from Mars to Earth for detailed analysis.
- **Commercial Partnerships:** NASA collaborates with private companies, such as SpaceX and Boeing, to develop spacecraft and technologies that support missions to the ISS and beyond.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. What is the primary objective of NASA's Parker Solar Probe mission?
 - (a) To study the Sun's corona and collect data on solar wind and magnetic fields
 - (b) To analyze the Sun's atmosphere and gather information about its magnetic fields
 - (c) To investigate solar wind and understand the dynamics of the Sun's magnetic activity
 - (d) To explore the outer layers of the Sun and examine solar wind patterns

2. What is the full form of NASA?
 - (a) National Aerospace and Satellite Agency
 - (b) National Aeronautics and Space Administration
 - (c) National Academy of Space and Aeronautics
 - (d) National Astronomical and Scientific Agency

3. Who was the Solar Probe named after?
 - (a) Dr. Eugene Parker
 - (b) Dr. Nicola Fox
 - (c) Dr. Jenifer Millard
 - (d) Dr. Carl Sagan

4. When was India's Aditya-L1 mission launched, and which launch vehicle was used?
 - (a) August 15, 2023; GSLV Mk III
 - (b) September 2, 2023; PSLV-C57
 - (c) October 10, 2023; PSLV-C49
 - (d) December 5, 2023; GSLV Mk II

5. Which NASA mission made Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin the first humans to walk on the Moon?
 - (a) Apollo 10
 - (b) Apollo 12
 - (c) Apollo 11
 - (d) Apollo 13

6. When was NASA's Parker Solar Probe launched?
 - (a) 2024
 - (b) 2018
 - (c) 2020
 - (d) 2019

7. What innovative cooling mechanism does the Parker Solar Probe use to maintain its systems at room temperature?
 - (a) Air-based cooling system
 - (b) Liquid nitrogen cooling
 - (c) Water-based cooling mechanism
 - (d) Solar panel heat dissipation

8. Where will Aditya-L1 position itself to observe the Sun?
 - (a) Earth's orbit
 - (b) Lunar orbit
 - (c) Lagrange Point 1
 - (d) Geosynchronous orbit

9. What is NASA's motto?
 - (a) "Reach Beyond"
 - (b) "For the Benefit of All"
 - (c) "Space Exploration for Tomorrow"
 - (d) "Advancing the Future"

10. Who is the current Administrator of NASA as of 2025?
 - (a) Charles Bolden
 - (b) Jim Bridenstine
 - (c) Bill Nelson
 - (d) Michael Griffin

ANSWER KEY

- | | | | | | | | |
|--------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1. (a) | 2. (b) | 3. (a) | 4. (b) | 5. (c) | 6. (b) | 7. (c) | 8. (c) |
| 9. (b) | 10. (c) | | | | | | |

HMPV Virus

News Highlights:

The **Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV)** has garnered attention globally due to its rising cases, particularly in countries like **China and sporadically in India**.

- While the virus is not new, its potential to cause severe respiratory issues in vulnerable populations underscores the need for awareness, prevention, and strategic health measures.

Overview of HMPV

- Discovery and Classification:** HMPV, identified in 2001 in the Netherlands, belongs to the **Paramyxoviridae family**, sharing similarities with the Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV).
- Nature:** It is an enveloped, non-segmented, negative-sense single-stranded RNA virus capable of causing a range of **respiratory illnesses** from **mild flu-like symptoms to severe conditions like pneumonia and bronchitis**.
- Genetic Lineages:** The virus is classified into two main genetic lineages: A and B, each further divided into sub-lineages A1, A2, B1, and B2.
- Modes of Spread:** HMPV is primarily transmitted through contact with contaminated secretions via droplets, aerosols, or fomites. Nosocomial (hospital-acquired) infections have been documented.
- Seasonality:** In temperate regions, HMPV activity peaks during late winter and spring, often coinciding with RSV and influenza seasons.
- High-Risk Groups:** The virus disproportionately affects children under five, the elderly, and individuals with weakened immune systems or pre-existing health conditions.

Global Recognition

The symptoms of HMPV vary from mild to severe, depending on the individual's health condition:

Mild Symptoms:



- Runny nose, sneezing, and coughing.
- Sore throat and mild fever.

Severe Symptoms:

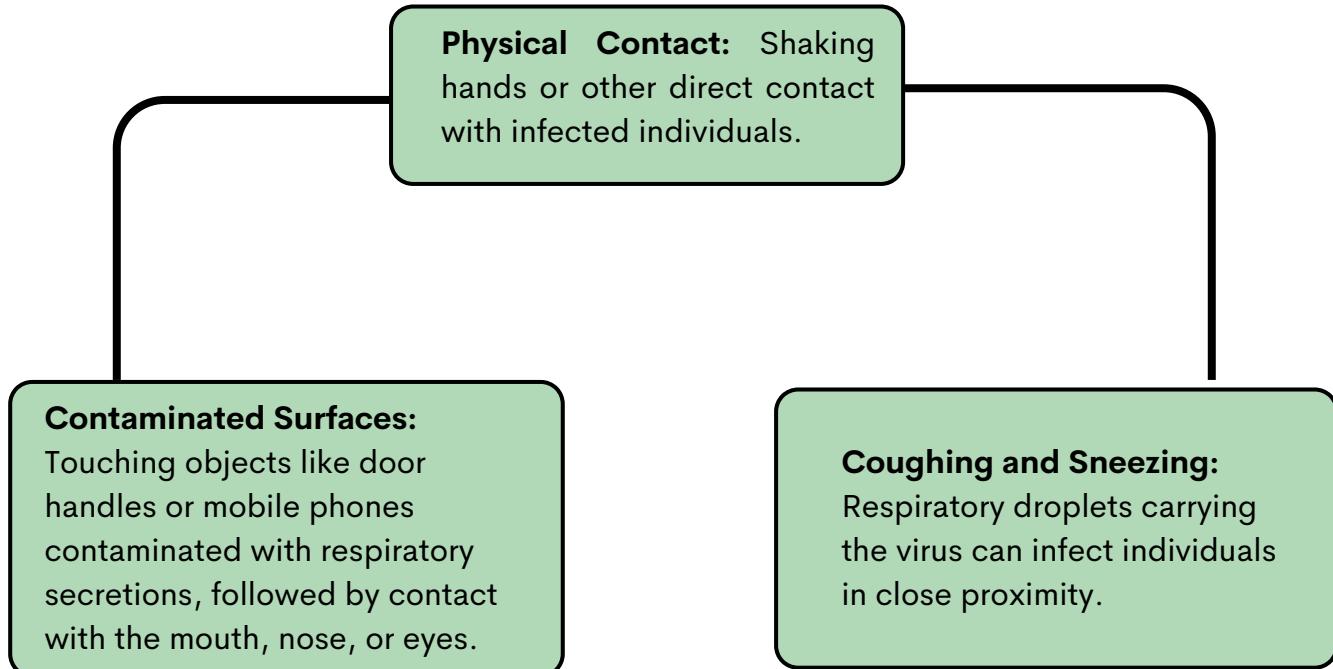
Rare but critical symptoms like **coughing blood** or severe respiratory distress may occur in vulnerable groups.

- Exacerbation of asthma** in pre-existing cases.
- Development of bronchitis or pneumonia.**
- Wheezing and shortness of breath.**



Transmission Mechanism

HMPV spreads primarily through respiratory droplets and contaminated surfaces. Common modes of transmission include:



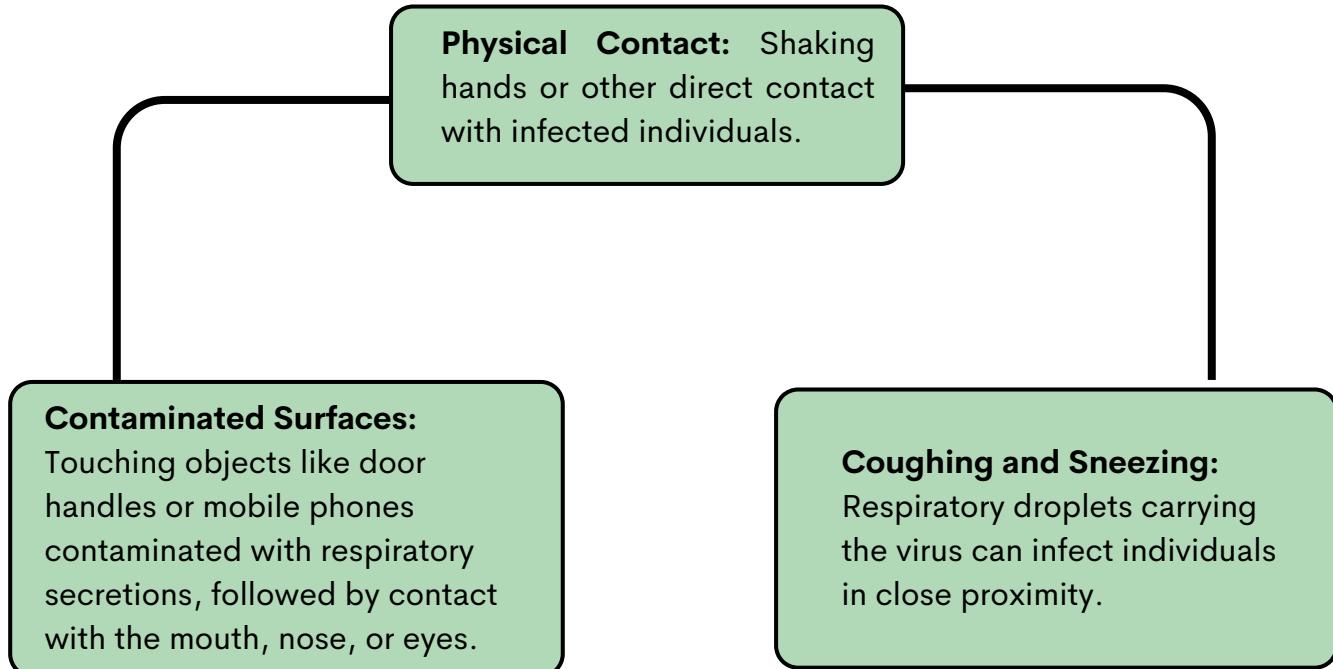
Prevention Strategies

As there are **no vaccines or antiviral drugs specifically for HMPV**, preventive measures focus on minimizing exposure and maintaining hygiene:



Transmission Mechanism

HMPV spreads primarily through respiratory droplets and contaminated surfaces. Common modes of transmission include:



Prevention Strategies

As there are **no vaccines or antiviral drugs specifically for HMPV**, preventive measures focus on minimizing exposure and maintaining hygiene:



HMPV in India: Current Scenario

Recent Cases:

As of January 2025, **India has reported multiple HMPV cases** across states like Gujarat, Karnataka, Puducherry, and Assam.

These include vulnerable populations such as a **nine-month-old child** in Gujarat and an **eight-month-old infant** in Karnataka.

Government Response:

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has acknowledged that HMPV is already in circulation globally, including India.

States have been advised to enhance surveillance for Influenza-Like Illnesses (ILI) and **Severe Acute Respiratory Illnesses (SARI)**.

Global Perspective

Surge in China:

HMPV cases have seen a significant rise in **China's northern provinces**, although the **World Health Organization (WHO)** notes that this aligns with **expected seasonal trends**.

WHO Insights:

WHO has emphasized that **Chinese healthcare systems remain stable** despite the surge and no emergency measures have been triggered.

Why is HMPV a Concern?

While the virus is generally mild, it poses significant risks to:

- **Infants and young children**, particularly under 5 years of age.
- **Elderly individuals** with weaker immunity.
- **Immunocompromised patients** or those with chronic respiratory or cardiac conditions.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. When was Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV) first identified?
 - (a) 1995
 - (b) 2001
 - (c) 2010
 - (d) 2015
2. Which family does HMPV belong to?
 - (a) Orthomyxoviridae
 - (b) Paramyxoviridae
 - (c) Coronaviridae
 - (d) Flaviviridae
3. What is the primary mode of transmission for HMPV?
 - (a) Contaminated food
 - (b) Insect bites
 - (c) Respiratory droplets
 - (d) Blood transfusion
4. Which age group is most commonly affected by severe HMPV infections?
 - (a) Adolescents (13-19 years)
 - (b) Young adults (20-35 years)
 - (c) Middle-aged adults (36-50 years)
 - (d) Children under 5 years
5. What is the typical incubation period for HMPV?
 - (a) 1-2 days
 - (b) 3-5 days
 - (c) 6-8 days
 - (d) 9-12 days
6. What is the primary method of preventing HMPV transmission?
 - (a) Vaccination
 - (b) Antiviral medication
 - (c) Good hygiene practices
 - (d) Wearing gloves
7. Which of the following is NOT a severe symptom of HMPV?
 - (a) Runny nose and sneezing
 - (b) Development of pneumonia
 - (c) Wheezing and shortness of breath
 - (d) Exacerbation of asthma in pre-existing cases
8. How is HMPV primarily transmitted?
 - (a) Through contaminated food
 - (b) By exposure to UV rays
 - (c) Through respiratory droplets and contaminated surfaces
 - (d) By insect bites
9. What severe condition can develop in vulnerable individuals infected with HMPV?
 - (a) Pneumonia
 - (b) Asthma
 - (c) Diabetes
 - (d) Skin rashes
10. In which country was the Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV) first discovered?
 - (a) China
 - (b) United States
 - (c) Netherlands
 - (d) India

ANSWER KEY

- | | | | | | | | |
|--------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1. (b) | 2. (b) | 3. (c) | 4. (d) | 5. (b) | 6. (c) | 7. (a) | 8. (c) |
| 9. (a) | 10. (d) | | | | | | |

STRESS MANAGEMENT SESSION



LE HAZRATGANJ



Static Scoop

Disintegration of the Soviet Union

News Highlights:

On December 25, 1991, the hammer and sickle flag was lowered over the Kremlin for the last time, marking the **end of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR)**. This event not only dismantled a global superpower but also reshaped global geopolitics, influencing conflicts such as the ongoing **Russia-Ukraine war**. Understanding the **internal challenges and external pressures** that led to the USSR's collapse offers critical insights into its enduring legacy and the rebalancing of power in a **post-Cold War world**.

Key Highlights of the Soviet Union's Collapse



Internal Faultlines

External Pressures

Economic Stagnation:

- The USSR's centrally planned economy struggled with inefficiencies, overproduction of military goods, and chronic shortages of consumer goods.
- By the 1980s, the economy could no longer sustain global ambitions, including the arms race and space program.

Reforms Gone Awry:

- Mikhail Gorbachev's policies of **glasnost (openness) and perestroika (restructuring)**, aimed at revitalizing the system, instead exposed the regime's weaknesses.
- Competitive elections in **1989** and attacks on corruption led to nationalist uprisings in republics like Lithuania, Ukraine, and the Caucasus.

Nationalist Movements:

- Republics such as the Baltic states (Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia) and Ukraine declared independence, signaling the fragmentation of the Soviet state.
- Boris Yeltsin's rise to power in Russia in 1991 intensified these fissures.

Failed Coup of August 1991:

- A coup by Communist hardliners failed to restore control, instead undermining Gorbachev's authority and accelerating the USSR's disintegration.

Cold War Arms Race:

- Decades of military competition with the United States drained resources and weakened the Soviet economy.
- Expensive commitments in **proxy wars** (e.g., Vietnam and Afghanistan) and nuclear programs further destabilized the system.

Defeat in Afghanistan (1979–1989):

- The Soviet Union's inability to suppress the **US-backed Mujahideen** exposed its military vulnerabilities and diminished global influence.

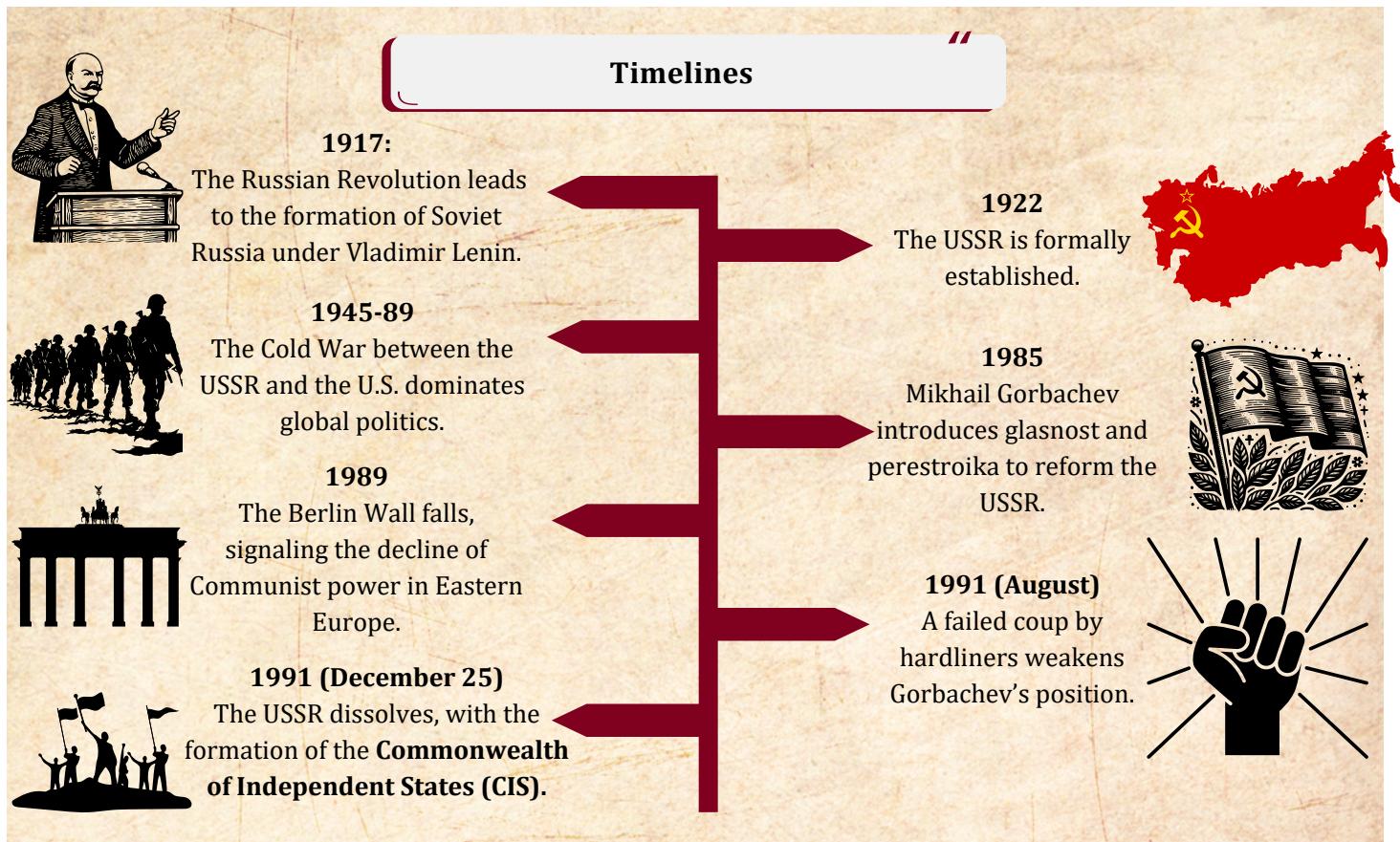
The Fall of the Berlin Wall (1989):

- Symbolizing the collapse of Communist regimes in Eastern Europe, this event marked the unraveling of Soviet hegemony in its satellite states.



George H.W. Bush's Diplomacy:

- The U.S. under President Bush worked cautiously with both **Gorbachev** and **Yeltsin**, promoting arms control agreements like START and aiding transitions in post-Soviet states.



Consequences of the Soviet Union's Fall

Economic and Political Reforms in Post-Soviet States

Russia's Transition:

- Under Boris Yeltsin, Russia pursued democratic reforms and market liberalization, though this led to economic instability and widespread corruption.
- Russia's vast nuclear arsenal became a primary concern for global security.

Rise of Ethnic and Regional Conflicts:

- The USSR's collapse triggered wars in regions like Chechnya, Ukraine, and the Caucasus, many of which persist today.

Global Geopolitical Shifts

Rise of the United States:

- The U.S. emerged as the world's sole superpower, reshaping global geopolitics in favor of capitalist democracy.
- NATO expanded eastward, incorporating former Eastern Bloc countries, a move viewed by Russia as a threat.

End of the Cold War:

- The ideological battle between **capitalist democracy** and **state-controlled socialism** ended, altering international alliances and power dynamics.

Impact on Socialism and Communism

Decline of Communist Ideology:

- The Soviet collapse discredited state-controlled socialism globally, leading to democratic transitions in several countries.
- China, however, adapted by integrating market reforms while maintaining one-party rule.



Did You Know?

Economic Cost of the Cold War:

- By the late 1980s, the USSR spent approximately **25% of its GDP on defense**, compared to 6% by the U.S.

Largest Nuclear Arsenal:

- At its peak, the Soviet Union had over **40,000 nuclear warheads**, necessitating international efforts to secure these after its collapse.

Republics Post-Dissolution:

- The USSR split into **15 independent nations**, including Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and the Baltic states.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Who is widely credited with initiating the policies that led to the dismantling of the USSR?
 (a) Joseph Stalin (b) Nikita Khrushchev
 (c) Mikhail Gorbachev (d) Boris Yeltsin
2. Who was the President of the United States when the USSR was officially dismantled in 1991?
 (a) Ronald Reagan (b) George H.W. Bush
 (c) Bill Clinton (d) Jimmy Carter
3. What significant global event symbolized the decline of Soviet influence in Eastern Europe?
 (a) The Fall of the Berlin Wall
 (b) The Cuban Missile Crisis
 (c) The Vietnam War
 (d) The signing of the START agreement
4. In which year was the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) officially established?
 (a) 1917 (b) 1922 (c) 1936 (d) 1945
5. How many independent nations emerged after the dissolution of the USSR?
 (a) 15 (b) 12 (c) 10 (d) 20
6. What was one of the primary economic issues that led to the collapse of the Soviet Union?
 (a) Overdependence on agricultural exports
 (b) Chronic shortages of consumer goods
 (c) Excessive investment in renewable energy
 (d) Failure of industrialization
7. What was the purpose of Mikhail Gorbachev's policies of glasnost and perestroika?
 (a) Strengthening the Soviet military
 (b) Expanding the Communist Bloc
 (c) Increasing state control over the economy
 (d) Restructuring and increasing transparency in the USSR
8. What significant event occurred on December 25, 1991, marking the end of the Soviet Union?
 (a) Establishment of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)
 (b) Fall of the Berlin Wall
 (c) Lowering of the Soviet flag over the Kremlin
 (d) Signing of the START Treaty
9. Which organization expanded eastward following the USSR's collapse?
 (a) Warsaw Pact (b) NATO
 (c) CIS (d) SCO
10. Which country adapted to the Soviet collapse by integrating market reforms while maintaining one-party rule?
 (a) Vietnam (b) China
 (c) Cuba (d) North Korea
11. Which event in August 1991 significantly weakened Gorbachev's authority?
 (a) Failed coup by Communist hardliners
 (b) Fall of the Berlin Wall
 (c) Yeltsin's election as President of Russia
 (d) Collapse of the Soviet economy
12. Which war exposed the military vulnerabilities of the Soviet Union during the 1980s?
 (a) Vietnam War (b) Gulf War
 (c) Afghanistan War (d) Korean War
13. Which policy introduced by Gorbachev aimed at reducing censorship and promoting transparency in governance?
 (a) Glasnost (b) Perestroika
 (c) Détente (d) Privatization
14. Which region experienced significant ethnic conflicts as a direct result of the Soviet Union's collapse?
 (a) Baltic States (b) Caucasus
 (c) Balkans (d) Central Asia

ANSWER KEY

1. (a) 2. (b) 3. (a) 4. (b) 5. (c) 6. (b) 7. (c) 8. (c)
9. (b) 10. (c)

Miscellaneous

National Sports Awards 2024 Recognize Excellence in Indian Sports

News Highlights:

The **National Sports Awards** represent India's highest recognition of contributions to sports, honoring athletes, coaches, and institutions for their exceptional achievements.

