

THE
CLAT POST⁺

**CLAT
2026
TROPHY
AWAITS**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Polity and Governance (Including Current Legal Knowledge)	03
1. Tamil Nadu's Opposition to the Three-Language Policy under NEP 2020.....	03
2. Mishaps in Electors Photo Identity Card Number.....	10
3. Immigration and Foreigners Bill, 2025 introduced in Lok Sabha.....	15
4. History of the Khalistan movement and Recent Issues	20
5. Raisina Dialogue 2025	26
6. 30 Maoists Shot Dead-Naxalism Evolution	30
7. Delimitation and Concerns of Southern States.....	34
2. Economy & Governance	41
8. Navratna status for IRCTC and IRFC: All about Maharatna, Navratnas and Mini Ratnas.....	41
3. International Affairs	45
9. USA-Russia-Ukraine Ceasefire Deal.....	45
10. Pakistan Train Hijack.....	55
11. U.S. Strikes on Houthis.....	64
12. Former Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte Arrested on ICC's Warrant	71
13. Donald Trump Proposes Negotiations for New Iran Nuclear Deal	77
14. India 2nd largest Arms Importer: SIPRI.....	83
15. Lalit Modi and Vanuatu Citizenship include the news on USA's Gold Card for Citizenship.....	87
16. Armenia, Azerbaijan agree to end 40 yrs of conflict ...	90
4. Environment & Biodiversity	95
17. India designates 58th Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh	95
18. World Air Quality Report 2024.....	102
5. Science & Technology	107
19. Aditya-L1 Captures First-Ever Image of Solar Flare 'Kernel'.....	107
20. India-Argentina sign MoU on Lithium Partnership.....	110
21. Sunita Williams & Butch Wilmore return to Earth.....	114
6. Static Scoop	119
22. 55th Anniversary of NPT and Indian nuclear programs evolutions and capacity.....	119
23. Life of VD Savarkar, Prime Minister remembering Savarkar's role in Freedom Struggle.....	125
7. Miscellaneous	129
24. International Women's Day.....	129
25. Champions Trophy 2025.....	135
26. 97th Academy Awards.....	138
8. Important One Liners	143
9. CLAT POST Mock Test	168
27. Question Paper	168

Polity & Governance

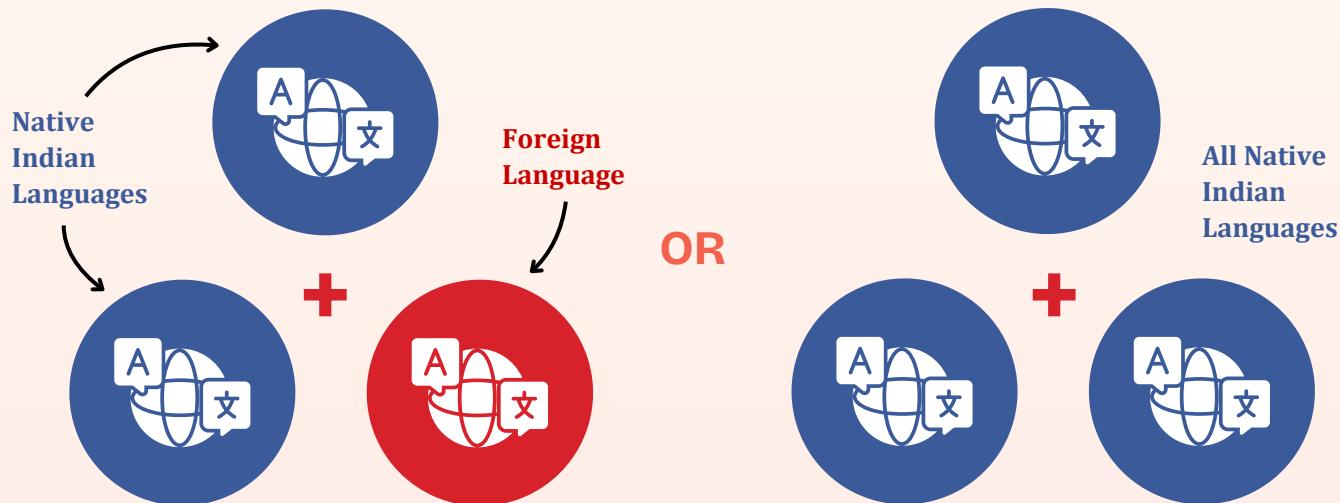
Tamil Nadu's Opposition to the Three-Language Policy under NEP 2020

News Highlights:

Tamil Nadu has declined to implement key parts of the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**, especially **the three-language formula**. In response, the central government has withheld ₹573 crore in educational funds under the **Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)**.

According to policy guidelines, states must align with NEP directives to receive SSA funding, with the Centre contributing 60% for states like Tamil Nadu.

What is the three Language Policy?



The **three-language formula in NEP 2020** recommends that students learn **three languages, at least two of which must be native to India**. This formula applies to **both government and private schools**, giving states the flexibility to choose languages without any imposition.

According to **NEP 2020**, in addition to Indian languages and English, students at the secondary level can also learn Korean, Japanese, French, German and Spanish, among other foreign languages.