- The **2024 awards ceremony**, organized by the **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports**, will take place on **January 17, 2025**, at **Rashtrapati Bhavan**, where **President Droupadi Murmu** will present the honors.

Factual Highlights of National Sports Awards 2024



Gukesh D



Praveen Kumar



Harmanpreet Singh



Manu Bhaker

Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award

The **Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award** is India's **highest sporting honor**, awarded to athletes for outstanding performances over the last four years. In 2024, this award is conferred upon the following individuals:

- **Gukesh D (Chess)**: The **18-year-old** became the **youngest chess world champion in 2024**, cementing his place in international chess history.
- **Harmanpreet Singh (Hockey)**: The Indian hockey team captain led the national squad to bronze at the **2024 Paris Olympics**, securing India's podium finish.
- **Praveen Kumar (Para-Athletics)**: At the **2024 Paris Paralympics**, Praveen clinched the **gold medal** in the **Men's High Jump (T64)** category, demonstrating extraordinary determination and skill.
- **Manu Bhaker (Shooting)**: Manu Bhaker made history by becoming India's first double Olympic medalist in a single edition, winning medals in shooting events at the 2024 Paris Olympics.

Arjuna Awards for Outstanding Performance in Sports and Games

The Arjuna Award is one of India's most prestigious honors, recognizing outstanding achievements in national sports. Instituted in **1961** by the **Government of India**, it acknowledges athletes who have demonstrated exceptional performance over the previous four years, as well as qualities of leadership, sportsmanship, and discipline. **Recipients receive a bronze statuette of Arjuna, a certificate, ceremonial attire, and a cash prize**. As of 2020, the cash prize was **₹15,00,000**. In 2024:

- **Number of Awardees**: The award was conferred on **34 athletes, including 17 para-athletes**.

Key Recipients in Athletics:

- **Jyothi Yarraj (Athletics):** The national sprinter broke multiple records and emerged as one of India's top athletes.
- **Annu Rani (Athletics):** Known for her record-breaking achievements in javelin throw.

Key Recipients in Hockey:

- **Salima Tete:** A vital player in India's national women's hockey team.
- **Sukhjeet Singh and Jarmanpreet Singh:** Contributed significantly to India's Olympic bronze medal win.

Achievements in Para-Sports:

- **Rakesh Kumar (Para-Archery):** Earned a bronze medal at the **2024 Paris Paralympics**, excelling in archery events.
- **Nitesh Kumar and Manisha Ramadass (Para-Badminton):** Dominated international para-badminton tournaments throughout 2024.

Arjuna Award (Lifetime)

This category honors retired athletes for their sustained contribution to Indian sports. In 2024:

- **Sucha Singh (Athletics):** Recognized for his long-standing achievements and role in promoting athletics post-retirement.
- **Murlikant Rajaram Petkar (Para-Swimming):** India's first Paralympic gold medalist (1972) and a pioneering figure in para-sports.



Sucha Singh



Murlikant Rajaram Petkar

Dronacharya Awards for Outstanding Coaches in Sports and Games

The Dronacharya Award acknowledges the crucial role of coaches in developing athletes and achieving excellence at the international level.

Regular Category:

- **Subhash Rana (Para-Shooting):** Trained several para-athletes who excelled at the 2024 Paralympics.
- **Deepali Deshpande (Shooting):** Coached medal-winning shooters, including Manu Bhaker.
- **Sandeep Sangwan (Hockey):** Key contributor to India's hockey resurgence on the global stage.



Subhash Rana



Deepali Deshpande

Lifetime Category:

- **S Muralidharan (Badminton):** Lauded for nurturing numerous badminton talents over the years.
- **Armando Agnelo Colaco (Football):** A visionary football coach who has played a key role in advancing Indian football.

Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puraskar

The Physical Education Foundation of India was honored with this award for its notable contributions to sports education and grassroots development programs.



Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (MAKA) Trophy

This award recognizes the best-performing universities in the Khelo India University Games. In 2024:

- Chandigarh University secured the top position as the overall champion.
- Lovely Professional University (Punjab) and Guru Nanak Dev University (Amritsar) were named first and second runners-up, respectively.



Significant Achievements of the 2024 Awards

- **Exceptional Recognition of Para-Athletes:**
 - A record 17 para-athletes received the Arjuna Award, reflecting India's spectacular performance at the 2024 Paris Paralympics, where Indian para-athletes bagged 29 medals, including 7 golds.
- **Young Achievers Making History:**
 - Manu Bhaker, at 22, became the first Indian athlete to win two Olympic medals in a single edition.
 - Gukesh D, at 18, established himself as the youngest chess world champion, showcasing India's growing dominance in the sport.
- **Women in Sports:**
 - Female athletes such as Salima Tete (Hockey), Jyothi Yarraj (Athletics), and Nitu (Boxing) underscored India's rising strength in diverse sporting fields.
- **Coaching Excellence:**
 - Coaches like Armando Agnelo Colaco and Deepali Deshpande were recognized for their instrumental roles in advancing India's sporting prowess internationally.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Who was the first athlete to receive the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award when it was originally instituted?

(a) Sachin Tendulkar (b) Vishwanathan Anand
 (c) P.T. Usha (d) Leander Paes
2. In which year was the Arjuna Award first instituted in India?

(a) 1952 (b) 1961
 (c) 1975 (d) 1982
3. Who was India's first Paralympic gold medalist and a 2024 recipient of an award for his contribution to Indian sports?

(a) Deepa Malik (b) Rakesh Kumar
 (c) Murlikant Rajaram Petkar (d) Nitesh Kumar
4. Who received the Dronacharya Award in the lifetime category for his contributions to football coaching?

(a) Armando Agnelo Colaco (b) Sandeep Sangwan
 (c) Subhash Rana (d) S Muralidharan
5. How many para-athletes received the Arjuna Award in 2024, reflecting India's exceptional performance at the Paris Paralympics?

(a) 10 (b) 12 (c) 17 (d) 20
6. Who became the youngest chess world champion in 2024 and received the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award?

(a) R Praggnanandhaa (b) Nihal Sarin
 (c) Gukesh D (d) Vidit Gujrathi

ANSWER KEY

1. (a) 2. (b) 3. (a) 4. (b) 5. (c) 6. (b) 7. (c) 8. (c)
9. (b) 10. (c)

PARENTS TEACHER MEET



LE INDORE



Dr. Manmohan Singh

News Highlights:

- Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh passed away at the age of 92 on December 26, 2024 in New Delhi due to age-related medical conditions.
- Singh, who served as **Prime Minister from May 22, 2004, to May 26, 2014**, was renowned for his role in **economic reforms in 1991**, which liberalized India's economy.
- He passed away after being admitted to the **All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS)**, where he was declared dead after efforts to revive him were unsuccessful.
- His death prompted **national mourning and tributes from leaders** across political and business sectors, reflecting his significant impact on India's development.

Dr. Manmohan Singh: A Detailed Overview



Early Life and Education

Birth and Early Life: Dr. Manmohan Singh was born on **September 26, 1932**, in **Gah**, a **village in West Punjab (now in Pakistan)**. Following the partition in 1947, his family migrated to India, where Singh grew up in humble circumstances.

Education: Singh showed an early interest in academics and pursued higher education in economics. He earned a **Bachelor's and Master's degree in Economics** from **Panjab University, Chandigarh**. After completing his studies in India, he went on to study abroad:

- M.A. in Economics from the University of Cambridge in 1957.
- Doctorate in Economics from the University of Oxford in 1962.

Academic and Professional Career

United Nations and Early Career:

- After completing his education, Dr. Singh worked at the **United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)** in Geneva from 1966 to 1969, contributing to the global economic discourse.

Delhi School of Economics:

- He later served as a **professor of International Trade** at the **Delhi School of Economics** from 1969 to 1971, shaping the minds of future economists.

Key Government Positions:

- Singh's career in public service began in the early 1970s. He held several significant government positions:
 - Chief Economic Adviser in the Ministry of Finance (1972–1976).**
 - Secretary in the Ministry of Finance (1976–1980).**
 - Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) (1982–1985).**
 - Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission of India (1985–1987).**
- Additionally, he served as the **Secretary-General of the South Commission** and played roles in several financial institutions, both domestic and international.

Contributions and Policies

Economic Reforms of 1991:

- As **Finance Minister** under Prime Minister **P.V. Narasimha Rao**, Dr. Singh is best known for his role in spearheading the 1991 economic reforms. These reforms included:
 - Devaluation of the Indian Rupee: Making Indian goods more competitive on the global market.

- **Dismantling of the License Raj:** Reducing bureaucratic controls over the economy and promoting industrial growth.
- Encouraging Foreign Direct Investment (FDI): Opening up the economy to global markets.
- **Trade Liberalisation:** Reducing tariffs and taxes to foster competition and innovation.
- These measures laid the foundation for India's market-oriented economy and set the stage for rapid economic growth in the following decades.
- **Prime Ministerial Initiatives (2004-2014):** Dr. Singh's tenure as Prime Minister saw continued efforts to modernize the economy while ensuring inclusive growth. His government introduced several social and economic reforms:
 - **National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA):** Ensuring employment for rural households.
 - **Right to Information Act (RTI):** Empowering citizens to access government information, promoting transparency.
 - **Foreign Policy:** Strengthened India's position globally, particularly through the Indo-US Civil Nuclear Agreement, which allowed India access to civilian nuclear technology.

Economic Growth:

- Under Dr. Singh's leadership, India experienced an average GDP growth of 8-9% during his first term as Prime Minister. His economic policies encouraged industrial growth, poverty reduction, and a booming middle class.

Awards and Honours

Padma Vibhushan (1987): Dr. Singh was awarded India's second-highest civilian honor for his contributions to the economy.

Honorary Degrees: Singh received numerous honorary degrees from prestigious universities, including:

- University of Cambridge,
- University of Oxford,
- University of Bologna,
- Delhi University,
- University of Mysore.

Other Honors:

- **World Statesman Award** (2010) by the **Appeal of Conscience Foundation** for his global leadership.
- Included in **Time magazine's list of the 100 most influential people** in the world in 2005.

Notable Facts

- **First Sikh Prime Minister:** Dr. Singh made history as the first **Sikh** to become the **Prime Minister of India**, holding the position from **2004 to 2014**.
- **Re-election as Prime Minister:** He was the first Prime Minister since **Jawaharlal Nehru** to be re-elected for a second term, after completing a full five-year term from 2004-2009.
- **Personal Life:** Dr. Singh was married to **Gursharan Kaur**, with whom he had **three daughters**. He was known for his **private and humble** nature, preferring to stay away from the limelight despite his public office.
- **Languages:** He was fluent in **Punjabi, Hindi, and English**, which helped him communicate effectively across different segments of Indian society and international leaders.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. When did former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh pass away recently?
 - (a) December 24, 2024
 - (b) December 25, 2024
 - (c) December 30, 2024
 - (d) December 26, 2024
2. What key economic reform was spearheaded by Dr. Manmohan Singh as Finance Minister in 1991?
 - (a) Nationalization of banks
 - (b) Introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST)
 - (c) Dismantling of the License Raj and promoting liberalization
 - (d) Implementation of demonetization
3. Which major legislation was introduced during Dr. Manmohan Singh's tenure as Prime Minister to ensure employment for rural households?
 - (a) Right to Education Act
 - (b) National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
 - (c) Food Security Act
 - (d) Land Acquisition Act

4. Which civilian honor was awarded to Dr. Manmohan Singh in 1987 for his contributions to the Indian economy?
(a) Padma Vibhushan (b) Bharat Ratna
(c) Padma Bhushan (d) Padma Shri
5. What significant milestone did Dr. Manmohan Singh achieve during his tenure as Prime Minister?
(a) He was the first Sikh to serve as Prime Minister of India.
(b) He introduced the Goods and Services Tax (GST).
(c) He was the first Prime Minister to serve without a political party affiliation.
(d) He served the longest continuous term as Prime Minister in Indian history.
6. What role did Dr. Manmohan Singh serve in from 1982 to 1985?
(a) Chief Economic Adviser
(b) Governor of the Reserve Bank of India
(c) Secretary in the Ministry of Finance
(d) Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission
7. Which major international agreement did Dr. Manmohan Singh play a key role in as Prime Minister?
(a) SAARC Free Trade Agreement
(b) Indo-US Civil Nuclear Agreement
(c) ASEAN-India Free Trade Agreement
(d) Paris Climate Accord
8. Which award did Dr. Manmohan Singh receive in 2010 for his global leadership?
(a) World Food Prize (b) Nobel Peace Prize
(c) World Statesman Award (d) Global Economic Award
9. In which year did Dr. Manmohan Singh first become Prime Minister of India?
(a) 1991 (b) 1999 (c) 2004 (d) 2009
10. Dr. Manmohan Singh served as a professor of International Trade at which institution?
(a) Jawaharlal Nehru University
(b) Delhi School of Economics
(c) Indian Institute of Management
(d) Panjab University
11. Which global position did Dr. Manmohan Singh hold at the United Nations from 1966 to 1969?
(a) Director of Economic Policy Division
(b) Consultant for International Trade
(c) Staff Member at UNCTAD
(d) Chairperson of the South Commission
12. Which historic agreement during Dr. Singh's tenure as Finance Minister involved the devaluation of the Indian Rupee?
(a) Bretton Woods Agreement
(b) 1991 Economic Liberalization Package
(c) WTO Accession Framework
(d) South Asian Free Trade Agreement
13. Dr. Manmohan Singh received honorary degrees from several universities. Which of the following is NOT one of them?
(a) University of Cambridge (b) University of Bologna
(c) University of Chicago (d) University of Mysore

ANSWER KEY

1. (c) 2. (c) 3. (b) 4. (a) 5. (a) 6. (b) 7. (b) 8. (c)
9. (c) 10. (b) 11. (c) 12. (b) 13. (c)

Surya Kiran 18 Focuses on Urban Warfare and Counterterrorism

News Highlights:

The Indo-Nepal Joint Military Exercise Surya Kiran, now in its 18th edition, highlights the **strong defense partnership** between **India** and **Nepal**. This annual exercise, hosted alternately in the two countries, is designed to improve **interoperability, operational readiness, and military cooperation**. It addresses modern warfare challenges, counterterrorism measures, and the provision of **humanitarian aid**.

Key Facts and Highlights of Surya Kiran 18

The 18th edition of the exercise is being held in Saljhandi, Nepal, from December 31, 2024, to January 13, 2025.

The Indian Army is represented by a battalion of the 11th Gorkha Rifles, which includes 334 personnel.

On the other side, the Srijung Battalion from the Nepalese Army is participating in the exercise.

The primary objectives are to enhance interoperability in jungle warfare, counterterrorism, and urban operations.

It also aims to strengthen skills in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) under the United Nations Charter. Additionally, it fosters operational coordination in difficult terrains and mountainous regions.

Exercise Surya Kiran 2024



Focus Areas of Training

- The training includes techniques for **survival** in **dense and rugged forest environments**. Urban warfare scenarios involve **close-quarter combat, room-clearing techniques, and simulated urban battles**.
- Heliborne operations** cover troop insertion and extraction via helicopters. **Defensive and offensive ambush training** is provided to prepare for combat situations.
- The training also focuses on **medical aid, disaster management, and evacuation procedures** during **humanitarian missions**.

Cultural and Ceremonial Highlights

- The **opening ceremony** featured a **traditional march** with **military bands** from both countries performing harmonized **Indian and Nepali tunes**.
- Major General Prem Bahadur Gurung**, General Officer Commanding of Nepal's Mid-West Division, addressed the gathering.
- He emphasized the importance of **learning from each other** while enhancing **brotherhood and interoperability**.



Historical and Strategic Context

The **Surya Kiran series** began in **2011** and has alternated between **India** and **Nepal** since its inception. It reflects the **deep-rooted bilateral military cooperation** and the **strong ties** shared by the two nations.

Recently, **high-profile visits** by military leaders, such as **General Upendra Dwivedi** from **India** and **General Ashok Raj Sigdel** from **Nepal**, have further cemented these ties. Both nations share a **deep cultural and historical relationship**, strengthened through the **Gorkha regiments** serving in the **Indian Army**.

This exercise reaffirms their **shared commitment to regional peace and security**.



General Ashok Raj Sigdel



General Upendra Dwivedi

Highlights of the Exercise

- Troops engage in **lane training** to simulate **real-world tactical challenges**.
- The drills incorporate **combat first aid** and **environmental conservation measures**.
- Team sports** and **yoga sessions** are organized to foster **camaraderie, mental focus, and physical well-being**.
- The exercise also enhances understanding of each other's **operational procedures**, promotes the **sharing of best practices**, and facilitates **mutual learning**.

Strategic Importance of Surya Kiran

- This exercise demonstrates the **commitment** of both nations to **regional stability** by addressing **counter-terrorism, border security, and disaster response preparedness**.
- It enhances the ability of **Indian and Nepali forces** to work seamlessly in **joint operations**. It also develops critical skills to manage **natural disasters**, a significant issue in the **Himalayan region**.
- Additionally, it reinforces the **historical and cultural bonds** shared by **India and Nepal**, exemplifying **mutual trust and respect**.

Key Military Leadership

- The **Indian Army's participation** is overseen by **General Upendra Dwivedi**, **Chief of the Indian Army Staff**, while **Nepal's involvement** is led by **General Ashok Raj Sigdel**, **Chief of the Nepali Army Staff**.
- On the ground, **Major General Prem Bahadur Gurung**, the **General Officer Commanding** of Nepal's **Mid-West Division**, leads the **local coordination** of the exercise.



- The **Gorkha Rifles** in the Indian Army comprises soldiers of Nepali origin, highlighting the unique cultural and military bond between the two nations.
- Surya Kiran is one of the **largest bilateral military exercises** conducted by India, underscoring the importance of its relationship with Nepal.
- The exercise incorporates **traditional yoga sessions**, reflecting a blend of physical training and mental focus.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Where is the 18th edition of the Indo-Nepal Joint Military Exercise Surya Kiran being held?
 (a) Pokhara, Nepal (b) Saljhandi, Nepal
 (c) Dehradun, India (d) Kathmandu, Nepal
2. Which Indian Army unit is participating in the 18th edition of Exercise Surya Kiran alongside the Nepalese Army?
 (a) Rajput Regiment (b) Maratha Light Infantry
 (c) Gorkha Rifles (d) Sikh Light Infantry
3. When did the Surya Kiran Joint Military Exercise between India and Nepal begin?
 (a) 2008 (b) 2010 (c) 2014 (d) 2011
4. Who leads the Indian Army's participation in the 18th edition of Exercise Surya Kiran?
 (a) General Ashok Raj Sigdel
 (b) Major General Prem Bahadur Gurung
 (c) General Upendra Dwivedi
 (d) Lieutenant General Manoj Pande
5. Which unique feature of the Gorkha Rifles highlights the cultural and military bond between India and Nepal?
 (a) It is the only regiment trained in maritime operations.
 (b) It comprises soldiers of Nepali origin.
 (c) It is solely responsible for cybersecurity operations.
 (d) It conducts exercises exclusively with NATO forces.
6. What is the primary objective of Surya Kiran 18?
 (a) Naval warfare and maritime security
 (b) Jungle warfare, counterterrorism, and humanitarian aid
 (c) Aerial combat and surveillance
 (d) Border dispute resolution
7. Which organization oversees Nepal's involvement in Surya Kiran 18?
 (a) Nepal's Ministry of Defence
 (b) Nepal's Mid-West Division
 (c) South Asian Defence Committee
 (d) Himalayan Security Council
8. What is the key training focus in urban warfare scenarios of Surya Kiran 18?
 (a) Room-clearing techniques and close-quarter combat
 (b) Long-range artillery training
 (c) Naval combat tactics
 (d) Advanced drone warfare
9. Who is the Chief of the Indian Army Staff overseeing India's participation in Surya Kiran 18?
 (a) General Bipin Rawat
 (b) General Anil Chauhan
 (c) General Upendra Dwivedi
 (d) General Manoj Mukund Naravane
10. What kind of military exercise is Surya Kiran classified as?
 (a) Multilateral (b) Navy-specific
 (c) Air Force-specific (d) Bilateral
11. Which battalion from the Nepalese Army is participating in Surya Kiran 18?
 (a) Srijung Battalion (b) Bhairavi Battalion
 (c) Mahendra Battalion (d) Shakti Battalion
12. How many personnel from the respected Army unit are participating in Surya Kiran 18?
 (a) 300 (b) 334 (c) 350 (d) 375
13. Which operational focus area of Surya Kiran 18 includes troop insertion and extraction?
 (a) Heliborne operations
 (b) Urban warfare training
 (c) Jungle warfare
 (d) Disaster management
14. Which region's stability is a key goal of the Surya Kiran exercises?
 (a) Himalayan (b) Indo-Pacific
 (c) Southeast Asia (d) South China Sea

ANSWER KEY

- | | | | | | | | |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|
| 1. (b) | 2. (c) | 3. (d) | 4. (c) | 5. (b) | 6. (b) | 7. (b) | 8. (a) |
| 9. (c) | 10. (d) | 11. (a) | 12. (b) | 13. (a) | 14. (a) | | |

PERSONALIZED MENTORSHIP SESSION



LE CHANDIGARH



LEumni Diaries

"Life at NLSIU Bangalore is a roller coaster—imagine sprinting from one assignment to the next, with barely enough time to blink. And don't even get me started on sleep—8 hours feel like a distant dream."



**Manyata Hada,
NLSIU Bangalore
2024-29 Batch**

Hey Juniors, how's the ride treating you? Trust me, I get it. When I kicked off my CLAT prep, I was full of energy, hope, and that 'I've got this' attitude. But then came July and August, and my optimism hit the wall. My mock scores were in the 40s, and I honestly felt like I was drowning. There were days when I seriously doubted if I could make it.

Then, in the final two months, reality hit hard. Time was running out, and I had a choice—either let it go or pull myself together. And let me tell you, the plot twist was real. One minute, I was stuck at rock bottom, and the next, I was clawing my way back. By October, my scores were skyrocketing into the 90s, and that's when I thought, "Hold on... this could actually work."

It wasn't easy, and there were days it felt like an uphill battle. But when I saw my AIR 47, I was in shock. Honestly, I never thought I'd get here. My CLAT 2024 journey was a roller coaster, and I'm still pinching myself that it all worked out in the end.

Looking back, the chaos, the stress, the ups and downs—they all led to this. And now, life at NLSIU? It's another wild ride. From 8 AM lectures to assignments piling up, I barely have time to breathe. Between law papers, projects, and endless to-do lists, sleep is a luxury I only dream about. But through all the madness, there's always something exciting—friends, events, and moments that make it all worth it.

I'm excited to meet you guys soon... Lage Raho!

UPCOMING BATCHES

WARRIOR (DROPPERS) BATCH

» Year-long intensive preparation for CLAT 2026 for students taking a gap year

OFFERINGS:



1250+ Hrs.
Live Classes



10,000+ Practice
Questions



20+ Booklets



100+ Mock
Tests



100+ Sectional
Tests



250+ Topic-wise
Tests



24*7 Live Doubt
Clearing Groups



CLAT Post-Flagship
Monthly Current
Affairs eMagazine .

LegaLE- Current
Lega Knowledge
magazine
released in 2
Volumes



Offline
Marathons and
much more

FIGHTERS BATCH

» Year-long program tailored for 12th standard students aiming for CLAT 2026

OFFERINGS:



850+ Hrs. Live
Classes



10,000+ Practice
Questions



20+ Booklets



100+ Mock
Tests



100+ Sectional Tests



250+ Topic-wise Tests



24*7 Live Doubt
Clearing Groups



LegaLE- Current
Lega Knowledge
magazine
released in 2
Volumes



Offline
Marathons and
much more

ACHIEVERS BATCH

» Comprehensive two-year course for students in 11th standard targeting CLAT 2027

OFFERINGS:



1500+ Hrs.
Live Classes



10,000+ Practice
Questions



20+ Booklets



170+ Mock
Tests



100+ Sectional Tests



250+ Topic-wise
Tests



24*7 Live Doubt
Clearing Groups



CLAT Post-Flagship
Monthly Current
Affairs eMagazine

LegaLE- Current
Lega Knowledge
magazine
released in 2
Volumes



Offline
Marathons and
much more

OTHER LAW ENTRANCE TESTS MASTER COURSE

» Exams Covered: MH CET | CUET Law | CULEE | NMIMS-LAT | NLAT UK | PUCET etc.

OFFERINGS:



Live/Recorded
Classes



5 Booklets



60+ Mock
Tests



100+ Sectional
Tests



250+ Topic-wise
Tests



24*7 Live Doubt
Clearing Groups

STATE LAW ENTRANCE TEST (SLET) TEST SERIES

» Exam Covered: MH-CET Law | PUCET Law | TS LAW CET | AP LAW CET | KLEE etc.

OFFERINGS:



10 Mocks
Each



360° Performance
Analysis



100+ Sectional
Tests



100+ Topic
Tests



12 CLATPosts-
Current Affairs
eMagazine



Daily Most
Important Articles
eMagazine

OTHER LAW ENTRANCE TEST (OLET TEST SERIES)

» Exams Covered: MH CET | CUET Law | CULEE | NMIMS-LAT | NLAT UK | PUCET etc.

OFFERINGS:



5 Booklets



60+ Mock
Tests



100+ Sectional
Tests



250+ Topic-wise
Tests



24*7 Live Doubt
Clearing Groups

IMPORTANT ONE LINERS

NATIONAL

India's First Bio-Bitumen Stretch Inaugurated on NH-44

- Nitin Gadkari inaugurated India's first bio-bitumen-based National Highway stretch on NH-44 in Mansar, Nagpur, Maharashtra. Developed using lignin-based bio-bitumen technology by Praj Industries, in collaboration with CSIR-CRRI, NHAI, and Oriental.
- Bio-bitumen uses lignin from plant biomass, reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 70% compared to fossil-based bitumen. Aims to reduce India's 50% import dependency on bitumen while supporting industrial sustainability. Promotes agricultural waste utilization, converting stubble into bio-bitumen, helping mitigate stubble burning issues.

Kaamya Karthikeyan: Youngest Female to Conquer Seven Summits

- Kaamya Karthikeyan, a 17-year-old from Navy Children School, Mumbai, became the youngest female to conquer the Seven Summits, scaling the highest peaks on each continent. Completed the feat on December 24, 2024, by summing Mount Vinson in Antarctica.
- Peaks climbed: Mount Kilimanjaro, Mount Elbrus, Mount Kosciuszko, Mount Aconcagua, Mount Denali, Mount Everest, and Mount Vinson.
- Began mountaineering at age 7 and became the youngest Indian to scale Mount Everest at age 16.

India's First Glass Bridge Inaugurated at Kanyakumari

- Tamil Nadu CM MK Stalin inaugurated India's first glass bridge in Kanyakumari on December 30, 2024, alongside dignitaries Udhayanidhi Stalin and Kanimozhi.
- Connects Vivekananda Rock Memorial and the Thiruvalluvar Statue under a Rs 37-crore project by the Tamil Nadu government.
- Bridge dimensions: 77 meters long, 10 meters wide, with a bowstring-arch design and a transparent glass surface offering stunning sea views.
- Built for marine-grade durability, reducing reliance on ferry services and improving tourist accessibility.
- Part of Tamil Nadu's initiative to boost local tourism and commemorate the silver jubilee of the Thiruvalluvar Statue's unveiling.

India's Metro Rail Network Becomes World's Third Largest

- India's metro rail network surpassed 1,000 km of operational lines, making it the third-largest globally after China and the United States.
- Metro services now span 11 states and 23 cities, with the first system launched in Kolkata (1984) and the largest in Delhi (395 km).
- Recent milestones include:
 - Delhi Metro Phase-IV extension (Janakpuri to Krishna Park, 2.8 km).
 - Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS (Namo Bharat corridor, 13 km).
 - Kolkata's underwater metro under the Hooghly River (520 meters).
- Over 998 km of metro projects are under construction, reflecting a commitment to urban transit expansion.

Jammu Becomes Indian Railways' 69th Division

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Jammu Railway Division on January 6, 2025, making it the 69th division under the Northern Railway Zone.
- Covers 742.1 route kilometers, including Pathankot-Jammu-Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla, Bhogpur-Sirwal-Pathankot, Batala-Pathankot, and the narrow-gauge Pathankot-Joginder Nagar line.
- Features iconic projects like the Chenab Rail Bridge (world's highest at 359 meters) and the Anji Khad Bridge (India's first cable-stayed rail bridge).
- Created by reorganizing the Firozpur Division, it enhances rail connectivity across Jammu, Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, and Ladakh.
- Boosts regional development, including tourism, employment, and socio-economic progress.
- Final trial runs for New Delhi to Srinagar direct train services scheduled for January 7-8, 2025, aiming for seamless connectivity from Kashmir to Kanyakumari.

Amit Shah to Launch CBI's BHARATPOL Portal

- Union Home Minister Amit Shah to launch the **BHARATPOL portal**, developed by the **Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)**, on **January 7, 2025**, at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi. Designed to provide **real-time international police assistance** and streamline communication with **INTERPOL** for combating transnational crimes. Focuses on areas like **cybercrime, financial crimes, online radicalization, organized crimes, drug trafficking, and human trafficking**.
- Portal replaces traditional communication methods, facilitating quicker **INTERPOL notices** and international cooperation.
- **CBI**, as India's **National Central Bureau (NCB)** for **INTERPOL**, will oversee operations to connect law enforcement agencies at central, state, and UT levels. **35 CBI officers** to be awarded **Police Medals** during the event, including the **President's Police Medal for Distinguished Service** and the **Union Home Minister's Medal for Excellence in Investigation**.

Aero India 2025: Showcasing India's Aerospace and Defence Leadership

- Aero India 2025 will be held from **February 10-14, 2025**, at **Air Force Station, Yelahanka, Bengaluru**, under the theme "**The Runway to a Billion Opportunities.**"
- Highlights include:
 - **Defence Ministers' Conclave** themed "**BRIDGE**", focusing on global defence partnerships and strategic cooperation.
 - **CEOs' Round-Table**, fostering collaborations between global leaders and Indian defence manufacturers.
 - **Manthan Start-up Event**, showcasing indigenous defence technologies and innovation.
 - Public days on **February 13-14**, featuring **air displays** and **static exhibitions** of advanced military platforms.
- Aims to strengthen **India's aerospace and defence sector** and promote international partnerships.
- Bilateral meetings with **defence ministers and officials** will explore manufacturing and strategic opportunities.

Centre Launches India's First Organic Fisheries Cluster in Sikkim

- Union Animal Husbandry and Fisheries Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh inaugurated India's **first organic fisheries cluster** in **Soreng District, Sikkim**, on January 7, 2025.
- The cluster promotes **sustainable, chemical-free, and antibiotic-free** fish farming to cater to global eco-conscious markets.
- Aligns with **Sikkim's organic farming practices**, reinforcing its reputation for sustainability.
- Part of **50 projects under PMMSY**, valued at **₹50 crore**, aimed at boosting aquaculture across northeastern states (excluding Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram).
- Focus on **ecologically healthy practices**, minimizing environmental pollution and protecting aquatic ecosystems.
- Supports the government's vision to enhance **farmers' incomes** and promote **sustainable aquaculture**.

Prabowo Subianto to Be 2025 Republic Day Chief Guest

- Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto will be the **chief guest** at India's **2025 Republic Day parade**, marking a significant step in **India-Indonesia relations**. Indonesia's first President Sukarno was India's first **Republic Day guest** in 1950, reflecting historical ties spanning over **2,000 years**.
- **2023-24 bilateral trade** stood at **USD 26.69 billion**, with India importing **coal, crude palm oil, minerals, and exporting refined petroleum, vehicles, and agriculture products**.
- The visit emphasizes **maritime cooperation, defense partnerships, and economic engagement**, key to India's **Act East Policy**. The **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (2018)** and **Shared Vision on Maritime Cooperation in Indo-Pacific** form the foundation for enhanced ties. Indonesia is India's **largest trading partner in ASEAN**, and the visit underscores cultural and economic bonds while bolstering strategic cooperation.

PM to Inaugurate Z-Morh Tunnel, Boosting Kashmir-Ladakh Connectivity

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the **Z-Morh tunnel** on **January 13, 2024**, enhancing connectivity between **Kashmir and Ladakh**. Ensures **year-round access to Sonamarg**, which was previously inaccessible in winter due to snow and avalanches.
- Located between **Gagangir and Sonamarg** in **Ganderbal district**, the **6.5 km tunnel** is built under the **Thajiwas Glacier** at a cost of **₹2,680 crore**. Features an **intelligent traffic management system** and bypasses landslide-prone areas for safer travel.
- Boosts **winter tourism** in Sonamarg and supports **military logistics** to Ladakh. Will connect to the upcoming **Zojila Tunnel**, set to be **Asia's longest**, reducing travel time between Ganderbal and Kargil from **3 hours to 20 minutes**.

Union Minister Sonowal Unveils National River Traffic and Navigation System (NRT&NS)

- Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal launched the **National River Traffic and Navigation System (NRT&NS)** on **January 11, 2025**, during the **Inland Waterways Development Council (IWDC)** meeting in Kaziranga, Assam. The system aims to improve **safety and efficiency in inland waterway transport** across India.
- Announcements included **₹50,000 crore investments** over five years for infrastructure enhancement along national waterways and **₹1,400 crore** in initiatives for 21 inland waterway states. The **Riverine Community Development Scheme** was introduced to promote infrastructure, trade, tourism, and skill training for **coastal communities**.
- **Infrastructure plans** include developing **shipbuilding and repair facilities**, reducing logistics costs, and boosting employment for riparian communities. Cargo movement on national waterways recorded a **7% growth** (April-November 2024), and cruise tourism saw significant growth under the **Cruise Bharat Mission**.
- **Regional developments** include six floating steel jetties on the Godavari River (NW 4) in Andhra Pradesh and feasibility studies for additional projects.

India Sets New Record with 30 GW Green Energy Addition in 2024

- India achieved a **record renewable energy capacity addition** of **30 GW** in 2024, a **113% increase** from **13.75 GW** in 2023, according to the **Ministry of New & Renewable Energy (MNRE)**. The total **cumulative renewable energy capacity** now stands at approximately **218 GW**, showcasing India's accelerating shift toward **clean energy**. India targets **500 GW renewable capacity by 2030**, requiring an annual addition of **50 GW** over the next six years.
- The highest capacity addition for a fiscal year was **18.48 GW** in 2023-24, reflecting sustained growth since 2014, when total capacity was **35.84 GW**.
- **Minister Pralhad Joshi** highlighted this milestone as a testament to India's commitment to reducing its **carbon footprint** and advancing **sustainability goals**. **BHEL** and **ONGC** have partnered to accelerate renewable energy projects, supporting India's green energy transition.

APAAR ID: One Nation One Student ID Card Launched

- The **Ministry of Education** introduced **APAAR ID** (Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry), a digital student ID aimed at centralizing academic data such as degrees, credits, and scholarships. Each student receives a **unique 12-digit APAAR number**, simplifying record access and ensuring efficient academic data management.
- Administered by the **Academic Bank of Credits (ABC)** under **NEP 2020**, APAAR ID integrates academic records in a secure digital registry, benefiting over **two crore students**.
- Registration is done via **abc.gov.in** or DigiLocker by providing **Aadhar and mobile details**, along with school or university information. After registration, students can download their APAAR card, which includes a QR code for easy verification.

Rupee Hits Record Low of ₹86 Against U.S. Dollar

- The **rupee fell 14 paise** to a record low of **₹86.00** against the **U.S. dollar** on **January 10, 2025**, pressured by a **strong dollar, foreign fund outflows, and rising crude oil prices**.
- **Foreign institutional investors (FIIs)** offloaded **₹7,170.87 crore** in the capital markets on **January 9, 2025**, contributing to the rupee's depreciation.
- Crude oil prices surged **1.96%** to **\$78.43 per barrel**, while the **dollar index** rose **0.01%** to **109.01**, adding to the pressure.
- The **Sensex** dropped **241.30 points** to **77,378.91**, and the **Nifty** declined **95 points** to **23,431.50**, marking a three-session losing streak in domestic markets.
- Analysts predict the rupee may trade in the range of **₹85.80–₹86.15**, with possible **RBI intervention** providing some support.
- The rise in **U.S. bond yields** to **4.69%** and anticipation of restrictive trade measures under the **new U.S. administration** added to the rupee's woes.

PM Modi Commissions INS Surat, INS Nilgiri, and INS Vaghsheer

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi commissioned **INS Surat**, **INS Nilgiri**, and **INS Vaghsheer** on **January 15, 2025**, at Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited in Mumbai, bolstering India's maritime defense. **INS Surat**: A Visakhapatnam-class **guided missile destroyer** (Project 15B) with **75% indigenous content**, armed with **BrahMos missiles**, **MRSAM**, and advanced stealth features.
- **INS Nilgiri**: The lead ship of **Project 17A**, a stealth frigate featuring **BrahMos missiles**, **MRSAM**, and future-ready upgrades like **VL-SRSAM**. **INS Vaghsheer**: The sixth **Kalvari-class submarine** (Project 75), designed for anti-surface and anti-submarine warfare, long-range strikes, and intelligence missions, with future integration of **air-independent propulsion**.

technology. Reflects India's progress in **indigenous defense production**, enhancing **self-reliance** and countering strategic challenges in the **Indian Ocean** amid growing Chinese activity.

Cabinet Approves 8th Pay Commission Implementation

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** and the Union Cabinet approved the formation of the **8th Central Pay Commission (CPC)** on **January 16, 2025**, to revise salaries, allowances, and pensions for central government employees and pensioners. **Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw** announced that the **Chairman and two members** will be appointed soon, with recommendations to be implemented by **January 1, 2026**.
- The commission will review **basic pay**, **Dearness Allowance (DA)**, **House Rent Allowance (HRA)**, and **pensions**, impacting over **one crore employees and pensioners**. Proposed adjustments include increasing the **minimum basic pay** from ₹18,000 to approximately ₹51,480 and raising the **fitment factor** from 2.57 to **2.86**. Aligns with the 10-year review cycle; the **7th Pay Commission**, constituted in 2014, implemented changes in 2016.

Domestic Migrants Report: EAC-PM

- The **Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM)** released a working paper titled "**400 Million Dreams!**"
- **Decline in Domestic Migration:** The number of domestic migrants **decreased by approximately 12%**, from 45.58 crore in 2011 to 40.20 crore in 2023. Consequently, the **migration rate dropped from 37.64% to 28.88%** during this period.
- **Migration Patterns:**
 - Short-distance migrations (within 500 km) constitute over 75% of migration flows.
 - Major urban centers like Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Bengaluru, and Kolkata remain primary destinations.
 - Significant migration corridors include Uttar Pradesh to Delhi, Gujarat to Maharashtra, Telangana to Andhra Pradesh, and Bihar to Delhi.
- **State-Specific Trends:**
 - West Bengal, Rajasthan, and Karnataka have seen an increase in the percentage of arriving migrants.
 - Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh have experienced a decline in their share of total migrants.

Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES) 2023-24

- The **Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES) 2023-24**, conducted by the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)**, reveals key insights into India's consumption patterns:
- **Increase in Monthly Per Capita Consumption Expenditure (MPCE):**
 - **Rural areas:** MPCE rose by approximately 9.2% to ₹4,122.
 - **Urban areas:** MPCE increased by about 8.3% to ₹6,996.
- This growth indicates a significant rise in household spending across both sectors.
- **Regional Disparities:**
- **Highest MPCE:**
 - Sikkim: Rural – ₹9,377; Urban – ₹13,927
 - Chandigarh: Rural – ₹8,857; Urban – ₹13,425
- **Lowest MPCE:**
 - Chhattisgarh: Rural – ₹2,739; Urban – ₹4,927
 - Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu: Rural – ₹4,311
 - Jammu and Kashmir: Urban – ₹6,327

Chhattisgarh Links Forest Ecosystem to Green GDP

Chhattisgarh has become the first Indian state to integrate its forest ecosystem services into the Green Gross Domestic Product (Green GDP), highlighting the economic and environmental value of forests.

Key Points:

- **Valuation of Ecosystem Services:** The state plans to quantify benefits such as carbon sequestration, water conservation, and biodiversity preservation, incorporating these into its economic assessments.
- **Economic and Cultural Significance:** Forests cover 44% of Chhattisgarh's land, providing resources like tendu leaves, lac, and medicinal plants, vital to the rural economy. They also hold cultural importance for tribal communities and support eco-tourism activities.
- **Policy Objectives:** By linking forest ecosystem services to Green GDP, Chhattisgarh aims to enhance budget planning and develop policies that balance economic growth with ecological sustainability.
- **Implementation Strategy:** The initiative involves scientific assessment of ecosystem services, including measuring CO₂ absorption by trees and evaluating the economic impact of water resources provided by forests.

Annual Ground Water Quality Report 2024

The **Annual Ground Water Quality Report 2024**, released by the Union Minister of Jal Shakti, provides a comprehensive analysis of India's groundwater quality.

- **Standardized Monitoring:** For the first time, the report implemented a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for groundwater quality monitoring, ensuring uniformity in data collection, analysis, and interpretation across over 15,200 monitoring locations and 4,982 trend stations.
- **Dominant Water Chemistry:** Calcium and bicarbonate ions are prevalent in India's groundwater, indicating a calcium-bicarbonate type water chemistry.
- **Contaminant Concerns:**
 - **Nitrate:** Approximately 20% of samples exceeded safe nitrate levels, with Rajasthan (49%), Karnataka (48%), and Tamil Nadu (37%) being the most affected.
 - **Fluoride and Arsenic:** Elevated levels were detected in certain regions, posing health risks.
- **Agricultural Suitability:** Over 81% of groundwater samples are suitable for irrigation, with 100% of samples from North-Eastern states rated as "excellent."

INTERNATIONAL

India-Kuwait Elevate Ties to Strategic Partnership

- During PM Modi's visit to Kuwait on December 21-22, 2024, India and Kuwait elevated their relationship to a **Strategic Partnership**. PM Modi received Kuwait's **highest civilian award, 'The Order of Mubarak Al-Kabeer'** for enhancing bilateral ties.
- Both nations agreed to form **Joint Working Groups** on trade, technology, education, and defense, and strengthen **people-to-people ties**. Signed an **MoU on defense cooperation**, including **joint military exercises, maritime safety, and cybersecurity collaboration**.
- Kuwait expressed interest in India's **Strategic Petroleum Reserve Program**, emphasizing **energy ties** in oil, gas, and renewables. Renewed the **Cultural Exchange Programme (2025-2029)** and **Sports Executive Programme (2025-2028)** to bolster cultural and educational links.

Trump Appoints Sriram Krishnan as Senior AI Policy Advisor

- President-elect Donald Trump appointed **Sriram Krishnan**, an Indian-American entrepreneur and venture capitalist, as **Senior Policy Advisor for Artificial Intelligence (AI)** at the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy. Krishnan will work with **David Sacks**, the White House **AI & Crypto Czar**, to shape **AI policies**, ensure **US leadership in AI**, and collaborate with the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology.
- Krishnan's career includes roles at **Microsoft (Windows Azure)**, **Facebook (mobile ad scaling)**, **Snap**, **Twitter**, and **Andreessen Horowitz (a16z)**, where he led their **London office**.
- His role will focus on **AI innovation**, **national policy coordination**, and addressing global tech challenges. The appointment has been widely celebrated, especially by the **Indian-American community**, recognizing his expertise and influence in blending technology with public policy.

Azerbaijan Airlines Crash in Kazakhstan

- An **Azerbaijan Airlines Embraer 190** jet en route from Baku to Grozny crashed near Aktau, Kazakhstan, on December 26, 2024, due to heavy fog. The aircraft was carrying **62 passengers and 5 crew members**, with **32 survivors** rescued, though several passengers sustained injuries.
- **Flight deviation:** The plane was rerouted over the **Caspian Sea**, significantly altering its planned path before the crash. Emergency responders acted swiftly to rescue survivors from the wreckage.
- **Passenger footage** revealed chaotic scenes, including injuries and attempts to exit the aircraft during the emergency.
- The incident underscores the risks of rerouting under adverse weather conditions and highlights the unpredictable nature of air travel emergencies.

China Approves \$137-Billion Mega Dam on Brahmaputra Near Indian Border

- China has approved the construction of the **world's largest hydropower dam** on the **Yarlung Zangbo (Brahmaputra)** in Tibet, near the Indian border, with an estimated cost of **\$137 billion**. Raises **strategic concerns** for India and Bangladesh over **water control**, potential **flooding risks during conflicts**, and impacts on **downstream riparian states**.
- India is constructing a **counter-dam** in Arunachal Pradesh and relies on a **hydrological data-sharing framework** under the 2006 **Expert Level Mechanism (ELM)**.

- Located in the **seismically active Tibetan Plateau**, the project faces risks due to its proximity to tectonic boundaries, though China claims the dam prioritizes **ecological protection** and uses **advanced engineering techniques**. The proposed **25,154-foot vertical drop** makes this project larger than the **Three Gorges Dam**, with significant implications for regional geopolitics and environmental stability.

US Officially Declares Bald Eagle as National Bird After 250 Years

- **President Joe Biden** signed a historic law on **December 24, 2024**, formally designating the **bald eagle** as the **national bird of the United States**, nearly **250 years** after its symbolic use began. The bald eagle has appeared on the **Great Seal of the US** since **1782**, symbolizing **strength, courage, and freedom**, but was never officially recognized until this legislation.
- Spearheaded by **Minnesota lawmakers**, the law acknowledges the bird's significance and its **recovery from near extinction**, protected under the **National Emblem Act of 1940**.
- Once critically endangered, the bald eagle population has rebounded significantly since **2009**, reflecting successful conservation efforts. The designation coincided with President Biden signing **50 other laws**, including a **federal anti-hazing law**, further highlighting the bird's unique **indigenous status to North America** and its enduring legacy as a symbol of the nation.

South Korea Parliament Impeaches Acting President Han Duck-soo

- South Korea's parliament impeached **Acting President Han Duck-soo** on **December 27, 2024**, deepening the nation's political crisis. The impeachment follows **President Yoon Suk Yeol's impeachment** on **December 14, 2024**, after his **imposition of martial law on December 3**.
- Han faced criticism for refusing to appoint **three Constitutional Court judges**, obstructing the impeachment process and violating constitutional duties.
- The opposition accused Han of avoiding a special investigation into Yoon's martial law decision and failing to uphold the law. Amid the crisis, South Korea's **economic instability worsened**, with the **Korean won** hitting its lowest level in **16 years**. If the impeachment is upheld, **Finance Minister Choi Sang-mok** will assume the role of acting president under South Korean law.