History and Evolution of the Three-Language Formula in India

1948–1949	1964–1966	1968	1975	1990	2020
University Education Commission	Kothari Commission	National Policy on Education	Gujral Committee Report	Ali Sardar Jafri Committee	National Education Policy (NEP)

University Education Commission

1948–1949

Chaired by **Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan**, this commission emphasised the **importance of bilingualism for educated Indians**. It suggested that students at the higher secondary and university levels should be proficient in three languages: their regional language, the federal language (Hindi), and English. This recommendation aimed to promote national unity while preserving linguistic diversity.

Kothari Commission

1964–1966

The Kothari Commission, officially known as the National Education Commission (1964–1966), was established by the Government of India to evaluate and propose reforms for the country's educational system. Chaired by Dr. Daulat Singh Kothari, the commission aimed to address various challenges in education and recommend strategies for improvement.

Key Recommendations:

- **Mother Tongue/Regional Language:** Emphasising the importance of the child's first language in early education.
- **Official Language of the Union (Hindi):** Encouraging the teaching of Hindi to promote national unity.
- **Modern Indian or European Language:** Introducing another language, such as English or any other modern language, to enhance linguistic diversity and global communication skills.

National Policy on Education

1968

National Policy on Education (1968): The three-language formula was officially adopted in this policy. It recommended that:

- **Hindi-speaking states:** Students should learn Hindi, English, and a modern Indian language, preferably from the southern regions.
- **Non-Hindi-speaking states:** Students should learn their regional language, Hindi, and English.
- The objective was to promote multilingualism and national integration.

The policy was reaffirmed in **NPE 1986 under PM Rajiv Gandhi** and revised in **1992 by Narasimha Rao's Congress government** to promote linguistic diversity and national unity.

Gujral Committee Report

1975

Committee Recommendations:

- In **1972**, the Indian government established a committee for the **promotion of Urdu**, with **I.K. Gujral** as its chairman.
- The committee was tasked with advising the government on measures to promote the Urdu language and provide adequate facilities for Urdu-speaking people in education, culture, and administration.
- The Gujral Committee's report, received in **the Ministry of Education** on **May 8, 1975**, contained **187 recommendations** covering a wide range of issues.
- The committee's report included recommendations to safeguard the rights of Urdu-speaking minorities, specifically those constituting more than **10% of the population**.

Ali Sardar Jafri Committee

1990

The **Ali Sardar Jafri Committee**, established in **1990**, proposed changes to the existing "**three-language formula**" in India's education system, advocating for the inclusion of Urdu or other modern Indian languages **alongside Hindi and English**, with the goal of better accommodating linguistic minorities, particularly Urdu speakers.

National Education Policy (NEP)

2020

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 reaffirms the Three-Language Formula with an emphasis on flexibility:

- **Choice of Languages:** Students are encouraged to learn three languages, with at least two being native to India.
- **No Imposition:** The policy explicitly states that no language will be imposed on any state, allowing for regional discretion in implementation.

Historical Opposition of Tamil Nadu to the Three-Language Policy and Hindi Imposition

Anti-Hindi Agitation of 1937–1940

- **Introduction of Hindi in Schools (1937):** The Indian National Congress government, led by **Chief Minister C. Rajagopalachari**, introduced compulsory Hindi education in secondary schools of **the Madras Presidency**. This decision faced immediate backlash from various quarters, including **E.V. Ramasamy (Periyar)** and **the opposition Justice Party**.
- **Protests and Repeal (1938–1940):** The period witnessed widespread protests, including fasts, marches, and demonstrations. The agitation led to **the arrest of approximately 1,198 individuals**, including women and children. The intensity of the protests compelled the government to withdraw the compulsory **Hindi education policy in February 1940**.

Resistance to the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020

- **Continued Opposition:** The introduction of **NEP 2020**, which reiterates the **three-language formula**, has been met with resistance in **Tamil Nadu**. The state perceives this as an attempt to impose Hindi, conflicting with its longstanding **two-language policy**.

Anti-Hindi Imposition Agitations of 1965

- **Official Language Act and Protests:** The central government's move to make **Hindi the sole official language after 1965** sparked massive protests in **Tamil Nadu**. The state witnessed widespread agitations, leading to significant political changes, including the rise of the **Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK)** to power.

Opposition to the Three-Language Formula

- **Rejection of the Policy:** Tamil Nadu has consistently opposed the **three-language formula** proposed by the central government, which recommends the teaching of **Hindi, English, and a regional language**. The state adheres to a **two-language policy**, emphasising **Tamil and English**, to preserve its linguistic heritage and resist perceived imposition of Hindi.

National Education Policy (NEP) 2020

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, introduced by the Government of India, represents a comprehensive framework aimed at transforming the Indian education system to meet the demands of the 21st century. It replaces the previous National Policy on Education, 1986, marking the first education policy of the 21st century in India.

Key Highlights:

- **School Education Reforms:**
 - **Curricular Structure:** The traditional 10+2 structure is replaced with a 5+3+3+4 model, corresponding to age groups 3–8 years (Foundational Stage), 8–11 years (Preparatory Stage), 11–14 years (Middle Stage), and 14–18 years (Secondary Stage). This restructuring aims to align with the cognitive developmental stages of children.