China Unveils World's Fastest High-Speed Train Prototype: CR450

- **China introduced the CR450**, the world's fastest high-speed train prototype, capable of **test speeds of 450 km/h** and a **commercial operating speed of 400 km/h**. The CR450 surpasses the current **CR400 Fuxing trains (350 km/h)**, reducing travel times, such as the **Beijing-Shanghai route** from **4.5 hours to just over 3 hours**.
- Features include **20% energy efficiency improvement** with **water-cooled permanent magnet traction systems**, enhanced stability, and **noise reduction technologies** for passenger comfort.
- The CR450 follows iconic projects like the **Shanghai Maglev (430 km/h)** and aims to extend networks internationally through Southeast Asia. Expected to debut commercially in **2025**, the CR450 represents a milestone in **sustainable, efficient, and advanced rail travel**.

Switzerland Enforces Facial Covering Ban

- **Switzerland implemented a ban on facial coverings**, including **burqas** and **niqabs**, in **public spaces** starting **January 1, 2025**. Violators face fines of up to **CHF 1,000 (\$1,143)**.
- **Exceptions** include coverings for **security, health, weather reasons, artistic performances, entertainment, or advertising**.
- Aligns Switzerland with other **European countries** like **France** and **Austria** with similar restrictions. Approved through a **referendum in 2021**, reflecting **public support**.

Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV) Outbreak in China

- **China** is experiencing a **surge in human metapneumovirus (HMPV)** cases, with children, the elderly, and immunocompromised individuals most affected. **HMPV**, first identified in **2001**, causes **respiratory infections** with symptoms such as **cough, fever, nasal congestion**, and in severe cases, **bronchitis or pneumonia**.
- The virus spreads via **respiratory droplets, close contact**, and **contaminated surfaces**, with an incubation period of **three to six days**. **High-risk groups** include **young children, older adults**, and those with **weakened immune systems**.
- Hospitals in **northern China** are overwhelmed, particularly with cases in children under 14, prompting **preventive measures** like **mask-wearing, social distancing, and frequent handwashing**.

Pakistan Begins Two-Year Term as Non-Permanent UNSC Member

- Pakistan started its **two-year term on January 1, 2025**, as a **non-permanent member of the UN Security Council (UNSC)**, marking its **eighth term**. Pakistan secured **182 votes** in the **UN General Assembly**, exceeding the required **two-thirds majority**.
- During its term, Pakistan will **preside over the UNSC in July 2025** and serve on critical committees like the **ISIS and Al Qaeda Sanctions Committee**. Ambassador **Munir Akram** emphasized Pakistan's commitment to addressing global challenges, promoting **peace**, and resolving disputes, including the **Kashmir issue**. This tenure coincides with significant global and regional challenges, including conflicts in **Europe, the Middle East, and Africa**, as well as rising **geopolitical tensions** and an **arms race**.

Mike Johnson Re-Elected as US House Speaker

- **Mike Johnson**, a Republican from Louisiana, was re-elected as **Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives** on the **first day of the new Congress**. His re-election faced opposition from **hard-right Republicans**, including members of the **Freedom Caucus**. **President-elect Donald Trump** played a crucial role in rallying GOP support, securing Johnson's victory amid internal divisions.
- **Democrats**, led by **Hakeem Jeffries**, opposed Johnson, questioning his ability to lead effectively given the GOP's **narrow majority** and **internal discord**. The election was time-sensitive due to the **January 6 deadline** for certifying Trump's **2024 presidential victory**.
- Johnson's win follows the ousting of former Speaker **Kevin McCarthy**, reflecting ongoing leadership challenges within the Republican Party.

Hanoi Declared World's Most Polluted City

- **Hanoi**, Vietnam's capital, recorded **PM2.5 levels of 266 µg/m³** on January 3, 2025, making it the **world's most polluted city**. Major pollution sources include **heavy traffic, industrial emissions**, and **trash burning**, leading to severe air quality deterioration.
- **Health impacts** are significant, with increased **respiratory issues**, particularly among the elderly, and reduced visibility affecting daily life. The government plans to combat pollution by **promoting electric vehicles (EVs)**, targeting **100% electric taxis** and **50% electric buses** by **2030**.

World's Oldest Person, Tomiko Itooka, Dies at 116 Years

- **Tomiko Itooka**, aged **116**, passed away in **January 2025**, recognized by **Guinness World Records** as the world's oldest person. Born in **May 1908**, she lived through **both World Wars**, significant **technological advancements**, and profound **societal changes**.
- Managed her husband's **textile factory office** during **World War II** and lived independently after his death in **1979**. Officially verified as the **world's oldest person** in **September 2024**, following the death of the previous record holder, **Maria Branyas Morera**.
- **Sister Inah Canabarro Lucas**, aged **116**, from **Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil**, is officially recognized as the world's oldest living person by **LongeviQuest**. She assumed the title following the passing of **Tomiko Itooka** of Japan on **December 29, 2024**. Born on **June 8, 1908**, Sister Lucas is a **nun, teacher, and professor**, with a remarkable legacy in education and faith.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau Announces Resignation

- **Justin Trudeau**, Prime Minister of Canada, resigned as leader of the **Liberal Party** after nearly a decade in power, citing **internal party conflicts** and **declining public support**. Trudeau will remain as **caretaker prime minister** until the **Liberal Party elects a new leader**.
- His resignation comes amid increasing support for **opposition leader Pierre Poilievre** and the **Conservative Party**. Trudeau highlighted his achievements, including **COVID-19 response, support for Ukraine, climate policies, and economic reforms**, but expressed regret over failing to implement **electoral reform**.
- **Canada's parliament** will be suspended until **March 24** to allow time for the **Liberal Party's leadership transition**. Poilievre criticized Trudeau's tenure as a "**dark chapter**", emphasizing his agenda of **tax cuts, stricter immigration controls, and stronger national defense**.

Wildfires Ravage Los Angeles: A State in Crisis

- **Southern California** faces catastrophic **wildfires** in January 2025, with **Los Angeles County** severely affected. Over **179,000 residents** are under **mandatory evacuation**, and at least **10 deaths** have been reported.

MUSEUM VISIT WITH STUDENTS



LE PRAYAGRAJ



- Major fires, including the **Pacific Palisades** and **Eaton fires**, have collectively destroyed over **10,000 structures**, with insured losses estimated to exceed **\$8 billion**. The **Palisades fire** has burned **20,000 acres** (6% contained), while the **Eaton fire** has scorched **14,000 acres** (0% contained).
- **Santa Ana winds**, gusting up to **80 mph**, and prolonged **drought conditions** have intensified the crisis, fueling rapid fire spread.
- High-profile areas, including **celebrity homes**, have been devastated, with celebrities like **Leighton Meester** and **Paris Hilton** losing properties. Severe **power outages**, **school closures**, and **traffic disruptions** add to the region's challenges. **Climate change**, **dry vegetation**, and **high temperatures** contribute to the worsening wildfire crisis.

Hindenburg Research Shuts Down

- **Hindenburg Research**, founded by **Nate Anderson** in 2017, has announced its **closure**, citing Anderson's **personal priorities** as the reason. Renowned for uncovering **corporate fraud**, the firm impacted companies like **Nikola Corp.**, **Adani Group**, and **Icahn Enterprises**.
- In 2020, Hindenburg alleged **fraud at Nikola**, leading to a **\$125 million SEC settlement** and the **criminal conviction** of founder **Trevor Milton**. The 2023 **Adani Group report** accused the conglomerate of **corporate fraud**, causing a **\$150 billion market cap loss** and significant global attention.
- Allegations against **Icahn Enterprises** highlighted a "Ponzi-like" structure, resulting in a **shareholder lawsuit** and heightened scrutiny.
- Anderson plans to **open-source Hindenburg's investigative methods** in the next six months and support employees in **starting their own firms**. The firm's investigations caused **major financial and reputational impacts**, reshaping perceptions of **corporate accountability**.

India and Spain Declare 2026 as 'Dual Year' for Culture, Tourism, and AI

- **India and Spain** will celebrate **2026** as a 'dual year' focusing on **culture**, **tourism**, and **artificial intelligence (AI)** collaboration. **Cultural exchanges** will include art exhibitions, music and dance performances, literature festivals, and architectural collaborations.
- **Tourism promotions** will emphasize **reciprocal visits**, **direct flight connections**, and **joint marketing campaigns**.
- Plans include **AI collaboration in healthcare**, **education**, and **industry** through **research**, **workshops**, and **AI centers**. **Bilateral trade** between India and Spain is valued at **USD 10 billion**, spanning **railways**, **clean technology**, **drones**, and **space exploration**.

World Malaria Report 2024

The **World Malaria Report 2024**, published by **the World Health Organization (WHO)**, presents the following key findings:

- **Increase in Malaria Cases:** In 2023, there were **an estimated 263 million** new malaria cases across **83 countries**, up from **252 million in 2022 and 226 million in 2015**.
- **High Mortality Rates:** The disease caused approximately **597,000 deaths in 2023**, with **African children under five years old** being the most affected demographic.
- **Geographical Burden:** The **African Region** continues to bear the heaviest burden, accounting for **94% of global malaria cases** and **95% of malaria-related deaths in 2023**.
- **Challenges in Malaria Control:**
 - **Drug and Insecticide Resistance:** The report notes significant concerns regarding resistance to treatments and insecticides.
 - **Impact of Climate Change and Conflicts:** Factors such as climate change, conflicts, and inequalities in healthcare access are hindering progress in malaria control efforts.
- **Advancements in Vaccination:** The introduction of new malaria vaccines, such as **the R21/Matrix-M vaccine**, has shown promise in preventing severe disease and death, with countries like Nigeria beginning to offer vaccinations to young children.

Henley Passport Index 2025

The Henley Passport Index 2025 provides the following key insights:

- **Top-Ranked Passport: Singapore** has reclaimed the top position, offering visa-free access to **195 destinations**.
- **India's Ranking:** India's passport is **ranked 85th**, granting holders visa-free or visa-on-arrival access to **57 countries**.
- **Notable Declines:** The United States has dropped to the **9th position**, with visa-free access to **186 destinations**.
- **Bottom Rankings: Afghanistan** remains at the **lowest rank**, with visa-free access to only **26 destinations**.

APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATION

Justice Madan Lokur Appointed Chairperson of UN Internal Justice Council

- **Justice Madan B. Lokur**, former Supreme Court Judge of India, appointed **Chairperson of the UN Internal Justice Council (IJC)**. Appointed by **UN Secretary-General António Guterres**, effective immediately until November 12, 2028. The IJC advises the UN on its internal justice system, ensuring impartiality and professionalism.
- Other IJC members include Carmen Artigas (Uruguay), Rosalie Balkin (Australia), Stefan Brezina (Austria), and Jay Pozenal (USA). Justice Lokur is recognized globally for his judicial expertise in social justice, environmental issues, and human rights.
- This appointment highlights India's growing influence in international legal and governance frameworks.

Justice GS Sandhawalia Appointed Chief Justice of Himachal Pradesh High Court

- **Justice Gurmeet Singh Sandhawalia** appointed as the **Chief Justice of Himachal Pradesh High Court**, effective from the date he assumes office.
- Appointment followed a **Supreme Court Collegium recommendation**, with official notification issued on **December 23, 2024**, after a **three-month delay**. Previously served as the **senior-most puisne Judge** of the **Punjab and Haryana High Court**. His **Judicial career** began on **September 30, 2011**, with elevation as a permanent judge on **January 24, 2014**.

President Appoints New Governors for Five States

- **Ajay Kumar Bhalla** appointed as **Manipur Governor**, replacing **Anusuiya Uikey**. A former **Union Home Secretary**, he brings expertise in addressing the ongoing **ethnic violence** in the state.
- **Arif Mohammed Khan**, former **Kerala Governor**, transferred to **Bihar**, succeeding **Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar**. Known for his intellectual and administrative acumen.
- **Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar**, reassigned from **Bihar to Kerala**, aims to bring stability and balance to governance.
- **Hari Babu Kambhampati**, transferred to **Odisha**, replacing **Raghubar Das**, whose resignation was accepted.
- **General (Dr.) V.K. Singh**, a retired Army officer and former Union Minister, appointed as **Mizoram Governor**, bringing strategic leadership to the region.

Faiz Ahmed Kidwai Appointed as DGCA Director General

- **Faiz Ahmed Kidwai**, a 1996-batch IAS officer from the **Madhya Pradesh cadre**, appointed as the **Director-General (DG) of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA)**.
- His appointment fills the position vacated by **Vikram Dev Dutt**, who was promoted to Secretary and transferred to the **Ministry of Coal**.
- Previously, Kidwai served as **Additional Secretary** in the **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare**.
- **Key challenges** include addressing disputes over new **pilot duty and rest norms** introduced in **January 2024**, which increased **weekly rest** for pilots to **48 hours** and curtailed **night flying hours**.

V. Narayanan Takes Over as ISRO Chief and Space Secretary

- **Dr. V. Narayanan**, a seasoned scientist with nearly **40 years** of experience in **rocket and spacecraft propulsion**, appointed as the **Secretary of the Department of Space** and **Chairman of ISRO**, effective **January 14, 2025**. He succeeds **S. Somanath**, with a **tenure of 2 years** or until further orders.
- Dr. Narayanan has been the **Director of the Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre (LPSC)** and played a key role in ISRO missions, including the development of **GSLV Mk III** and **Chandrayaan-3** propulsion systems.
- **Academic qualifications** include an **MTech in Cryogenic Engineering** and a **PhD in Aerospace Engineering** from **IIT Kharagpur**.
- Recognized with **awards** like the **ASI Gold Medal**, **ISRO Outstanding Achievement Award**, and **Team Excellence Award**. Key contributions include leading the **Cryogenic Propulsion** for **GSLV Mk III** and the **Chandrayaan missions**, and heading the **Human Rated Certification Board (HRCB)** for the **Gaganyaan mission**.

Justice Arun Mishra Appointed as Ombudsman of BCCI

- **Justice Arun Mishra**, former Supreme Court judge, appointed as **Ombudsman and Ethics Officer** of the **BCCI** to oversee **ethical practices** and resolve **disputes** in Indian cricket.
- Mishra's career includes significant achievements: elected as the **youngest Chairman** of the **Bar Council of India**, and served as **Chief Justice of Rajasthan** and **Calcutta High Courts**.
- **BCCI appointments** also include **Devajit Saikia** as **Secretary**, replacing **Jay Shah** (now ICC Chairman), and **Prabhjeet Singh Bhatia** as **Treasurer**.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Project VISTAAR: Transforming Indian Agriculture Digitally

- IIT Madras and the Ministry of Agriculture launched Project VISTAAR to modernize India's agricultural extension system. VISTAAR (Virtually Integrated System to Access Agricultural Resources) aims to provide digital crop advisory, improve supply chain management, and share updates on government schemes with farmers. Leverages a database of over 12,000 agri-focused start-ups, developed by YNOS Venture Engine at IIT Madras, to address agricultural challenges and promote innovative solutions.
- Farmers gain real-time access to information on best practices, weather forecasts, pest control, and sustainable techniques, enhancing decision-making and productivity. Focuses on capacity building and training farmers for long-term sustainability and scalability of digital agricultural services.

Nadi Tarangini: India's First Ayurvedic Diagnostic Device Approved by CDSCO

- Nadi Tarangini, an AI-powered pulse diagnostic device developed by Atreya Innovations, became the first Ayurvedic medical device to receive CDSCO approval on January 6, 2025. Combines modern technology with Ayurvedic practices, using piezoelectric pressure sensors to analyze 22 parameters, including Tridosha balance, stress, and digestive health.
- Produces a 10-page health report in 10 Indian languages, with an accuracy of 85%. Developed after six years of research by Prof. J.B. Joshi and Dr. Aniruddha Joshi, receiving ₹5 crore in seed funding and a production capacity of 5,000 devices per year.
- Recognized with patents in the US, Europe, Indonesia, and India, and highlighted by PM Narendra Modi in Mann Ki Baat. Priced at ₹55,000, the device is used in 1250 Ayurvedic clinics, having tested over 5 lakh individuals, paving the way for standardizing Ayurveda globally.

IUCN Lists Western Ghats as Key Freshwater Biodiversity Hotspot

- The Western Ghats has been identified as a critical global hotspot for threatened freshwater species in the IUCN's first-ever multi-taxon global freshwater fauna assessment. One-quarter of global freshwater species are at high risk of extinction, with the Western Ghats housing over 300 freshwater fish species, one-third of which are threatened.
- The study highlights pollution, dam construction, water extraction, invasive species, and agriculture as the primary threats to biodiversity.
- The Humpbacked Mahseer, a critically endangered fish, is one of the species at risk in this region. Kerala, with the highest number of threatened freshwater fishes in India, is home to the Periyar River, a key conservation priority.

New Launchpad of ISRO Coming Up at Sriharikota

- The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the construction of a third launchpad at ISRO's Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, with a budget of ₹3,985 crore. The project, to be completed in 4 years, aims to support Next Generation Launch Vehicles (NGLVs) and enhance India's space transportation capabilities.
- The launchpad will handle payloads up to 30,000 tonnes to low Earth orbit (LEO), significantly increasing capacity from the current limit of 8,000 tonnes. It will also support human spaceflight missions and future space exploration plans like the Indian crewed lunar landing by 2040.
- Strategic significance: Boosts India's space standing globally, enabling more frequent launches for national, commercial, and human spaceflight missions.

First Black-eyed Pea Sprouts in Space by ISRO

- ISRO successfully germinated black-eyed pea (lobia) seeds in space using its Compact Research Module for Orbital Plant Studies (CROPS), marking a major milestone in space agriculture.
- This achievement demonstrates the potential for growing sustainable food sources on long-duration space missions, crucial for astronaut nutrition and psychological well-being.
- The CROPS-1 mission simulated Earth-like conditions, using soil-like media, and achieved successful germination within 4 days, with initial growth observed by the 5th day.
- Key challenges addressed included microgravity, radiation, temperature fluctuations, and limited light.

SPORTS WORLD

Richa Ghosh Smashes Record-Breaking Fifty in Women's T20Is

- Richa Ghosh, India's wicketkeeper-batter, set a new record by scoring the **joint-fastest fifty in women's T20Is** in just **18 balls** during the third T20I against **West Indies Women** at the **DY Patil Stadium**. She equaled the record held by **Sophie Devine** (New Zealand) and **Phoebe Litchfield** (Australia).
- Richa surpassed **Smriti Mandhana's** previous record for the fastest fifty by an Indian in T20Is (24 balls, 2019).
- Her **blistering innings** featured **3 boundaries** and **5 sixes**, contributing significantly to **India's highest-ever total** in women's T20Is—**217/4**. Richa's performance highlights the growing dominance of **Indian women's cricket**, showcasing the rise of **young talent** and the increasing power-hitting capabilities in the women's game.

Delhi to Host 2025 Para Athletics World Championships

- India will host the **2025 Para Athletics World Championships** for the first time, from **September 26 to October 5, 2025**, at the **Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium**, New Delhi. The **12th edition** of the championships marks the **largest international Para sports event** ever hosted in India.
- Over **1,000 athletes** from **100+ countries** are expected to compete, with the event serving as a **qualifier for the 2028 Los Angeles Paralympic Games**.
- India showcased progress in Para athletics with **17 medals**, including **6 golds**, at the **2023 Kobe Championships**. The event aims to promote **inclusivity, empower persons with disabilities**, and strengthen India's role in **Para sports**. Seen as part of India's strategy for future global events, including the **2029 World Athletics Championships** and a potential bid for the **2036 Olympics**.

India to Host ISSF Junior World Cup 2025

- India will host the **ISSF Junior World Cup 2025** in **Rifle, Pistol, and Shotgun events**, marking the first time this prestigious competition will be held in the country. This announcement solidifies India's reputation as a **global hub for shooting sports**, with **nine ISSF events** hosted over the past decade.
- The **National Rifle Association of India (NRAI)** credited the **Government of India** and the **Ministry of Sports** for their support in securing this event. India previously hosted the **Senior ISSF World Cup in Bhopal (2023)** and the **ISSF World Cup Final (2024)**. The event will showcase young shooting talents globally, strengthen India's **infrastructure**, and boost the **domestic promotion of shooting sports**.

India Clinches Women's U19 T20 Asia Cup Title

- India won the inaugural **U19 Women's T20 Asia Cup** by defeating **Bangladesh** by **41 runs** in the final at **Bayuemas Oval, Kuala Lumpur**, on **December 22, 2024**.
- India's innings:** Scored **117/7** in 20 overs, powered by **Gongadi Trisha's 52 off 47 balls** with 5 fours and 2 sixes, and **Mithila Vinod's 17 off 12 balls**.
- Bangladesh's chase:** Bowled out for **76**; **Juairiya Ferdous** top-scored with **22 runs**, and **Fahmida Choya** added **18 runs**.
- Indian bowling:**
 - Aayushi Shukla:** Tournament's top wicket-taker, claimed **3/17**.
 - Sonam Yadav and Parunika Sisodia:** Took **2 wickets** each.
 - VJ Joshitha:** Struck early by dismissing Eva for a duck.
- Bangladesh lost their last **7 wickets for 21 runs** in 40 balls.
- Key performers:**
 - India: **Gongadi Trisha** (52 runs), **Aayushi Shukla** (3 wickets).
 - Bangladesh: **Farjana Easmin** (4/31), **Juairiya Ferdous** (22 runs).

Lakshya Sen Secures Third Place at King Cup

- Lakshya Sen, India's badminton star, secured **third place** at the inaugural **King Cup International Badminton Open** in **Bangkok, Thailand**. Defeated **Alex Lanier (France)** with a scoreline of **21-17, 21-11**, showcasing dominance in the second game. Narrowly lost to **Hu Zhe'an (China)**, the reigning World Junior Champion, in straight games **19-21, 19-21**.
- Took an early lead in the bronze-medal match, maintaining control despite a brief comeback by Lanier. Prize money: Approximately **₹36 lakh**. Lakshya's performance reinforced his status as one of India's top shuttlers, demonstrating consistency and resilience on the international stage.

Bumrah Breaks Record for Fastest 200 Wickets by an Indian

- **Jasprit Bumrah** became the **fastest Indian bowler** to reach **200 Test wickets**, achieving the milestone in just **44 Tests** during the **Boxing Day Test** of the **Border-Gavaskar Trophy** at the MCG, Melbourne. Bumrah surpassed **Mohammed Shami**, who reached the mark in **9896 balls**, by achieving it in just **8484 balls**.
- Bumrah is the **fourth-fastest overall** to 200 wickets in terms of deliveries bowled, trailing only **Waqar Younis, Dale Steyn, and Kagiso Rabada**. Bumrah reached the milestone with a remarkable **average of 19.56**, the **best in the 200-wicket club**.
- He remains a leading pacer in the competition with **151 wickets**. His stellar performance, including **four wickets in the first innings**, underlines his dominance in Test cricket and solidifies his place among cricket's elite bowlers.

Magnus Carlsen, Nepomniachtchi Share Blitz Title: Controversy Ensues

- **Magnus Carlsen** and **Ian Nepomniachtchi** shared the **World Blitz Championship title** at the **FIDE Rapid and Blitz Championship in New York**, sparking significant controversy.
- The decision came after a tied final match, with both players drawing three tiebreak games. Carlsen proposed sharing the title, which Nepomniachtchi agreed to.
- A **leaked video** showed Carlsen suggesting, "**If FIDE refuse, we can just play short draws until they give up,**" raising accusations of **match-fixing** and manipulation.

Inaugural Kho Kho World Cup 2025: Trophies and Mascots Unveiled

- The **Kho Kho Federation of India (KKFI)** unveiled trophies and mascots for the inaugural **Kho Kho World Cup 2025**, scheduled from **January 13-19** at the **Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium**, New Delhi. The event will feature **men's and women's teams** from **24 countries** across six continents, showcasing Kho Kho on the global stage. The **men's trophy (blue)** represents **trust and determination**, while the **women's trophy (green)** symbolizes **growth and vitality**. Both feature contemporary designs with intricate detailing.
- **Tejas and Tara**, the mascots, are gazelles symbolizing brilliance, energy, guidance, and aspiration, adorned with **traditional Indian motifs**. The event will be **broadcast free on Disney+ Hotstar and DD Sports**, promoting the sport worldwide.