- **Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE):** The policy emphasizes universal access to high-quality ECCE for all children aged 3–6 by 2025, recognizing the critical importance of early years in shaping a child's future.
- **Foundational Literacy and Numeracy:** A National Mission on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy is proposed to ensure that every student attains foundational literacy and numeracy by the end of Grade 3.
- **Assessment Reforms:** The policy introduces a shift from summative to formative assessment, focusing on competency-based learning. A new National Assessment Centre, PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development), will be established to oversee these changes.
- **Higher Education Reforms:**
 - **Holistic Multidisciplinary Education:** The NEP envisions broad-based, multidisciplinary, holistic undergraduate education with flexible curricula, creative combinations of subjects, integration of vocational education, and multiple entry and exit points.
 - **Institutional Restructuring:** Higher education institutions will be consolidated into three types: Research-intensive Universities, Teaching-intensive Universities, and Autonomous Degree-granting Colleges.
 - **Regulatory Changes:** A single overarching umbrella body for the entire higher education system, excluding medical and legal education, called the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI), will be established.
- **Teacher Education and Training:**
 - **Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP):** By 2030, the minimum degree qualification for teaching will be a 4-year integrated B.Ed. degree.
 - **Continuous Professional Development:** The policy emphasizes the need for continuous professional development and proposes the creation of a National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST).
- **National Educational Technology Forum (NETF):** An autonomous body will be created to provide a platform for the free exchange of ideas on the use of technology to enhance learning, assessment, planning, and administration.
- **Promotion of Indian Languages:** The policy recommends that children learn three languages, with at least two being native to India. It emphasizes the importance of the mother tongue/local language as the medium of instruction at least until Grade 5, but preferably till Grade 8 and beyond.
- **Vocational Education:** The NEP aims to integrate vocational education into mainstream education in a phased manner, starting from Grade 6, and aims to provide access to vocational education to at least 50% of all learners by 2025.

Samagra Shiksha Funds

Samagra Shiksha is an integrated scheme launched by the **Government of India to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education from pre-school to class XII**. It aims to treat school education holistically as a continuum, aligning with **Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG-4)**.

Key Features:

- **Comprehensive Coverage:** The scheme encompasses all levels of school education, from pre-primary to senior secondary, facilitating a seamless transition across stages.
- **Focus on Quality:** Emphasises improving learning outcomes, teacher education, and integrating technology into the classroom.
- **Vocational Education:** Seeks to integrate vocational education with general academic education to prepare an employable and competitive workforce.

Funding Mechanism:

Samagra Shiksha operates as a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme**, with funding shared between the Central and State Governments.

In the Samagra Shiksha scheme, the funding is shared between the Central and State governments, with a 60:40 ratio for all states and union territories with legislatures, except for the 8 North-Eastern States and 2 Himalayan States, which receive 90:10 funding.

The allocation and release of funds are based on Annual Work Plans & Budgets (AWP&B) submitted by States and Union Territories, which are appraised and approved by the Project Approval Board in consultation with the respective States/UTs.



MIND MAP

Tamil Nadu's Opposition to the Three-Language Policy

- **Reason for Opposition:** Tamil Nadu refuses to implement NEP 2020 due to the three-language formula, preferring its two-language policy (Tamil & English).
- **Financial Consequences:** ₹2,152 crore in Samagra Shiksha funds withheld.
- **Government Stand:** Centre insists states comply with NEP for SSA funding (60:40 ratio).
- **Legal Challenge:** Tamil Nadu calls it "blackmail" and questions its constitutional validity.
- **Historical Resistance:**
 - **1937-40:** Protests against compulsory Hindi in schools under C. Rajagopalachari.
 - **1965:** Protests against Hindi as the sole official language, leading to DMK's rise.

Three-Language Formula: History

- **Early Recommendations (1948-49):**
 - Radhakrishnan Commission suggested proficiency in three languages (regional, Hindi, English).
- **Kothari Commission (1964-66):**
 - Recommended mother tongue + Hindi + modern language to ensure national integration.
- **Adoption in National Policies:**
 - NPE 1968 & 1986: Reinforced the formula for multilingual education.
- **Committee Recommendations:**
 - **Gujral Committee (1975):** Safeguarded Urdu-speaking minorities' rights.
 - **Ali Sardar Jafri Committee (1990):** Advocated Urdu as an additional language.
 - **NEP 2020 Update:** Emphasizes flexibility, ensures no language is imposed.

National Education Policy (NEP) 2020

- **School Education Reforms:**
 - **New Structure:** 5+3+3+4 model replacing 10+2.
 - **Early Childhood Care:** Universal access for ages 3-6 by 2025.
 - **Assessment Changes:** Formative over summative, with PARAKH evaluation system.
- **Higher Education Reforms:**
 - **Multidisciplinary Education:** Flexible course choices, vocational integration.
 - **Institutional Restructuring:** New categories—research, teaching, and degree-granting colleges.
- **Teacher Training:** By 2030, a 4-year integrated B.Ed. degree becomes mandatory.
- **Technology in Education:** National Educational Technology Forum (NETF) for digital learning.
- **Promotion of Indian Languages:** Three-language formula, with mother tongue as the medium till Grade 5 (preferably till Grade 8).
- **Implementation Strategy:** Public investment in education targeted at 6% of GDP.