Lionel Messi Honoured with the US Presidential Medal of Freedom

- Lionel Messi, captain of the **Argentina men's football team**, received the **US Presidential Medal of Freedom**, the **highest civilian honour in the United States**, becoming the **first male footballer** to achieve this distinction. Messi, currently playing for **Inter Miami CF**, was recognized for his **outstanding contributions to football** and his **global influence on sports and culture**.
- The award was presented by **President Joe Biden** at the **White House** alongside 18 other distinguished individuals, including **Hillary Clinton, Denzel Washington, and Magic Johnson**. The **US Presidential Medal of Freedom**, established in **1945**, honours individuals for contributions to the **national interest, world peace, and cultural or public endeavors**.
- Messi's career includes **8 Ballon d'Or awards**, a **2022 FIFA World Cup victory**, and numerous accolades, cementing his legacy as one of the greatest footballers in history.

Anju Bobby George Named Chairperson of AFI's Athletes Commission

- **Anju Bobby George**, a legendary long-jumper and **2003 World Championships bronze medalist**, has been appointed as the **Chairperson of the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) Athletes Commission**.
- The commission includes **nine athletes**, with **six women**, emphasizing **gender parity**. Notable members include **Neeraj Chopra**, a two-time Olympic medalist, **Jyotirmoyee Sikdar**, **Krishna Poonia**, and **Sudha Singh**.
- **Neeraj Chopra**, despite his active athletic career, accepted the nomination alongside **Avinash Sable** and **Bahadur Singh Sagoo**, the newly elected **AFI president**.
- The commission was formed through elections held in **October 2024**, with additional members nominated by the **AFI Executive Council**.
- **Adille Sumariwalla**, the outgoing AFI president, continues as an ex-officio member and chairs committees on government liaison and ethics.

Smriti Mandhana Smashes India's Fastest Women's ODI Century

- **Smriti Mandhana** scored the **fastest century by an Indian in women's ODIs**, reaching **100 runs off 70 balls**, surpassing **Harmanpreet Kaur's 87-ball record**. She became the **first Indian woman** to score **10 ODI centuries**, tying for third on the all-time list with **Tammy Beaumont**.
- Mandhana smashed **7 sixes** and **12 fours**, equaling Harmanpreet's record for most sixes in a Women's ODI innings. She formed a **233-run opening partnership** with **Pratika Rawal**, the **third-highest** for India in Women's ODIs. This

performance occurred during the **3rd ODI against Ireland Women** at the **Niranjan Shah Stadium**, Rajkot, where Mandhana captained the team in **Harmanpreet Kaur's absence**.

Djokovic Breaks Federer's Record for Grand Slam Match Count

- Novak Djokovic set a new record on **January 17, 2025**, by playing his **430th Grand Slam match**, surpassing Roger Federer's **429 matches**. The milestone was achieved during Djokovic's **second-round victory** at the **Australian Open** against **Jaime Faria**, with a score of **6-1, 6-7 (4), 6-3, 6-2**.
- Djokovic's **career Grand Slam record** now stands at **379 wins and 51 losses (.881 winning percentage)**, compared to Federer's **369-60 (.860 winning percentage)**. Djokovic holds the record for **most Grand Slam singles titles (24)** and has played in **37 Grand Slam finals**, six more than Federer.

Karnataka Clinch Vijay Hazare Trophy For Record 5th Time

- Karnataka won the **Vijay Hazare Trophy 2024-25**, defeating **Vidarbha** by **36 runs** in the final on **January 19, 2025**, at the **Kotambi Stadium, Vadodara**. Karnataka posted a challenging total of **348/6** in 50 overs, led by **Ravichandran Smaran** (101 off 92 balls), **Krishnan Srijith** (78 off 74 balls), and **Abhinav Manohar** (79 off 42 balls).
- Vidarbha fought valiantly but were bowled out for **312** in 48.2 overs, with key contributions from **Dhruv Shorey** (100 runs) and **Harsh Dubey** (63 off 30 balls). This victory marks Karnataka's **fifth Vijay Hazare Trophy title**, following wins in **2013-14, 2014-15, 2017-18, and 2019-20**, solidifying their legacy in domestic cricket.

BOOKS & AUTHORS

A Book Titled 'BRING IT ON: The Incredible Story of My Life' by Dr. Deepa Malik

- HarperCollins India has announced the publication of '**BRING IT ON: The Incredible Story of My Life**', a memoir by **Dr. Deepa Malik**, India's first female Paralympic medalist.
- Deepa Malik won a **silver medal in shot put** at the **2016 Rio Paralympics**, earning **23 international medals** in her illustrious career.
- She has been honored with awards such as the **Padma Shri, Khel Ratna Award**, and **Arjuna Award** for her contributions to sports.
- The book chronicles her journey of overcoming spinal tumors, societal barriers, and the stigma associated with disabilities, redefining challenges as opportunities for growth.

Pankaj Mishra's *The World After Gaza: A Reflection on Global Morality*

- Pankaj Mishra's latest book, *The World After Gaza*, examines the ongoing conflict in the Palestinian Gaza Strip, highlighting its devastating impact on **human rights and global morality**.
- Published by **Juggernaut Books**, it reflects on the **atrocities and injustices** of the war, presenting a stark critique of **modern political and moral failures**.
- Mishra documents the crisis, emphasizing its **historical context** and the dangers of rising **division, hostility, and resentment**.
- He critiques the **instrumentalization of Holocaust memory**, arguing that invoking fear to justify expansionist policies degrades the memory of Holocaust victims.
- The book warns of a troubling future shaped by **rising extremism, moral decline, and political instability**, urging readers to prepare for challenging times.

IMPORTANT DAYS

First-Ever World Meditation Day Celebrated on December 21, 2024

- United Nations declared December 21 as **World Meditation Day** through a resolution on **November 29, 2024**. Theme: "**Meditation for Global Peace and Harmony**."
- India hosted a special event at **UN Headquarters, New York**, with **Sri Sri Ravi Shankar** leading a live global meditation session. The day highlights meditation's role in fostering mental well-being, unity, and addressing global challenges. Meditation, rooted in **India's heritage**, has evolved into a **universal practice** promoting emotional and physical resilience.

National Mathematics Day 2024: Honoring Srinivasa Ramanujan

- Celebrated annually on **December 22**, marking the birth anniversary of **Srinivasa Ramanujan**. Established in **2012** by **former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh** to honor Ramanujan's contributions.

- Ramanujan, born in **Erode, Tamil Nadu (1887)**, revolutionized mathematics with discoveries in **infinite series, number theory, and continued fractions**. Collaborated with **G.H. Hardy** at Cambridge University, becoming the **second Indian elected to the Royal Society (1918)**.
- Known for **1729**, the **Hardy-Ramanujan Number**, the smallest number expressible as the sum of two cubes in two different ways. Passed away at **32 years old (1920)**, leaving a legacy that inspires mathematicians worldwide. Mathematics is celebrated for its role in **science, engineering, and daily problem-solving**, exemplifying Ramanujan's impact. **The Man Who Knew Infinity**, a book and film, showcases Ramanujan's life and work.

National Farmers Day 2024

- Celebrated annually on **December 23**, marking the **birth anniversary of Chaudhary Charan Singh**, India's **fifth Prime Minister**. Recognizes the vital contribution of farmers to **India's agrarian economy** and **food security**.
- **Theme for 2024: "Empowering 'Annadatas' for a Prosperous Nation"**, focusing on farmers' welfare and sustainable agriculture. Commemorates Chaudhary Charan Singh's advocacy for **land reforms, farmer welfare policies**, and rural development. Highlights key issues like **fair crop pricing, climate change adaptation, modern technology access**, and **sustainable farming**.

Celebrating Good Governance Day - Honoring Atal Bihari Vajpayee's Legacy

- Observed annually on **December 25**, marking the birth anniversary of **Atal Bihari Vajpayee**, India's former Prime Minister. Established in **2014** by the Narendra Modi-led government to emphasize **accountability in governance**. Vajpayee's contributions include **telecom reforms**, the **Golden Quadrilateral project**, and successful **Pokhran nuclear tests (1998)**. Known for his humility, Vajpayee served as Prime Minister for **three terms** and delivered the **first Hindi speech at the UN General Assembly**.
- India promotes good governance through initiatives like the **District Good Governance Index, National e-Governance Plan**, and the **Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005**. Challenges to governance include **corruption, gender inequality, judicial delays, and centralized administration**.

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2025

- **Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD)** is observed annually on **January 9** to honor the contributions of the Indian diaspora to India's development.
- The **18th PBD Convention** was held from **January 8–10, 2025**, in **Bhubaneswar, Odisha**, under the theme "**Diaspora's Contribution to a Viksit Bharat**" (Developed India).
- Initiated in **2003**, PBD strengthens India's ties with its overseas citizens and promotes diaspora engagement in national growth.
- Events included **Youth Pravasi Bharatiya Divas**, plenary sessions on leadership, sustainability, and women's contributions, and the **Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards** to honor distinguished diaspora members.

World Hindi Day 2025: Promoting the Global Significance of Hindi

- **World Hindi Day (Vishwa Hindi Diwas)** is celebrated annually on **January 10** to promote Hindi as a global language.
- The 2025 theme, "**A Global Voice of Unity and Cultural Pride**", emphasizes Hindi's role in uniting cultures and fostering international exchange.
- Initiated in 1949, Hindi was adopted as **India's official language** in the **Devanagari script**, reflecting its widespread use and cultural significance.
- Globally, Hindi ranks as the **fourth most spoken language**, with **4.46% of the world's population** using it.

National Youth Day 2025

- **National Youth Day (Rashtriya Yuva Diwas)** is observed annually on **January 12** to commemorate **Swami Vivekananda's birth anniversary**.
- Instituted by the **Government of India in 1984**, the first celebration took place on **January 12, 1985**.
- The day aims to inspire youth with Swami Vivekananda's teachings on **spiritual growth, national unity, and youth empowerment**.
- Celebrations include **parades, seminars, meditation sessions, and cultural programs**, held at **Ramakrishna Mission centers**, schools, and colleges.
- Activities like **essay-writing, quiz competitions, and youth conventions** emphasize youth participation in **nation-building**.
- Swami Vivekananda, born **January 12, 1863**, is remembered for introducing **Vedanta** and **Yoga** to the West and his iconic **Chicago Speech (1893)**.

77th Indian Army Day 2025

- **Indian Army Day**, observed annually on **January 15**, commemorates the transfer of leadership to Indian hands in **1949**, with **Field Marshal K.M. Cariappa** becoming the first Indian Commander-in-Chief. The **2025 theme**, “**Samarth Bharat, Saksham Sena**” (Empowered India, Capable Army), highlights the army's role in safeguarding India's sovereignty and promoting self-reliance.
- For the first time, the **Army Day Parade** will be held in **Pune**, featuring military bands, equipment displays, aerial fly-pasts, and combat drills. Events include **parades, ethnic performances**, and exhibitions of **cutting-edge weaponry** at the Cariappa Parade Ground in Delhi.
- This day honors the bravery and sacrifices of soldiers and showcases the Indian Army's contributions to **national security, peacekeeping, and disaster relief**.

OBITUARIES

Shyam Benegal, Renowned Filmmaker, Passes Away at 90

- **Shyam Benegal**, an iconic filmmaker known for **socially impactful and realistic cinema**, passed away on **December 23, 2024**, in Mumbai at the age of **90**, due to kidney-related ailments. Born on **December 14, 1934**, in **Hyderabad**, Benegal was a pioneer in blending **art-house and commercial cinema**, addressing issues like **class struggles, gender dynamics, and colonial history**.
- Key films include **Ankur (1974)**, **Nishant (1975)**, **Manthan (1976)**, **Bhumika (1977)**, **Zubeidaa (2001)**, and **The Making of the Mahatma (1996)**. He worked with celebrated actors like **Naseeruddin Shah, Shabana Azmi, Smita Patil, and Girish Karnad**. Awards include the **Padma Shri (1976)**, **Padma Bhushan (1991)**, and the **Dadasaheb Phalke Award (2005)**, Indian cinema's highest honor.

Jimmy Carter, 39th U.S. President and Nobel Laureate, Passes Away at 100

- **Jimmy Carter**, the **39th President of the United States**, passed away at **100** in **Plaines, Georgia**, on **December 30, 2024**.
- Born on **October 1, 1924**, Carter graduated from the **U.S. Naval Academy** and served in the **Navy** before managing his family's peanut farm.
- Elected in **1976**, his presidency was marked by economic challenges, including **high inflation** and the **Iran hostage crisis**.
- Achievements include the **Camp David Accords (1978)**, a historic peace agreement between **Israel** and **Egypt**.
- The **Iran hostage crisis** overshadowed his term, with **52 Americans** held hostage until **1981**, shortly after his presidency ended.
- Post-presidency, he founded the **Carter Center (1982)**, championing **human rights, democracy, and global health**.
- Awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize (2002)** for international conflict resolution and humanitarian efforts.

Dr. R. Chidambaram, India's Nuclear Visionary, Passes Away at 88

- **Dr. Rajagopala Chidambaram**, a key figure in India's **nuclear program**, passed away on **January 4, 2025**, at **Jaslok Hospital, Mumbai**, at the age of **88**. Integral to India's nuclear journey, he contributed to the **1974 'Smiling Buddha' test** and led **Operation Shakti (1998)**, solidifying India as a nuclear power.
- He served as **Principal Scientific Advisor (2002–2018)**, advancing fields like **energy security, supercomputing, and nanotechnology**. Initiatives like **RuTAG** empowered rural communities, while projects like **SETS** enhanced India's **cybersecurity** and **National Knowledge Network (NKN)** fostered educational collaboration. Awards include the **Padma Shri (1975)** and **Padma Bhushan (1999)** for his contributions to science and technology.

Legendary Director David Lynch Passes Away at 78

- **David Lynch**, renowned Hollywood director and writer, passed away at **78** on **January 18, 2025**, leaving a lasting legacy in modern cinema.
- Known for his **surreal style** and exploration of the **human psyche**, Lynch transformed genres like psychological thrillers and horror.
- Iconic works include:
 - **Eraserhead (1977)**: His debut feature, introducing his unique surrealist approach.
 - **Blue Velvet (1986)**: A cult classic.
 - **Mulholland Drive (2001)**: A critical masterpiece.
 - **Twin Peaks (1990)**: A groundbreaking TV series blending crime, drama, and surrealism.
- Lynch received numerous accolades:

- Four Academy Award nominations.
- Palme d'Or (1990) for *Wild at Heart*.
- Honorary Academy Award (2019) for lifetime achievement.
- Emmy Awards and a Peabody Award for *Twin Peaks*.

RANKING

India Ranks 49th in Network Readiness Index 2024

- India has climbed 11 places to rank 49th in the 2024 Network Readiness Index (NRI), up from 60th in 2023, with an improved score of 53.63. Published by the Portulans Institute, the NRI evaluates nations on their ability to leverage technology for governance and citizen engagement.
- Key advancements include: Progress in Artificial Intelligence (AI) to enhance global research and citizen services. Enhanced mobile networks and broadband connectivity, driven by government focus on digital infrastructure.

3 Indians Feature in Forbes' 2024 Power Women List

- Forbes' 21st annual list of the World's 100 Most Powerful Women highlights leaders in business, politics, and philanthropy.
- Nirmala Sitharaman (Rank 28): India's Finance Minister, managing a \$4 trillion economy projected to become the third-largest by 2027.
- Roshni Nadar Malhotra (Rank 81): Chairperson of HCL Technologies, overseeing a \$12 billion enterprise.
- Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw (Rank 82): Founder of Biocon, leading it to become a biopharmaceutical leader.
- Claudia Sheinbaum, President of Mexico, tops the list, followed by Ursula von der Leyen and Christine Lagarde.

Recap 2024: Most Populated Indian Cities

- India, with a population of over 1.4 billion in 2024, is the world's most populous country. Delhi is the largest city, with a population of 33.8 million, ranking second globally.
- Mumbai follows with 21.6 million, making it the 9th most populous city worldwide. Kolkata, at 15.5 million, ranks 18th globally, while Bangalore's 14 million places it 23rd.
- Chennai, with 12 million residents, ranks 28th. Hyderabad's population is 11 million, ranking 34th, while Ahmedabad and Surat house 8.8 million and 8.3 million people, ranking 45th and 50th, respectively.
- Pune, with 7.3 million residents, ranks 58th, and Jaipur, with 4.3 million, ranks 112th. India's urbanization continues to accelerate, with major cities emerging as economic and cultural hubs.
- Declining fertility rates and projected population stabilization by 2050 highlight India's demographic shift. The rise of these densely populated cities reflects the nation's growth and its challenges in sustainable urban development.

Recap 2024: Top 10 Richest Cities in India

- In 2024, India experienced significant growth in the number of billionaires, with 94 new billionaires, bringing the total to approximately US\$ 1 trillion in wealth.
- This surge has positioned India as one of the fastest-growing billionaire hubs globally. Mumbai, the financial capital of India, leads with 386 billionaires, surpassing Beijing and becoming the "billionaire capital of Asia."
- New Delhi, with 217 billionaires, ranks second, benefiting from its political significance and thriving sectors like technology and finance. Hyderabad ranks third with 104 billionaires, driven by its booming technology and pharmaceutical industries.
- Bengaluru holds fourth place, with 100 billionaires, known as India's IT capital. Chennai, with 82 billionaires, ranks fifth, bolstered by its industrial and manufacturing sectors.
- Kolkata ranks sixth with 69 billionaires, known for its heritage and commerce. Ahmedabad follows with 67 billionaires, thriving in textiles and pharmaceuticals.
- Pune, with 53 billionaires, benefits from its growing IT and educational sectors. Surat, the diamond capital, ranks ninth with 28 billionaires, and Gurugram rounds out the top 10 with 23 billionaires, emerging as a hub for finance, IT, and real estate.

India Ranked Second for Cyberattacks in 2024

- In 2024, India became the second most targeted nation globally for cyberattacks, with 95 entities affected by data theft, following the United States, which had 140 attacks.

- The **finance** and **banking sectors** were the hardest hit, with **20 victims**. Other sectors impacted include **government**, **telecommunications**, **healthcare**, and **education**.
- Major data breaches included the leak of **850 million records** of Indian citizen data from **Hi-Tek Group**, customer data from **Star Health and Allied Insurance**, and **2TB** of data from **Telecommunications Consultants India**.
- The report also identified **108 ransomware incidents** in India, with **Lockbit** being the most active group, responsible for **over 20 incidents**.
- This surge in cyberattacks highlights the critical need for enhanced **cybersecurity measures** to safeguard sensitive data and ensure public trust as India continues its rapid **digital transformation**.

ECONOMY

GDP to Grow at 6.6% in FY25: RBI

- The **RBI** projects India's **GDP growth** at **6.6%** for **FY25**, driven by a **revival in rural consumption**, increased **government spending**, and strong **services exports**. **NPAs** hit a **12-year low** of **2.6%**, with **net NPAs** at **0.6%**, indicating improved **asset quality** in banks.
- Inflation** may ease due to a strong **kharif** harvest, but risks from **extreme weather** and **geopolitical tensions** remain. Risks include **moderation in urban demand**, global uncertainties, and protective **trade policies**.
- India's **financial system** remains stable, with **capital buffers** in banks at **14%**, exceeding regulatory minimums.

RBI Reports 98.12% of ₹2,000 Notes Returned

- As of **December 31, 2024**, **98.12%** of ₹2,000 denomination banknotes have been returned to the banking system, leaving **₹6,691 crore** still with the public. The **₹2,000 notes** were withdrawn from circulation in **May 2023**, when ₹3.56 lakh crore was in circulation.
- Public could exchange or deposit these notes at all bank branches until **October 7, 2023**, after which deposits were only allowed at **19 RBI issue offices**. **India Post** facilitated the transfer of ₹2,000 notes to RBI offices for deposit into accounts. The RBI continues to accept ₹2,000 notes at its issue offices across various cities, including **Mumbai, Delhi, and Chennai**.

Government Forms Committee to Update WPI Base Year

- The **Government of India** has formed an **18-member committee**, chaired by **Professor Ramesh Chand**, to revise the base year of the **Wholesale Price Index (WPI)** from **2011-12** to **2022-23**. The committee aims to enhance the accuracy of inflation measurement by considering **recent economic changes**, including the expansion of the **service sector**. The committee will focus on commodity selection, **price collection** methodology, and developing a **Producer Price Index (PPI)**.
- The **WPI** currently tracks wholesale prices of goods, while the **PPI** will expand to include both goods and services, providing a more comprehensive view of inflation at the producer level. The committee is expected to submit its final report within **18 months**.

India's Economic Growth Projections: UN's "World Economic Situation and Prospects 2025" Report

- The **United Nations** forecasts India's economy to grow by **6.6%** in **2025** and **6.7%** in **2026**, driven by strong **private consumption**, **investment**, and **infrastructure development**. **Public sector investment** in infrastructure projects, including **digital connectivity** and **water supply**, is expected to drive economic growth.
- The **manufacturing** and **services** sectors, along with exports in **pharmaceuticals** and **electronics**, will contribute to the expansion.
- Favorable monsoons** in 2024 are expected to boost **agricultural output** in 2025. **South Asia** is projected to grow at **5.7%** in 2025, driven by India's performance. **Inflation** is expected to decrease to **4.3%** in 2025, staying within the **Reserve Bank of India's** target range. Risks include **geopolitical tensions**, **external demand slowdown**, **debt challenges**, and **climate hazards**.

India's Projected Economic Growth: World Bank

- India** is projected to grow at **6.7%** in both **FY26** and **FY27**, maintaining its position as the fastest-growing major economy. Growth is driven by strong performances in the **services** and **manufacturing** sectors, supported by **government reforms** and improved **infrastructure**.
- The **global economy** is projected to grow by **2.7%** in 2025 and 2026, with **South Asia's GDP** expected to rise to **6.2%**, primarily due to India's robust growth.

BRAIN GAME SESSION



LE ALIGANJ



- Challenges include **high debt, weak investment**, and **climate change costs**, requiring domestic reforms to boost private investment and trade relations. **Fiscal deficits** in India are expected to continue shrinking, aided by growing **tax revenues**.

Cabinet Approves ₹11,440 Crore Revival Package for Debt-Ridden RINL

- The **Union Cabinet** has approved a **₹11,440 crore** package to revive **Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL)**, also known as **Vizag Steel**. The plan includes **₹10,300 crore** as **equity capital** and converting **₹1,140 crore** of working capital loans into **preference shares**.
- RINL reported a **negative net worth** of **₹4,538 crore** as of March 2024, with significant financial distress, including **loan defaults**.
- The company will begin full production with **two blast furnaces** in **January 2025**, aiming to expand to **three furnaces** by **August 2025** to stabilize the steel market. The revival also includes efforts to secure **raw materials**, **modernize** the plant, and improve **operational sustainability**.

Trend and Progress of Banking in India 2003-24

The Reserve Bank of India's "Trend and Progress of Banking in India 2023-24" report highlights key developments in the banking sector:

- Robust Balance Sheets:** Indian banks maintained strong financial positions, with continued expansion in loans and deposits. Gross non-performing assets (NPAs) declined to **a 13-year low of 2.5% by September 2024**, down from **2.7% in March 2024**. Net NPAs also decreased to 0.57% from 0.62% during the same period.
- Moderation in Loan Growth:** Loan growth decelerated for the sixth consecutive month in December 2024, **registering a 12.4% year-on-year increase, compared to 15.6% in December 2023**. This slowdown is attributed to the **Reserve Bank of India's tighter lending norms**, particularly concerning unsecured loans.
- Profitability Under Pressure:** Banks faced challenges due to increased provisions for bad loans and a rise in non-performing assets. For instance, **HDFC Bank reported a 17% increase in loan loss provisions and an uptick in its non-performing assets ratio**. Similarly, RBL Bank experienced an 86% drop in quarterly profits due to doubling provisions.