Samagra Shiksha & PM SHRI Scheme

- **Samagra Shiksha:** Holistic education (pre-primary to Class XII), focusing on quality, teacher training, and vocational education.
- **Funding:** 60:40 (states), 90:10 (Northeast & Himalayan states).
- **PM SHRI Scheme:** 14,500+ model schools reflecting NEP 2020. **Key Features:** Environmental sustainability, 'Challenge Mode' selection (max two schools per block). Status: Implemented in 10,855 schools (as of Oct 7, 2024).

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

13. What is the name of the autonomous body proposed under the National Education Policy (NEP) to serve as a platform for the free exchange of ideas on the use of technology in learning, assessment, planning, and administration?
- (a) National Digital Learning Authority (NDLA)
(b) National Educational Technology Forum (NETF)
(c) Digital India Education Initiative (DIEI)
(d) National Innovation in Learning Platform (NILP)
14. Who was one of the key figures who opposed the introduction of compulsory Hindi education in secondary schools of the Madras Presidency in 1937, introduced by Chief Minister C. Rajagopalachari?
- (a) E.V. Ramasamy
(b) B.R. Ambedkar
(c) Jawaharlal Nehru
(d) Vallabhbhai Patel

ANSWER KEY

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



Mishaps in Electors Photo Identity Card Number

News Highlights:

The topic of **duplicate EPIC numbers** has been raised by the **Trinamool Congress (TMC)** alleging **manipulation of electoral rolls** by the **BJP**. The party claims that the **Election Commission of India (ECI)** is involved in a conspiracy to suppress voters in non-BJP areas. The issue involves the **Electors Photo Identity Card (EPIC)** numbers being **duplicated** across different states. The **ECI** has responded by clarifying that such duplications are a legacy issue and that measures will be taken to resolve it.

Background:

- **Trinamool Congress Allegations:** On **February 27, 2025**, West Bengal **Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee** claimed that the **BJP**, with the help of the **Election Commission**, was adding voters from other states to the **West Bengal electoral list**. The allegations focused on the duplication of **EPIC numbers**.

What is EPIC?



- EPIC stands for **Electors Photo Identity Card**
- It assigned to every voter by the **Election Commission of India**.
- EPIC is a unique **10-digit alphanumeric code** assigned to every voter. It serves as an **official identity card for electors** and is primarily used to prevent voter impersonation and enhance electoral transparency.
- The EPIC is linked to the **ERONET** digital platform, which is used to manage **electoral rolls**.
- It was introduced in **1993** under the **Registration of Electors Rules, 1960**, to promote electoral transparency.
- The **Electors Photo Identity Card (EPIC)** was first used in the **1993 Assembly Elections** in the **state of Kerala**.

ERONET – The Digital Platform for EPIC



- **ERONET (Election Rolls Online Management System)** is the **digital platform** developed by the **Election Commission of India** to handle voter registration, migration, and deletion of names from the electoral rolls.
- The **ERONET platform** automates the process of **electoral roll management**, ensuring the accuracy of voter data and preventing fraudulent additions to the rolls.
- The **ERONET platform** was implemented in **2008** to replace the earlier **manual** processes of voter registration and to enhance the efficiency and reliability of the **electoral roll database**.

Development and Impact of ERONET

- Before the introduction of **ERONET**, voter registration was managed manually, and electoral rolls were updated by each **State/Union Territory** individually. This led to some inconsistencies and inefficiencies in the system, including the possibility of **duplicate entries** and **incorrect voter details**.
- The **ERONET platform** provided a solution by **centralizing the data**, which allowed the **Election Commission** to maintain a more **accurate** and **up-to-date voter database**. It also helped to **automate the allotment of EPIC numbers** to voters upon registration.
- The **EPIC number** is now used for various purposes, including as a valid **identity proof** for voters during elections and for other administrative purposes like **Aadhaar** linking and voter **verification**.

Key Features of EPIC

01

Unique Identifier: Each voter is assigned a **unique 10-digit alphanumeric EPIC number**, which ensures that no two voters have the same number. This number serves as a **proof of identity** and is linked to the **voter's constituency** and **polling booth**.

02

Electoral Transparency: The EPIC system was introduced to make the electoral process more **transparent** and **secure**, thereby reducing the chances of **bogus voting** and improving **electoral integrity**.

03

Migration & Transfers: The **ERONET platform** facilitates the **transfer of voter registrations** across different states or constituencies, helping ensure that voters who move between regions are properly registered in their new locations.

Legal and Administrative Framework

- **Legal Basis:** The issuance of the **EPIC number** is governed by the **Registration of Electors Rules, 1960**, which provide the legal framework for the **voter registration** process in India.
- The **Electoral Roll** is maintained by **Chief Electoral Officers (CEOs)** of states and **Union Territories**, and the **EPIC** serves as an official record for every registered voter.
- **ERONET** was launched in line with the **Electoral Reform Act** and aims to ensure an efficient, transparent, and user-friendly system for voters and electoral authorities.

The Election Commission's Response

- **EC Clarification:** The EC explained that the **duplicate EPIC numbers** stemmed from a **manual system** used prior to the introduction of **ERONET** in **2008**. The decentralization of electoral rolls in different states resulted in the possibility of **duplicated EPIC numbers**.
- **EPIC Number Allocation:** Despite having the same **EPIC number**, the EC emphasized that each voter's **demographic details, polling booth, and constituency** are distinct. The EC clarified that voters can cast their votes **only at their designated polling stations** in their respective **states or UTs**.
- **ERONET 2.0:** The EC assured that the **ERONET 2.0 platform** would be updated to resolve the duplication issue, ensuring that **unique EPIC numbers** are allotted to all registered electors.

TMC's Counterclaims

- **Saket Gokhale's Statement:** Trinamool MP **Saket Gokhale** argued that the **EPIC number** is tied to the **voter's photo** and that a **duplicate EPIC** would lead to **photo mismatches**, potentially denying voters the right to vote. He accused the EC of a deliberate attempt to **suppress non-BJP votes** by issuing the same **EPIC numbers** in different states.
- **Alleged Voter Suppression:** The TMC further alleged that the **duplicate EPIC numbers** were being used to target **voters in non-BJP areas** and potentially prevent them from voting.

EC's Efforts to Address the Issue

- **Resolution Timeline:** The EC stated that the issue of duplicate EPIC numbers is a **legacy issue** and would be resolved within **three months** by allotting **unique EPIC numbers** to all affected electors.
- **Updating Electoral Rolls:** The **Election Commission** has been conducting **annual updates** to rectify any discrepancies in the **elector's photo identity card**.

Landmark Judgments on EVM (Electronic Voting Machine) and EPIC (Electors Photo Identity Card)

1. Kuldip Nayar v. Union of India (2006) - EVM and Voter Transparency

- **Court:** Supreme Court of India
- **Issue:** The petitioners raised concerns regarding the transparency of the **Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs)**. They argued that the absence of a **Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT)** system could result in manipulation or errors in election results.
- **Judgment:** The Supreme Court did not find the existing EVM system unconstitutional but stressed the need for greater transparency and accountability in the election process. It suggested that the **Election Commission of India (ECI)** consider using the **VVPAT** system along with EVMs for improved transparency.
- **Impact:** This judgment led to the subsequent introduction of **VVPATs**, which provide paper-based verification of the votes cast on EVMs.

2. S. Subramaniam Balaji v. State of Tamil Nadu (2013) - EVM Transparency and Accountability

- **Court:** Supreme Court of India
- **Issue:** The case raised concerns regarding the role of **EVMs** in elections, including questions about the lack of paper trails, which could make the system vulnerable to manipulation.
- **Judgment:** The Court highlighted the need for further reforms in the use of **EVMs** and urged the **Election Commission of India** to implement **VVPAT** technology to ensure that voters could verify their vote independently and securely.
- **Impact:** This ruling emphasized the importance of **verifiable voting** and led to a phased implementation of **VVPATs** alongside EVMs.

Committees on EVM and EPIC

1. Inderjit Gupta Committee (1990) - Voter Registration and EPIC

- **Purpose:** This committee was formed by the **Election Commission of India (ECI)** to review the process of **voter registration** and to suggest improvements for electoral reforms. It was an important step towards modernizing voter identification and ensuring the transparency of the electoral process.

- **Recommendations:** The committee recommended the introduction of the **Electors Photo Identity Card (EPIC)** to address the issue of **voter impersonation** and to make the process more efficient.
 - **Impact:** This led to the introduction of **EPIC** in **1993** for voter identification, helping to streamline the voter registration process and improve the credibility of elections.

2. Law Commission of India - 255th Report (2015) - EVM and Electoral Process

- **Purpose:** This report dealt with the use of **EVMs** in elections and examined issues related to **voter verifiability** and **electoral transparency**.
 - **Recommendations:** The **Law Commission** recommended the use of **VVPAT** (Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail) with **EVMs** to address the issue of transparency in the election process.
 - **Impact:** The **Law Commission's** recommendations were a catalyst for the phased introduction of **VVPATs** to improve **electoral transparency** and **voter confidence**.

3. Election Commission's EVM Committee (2018) - Improvement in EVM Technology

- **Purpose:** The **Election Commission of India** set up an internal committee to look into improving the **EVM technology** and ensuring its **integrity** in the electoral process.
 - **Recommendations:** The committee focused on making **EVMs** more secure and tamper-proof. The committee also recommended that more **security protocols** be introduced to safeguard the integrity of the machines.
 - **Impact:** Following this committee's recommendations, the **Election Commission of India** took several measures to ensure the robustness and security of **EVMs**, which included random checks, **voter verifiability**, and **stringent audits**.