LEGALEDGE TEST SERIES

MOCK COMMON LAW ADMISSION TEST 2025-26

CLAT MOCK

TR ID.

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

(In Figures)



INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Duration of Test : 2 Hours (120 Minutes)

1. Separate carbonised Optical Mark Reader (OMR) Response Sheet is supplied along with this Questions Booklet and the carbon copy has to be detached and taken by the candidates.
2. In case of any discrepancy in the question booklet (QB), please request the invigilator for replacement of a fresh packet of QB with OMR. Do not use the previous OMR response Sheet for a fresh booklet so obtained.
3. Candidates will not be given a second blank OMR response Sheet under any circumstance. Hence, OMR response Sheet shall be handled carefully.
4. Answer all questions. No clarification can be sought on the Questions Paper
5. Possession of electronic devices in any form is strictly prohibited in the examination Hall.
6. The use of any unfair means by any candidate shall result in the cancellation of his/her examination.
7. Impersonation is an offense and the candidate, apart from disqualification, will be liable to be prosecuted.
8. The test Paper for Five Year integrated Law Programme is for 120 marks containing 120 multiple Choice Questions.
9. There will be Negative marking for multiple choice objective type questions. 0.25 marks will be deducted for every wrong answer or where candidates have marked more than one response.

Maximum Marks : 120

10. Use **BLACK/BLUE BALL POINT PEN** only for writing the roll No. and other details on OMR response Sheet.
11. Use **BLACK/BLUE BALL POINT PEN** for shading the circles. Indicate only the most appropriate answer by shading from the options provided. The answer circle should be shaded completely without leaving any space.
12. As the responses cannot be modified/corrected on the OMR Response Sheet, candidates have to take necessary precautions before marking the appropriate circle.
13. The candidate should retain the Admit Card duly Signed by the invigilator, as the same has to be produced at the time of Admission.
14. Handle the OMR response Sheet with care. Do not fold.
15. Ensure that invigilator puts his/her signature in the space provided on the OMR response Sheet. Candidate should sign in the space provided on the OMR response Sheet.
16. The candidate should write Question Paper booklet No., and OMR response Sheet No., and sign in the space/column provided in the attendance sheet.
17. Return the Original Page of OMR response Sheet to the invigilator after the examination.
18. The candidate shall not write anything on the OMR response Sheet other than the details required and in the spaces provided for

SECTION-A : ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Directions (Q.1-Q.24): Read the passage carefully and answer the questions.

Passage (Q.1-Q.6): From a very early age, I knew that language had a kind of magic. I was fascinated by the way words could shape thoughts, evoke emotions, and bring distant worlds to life. The English language, in particular, felt like an infinite playground—a space where ideas could be molded, expanded, and redefined. I found joy in the rhythm of well-crafted sentences, the power of a single phrase, and the endless possibilities of expression. Language was not just a tool; it was an art form, a bridge between minds, and a key to unlocking new dimensions of understanding.

I share this background because I do not think one can truly appreciate a language without understanding its depth and influence. English is a language of history and evolution, shaped by countless cultures, borrowed words, and shifting meanings. It is a living entity, constantly growing and adapting to the world around it. To master it is not just to learn its grammar and vocabulary, but to embrace its **nuances**, its contradictions, and its ever-expanding horizon of possibilities. I believe there are four great motives for studying and loving the English language, at least for those who see it as more than mere communication. They are:

- (i) **Expression and Creativity:** The ability to craft ideas, to play with words, and to construct stories, poems, and arguments that captivate and inspire.
- (ii) **Intellectual Exploration:** The way English opens doors to literature, philosophy, and critical thinking, allowing one to engage with the greatest minds across time and space.
- (iii) **Cultural Connection:** The role of English as a global language, enabling conversations with people from different backgrounds, fostering understanding, and breaking barriers.
- (iv) **Historical and Linguistic Fascination:** The richness of English as a blend of languages, shaped by history, migration, and cultural exchange—an evolving record of human thought and progress.

[Extracted with edits from personal reflections on language]

1. The writer's fascination with the English language was primarily due to:
 - (a) The complexity of grammar rules
 - (b) The strict structure of sentences
 - (c) The power of words to shape thoughts and emotions
 - (d) The difficulty of mastering multiple languages
2. Why does the writer provide background information?
 - (a) To highlight the difficulty of learning English
 - (b) To emphasize that understanding a language requires knowledge of its depth and influence
 - (c) To explain the rules of English grammar
 - (d) To argue that language should remain unchanged over time
3. If one ignores the nuances of English, one will...
 - (a) Miss its depth and evolving nature
 - (b) Struggle to form grammatically correct sentences
 - (c) Be unable to communicate in multiple languages
 - (d) Find it easy to master the language
4. According to the passage, intellectual exploration is an important motive for learning English because it...
 - (a) Helps in creative storytelling
 - (b) Makes learning grammar easier
 - (c) Encourages memorization of vocabulary
 - (d) Opens doors to literature, philosophy, and critical thinking
5. The author strongly advocates that English should be viewed as:
 - (a) A rigid structure of grammar rules
 - (b) A language that should remain unchanged
 - (c) A difficult skill that only a few can master
 - (d) A dynamic, evolving entity influenced by culture and history
6. Which of the following is a synonym for the word "nuances" in the passage?

(a) Details	(b) Subtleties
(c) Layers	(d) All of the above

Passage (Q.7-Q.12): In the modern world, technology is both a beacon of human ingenuity and a force of profound disruption. Over the past century, humanity has witnessed an unprecedented acceleration in innovation, from the dawn of the digital age to the rise of artificial intelligence. However, this rapid progress presents a paradox: while technology enhances efficiency and convenience, it simultaneously fuels societal anxieties and ethical dilemmas.

One of the most significant benefits of technological advancement is its transformative impact on communication. The advent of the internet and mobile technology has created a world where information is instantly accessible. Social media platforms connect individuals across continents, fostering global awareness and collective action. Yet, this interconnectedness comes at a cost. The digital age has ushered in concerns over data privacy, misinformation, and the

erosion of genuine human interactions. The very tools designed to bridge distances often create emotional and psychological divides.

Moreover, automation and artificial intelligence (AI) have revolutionized industries, enhancing productivity and reducing human error. In medicine, AI-driven diagnostics promise early detection of diseases with unparalleled accuracy, potentially saving millions of lives. In finance, algorithmic trading has redefined market dynamics, making transactions more efficient. However, these advancements also bring uncertainties. Automation threatens traditional job markets, displacing workers in manufacturing, logistics, and even creative fields. Ethical questions arise as AI systems make decisions once reserved for humans—who should bear responsibility when an autonomous vehicle causes an accident? Should AI-generated art and literature be considered original creations?

Environmental concerns add another layer to this **paradox**. While renewable energy technologies promise a sustainable future, the very devices that drive modern convenience—smartphones, laptops, and electric vehicles—rely on rare earth metals, whose extraction depletes natural resources and devastates ecosystems. The digital economy, powered by data centers and blockchain transactions, consumes staggering amounts of energy, exacerbating climate change.

The paradox of technological progress is, therefore, not merely a question of advancement but of balance. Innovation must be pursued alongside ethical considerations, ensuring that progress serves humanity rather than undermines it. The future hinges on our ability to navigate this delicate equilibrium, embracing technology without forsaking the very values that define our existence.

7. Which of the following best reflects the central idea of the passage?
- (a) The benefits of technology far outweigh its drawbacks in the modern world.
 - (b) While technology has driven unprecedented progress, it also raises ethical, social, and environmental dilemmas.
 - (c) Artificial Intelligence and automation are the greatest threats to human employment.
 - (d) The digital age has led to a complete erosion of human relationships and values.
8. Based on the passage, what is one of the major concerns arising from rapid technological advancement?
- (a) It has made human interactions more meaningful.
 - (b) It has led to a complete elimination of traditional job markets.
 - (c) It has created ethical dilemmas and widened societal anxieties.
 - (d) It has entirely replaced human decision-making in critical sectors.
9. According to the passage, what should be the approach towards technological progress?
- (a) Rapid technological development should be encouraged without restrictions.
 - (b) Ethical considerations should guide technological innovation to maintain balance.
 - (c) Governments should impose strict regulations to limit technological growth.
10. Why does the author describe the impact of artificial intelligence in different industries?
- (a) To illustrate how AI is reducing efficiency and increasing human errors.
 - (b) To highlight both the revolutionary benefits and the uncertainties AI brings.
 - (c) To argue that AI will soon replace human intelligence entirely.
 - (d) To emphasize that AI-driven automation will only benefit the financial sector.
11. What does the passage imply about the relationship between environmental sustainability and technological progress?
- (a) Technology is solving all environmental problems without creating new ones.
 - (b) The use of rare earth metals and data-driven economies create environmental concerns despite technological advancements.
 - (c) The digital economy is energy-efficient and does not contribute to climate change.
 - (d) Renewable energy completely eliminates the negative effects of technology on the environment.
12. What is the antonym for the word "paradox" as used in the passage?
- (a) Certainty
 - (b) Contradiction
 - (c) Dilemma
 - (d) Complexity

Passage (Q.13-Q.18): Technology is not merely the accumulation of mechanical knowledge or the endless pursuit of innovation; it is the conscious refinement of human intellect, directed towards the elevation of civilization. If progress were only measured by the vastness of databases or the sophistication of algorithms, then machines alone would be the harbingers of wisdom. But does the mere possession of information signify understanding? Does the ceaseless hum of automation fulfill the deeper yearning of the human spirit?

True progress is not in the complexity of our inventions, but in the depth of our wisdom. We do not seek to create mere tools of convenience, but to foster minds that can wield them with foresight. What is needed is not just technical expertise, but a synthesis of knowledge and ethical **discernment**. A society that amasses power without direction, that surrenders itself to the authority of machines without questioning its purpose, risks becoming enslaved by its own creations.

The ultimate goal of all advancement must be the cultivation of discernment. The individual who can harness technology without being dominated by it, who can stand firm against the tide of fleeting trends, is truly enlightened. This mastery does not come from passive consumption of information but from deliberate reflection and understanding. The chemist in the laboratory, the philosopher in deep contemplation, and the engineer designing the marvels of tomorrow—all must employ the same fundamental principle: the power of focused inquiry.

Knowledge, like fire, can illuminate or consume. The wise do not hoard it indiscriminately but channel it towards the betterment of all. The real triumph of humanity lies not in the machines it builds, but in the virtues it upholds while wielding them.

[Extracted with reflections from *The Ethics of Progress*]

- 13. Technology, as described by the author, means:
 - (a) The accumulation of mechanical knowledge
 - (b) The vastness of databases and algorithms
 - (c) Endless pursuit of innovation
 - (d) None of the above
- 14. As per the author, the ultimate goal of technological progress should be:
 - (a) To create sophisticated machines
 - (b) To ensure human convenience
 - (c) To cultivate discernment and wisdom
 - (d) All of the above
- 15. According to the author, what does society risk if it amasses power without direction?
 - (a) Becoming enslaved by its own creations
 - (b) Losing ethical discernment
 - (c) Surrendering to automation
 - (d) All of the above
- 16. According to the author, what is essential to balance technology with wisdom?
 - (a) Passive consumption of information
 - (b) Ethical discernment and reflection
 - (c) Surrendering to fleeting trends
 - (d) All of the above
- 17. According to the author, which among the following is key to attaining true mastery over technology?
 - (a) Hoarding knowledge indiscriminately
 - (b) Focused inquiry and deep contemplation
 - (c) The blind pursuit of automation
 - (d) All of the above
- 18. Which of the following words is related to the word "discernment"?
 - (a) Insight
 - (b) Judgment
 - (c) Perception
 - (d) All of the above

Passage (Q.19-Q.24): The clock struck eleven as he unlatched the rusted iron gate, its creak slicing through the stillness of the night. The mansion loomed ahead, its silhouette jagged against the moonlit sky, the broken windows glinting like shattered glass in a sea of darkness. A chill wind swept through the neglected garden, rustling the overgrown ivy that clung stubbornly to the crumbling walls. He hesitated for a moment, adjusting his leather gloves before stepping forward, his boots pressing into the damp earth, leaving behind faint imprints that the night would soon erase.

Inside, the air was thick with the scent of aged wood and something less definable—perhaps the lingering breath of secrets long buried. A grand chandelier hung overhead, its crystals coated in decades of dust, swaying ever so slightly as if whispering warnings only the keenest of ears could catch. He ran his fingers along the mahogany railing of the grand staircase, the once-glossy surface dulled by time and neglect.

Somewhere beyond the towering doors, a faint sound echoed—a shuffling, barely perceptible, yet unmistakable. He froze. Was it the wind, or something far less explainable? His pulse quickened as he reached into his coat pocket, fingers brushing against the cold steel of the revolver.

The room at the end of the hallway stood ajar, a sliver of golden candlelight spilling onto the dusty floorboards. He had been told the house was abandoned. He had been assured that no one had stepped inside for years. And yet, as he pushed the door open, the candle's flame flickered—its wax still warm, its light dancing in defiance of the darkness.

Something—or someone—was here.

- 19.** Which among the following is the meaning of the expression 'lingering breath of secrets long buried'?
- (a) The presence of a ghostly entity
 - (b) The mansion's air carrying an eerie, mysterious atmosphere
 - (c) The scent of aged wood mixed with dust
 - (d) The sound of whispering voices in the hallway
- 20.** At what time did the protagonist enter the mansion?
- (a) When the moon cast long shadows across the ground
 - (b) When the wind rustled through the overgrown ivy
 - (c) When the clock struck eleven
 - (d) When the candle in the hallway flickered
- 21.** What detail gave the impression that the mansion was abandoned?
- (a) The rusted iron gate and the broken windows
 - (b) The dust-covered chandelier swaying in silence
 - (c) The air thick with the scent of aged wood and time
 - (d) All of the above
- 22.** Which among the following is the word for the phrase 'coated in decades of dust'?
- (a) Shrouded
 - (b) Dulled
 - (c) Obscured
 - (d) Aged
- 23.** Which among the following is NOT an element of suspense in the passage?
- (a) The creaking of the iron gate
 - (b) The golden candlelight flickering in the hallway
 - (c) The mention of the protagonist's leather gloves
 - (d) The faint sound echoing beyond the doors
- 24.** What unusual sign indicated that the mansion might not be truly abandoned?
- (a) The overgrown ivy and crumbling walls
 - (b) The dust-laden air and aged wood scent
 - (c) The cold steel of the revolver in the protagonist's pocket
 - (d) The warm wax of the flickering candle

SECTION-B : GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

Directions (Q.25-Q.52): Read the comprehension carefully and answer the questions.

Passage (Q.25-Q.30): National Sports Awards 2024 Recognize Excellence in Indian Sports

The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has announced the recipients of the National Sports Awards 2024. Shooter Manu Bhaker, D Gukesh, Harmanpreet Singh, and para-athlete Praveen Kumar will be honored with the prestigious Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award. The Arjuna Award, one of India's highest sporting honours, recognizes outstanding performances in sports and games. The winners of the 2024 Arjuna Award were announced by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, acknowledging the achievements of athletes across various disciplines.

Established in 1961, the Arjuna Award aims to reward athletes for their consistent outstanding performance in national and international competitions. It also emphasizes qualities like leadership, sportsmanship, and discipline. This year, a total of 32 athletes have been honored with the award.

The Arjuna Awards not only celebrate individual excellence but also inspire upcoming athletes to strive for greatness. The recognition motivates sportspeople to enhance their performance and contribute to India's sporting legacy on international platforms. The announcement of Arjuna Award winners for the year 2024 signifies that India is fast emerging as a sporting powerhouse. With this vast array of disciplines represented, the awards have portrayed the commitment and talent of Indian athletes. In preparation to accept their honours, these recipients are an example for generations to come in the realm of sports.

[Extracted with edits and revisions from <https://www.indiatoday.in>]

Passage (Q.31-Q.36): Jallianwala Bagh tragedy

On 29 May 1919, Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore, in protest against the horrifying Jallianwala Bagh massacre, composed a letter addressed to the Viceroy of India, Lord Chelmsford, beseeching him to renounce the knighthood bestowed upon Tagore by the British monarch in 1915. Though not an active participant in politics, Tagore's spirit was ignited by the harrowing events of the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy. In the wake of the massacre, Tagore sought to rally fellow leaders of the nation to join his protest. When no one answered the call, he found himself standing resolutely alone. His letter commenced with these words: "Your Excellency, the enormity of the measures taken by the Government in the Punjab to suppress local disturbances has jolted our understanding, revealing the vulnerability of our status as British subjects in India."

Although he did not wish to slight the honor, he implored Viceroy Lord Chelmsford to relinquish the knighthood title (Sir) in solidarity with his countrymen. In his letter, he articulated, "These are the reasons that have painfully compelled me, with sincere reference and regret, to request Your Excellency to relieve me of my Knighthood, an honor I had the privilege to accept from His Majesty the King through your predecessor, for whom I still hold great admiration for his nobility of spirit." In hindsight, R. E. H. Dyer expressed remorse for his actions. A century later, the British Government issued an official statement expressing regret for the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy, substantiating Rabindranath Tagore's righteous stance at the time.

[Extracted with edits and revisions from <https://amritmahotsav.nic.in>]

- 31.** Which regiment of the British Indian Army carried out the Jallianwala Bagh massacre on 13th April 1919?
- (a) Gurkha
 - (b) Dogra
 - (c) Rajputana
 - (d) Madras
- 32.** Consider the following statements about the Rowlatt Act 1919:
- I. It was passed on the recommendations of the Sedition Committee chaired by Sir Sidney Rowlatt.
 - II. The act allowed the detention of political prisoners without trial for up to two years.
 - III. It was enacted during World War II to combat subversive activities.
- Which of the above statements is/are correct?
- (a) I and II only
 - (b) II and III only
 - (c) I and III only
 - (d) I, II, and III
- 33.** Which commission was appointed by the British government to investigate the Jallianwala Bagh massacre of 1919?
- (a) Simon Commission
 - (b) Hunter Commission
- 34.** The arrest and banishment of which Indian leader, alongside Saifuddin Kitchlew, sparked violent protests in Amritsar on April 10, 1919, leading up to the Jallianwala Bagh massacre?
- (a) Lala Lajpat Rai
 - (b) Bal Gangadhar Tilak
 - (c) Satya Pal
 - (d) Bipin Chandra Pal
- 35.** Who awarded Rabindranath Tagore the title of Knighthood in 1915 for his services to literature?
- (a) Queen Victoria
 - (b) King George V
 - (c) Lord Chelmsford
 - (d) Prince Edward
- 36.** Who served as the Secretary of State for India from 1917 to 1922 and played a significant role in shaping the Government of India Act, 1919?
- (a) Lord Chelmsford
 - (b) Edwin Charles Montagu
 - (c) Winston Churchill
 - (d) Stafford Cripps

Passage (Q.37-Q.41): LEADS 2024 Report

States along with the private sector must develop action plans for better logistics business to attract investments. There is a need to develop regional and city-level logistics plans as well for last-mile connectivity. This was stated by Union Minister of Commerce & Industry, Shri Piyush Goyal during the release of the "Logistics Ease Across Different States (LEADS) 2024" report today in New Delhi. He also presided over the felicitation function of the "Logistics Excellence, Advancement, and Performance Shield (LEAPS) 2024".

He emphasised on implementation of measures to promote green logistics, workforce inclusivity and facilitation of Central Government projects. He noted that adoption of newer technologies like Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Data Analytics is vital for achieving greater success in future. The Minister also laid emphasis on skill development to boost the logistics sector.

Minister Goyal also said that the country should engage on gender inclusivity and encourage greater participation of women in the sector and States must leverage public-private partnerships (PPPs) in the logistics sector for better success. He urged the States to look at multi-modal hubs for in-land container depots and make land available through the bidding mode to promote transparency and cutting down costs. He urged the logistics sector to adopt LEAD framework – Longevity, Efficiency and Effectiveness, Accessibility and Accountability and Digitalisation of processes to transform the logistics sector and prepare India for a Viksit Bharat by 2047.

[Extracted with edits and revisions from <https://pib.gov.in>]

- 37.** Which country topped the 2023 Logistics Performance Index (LPI) for the first time, surpassing Germany?
- (a) Finland
 - (b) Singapore
 - (c) Denmark
 - (d) Netherlands
- 38.** What was India's rank in the 'Logistics Performance Index Report 2023'?
- (a) 44
 - (b) 38
 - (c) 54
 - (d) 40
- 39.** Which North-Eastern state was classified as an "Aspirer" in the LEADS 2024 report?
- (a) Manipur
 - (b) Meghalaya
 - (c) Arunachal Pradesh
 - (d) Assam
- 40.** Which of the following is NOT one of the key pillars used to evaluate logistics performance in the LEADS 2024 report?
- 41.** The LEADS report, released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, was conceived on the lines of which organization's Logistics Performance Index (LPI)?
- (a) International Monetary Fund (IMF)
 - (b) World Trade Organization (WTO)
 - (c) World Bank
 - (d) United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
- 42.** Which institution recently launched a course on the PM GatiShakti Concept for Efficient Infrastructure Planning and National Development?
- (a) Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi
 - (b) GatiShakti Vishwavidyalaya (GSV)
 - (c) National Institute of Technology (NIT) Trichy
 - (d) Indian School of Business (ISB) Hyderabad

Passage (Q.43-Q.47): India State of Forest Report 2023

Courts and conservationists have demanded that the state follow the dictionary definition of forests whereas the administration has been muddying it to exclude "community" forests, among others, while including plantations and orchards. Even if the administration's impetus is murky, it is allowing India to claim it is growing its carbon sink towards its climate commitments while allowing developmental activities to continue unimpeded. The report also lacks details about whether its estimates of the carbon sequestration potential of degraded land account for the specific uses to which they are currently being subjected.

Forest loss in biodiverse areas cannot be adjusted with new plantations elsewhere, the consequences of which are exacerbated by the decision to include even commercial plantations, which have lower sequestration and ecological value, and the continued use of the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act. In several northern districts, the extent of forest cover that suffered fire losses has increased by an order of magnitude in two years. Ground reports by The Hindu have documented a paucity of human resources, skill, and equipment to control fires. Economic growth is essential and trees will be lost, but this is precisely why the friction that laws impose on the growth impulse is essential too. Yet, the government has been weakening environmental safeguards — more recently, the Forest (Conservation) Amendment Act 2023 further contracted the 1980 Act's purview — and distorting its official inventory of forests. It is hard to imagine anyone winning in the end.