4. Shah Commission Report (1977) - Electoral Roll Reforms

- **Purpose:** The **Shah Commission** was tasked with investigating various issues related to the **electoral process** and the **registration of voters**.
 - **Recommendations:** Although it was not directly related to **EVMs**, the commission made several recommendations regarding the **registration of voters** and ensuring accurate voter records. It highlighted the need for **photo identification** and **electoral roll management**, which eventually led to the creation of the **EPIC** system.
 - **Impact:** The **Shah Commission Report** laid the groundwork for introducing a photo identity system to improve the quality and security of the electoral roll.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Which political party has raised concerns about duplicate EPIC numbers, alleging manipulation of electoral rolls by the BJP?
(a) Indian National Congress (b) Trinamool Congress
(c) Bharatiya Janata Party (d) Aam Aadmi Party
 - Under which rules was the Electors Photo Identity Card (EPIC) introduced in 1993 to promote electoral transparency?
(a) Representation of the People Act, 1951
(b) Indian Constitution, Article 324
(c) Registration of Electors Rules, 1960
(d) Election Commission Act, 1991
 - Which digital platform is the Electors Photo Identity Card (EPIC) linked to for managing electoral rolls in India?
(a) DigiVote (b) ERONET
(c) VoterLink (d) eElector
 - In which Indian state was the Electors Photo Identity Card (EPIC) first used during the 1993 Assembly Elections?
(a) Kerala (b) Maharashtra
(c) Tamil Nadu (d) West Bengal
 - What is the full form of ERONET, the digital platform used by the Election Commission to manage electoral rolls?
(a) Electronic Roll Organization Network
(b) Election Records Online Network
(c) Electoral Registration Online Network
(d) Election Rolls Online Management System
 - Which updated platform did the Election Commission propose to resolve duplication issues and ensure unique EPIC numbers for all registered voters?
(a) VoterNet Plus (b) EPIC Secure
(c) ERONET 2.0 (d) eVote Manager

ANSWER KEY

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

Immigration and Foreigners Bill, 2025 introduced in Lok Sabha

News Highlights:

The **Immigration and Foreigners Bill, 2025** was introduced in the **Lok Sabha** with the intent to modernise and consolidate India's immigration laws. The Proposed Legislation aims to **Enhance National Security and Streamline Entry, Stay, and Exit of Foreigners**.

- The Bill was introduced by Nityanand Rai, the **Minister of State for Home Affairs** in March 2025.

Key Highlights of the

IMMIGRATION AND FOREIGNERS BILL, 2025

Repealing Outdated Laws

The Bill seeks to repeal four existing laws governing immigration and the treatment of foreigners in India. These include:

- **Foreigners Act, 1946:** This Act was introduced to regulate the entry and residence of foreigners in India. It has been criticised for outdated provisions, including its approach to detention and deportation of foreigners.
- **Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939:** This Act mandates the registration of foreigners staying in India for extended periods and was enacted during British rule.
- **Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920:** This law regulates the entry of foreigners into India via passports, a holdover from colonial times.
- **Immigration (Carriers' Liability) Act, 2000:** This law holds transport carriers responsible for the illegal entry of foreigners.

Definition of Foreigners

- The Bill continues the simplistic definition of a foreigner as "a person who is not a citizen of India." While this is straightforward, it fails to consider modern complexities in migration, such as: **Migrant workers, Refugees and asylum seekers, Stateless persons** (individuals without any country of nationality), **Economic migrants** and **tourists**
- By not acknowledging the diverse categories of foreigners, the Bill misses the opportunity to create a framework that addresses their distinct legal, social, and economic needs.

Refugees and Stateless Persons

- One of the critical flaws in the Bill is its **silence on refugees** and **stateless persons**. India has a long history of providing refuge to migrants from neighboring countries, including **Sri Lanka** and **Afghanistan**.
- The Bill does not legally acknowledge **asylum seekers** or **refugees**, which would have aligned India's laws with **international standards** and **human rights obligations**. Similarly, it overlooks **stateless individuals**, who often face legal uncertainty and vulnerability due to their lack of nationality.

Prosecution of Foreigners

The Bill proposes **five penalties** for violations of its provisions, including penalties for:

- **Carriers** who fail to adhere to immigration regulations
- **Entering without valid documents** (passport or visa)
- **Using forged documents**
- **Overstaying** the visa period
- **Abetting immigration violations**

Burden of Proof

- The Bill retains the **reversal of the burden of proof** from the **Foreigners Act**, placing the onus on the accused to prove they are not a foreigner, rather than on the state to establish their foreign status. This problematic provision has led to **wrongful prosecutions** in the past, particularly in cases involving **Indian nationals with mental illness** who have been mistakenly detained near border areas.

Compounding of Offences

- A positive provision in the Bill is the ability to **compound certain offences, allowing the accused to reach a compromise**, leading to charges being dropped either before prosecution or during the trial.

Removal and Deportation Procedures

- The Bill fails to clearly outline the process for the **removal and deportation** of foreigners, particularly those detained in India. Currently, the **Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)** governing deportations are not publicly available, causing confusion and delays.
- The lack of transparency leads to **indefinite detentions**, leaving foreign nationals, their families, and legal representatives to navigate the complex and often uncoordinated procedures between state and central government authorities.
- There is no formal mechanism to address the **human rights** of detained foreigners or to ensure their **timely repatriation**.

Sweeping Powers to Government

- The Bill grants the **central government** significant powers over **foreigners' movements**, including the authority to:
 - Require foreigners to stay in **specific locations** or restrict their movements.
 - Direct foreigners to present themselves for **examinations**, provide **biometric data**, and submit **medical reports**.
- These provisions are concerning as they infringe on the **personal liberty** of foreigners, bypassing the **due process** guaranteed by the **Constitution**. The Bill does not offer any opportunities for foreigners to **appeal** or challenge these restrictions.

Penalties and Jail Terms

- The Bill proposes penalties for several offences, including:
 - Entering without valid documents:** Punishable by imprisonment for up to **five years** and a fine of up to **₹5 lakh**.
 - Using forged or fraudulently obtained documents:** Punishable by imprisonment from **two to seven years** and a fine up to **₹10 lakh**.
- Foreigners who overstay their visa or violate other provisions face **up to three years' imprisonment** and a fine up to **₹3 lakh**.

Carriers' Liability

- The Bill holds **carriers** (such as airlines, shipping companies, and land transport services) liable for transporting foreigners who do not meet immigration requirements. These carriers are mandated to:
 - Provide detailed **passenger and crew manifests** to immigration authorities.
 - Ensure the removal of foreigners whose entry is denied.
- Violations could result in a penalty of up to **₹50,000**.

Tracking and Reporting Requirements

- The Bill mandates that **hotels, universities, and hospitals** report information about foreigners to facilitate tracking, especially of those who overstay.
- International carriers** must provide advance information on passengers, facilitating better control over foreign nationals entering and exiting India.

Legal Framework and Constitutional Concerns

- Article 19(5)** of the **Constitution of India** allows the government to regulate the **entry and stay** of foreigners in India. However, critics argue that the Bill's provisions infringe upon fundamental rights, particularly **freedom of movement** and **personal liberty**.
- Article 21** guarantees the **right to life and liberty**, which some provisions in the Bill appear to undermine, especially with regard to indefinite detention without trial.
- National Human Rights Commission v. State of Arunachal Pradesh (2005):** The Court ruled that foreign nationals should not be subjected to inhumane treatment and that India must adhere to human rights norms.
- Sarbananda Sonowal v. Union of India (2005):** The Court held that the burden of proof for establishing whether someone is a foreigner cannot be placed entirely on the accused.



MIND MAP

Key Provisions

- **Definition of Foreigner:**
 - Simplistic: "not a citizen of India", excludes categories like refugees, stateless persons, migrant workers.
- **Penalties:**
 - Entry without documents: Jail up to 5 yrs, Fine ₹5 lakh
 - Forged documents: Jail 2–7 yrs, Fine ₹10 lakh
 - Overstaying visa: Jail up to 3 yrs, Fine ₹3 lakh
 - Carriers' violation: Fine up to ₹50,000
- **Carriers' Liability:** Must ensure passengers meet immigration norms; report violations.
- **Compounding of Offences:** Certain violations can be settled without full prosecution.
- **Tracking Requirements:** Hotels, universities, hospitals, and carriers must report foreigner data.
- **Government Powers:**
 - Restrict movement, collect biometrics, order medical exams
 - No provision for appeal or due process.

Objective:

- Modernize and consolidate India's immigration laws.
- Repeals 4 outdated laws:
 - Foreigners Act, 1946
 - Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939
 - Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920
 - Immigration (Carriers' Liability) Act, 2000

Constitutional & Legal Concerns

- **Article 19(5):** State can regulate foreigners, but must respect rights
- **Article 21** infringed by indefinite detention
- **SC Precedents:**
 - NHRC v. State of Arunachal Pradesh (2005) – Humane treatment of foreigners
 - Sarbananda Sonowal v. UoI (2005) – Burden of proof on state, not individual

Comparative Inspiration

- US INA (1952), EU Immigration Policy
- Australia's Migration Act (1958), Canada's IRPA (2001)
- Biometric verification, smart borders, data-sharing (SIS-like)

Criticisms

- Ignores refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons
- Burden of proof on accused to prove nationality
- No clear deportation/removal SOPs; leads to indefinite detention
- Violates Article 21 (Right to life & liberty)
- No mechanisms to protect human rights of detained foreigners

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. How many existing laws does the Immigration and Foreigners Bill, 2025 aim to repeal in order to modernize and consolidate India's immigration framework?
 - (a) Two laws
 - (b) Three laws
 - (c) Four laws
 - (d) Five laws

2. Which of the following Acts was introduced to regulate the entry, stay, and exit of foreigners in India, but has been criticized for its outdated provisions on detention and deportation?
 - (a) Foreigners Act, 1946
 - (b) Citizenship Act, 1955
 - (c) Passport Act, 1967
 - (d) Immigration Control Act

3. Which Act, enacted during British rule, mandates the registration of foreigners residing in India for extended periods ?
 - (a) Foreigners Act, 1946
 - (b) Citizenship Act, 1955
 - (c) Immigration (Control) Act, 1983
 - (d) Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939

4. Which colonial-era law governs the entry of foreigners into India using passports?
 - (a) Foreigners Act, 1946
 - (b) Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920
 - (c) Citizenship Act, 1955
 - (d) Immigration (Control) Act, 1983

5. Which Act holds transport carriers legally responsible for bringing foreigners into India without valid documents ?
 - (a) Immigration (Carriers' Liability) Act, 2000
 - (b) Foreigners Act, 1946
 - (c) Passport Act, 1967
 - (d) Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939

6. According to the Immigration and Foreigners Bill, 2025, how many categories of penalties are proposed for violations such as unauthorized entry, forged documents, and overstaying a visa?
 - (a) Two penalties
 - (b) Three penalties
 - (c) Four penalties
 - (d) Five penalties

7. What legal principle, retained from the Foreigners Act in the Immigration and Foreigners Bill, 2025, places the responsibility on the accused to prove their nationality?
 - (a) Presumption of innocence
 - (b) Habeas corpus
 - (c) Burden of proof
 - (d) Right to legal representation