[Extracted with edits and revisions from <https://www.thehindu.com>]

- 43.** How often is the India State of Forest Report (ISFR) published by the Forest Survey of India (FSI)?
- (a) Annually
 - (b) Biennial
 - (c) Triennial
 - (d) Quadrennial
- 44.** Which state reported the maximum increase in forest and tree cover according to the India State of Forest Report 2023?
- (a) Mizoram
 - (b) Uttar Pradesh
 - (c) Chhattisgarh
 - (d) Odisha
- 45.** Which of the following states is NOT among the top three states with the most forest fire incidents in the 2023-24 season?
- (a) Uttarakhand
 - (b) Odisha
 - (c) Chhattisgarh
 - (d) Madhya Pradesh

- 46.** Which of the following statements about the Forest Survey of India (FSI) is true?
- (a) The Forest Survey of India (FSI) was established in 1981, replacing the Pre Investment Survey of Forest Resources (PISFR) initiated in 1976.
 - (b) The FSI operates under the Ministry of Environment and Forests and has regional offices located in Shimla, Kolkata, Nagpur, and Bangalore.
 - (c) The National Commission on Agriculture (NCA) recommended establishing the FSI in 1981, with the Eastern zone having a sub-centre in Dehradun.
 - (d) The primary objective of FSI is to provide financial assistance to forest-dependent communities rather than assessing and monitoring forest resources.
- 47.** Which global initiative aims to restore 350 million hectares of deforested and degraded land by 2030, with India committing to restore 13 million hectares by 2020 and an additional 8 million hectares by 2030?
- (a) Bonn Challenge
 - (b) Paris Agreement
 - (c) UNCCD Framework
 - (d) Convention on Biological Diversity

Passage (Q.48-Q.52): Rise and fall of the Maratha Empire

In the latter half of the 17th century, a revolutionary change of great importance was brought about in the political system of India. The coronation of Shivaji the Great at Raigad in 1674 announced to the world the birth of a new independent Hindu Kingdom in the Deccan which was, in course of time, to expand into an Empire, bringing the whole of India under its control. It is indeed a remarkable fact that the Marathas asserted their independence with success, opposed as they were by Aurangzeb, the master of the vast resources of the Great Mughal empire.

In order to fully understand the significance of this emergence of the Maratha nationality in the 17th century, we must look to the social, political and economic condition of the Hindus under the Sultans of the Deccan during the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries. In the course of these centuries, two movements, one religious and social and the other political, were shaping themselves among the people of Maharashtra and it was the confluence of both these currents that carried Shivaji the Great and his heroic companions to victory on the crest of its wave.

Allaudin's invasion of the Deccan in 1294 was the first appearance of the Muslim in the South. During the last hundred years the arms of the Crescent had subjugated the whole of Northern India and Allaudin's expedition to the Deccan was an indication that the ambition of the conquerors would not be satisfied until the South as well was brought under their sway. During Allaudin's reign three great armies were led by his famous general, Malik Kafoor, and this time the greater part of Maharashtra was conquered. The kings of Deogiri at Doulatabad struggled manfully against Alladin and his successors at Delhi.

[Extracted with edits and revisions from <https://archive.org>]

- 48.** Who is credited, along with his son Shivaji, for laying the foundation of a strong Maratha state in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries?
- (a) Tukaram Maharaj
 - (b) Shahji Bhonsle
 - (c) Ramdas Swami
 - (d) Eknath Shastri
- 49.** Who succeeded Shivaji as the ruler of the Maratha Empire in 1681 and continued his father's expansionist policies?
- (a) Rajaram
 - (b) Sambhaji
 - (c) Shivaji II
 - (d) Shahu
- 50.** In the Maratha Empire's Ashtapradhan system, which title referred to the Prime Minister responsible for overseeing the entire administration?
- (a) Amatya
- 51.** In the provincial administration of the Maratha Empire, what does the term "Parganas" refer to?
- (a) Villages
 - (b) Sub-districts
 - (c) Districts
 - (d) Provinces
- 52.** Which lake, situated at an altitude of about 14,270 feet in the Himalayas, is one of the world's highest brackish water lakes and recently saw the inauguration of a statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj?
- (a) Pangong Tso
 - (b) Dal Lake
 - (c) Tso Moriri
 - (d) Nainital Lake

SECTION-C : LEGAL REASONING

Directions (Q.53-Q.84): Read the comprehension carefully and answer the questions.

Passage (Q.53-Q.58): India's data protection framework has evolved significantly with the introduction of the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023. This Act establishes a robust mechanism to safeguard personal data, including the creation of the Data Protection Board of India. The Board is tasked with adjudicating disputes between individuals and platforms concerning data breaches. Individuals are empowered with rights such as accessing their personal data, requesting corrections or erasures, revoking consent, and nominating representatives to handle data-related requests. Special attention is given to the protection of minors, with provisions that prohibit processing activities detrimental to children's well-being, including tracking, behavioral monitoring, and targeted advertising.

Despite its progressive nature, the legislation has faced criticism for several reasons. Exemptions in the Act allow personal data to be processed for purposes such as legal proceedings, law enforcement, and certain corporate transactions (with consumer's consent). Critics argue that these exemptions could potentially undermine individual privacy protections. Another concern is the limited scope of the Act, as it only applies to data collected digitally or digitized from offline sources, leaving purely offline personal data outside its purview. This has led to questions about the comprehensiveness of the legislation in addressing the broader challenges of data privacy.

In January 2025, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology took a step forward by releasing the draft Digital Personal Data Protection Rules, 2025, for public consultation.

While these developments signal progress, experts emphasize the need for further refinements to address existing gaps and enhance the privacy framework comprehensively. Ensuring robust privacy safeguards for all individuals remains a critical goal for India's data protection landscape.

[Extracted with edits and revisions from, <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/indias-data-protection-rules-need-some-fine-tuning/article69092690.ece>]

- 53.** Rajat, a user of the social media platform "ConnectUs", notices that his profile incorrectly lists his health status, which has led to inappropriate targeted advertising. He wants to correct this error without impacting other data processing activities. According to the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, what is the most appropriate action he should take?
- (a) Request ConnectUs to correct the erroneous health status information in his profile.
 - (b) Demand that ConnectUs stop all data processing activities related to his account.
 - (c) Nominate a representative to manage his data privacy concerns with government and ConnectUs.
 - (d) Seek legal advice on suing ConnectUs for damages due to privacy invasion.
- 54.** **Assertion (A):** The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, allows personal data to be processed for legal proceedings, law enforcement, and certain corporate transactions.
- Reasoning (R):** These exemptions are designed to streamline data processing practices for all personal data, whether digital or offline, ensuring faster and more efficient handling by authorities and corporations. Is the assertion correct, and does the reasoning logically explain the assertion?
- 55.** Under which of the following scenarios would the processing of children's data be permissible without violating the provisions focused on protecting minors' well-being?
- (a) A children's online educational platform uses behavioral monitoring to customize learning paths based on individual performance.
 - (b) An app designed for teenagers uses data analytics to push advertisements based on browsing history and app usage.
 - (c) Both (a) and (b).
 - (d) Neither (a) nor (b).
- 56.** Which of the following scenarios would be permissible under the exemptions?
- (a) A corporation uses personal data from customer feedback forms to tailor marketing strategies without customer consent.
 - (b) A law enforcement agency processes personal data collected from public surveillance cameras to track a suspected criminal.

- (c) A healthcare provider uses patient data to send promotional emails about health products.
(d) All of the above.
- 57.** An NGO, Green Future, conducts surveys to assess community attitudes towards environmental conservation. They collect data using both paper forms and a mobile app. After compiling the results, there is a discrepancy between the digital and physical data regarding community support for a new conservation project. Green Future needs to decide which data set to use for their official report to potential donors. Under the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, which data set should Green Future legally rely on to compile their official report?
(a) The data collected via the mobile app, as it is digitally collected data.
(b) The paper form data, as it represents the original handwritten responses.
(c) Both the digital and paper form data, as combining all data provides a comprehensive view.
(d) All of the above.
- 58.** The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, which includes provisions for the processing of personal data, has faced criticism. Which of the following reasons aligns with the criticism described in the passage?
(a) The exemptions are too broad, potentially allowing a wide range of personal data to be processed under the guise of legal and corporate necessities, which could undermine the intended robustness of privacy protections.
(b) The Act enables the Data Protection Board of India to have extensive powers, including adjudicating disputes and enforcing compliance, which could lead to overreach.
(c) The Act allows for the processing of personal data without adequate checks on how this data is used by law enforcement, risking misuse of personal information.
(d) All of the above.

Passage (Q.59-Q.64): Criminal contempt, in its broadest sense, encompasses actions that interfere with or tend to impede the due course of justice, including any attempts to circumvent a court's judgment or order. The Supreme Court, in *Reliance Petrochemicals Ltd. v. Proprietors of Indian Express Newspapers, Bombay Pvt. Ltd. & Ors.* (AIR 1989 SC 190), emphasized that public interest demands non-interference with judicial processes. The Court highlighted that judicial decisions should not be preempted or undermined by public agitation or publications. It further stressed that the assessment of contempt must consider the specific facts of the case, ensuring that the due course of justice remains unimpaired.

Any speech or writing that misrepresents court proceedings, prejudices public opinion for or against a party, or reflects negatively on parties to a proceeding constitutes contempt. In *Re: P.C. Sen* (AIR 1970 SC 1821), the Supreme Court observed that the question is not the contemnor's intention but whether the act tends to interfere with the administration of justice or has harmful effects. The Court noted, "To make a speech tending to influence the result of a pending trial, whether civil or criminal, is a grave contempt." It stated that the focus in such cases is not on whether interference occurred, but whether the act had the potential to interfere with justice.

Courts bear the duty to ensure their proceedings are not misrepresented, as prejudicing public opinion against parties before a cause is fully heard can lead to "pernicious consequences." In *The William Thomas Shipping Co, in re. H. W. Dhillon & Sons Ltd. v. The Company, In re. Sir Robert Thomas and Ors.* ([1930] 2 Ch. 368), the Court observed that publishing injurious misrepresentations about parties to proceedings constitutes contempt. Such actions may cause parties to compromise or deter individuals with valid claims from approaching the courts, thus undermining the administration of justice.

[Extracted with edits and revisions from, <https://doj.gov.in/law-commission-reports-having-doj-interface/>]

- 59.** During a highly publicized civil trial, a prominent business leader, Mr. Redfern, who is not a party to the case but has significant business interests in the outcome, makes a series of public statements. In these statements, he predicts the failure of one party's legal strategy and mentions that the judiciary tends to favor entities that contribute to economic growth. Which of the following scenarios most accurately assesses the potential for Mr. Redfern's actions to be considered criminal contempt?
(a) Mr. Redfern's statements are likely considered criminal contempt because they cast aspersions on the impartiality of the judiciary, potentially influencing public opinion and the court's neutrality.
(b) Mr. Redfern's actions cannot be considered criminal contempt as he is merely expressing his

- personal opinion on the economic implications of the trial, without any direct interference in the court's processes.
- (c) Mr. Redfern's commentary is a permissible exercise of free speech, aimed at discussing public affairs without any intention to influence the judiciary.
- (d) Mr. Redfern's predictions about the legal strategy's failure are based on his business expertise, not on any intent to disrupt the judicial process.
- 60.** **Assertion (A):** "Any speech or writing that misrepresents court proceedings, prejudices public opinion for or against a party, or reflects negatively on parties to a proceeding constitutes contempt."
- Reasoning (R):** "The focus in such cases is not on whether interference occurred, but whether the act had the potential to interfere with justice."
- Is the assertion correct, and does the reasoning logically explain the assertion?
- (a) Both A and R are true, and R is the correct explanation of A.
- (b) Both A and R are true, but R is not the correct explanation of A.
- (c) A is true, but R is false.
- (d) A is false, but R is true.
- 61.** In a recent high-profile trial, a well-known media outlet published a series of articles that were critical of the trial's proceedings, claiming that the evidence presented was insufficient for a conviction. The articles also speculated on potential outcomes and suggested that a conviction would indicate judicial bias. The publisher is brought to court on charges of contempt. The court must assess whether these publications constitute contempt by considering the specific facts of the case and ensuring that the due course of justice remains unimpaired. Which of the following factors could lead to a finding of contempt in this scenario?
- (a) The publisher's analysis and criticism of the evidence presented, intended as a discussion on legal standards and public interest.
- (b) The publisher's intent to provide the public with informative updates about the trial, which is a part of journalistic duty.
- (c) The articles' direct influence on the public's perception of the judiciary's integrity and the fairness of the ongoing trial.
- (d) All of the above.
- 62.** A journalist named Rohan wrote an article while a high-profile court case was actively ongoing. The article described the ongoing proceedings in detail and included speculative commentary that cast one of the parties in a highly negative light, suggesting they were likely to be found guilty due to past behaviors rather than the evidence presented. Which of the following is most appropriate?
- (a) Rohan's article is protected under freedom of speech, and he cannot be held in contempt as long as he does not explicitly lie about factual elements.
- (b) Rohan can be held in contempt of court if his article is found to have prejudiced public opinion against the party, potentially influencing the outcome of the case.
- (c) Rohan's speculations about the party's past behaviors and likelihood of guilt do not constitute contempt since they are part of journalistic analysis.
- (d) All of the above.
- 63.** Mr. Sharma, a popular social media influencer, posts a detailed critique of a judge's handling of a high-profile corruption case, which is currently in progress. In his post, Mr. Sharma suggests that the judge might be biased, potentially influencing public perception of the trial's integrity. After being brought to court on charges of contempt, Mr. Sharma defends himself by stating that his intention was not to interfere with the administration of justice. Will his defense hold?
- (a) Yes, because Mr. Sharma's intention was not to interfere with the administration of justice, his post is protected as free speech.
- (b) No, because any public critique of a judge handling an ongoing trial is automatically considered contempt, regardless of intent or effect.
- (c) Yes, because Mr. Sharma is entitled to express his opinions about the judiciary, and as long as there is no explicit call to disrupt the trial, his actions do not constitute contempt.
- (d) No, because the potential of the post to influence public opinion and interfere with the administration of justice is what constitutes contempt, not the contemnor's intention.
- 64.** During a contentious trial involving corporate fraud, Dr. Bishwa, a well-respected law professor, publishes an academic article in a legal journal. The article critically examines trends in judicial handling of corporate fraud cases across various jurisdictions, without specifically mentioning the ongoing trial. After the publication, a complaint is filed against Dr. Bishwa for contempt, alleging that her article could influence the judicial outcome of the ongoing case. Considering

the principles laid down in the passage, which of the following is the most appropriate ruling?

- (a) Dr, Bishwa is liable for contempt because her article discusses topics directly related to the subject matter of the ongoing trial.
- (b) Dr, Bishwa is not liable for contempt as her article is a scholarly work that does not specifically mention the ongoing trial or attempt to influence its outcome.

- (c) Dr, Bishwa is liable for contempt because her article might indirectly influence how the public perceives judicial handling of similar cases.
- (d) Dr, Bishwa is not liable for contempt because the article was intended for an academic audience, focusing on theoretical aspects rather than the specifics of the ongoing case.

Passage (Q.65-Q.69): The Provincial Constitution Committee (chaired by Patel) agreed with the Union Constitution Committee (chaired by Nehru) that a parliamentary form of government was suitable for the country, and that the governor be directly elected by adult franchise. However, during debates, the Constituent Assembly altered this process to direct appointment by the President. Another significant discussion focused on the governor's role concerning the chief minister. The final formulation (Article 163) reads: "There shall be a Council of Ministers with the chief minister at the head to aid and advise the Governor in the exercise of his functions, except in so far as he is by or under this Constitution required to exercise his functions or any of them in his discretion." The Constitution grants the governor discretionary powers for certain actions, like special powers in some North-Eastern states. Additionally, the governor must make key decisions, such as inviting a party to form a government in case of no clear majority, or dissolving the assembly if no party or coalition can demonstrate majority support provided there is a possibility of forming a stable government by that party. Various commissions have suggested that the governor should be from a different state, have no recent political involvement, and be appointed after consultation with the chief minister. They also emphasized that President's Rule should only be used as a last resort, with the confidence of the government tested only on the floor of the House.

- 65.** Which of the following statements can be concluded from the given passage?
- (a) The Provincial Constitution Committee and the Union Constitution Committee both agreed on the election of the governor by the public and no further alteration was made in this process.
 - (b) The Governor has the discretion to make certain decisions, such as granting special powers to some North-Eastern states.
 - (c) The Governor can decide on the dissolution of the assembly only if a party is unable to form a government.
 - (d) As per the recommendation of various committees, The Governor should be appointed after consulting with the Chief Minister and should not have been involved in recent politics.
- 66.** If no political party or coalition has the clear majority in the state legislature, who has the authority to decide on the formation of the government?
- (a) The Governor can invite any party to form the government, regardless of the support in the legislature.
 - (b) The President must appoint a party to form the government if no majority exists.
 - (c) The Governor decides whom to invite to form the government if no party or coalition has a clear majority.
 - (d) The Chief Minister can decide on the formation of the government.
- 67.** The Governor has the power to dissolve the assembly. Under what condition is this power exercised?
- (a) If the ruling party requests the dissolution of the assembly.
 - (b) If the legislative assembly fails to elect a speaker.
 - (c) If no party or coalition is able to demonstrate majority support in the legislative assembly.
 - (d) If the Chief Minister proposes the dissolution.
- 68.** The recommendation that the Governor be an individual from a different state with no recent political involvement is made by which body?
- (a) The President of India.
 - (b) The Provincial Constitution Committee.
 - (c) Various commissions.
 - (d) The Union Constitution Committee.
- 69.** Which of the following is an incorrect statement based on the passage?
- (a) The post of Governor must be consulted by the CM before being appointed according to recommendations by the commissions.
 - (b) The President's discretion can override the Governor's decisions in some circumstances.
 - (c) The Governor has a constitutional duty to form a government when no clear majority exists.
 - (d) The imposition of President's Rule should be a last resort, as suggested by commissions.

Passage (Q.70-Q.74): The Bombay High Court held that, "No one can claim that their right to practise religion has been violated when permission to use a loudspeaker is denied."

The use of loudspeakers and public address systems (PAS) cannot be deemed an essential religious practice that ought to be protected by law, the court said. The HC was hearing a writ petition filed by two residents' associations in Mumbai's suburban Nehru Nagar, Kurla (East) and Chunabhatti areas against the use of loudspeakers by mosques and madrasas beyond permissible decibel limits and during prohibited hours.

Under The Noise Pollution (Regulation and Control) Rules, 2000, noise levels in residential areas during the day must not exceed 55 decibels and, at night, 45 decibels. Section 38 of the Maharashtra Police Act allows police to stop music, sound, or noise, and to rescind, modify, or alter the permission to use loudspeakers.

The 2016 ruling by the HC said that places of worship could not escape being penalised for noise pollution, and that the "use of loudspeakers is not an essential part of any religion". The use of loudspeakers could not be claimed as a fundamental right under right to freedom of religion and Article 19(1)(a) (freedom of speech and expression) of the Constitution, the ruling said.

The 2016 ruling referred to past SC judgments and directed that loudspeakers cannot be used between 10 pm and 6 am. It also prohibited the use of horns in silence zones and during night hours in residential areas.

The ruling said the state government could permit the use of loudspeakers between 10 pm and midnight during cultural or religious occasions for 15 days in the calendar year, except in silence zones.

Areas up to 100 metres around schools, colleges, hospitals, religious places, and courts are silence zones.

70. A mosque located within 100 meters of a hospital in Mumbai uses loudspeakers during nighttime hours. The mosque argues that it has been doing so for years and the practice is protected under Article 19(1)(a). How should the authorities respond based on the court's judgment?

- (a) The authorities should allow the mosque to continue, as it is a long-standing practice protected by fundamental rights.
- (b) The authorities should issue a warning but take no further action due to the religious significance of the practice.
- (c) The authorities should prohibit the use of loudspeakers as it violates silence zone regulations and is not an essential religious practice.
- (d) The authorities should allow the use of loudspeakers until midnight during religious occasions.

71. What constitutes a silence zone as per the Bombay High Court's judgment?

- (a) Areas within 100 meters of schools, colleges, hospitals, and courts
- (b) Areas designated by the local government based on need
- (c) Any area within a residential zone after 10 pm
- (d) Only hospitals and courts are considered silence zones

72. Which Article of the Indian Constitution specifically deals with the right to freedom of religion?

- (a) Article 15

- (b) Article 19
- (c) Article 22
- (d) Article 25

73. Which of the following scenarios correctly allows the use of loudspeakers, as per the Bombay High Court's ruling?

- I. A mosque obtains permission to use loudspeakers during evening prayers but exceeds the permissible decibel limits, claiming it as an essential religious practice.
- II. A temple uses a loudspeaker between 9 PM and 11 PM during a religious festival after obtaining special permission from the state government, ensuring compliance with The Noise Pollution Rules, 2000.
- III. A madrasa uses loudspeakers in a silence zone near a hospital, asserting that it is a fundamental right under right to religion of the Constitution.
- IV. A school conducts an annual cultural event using loudspeakers within permissible decibel limits during the day, adhering to the Noise Pollution Rules.

- (a) I and III
- (b) II and IV
- (c) Only III
- (d) Only I

74. Under the Noise Pollution (Regulation and Control) Rules, 2000, what are the permissible noise levels in residential areas during night time?

- (a) 55 decibels
- (b) 65 decibels
- (c) 45 decibels
- (d) 40 decibels

Passage (Q.75-Q.79): IN-SPACE recently released the Norms, Guidelines and Procedures (NGP) for Implementation of the Indian space Policy – 2023 (ISP). While the ISP is an overarching framework based on the reforms envisioned by GOI, the NGP is intended to be the roadmap to implement these reforms.

The NGP is designed to govern “space activities” carried out by Indian entities from within the Indian Territory, which includes a wide range of activities ranging from operation of space objects to space transportation including launches. Private players are now required to obtain a prior authorization from IN-SPACE before undertaking such activities and the NGP details out the regulatory framework for the authorization, timelines, liabilities, etc. While only an Indian Entity is permitted to apply to IN-SPACE for authorization, non-Indian Entities are permitted to apply through an Indian Entity which could either be its subsidiary or joint venture.

In addition to authorizations, IN- SPACE under the NGP is also responsible for registration of space-objects, satellite network filings and assessing safety and liability related aspects of space activities. The NGP stresses on way Space Activities are to be carried out, such that it does not pose a threat to national defense, security, public order, intelligence, safety of people, property and environment.

Currently, the ISP and the NGP have only been released in the form of guidelines and policy documents formulated by the Department of Space (DOS). Given the national importance of this sector, it is time that a codified statute is legislated to fortify roles and responsibilities of IN- SPACE, including appellate mechanisms for authorisations, after taking into consideration inputs from the industry bodies. Resuscitating a version 2.0 of the Space Activities Bill, 2017 could be a good starting point.

(Source- <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/small-biz/legal/navigating-the-legal-cosmos-a-deep-dive-into-the-norms-and-guidelines-released-by-in-space/articleshow/112940644.cms>)

- 75.** What is the primary function of the Norms, Guidelines and Procedures (NGP) document released by IN-SPACE?
- (a) To define the overall vision for the Indian Space Policy (ISP)
 - (b) To regulate the development of new space technologies in India
 - (c) To establish IN-SPACE as the primary governing body for space activities
 - (d) To provide a roadmap for implementing the reforms outlined in the ISP
- 76.** According to the NGP, which entities require authorization from IN-SPACe to conduct space activities in India?
- (a) Only government agencies
 - (b) Only private companies
 - (c) All entities, domestic and foreign
 - (d) Indian entities, or foreign entities being able to participate through partnerships with Indian entities.
- 77.** What are some of the key responsibilities of IN-SPACE outlined in the NGP?
- (a) Funding and development of new space exploration projects
 - (b) Authorizing, registering, and overseeing the safety of space activities
- 78.** Why does the author of the source article advocate for a codified statute on space activities in India?
- (a) To replace the NGP with a more comprehensive legal framework
 - (b) To increase government funding for space exploration initiatives
 - (c) To clarify the roles and responsibilities of private companies in the sector
 - (d) To strengthen the national security implications of space activities
- 79.** What is the suggested approach to creating a legal framework for space activities in India, as mentioned in the passage?
- (a) Develop entirely new legislation from scratch
 - (b) Adapt and update the existing Space Activities Bill, 2017
 - (c) Issue further guidelines and clarifications from IN-SPACe
 - (d) Rely on existing regulations under the Department of Space

Passage (Q.80-Q.84): The concept of compassionate appointments can be traced to the Indian Constitution's Article 39, which is under the Directive Principles of State Policy and talks about the right to livelihood. It aims to provide employment on compassionate grounds to the dependent family members of a government servant who dies in harness or retires on medical grounds, leaving the family without any source of sustenance. Multiple factors are looked at while assessing a request for compassionate appointments, such as the financial condition of the family, the presence of earning members, family size, children's ages, and the essential needs of the family. According to instructions on "Compassionate Appointment under Central Government" given by the DoPT, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, compassionate appointments can extend to dependent family members of a government servant who: (a) Dies while in service (including death by suicide), (b) Retired on medical grounds under Rule 2 of the CCS (Medical Examination) Rules 1957 or the corresponding provision in the Central Civil Service Regulations before 55 years of age and (c) Retired on medical grounds under Rule 38 of the CCS(Pension) Rules, 1972 or the corresponding provision in the Central Civil Service Regulations before attaining the age of 55 years. The measure can also extend to the family members of an Armed Forces employee who: (i) Dies during service; (ii) is killed in action; or (iii) is medically boarded out and is unfit for civil employment. However, the government servant or an Armed Forces employee must have been appointed on a "regular basis" and not on a daily wage, casual, apprentice, ad-hoc, contract, or reemployment basis.