8. Which provision in the Immigration and Foreigners Bill, 2025 allows certain offences to be resolved through a compromise, potentially avoiding prosecution or ending a trial early?
 - (a) Plea Bargaining
 - (b) Compounding of Offences
 - (c) Deferred Prosecution Agreement
 - (d) Conditional Discharge

9. As per the Immigration and Foreigners Bill, 2025, what is the maximum fine for entering India without valid documents such as a passport or visa?
 - (a) ₹5 lakh
 - (b) ₹2 lakh
 - (c) ₹1 lakh
 - (d) ₹50,000

10. According to the Immigration and Foreigners Bill, 2025, what is the range of imprisonment for using forged or fraudulently obtained documents?
 - (a) One to three years
 - (b) Three to five years
 - (c) Two to seven years
 - (d) Five to ten years

11. What is the penalty proposed in the Immigration and Foreigners Bill, 2025 for foreigners who overstay their visa or violate other related provisions?
 - (a) One year imprisonment and ₹50,000 fine
 - (b) Two years imprisonment and ₹1 lakh fine
 - (c) Up to five years imprisonment and ₹5 lakh fine
 - (d) Up to three years' imprisonment and a fine up to ₹3 lakh

12. Who introduced the Immigration and Foreigners Bill, 2025, in the Lok Sabha in March 2025?
(a) Amit Shah
(b) Nityanand Rai
(c) Rajnath Singh
(d) Kiren Rijiju
13. Which two ministries were primarily involved in the drafting process of the Immigration and Foreigners Bill, 2025, alongside legal scholars and immigration experts?
(a) Home Affairs and External Affairs
(b) Law and Justice and Finance
(c) Defence and Parliamentary Affairs
(d) Labour and Minority Affairs
14. Which provision of the Constitution of India allows the government to impose reasonable restrictions on the freedom of movement, including for regulating the entry and stay of foreigners?
(a) Article 14
(b) Article 21
(c) Article 19(1)(c)
(d) Article 19(5)
15. Which Article of the Indian Constitution guarantees the right to life and personal liberty, potentially impacted by provisions in the Immigration and Foreigners Bill, 2025 related to indefinite detention without trial?
(a) Article 19(1)(d)
(b) Article 14
(c) Article 21
(d) Article 22
16. In which case did the Supreme Court of India rule that foreign nationals must not be subjected to inhumane treatment and emphasized adherence to international human rights standards?
(a) State of West Bengal v. Anwar Ali Sarkar (1952)
(b) National Human Rights Commission v. State of Arunachal Pradesh (2005)
(c) PUCL v. Union of India (2003)
(d) Kuldip Nayar v. Union of India (2006)
17. Which of the following modern features is included in the Immigration and Foreigners Bill, 2025 to enhance surveillance and control at points of entry?
(a) Facial recognition at polling booths
(b) Digital currency tracking
(c) Smart border security
(d) Drone delivery systems

ANSWER KEY

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

History of the Khalistan movement and Recent Issues

News Highlights:

The recent security breach during External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's visit to London on March 5, 2025, has brought attention to the ongoing Khalistani separatist movements in the UK. A protestor attempted to breach the security perimeter outside Chatham House, where Jaishankar was attending an event.

- Moreover, The Indian government has requested the United States to designate Sikhs for Justice (SFJ), a pro-Khalistan group, as a Foreign Terrorist Organisation (FTO). This move follows increasing concerns over SFJ's violent rhetoric and anti-India activities, particularly in the US, where its leader, Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, is based.

Khalistani Movement: History

1940s–1950s

- 1940:** The first explicit call for Khalistan was made through a pamphlet titled "Khalistan," advocating for an independent Sikh homeland.
- 1947:** During the partition of India, the Punjab region was divided between India and Pakistan. Despite some Sikh leaders' aspirations for a separate Sikh state, the proposal was deemed unviable due to demographic constraints, leading to Punjab's division between the two new nations.

1960s–1970s

- In the 1950s and 60s, the Sikh political party Shiromani Akali Dal launched the Punjabi Suba movement, demanding a Punjabi-speaking state based on linguistic and cultural identity.
- 1966:** The Indian government reorganised Punjab, resulting in the creation of a Punjabi-speaking state. However, this did not fully satisfy Sikh aspirations for greater autonomy.
- 1973:** The Shiromani Akali Dal adopted the Anandpur Sahib Resolution, demanding increased autonomy for Punjab and the recognition of Sikhism as a distinct religion. This resolution became a foundational document for subsequent separatist demands.
- 1979:** Formation of the Babbar Khalsa by Talwinder Singh Parmar and Sukhdev Singh, aiming to establish an independent Khalistan through militant means.
- 1981:** Assassination of Lala Jagat Narain, a prominent critic of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and the Khalistan movement.

- 1982:** Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale launched the Dharam Yudh Morcha, advocating for the implementation of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution.
- June 1984:** Operation Blue Star was initiated by the Indian government to remove Bhindranwale and his followers from the Golden Temple in Amritsar, resulting in significant casualties and damage to the sacred site. This operation intensified Sikh discontent and led to widespread protests.
- October 31, 1984:** In retaliation for Operation