(Source:<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-law/supreme-court-compassionate-appointment-ruling-8492120/>)

- 80.** Which of the following is the primary objective of compassionate appointments under the Directive Principles of State Policy?
 (a) To ensure a steady government workforce.
 (b) To offer employment opportunities based on merit.
 (c) To provide financial stability to the families of deceased or incapacitated government employees.
 (d) To fulfill the employment quotas mandated by Article 39 of the Constitution.
- 81.** If a government employee retires on medical grounds at the age of 56, which of the following scenarios will apply to their family's eligibility for a compassionate appointment?
 (a) The family is ineligible because the employee retired after 55 years of age.
 (b) The family is eligible only if the retirement is under Rule 38 of the CCS(Pension) Rules, 1972.
 (c) The family is eligible if there is no other earning member.
 (d) The family is eligible only if the retirement is due to service-related injury.
- 82.** Why are government servants employed on a casual or contract basis excluded from the compassionate appointment scheme?
 (a) They are not considered regular employees.
 (b) They do not contribute to the CCS (Pension) Rules, 1972.
- 83.** An Armed Forces employee is medically boarded out at the age of 45 and deemed unfit for civil employment. Under what condition will their family qualify for compassionate appointment?
 (a) If the employee's medical condition directly impacts their dependents' financial stability.
 (b) If the employee was in regular service at the time of medical boarding out.
 (c) If there is no earning member in the employee's family.
 (d) If the medical condition occurred during active duty.
- 84.** What additional factor does the DoPT require to be assessed while evaluating requests for compassionate appointments?
 (a) The educational qualifications of the applicant.
 (b) The applicant's ability to contribute to the government's workforce.
 (c) The essential needs and financial condition of the family.
 (d) The length of service of the deceased or retired employee.

SECTION-D : LOGICAL REASONING

Directions (Q.85-Q.108): Read the comprehension carefully and answer the questions.

Passage (Q.85-Q.90): The Supreme Court has brought clarity to a grey area in the Constitution by observing that the expression "as soon as possible" in Article 200 of the Constitution, which deals with the governors giving asset to the bills passed by state legislatures, "has significant constitutional intent and must be borne into mind".

The Constitution gives the governors three choices with respect to bills presented to them: to give assent, to withhold it or to refer to the President under certain specific circumstances. The provision for returning a bill comes in the ambit of the second choice, that is to withhold it. The court has observed that bills should be returned "as soon as possible".

Some governors have chosen to interpret the clause "to withhold the assent" as if they have a constitutional mandate to withhold it for infinite time. Governors in several states where the governments are run by parties in camps opposite to that of the ruling dispensation at the Centre use this provision to make law-making and constitutional governance extremely difficult by their refusal to sign into law bills passed by the legislatures.

The present case in the Supreme Court pertains to the Telangana governor signing some bills and keeping some others on hold. The Kerala governor would publicly raise doubts about the constitutional validity of the bills and sit on them for a period of his choice. The governor of Tamil Nadu would go to the extent of saying that a bill, which has been withheld for long, is as good as dead.

The Supreme Court has put all doubts to rest in its interpretation of Article 200 and underscored the paramountcy of popular will which gets reflected in sovereign legislatures. It also means that it is not open to appointee governors to sit in judgment over the wisdom of the elected legislatures; it is the job of the people or for the constitutional courts.

It's time recalcitrant governors realised the limits of their powers under the Constitution and realigned their ideas with those of democracy.

85. Which of the following is NOT a supporting idea in the passage?

- (a) The Supreme Court has clarified the interpretation of Article 200, emphasizing the need for governors to return bills as soon as possible.
- (b) Some governors have exploited the ambiguity of the Constitution to withhold assent to bills for indefinite periods, causing difficulties in law-making and governance.
- (c) The court's decision urges governors to recognize the paramountcy of popular will and respect the decisions of elected legislatures.
- (d) Governors should have more authority in the legislative process to ensure the constitutional validity of bills.

86. Which of the following inferences CANNOT be drawn from the passage?

- (a) The Supreme Court's decision will put an end to governors withholding assent for an indefinite period.
- (b) The Supreme Court addressed the misuse of three choices given to governors when handling bills presented to them.
- (c) The Supreme Court's interpretation of Article 200 supports the idea that governors can sit in judgment over elected legislatures.

(d) The intervention of Supreme Court to bring clarity on the use of the expression "as soon as possible" was stirred up due to the actions of the Telangana governor.

87. Which of the following would strengthen the author's argument in the passage?

- (a) Evidence that governors who withhold assent to bills for indefinite periods have a negative impact on state governance.
- (b) Multiple instances were observed where governors successfully improved the quality of bills by withholding assent for a longer time.
- (c) Examples of governors from states where the ruling party aligns with the central government also withholding assent to bills.
- (d) Cases where the Supreme Court has previously upheld the right of governors to withhold assent indefinitely.

88. "A study has shown that states where governors withheld assent to bills for long periods experienced slower economic growth and increased bureaucratic inefficiencies." What would be the impact of introducing the external statement in the passage?

- (a) It would weaken the author's argument by providing evidence that governors' actions have no impact on state governance.

- (b) It would contradict the author's claim that the Supreme Court has clarified the interpretation of Article 200.
- (c) It would support the author's argument by providing evidence that withholding assent for indefinite periods has negative consequences on state governance.
- (d) It would undermine the importance of respecting the popular will reflected in sovereign legislatures.
- 89.** In light of the Supreme Court's interpretation of Article 200, what should governors do when presented with a bill passed by state legislatures?
- (a) Governors should return bills as soon as possible, respecting the popular will reflected in sovereign legislatures.
- (b) Governors should withhold assent indefinitely, ensuring they thoroughly analyze the constitutional validity of bills.
- 90.** Which of the following is a necessary assumption made by the author in the passage?
- (a) Governors who withhold assent for indefinite periods always have political motivations behind their actions.
- (b) The Supreme Court's interpretation of Article 200 will immediately resolve all issues related to governors withholding assent.
- (c) Constitution gave power to Governors not to linger on the bills indefinitely to give assent.
- (d) The central government has no influence on the actions of state governors regarding the withholding of assent.

Passage (Q.91-Q.96): When we talk about the 'space race' between the Cold War adversaries the U.S. and the Soviet Union, we usually discuss the race to land the first human beings on the moon. Soon after this was achieved, however, attention shifted to our neighbouring planet Mars. The first successful soft landing on Mars was achieved by the Soviet Union with their Mars 3 mission. At this initial period of planetary exploration, both these space superpowers tended to launch pairs of spacecraft as a precautionary measure. The idea was to have one as the backup of another, so that at least one of them succeeded in its efforts even if the other failed completely in its objective.

It therefore comes as no surprise that the Mars 2 and Mars 3 missions consisted of identical spacecraft. With a bus/orbiter module and an attached descent/lander module, the combined mass of the spacecraft, with fuel, was approximately 4,650 kg. The Mars 3 spacecraft was 4.1 metres high, 5.9 metres across the two solar panel wings and had a base diameter of 2 metres. The primary objective of the Mars 3 orbiter was to image the Martian surface and clouds, determine the temperature on Mars, and measure properties of the Martian atmosphere, among others. These were in addition to serving as a communications relay to send signals from the lander to Earth.

Mars 3 was launched on May 28, 1971, just nine days after Mars 2 had been successfully launched. Ten days later, on June 8, a mid-course correction was made after which Mars 3 was involved in a three-way race with Mars 2 and U.S.' Mariner 9 to become the first spacecraft to orbit Mars. Less than five hours before reaching Mars, the descent module of Mars 3 had been released. Having entered the Martian atmosphere at roughly 5.7 km/s, a combination of aerodynamic braking, parachutes, and retro-rockets allowed the lander to achieve a soft landing. With the Mars 2 lander having crashed, this made the Mars 3 mission the first ever to achieve a soft landing on Mars.

- 91.** Given that Mars 3 was the first successful soft landing on Mars, what does the passage imply about the technological advancements of the Soviet Union in comparison to their Cold War adversary?
- (a) The Soviet Union had surpassed the U.S. in terms of space exploration capabilities.
- (b) Both nations were almost on par, but the Soviet Union had a slight edge in landing technologies.
- (c) The Soviet Union had more consistent success with their planetary missions.
- (d) While both nations were competitive, Mars 3 showcased the Soviet Union's specific advancement in soft landing technology.
- 92.** Which of the following, if true, would most weaken the author's arguments?
- (a) Mars 3 was launched prior to Mars 2, contrary to the sequence stated in the passage.
- (b) The Mars 3 orbiter primarily functioned as a communications relay and did not carry out any scientific research.
- (c) There was an unrecorded Soviet mission that successfully landed on Mars before Mars 3.
- (d) Mars 2 was not intended to be a backup for Mars 3 but was a separate mission with distinct objectives.

- 93.** The passage suggests that the primary objective of the Mars 3 orbiter was to image the Martian surface and clouds, among other tasks. If it were discovered that Mars 3 orbiter was also equipped to study the geology of the Martian soil, how would that information affect the overall understanding of the mission's objectives?
- (a) The mission would be considered broader in scope than initially perceived.
 - (b) It would indicate that the mission prioritized soil analysis over atmospheric study.
 - (c) The mission's success would be evaluated based on the quality of soil data retrieved.
 - (d) It would render the earlier objectives of imaging the Martian surface redundant.
- 94.** Assuming the principles and techniques used in the Mars 3 mission were to be employed in a hypothetical future mission, "Mars Prime", which of the following scenarios would be most consistent with the approach taken by the Mars 3 mission?
- (a) Mars Prime is launched as a single spacecraft with no backup, aiming to land humans on Mars.
 - (b) Mars Prime is launched in tandem with a backup, "Mars Prime 2", both aiming to place a robotic rover on Mars.
 - (c) Mars Prime is launched as a lone mission, aiming to capture images of the Martian surface,
- 95.** If Mars 3 had not achieved a soft landing on Mars, which of the following would have most likely been true based on the information in the passage?
- (a) Mars 3 would have shared the same fate as Mars 2.
 - (b) Mars 3's orbiter would have failed in its primary objectives.
 - (c) U.S.'s Mariner 9 would have become the only contender in the three-way race.
 - (d) Mars 3's mission would have been deemed a total failure irrespective of the orbiter's success.
- 96.** Which of the following is the author most likely to disagree with based on the information provided in the passage?
- (a) Mars 3 achieved the first successful soft landing on Mars.
 - (b) Mars 2 and Mars 3 missions were launched as a precautionary measure, functioning as backups for each other.
 - (c) Mariner 9, the U.S. mission, was meant to soft-land on the surface of Mars.
 - (d) The primary objective of the Mars 3 mission was to establish a permanent human colony on Mars.

Passage (Q.97-Q.102): All is well that ends well. This is how one can sum up the political drama staged in the national capital during the last three days as part of the selection of the chief minister of Karnataka where the Congress staged a spectacular victory by bagging 135 seats. The race for the chief minister's post was nothing new or unexpected. But the High Command of the party managed to resolve the issue without much heart-burning among the contestants. On Saturday, Siddaramaiah would be sworn in as the chief minister and the process of government formation is likely to commence without delay. The immediate task awaiting the chief minister and his deputy D K Shivakumar is to regain the trust and confidence of the people in the State who were antagonized and tortured by corruption in big places during the last four years of BJP rule. And the voters are waiting with bated breath and anticipation for the fulfilment of the promises made by the Congress leadership in the run-up to the election. Both Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar are left with no break from the hectic electioneering as they have to get the State ready for the 2024 Lok Sabha election. The victory of the Congress in the Karnataka polls has no doubt, rejuvenated the Grand Old Party across the nation. A sense of indecisiveness and uncertainty are discernible in the BJP camp as the leadership is groping in the dark to understand what went against them. Though some political pundits attribute the Congress win to communalism, they are silent about the asinine communalism which was the platform on which the top leadership of the Hindutwa party solicited a mandate for the second term. There is a sense of relief among the Opposition camp as the Congress won hearts and influenced the voters. If the Congress leadership, especially Sonia Gandhi, could take the regional satraps into confidence, there is no reason to doubt about a 2004 model of unity and a UPA victory. It is not the Nobel Prize for Peace or a chair in the security council of the United Nations that the man in the street need. To understand the unhappiness and discontentment among the people, all one has to do is compare the prices of petrol, diesel, cooking gas, rice and wheat that prevailed before 2014 and post-2014.

Ten years is a long time in politics and rhetoric has no place. One cannot keep on blaming Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi for what Ambani and Adani are doing now. It is good that the nation is getting a new parliament building in the coming months. A person, no less than the spouse of the finance minister of the country, has said that the nation's economy

is in ruins. The question is are we to continue clapping to the statistics of no value read out from teleprompters? The sudden transfer of Kiran Rijiju from the ministry of law to the department of earth sciences is laughable. Having served the Government with sincerity and dedication, Rijiju deserved a reasonably good farewell. But that has been the modus operandi of Veeru and Dheeru during the last decade. With India as the current chair of the G20 countries, Prime Minister Kishida and Prime Minister Narendra Modi will have an exceptional opportunity to discuss the issues faced by the 'Global South' including global health and digitalisation. There is an acute economic disparity between the two worlds— 'Global North' and 'Global South' which has clearly been visible during Covid-19. Also, while the Western world managed to survive the food crisis amidst the war in Ukraine, countries in the 'Global South' faced a shortage of food and fuel.

- 97.** Which of the following can be concluded from the information present in the passage?
- (a) The BJP's defeat in the Karnataka election was mainly due to the influence of Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi's policies.
 - (b) The economic disparity between the 'Global North' and 'Global South' has been accentuated by the Covid-19 crisis and the war in Ukraine.
 - (c) The people of Karnataka express unanimous satisfaction towards the BJP's rule over the last four years.
 - (d) Kiran Rijiju's transfer from the ministry of law to the department of earth sciences signifies his excellent performance in his previous role.
- 98.** Which of the following, if true, would most strengthen the author's arguments?
- (a) The economic condition of the 'Global South' has significantly improved in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.
 - (b) The people of Karnataka have expressed satisfaction with Siddaramaiah's previous term as Chief Minister.
 - (c) Data reveals that the cost of petrol, diesel, cooking gas, rice, and wheat has increased substantially post-2014.
 - (d) Kiran Rijiju's transfer to the Department of Earth Sciences has resulted in significant improvements in the department's functioning.
- 99.** Which of the following, if true, would most weaken the author's arguments?
- (a) Some 'Global South' nations have shown significant economic growth amidst the Covid-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine.
 - (b) Recent statistics indicate improvement in the general situation of people in the country despite rise in prices of petrol, diesel, and cooking gas.
 - (c) The Congress leadership has refused to engage with regional satraps, leading to party fragmentation.
 - (d) Kiran Rijiju's transfer to the Department of Earth Sciences was due to his outstanding performance in his previous role.
- 100.** If you were a policy advisor to the newly elected government in Karnataka, considering the contents of the passage, which of the following steps would be most effective in gaining public trust?
- (a) Focus on resolving the economic disparity between the 'Global North' and 'Global South'.
 - (b) Initiate an investigation into the role of Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi in current economic issues.
 - (c) Emphasize Kiran Rijiju's achievements during his tenure in the Ministry of Law.
 - (d) Immediately address the issues of corruption, implement promises made during the election, and work towards controlling the prices of essential commodities.
- 101.** Based on the passage, what can be inferred about the author's perspective?
- (a) The author believes that Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar are unsuitable for the leadership roles they have been given.
 - (b) The author is skeptical about the potential of the new Congress government in Karnataka to fulfill its promises.
 - (c) The author believes that the BJP's handling of economic matters and corruption contributed to their defeat in Karnataka.
 - (d) The author believes that the transfer of Kiran Rijiju is a significant factor contributing to the BJP's downfall.
- 102.** Based on the passage, which of the following statements is the author most likely to disagree with?
- (a) Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar face a significant task in restoring the public's trust in Karnataka's government.
 - (b) The BJP's handling of economic issues and allegations of corruption contributed to their defeat in the Karnataka election.
 - (c) The transfer of Kiran Rijiju from the Ministry of Law to the Department of Earth Sciences was a strategic move that strengthens the BJP.
 - (d) The victory of the Congress in Karnataka's election has had a rejuvenating effect on the party across the nation.

Directions (Q.103-Q.108): Seven boxes L, M, N, O, P, Q and R are stacked over each other and are numbered 1 - 7 from bottom to top. Either a mobile or a laptop is kept in each box. The number of laptops is more than the number of mobiles. A laptop is kept in box O which is not kept adjacent to box R. Box Q is kept at an odd numbered position and at least three boxes are kept below it. Box P is kept immediately above box L. The box in which a laptop is kept is kept immediately below the box R. One mobile each is kept in boxes adjacent to the box M. Five boxes are kept between R and N. Only two boxes are kept between the boxes Q and L and a mobile is kept in box L.

103.

- Which box is kept at the Third position from the bottom?
(a) Box in which mobile is kept
(b) Q
(c) P
(d) None of these

104. Select the odd one out.

- (a) R
(b) M
(c) P
(d) O

105.

- Which box is kept immediately below box M ?
(a) The box which is immediately above box Q
(b) L
(c) The box which is numbered 5
(d) R

106. A ____ is kept in box ____.

- (a) Laptop, N
(b) Both a and c
(c) Mobile, P
(d) Both a and e

107. How many laptops are kept in boxes below box P ?

- (a) 4
(b) 2
(c) 5
(d) 1

108. Select the correct combination.

- (a) 2 - R - Mobile
(b) 4 - O - Laptop
(c) 6 - M - Mobile
(d) 5 - L - Laptop

SECTION-E : QUANTITATIVE TECHNIQUES

Directions (Q.109-Q.114): In the year 2020, a town had a total population of 2,50,000 people. Due to rapid industrial expansion in 2021, more job opportunities and better living conditions attracted people, leading to a 12% increase in the population that year. However, in 2022, many residents decided to move to other cities in search of different opportunities or better living standards, resulting in 10% of the total population migrating. In 2023, the government launched a large-scale development plan to improve infrastructure, create employment, and enhance the overall quality of life in the town. As a result, the remaining population saw a significant increase of 15%. Unfortunately, in 2024, a pandemic hit the town, affecting the residents in various ways. Due to both migration and mortality caused by the crisis, the town's total population decreased by 8%.

- 109.** What was the average approximate population of the city from 2020 to 2024?
 (a) 2,60,500 (b) 2,67,683
 (c) 2,59,800 (d) 2,62,000
- 110.** What was the ratio of the population in 2024 to the population in 2021?
 (a) 33327: 35000 (b) 33333: 35000
 (c) 33337: 35000 (d) 33357: 35000
- 111.** What was the percentage change in population from 2020 to 2024?
 (a) 5.52% decrease (b) 5.52% increase
 (c) 6.64% increase (d) 6.45% increase
- 112.** What was the population change percentage from 2021 to 2024, given that the population in 2021 was 2,80,000?
- 113.** What was the population of the city before the decrease in 2024?
 (a) 2,89,800 (b) 2,87,500
 (c) 2,85,000 (d) 2,90,000
- 114.** Which of the following statements is true?
 (a) The final population in 2024 is 2,57,940.
 (b) The total percentage increase over the four years was 9%.
 (c) The population in 2023 was 2,99,475 before the pandemic.
 (d) The net effect over the four years resulted in an overall increase in population.

Directions (Q.115-Q.120): In 2021, a college library has a collection of fiction, non-fiction, and reference books (The books that are not considered either fiction or non-fiction) in the ratio of 3:5:2, with a total of 80,000 books. This means the number of fiction, non-fiction, and reference books is divided according to this proportion. In the year 2022, the library received an increase in books for each category, where the number of fiction books grew by 10%, non-fiction books increased by 5%, and reference books saw an 8% rise. However, in the year 2023, some books were lost due to wear and tear. Specifically, 500 fiction books, 800 non-fiction books, and 300 reference books were damaged or lost.

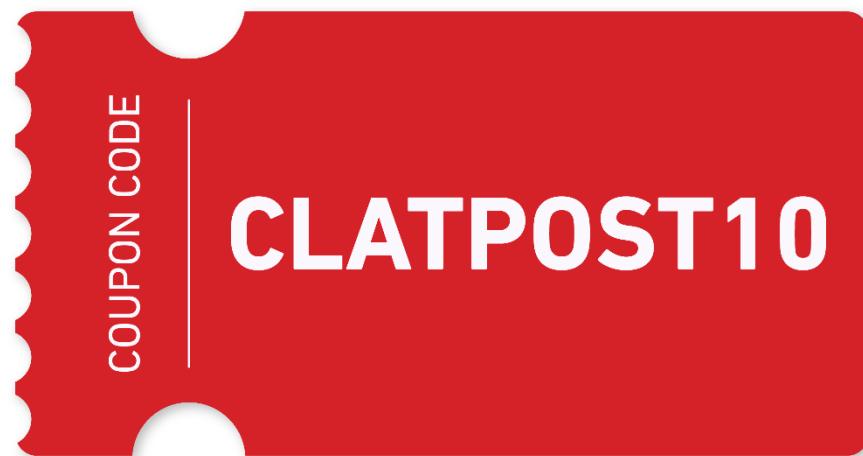
- 115.** What is the percentage increase in the total number of books from 2021 to 2023 ?
 (a) 5.1% (b) 5.2%
 (c) 5.5% (d) 6%
- 116.** If the same percentage increase in each book category happens again in 2024 as in 2022, what will be the approximate total number of books in 2024?
 (a) 88,950 (b) 90,088
 (c) 89,100 (d) 87,512
- 117.** The ratio of fiction to non-fiction books in 2023 is closest to:
 (a) 3: 4 (b) 5: 8
 (c) 1: 2 (d) 2: 3
- 118.** If, at the end of 2023, an additional 1,000 fiction, 1,200 non-fiction, and 800 reference books are donated to the library, what will be the percentage of reference books in the total collection?
 (a) 20.41% (b) 21.27%
 (c) 18.53% (d) 19.87%
- 119.** The absolute difference in the number of non-fiction books between 2021 and 2023 is:
 (a) 1,200 (b) 1,300
 (c) 1,500 (d) 1,000
- 120.** Which of the following is incorrect?
 (a) In 2022, the library had 85,680 books
 (b) In 2023, fiction books were 25,900
 (c) The total gain in 2022 was 5,680 books as compared to 2021.
 (d) The number of reference books in 2023 was 16,800

Done Solving the Mock?

Now Scan the QR Code below to submit your answers. You'll get access to the Answer Key, In-Depth Video Analysis and Detailed Performance Insights.



Avail 10% OFF on LEGALEDGE Test Series
Use the Coupon Code CLATPOST10



DOUBT

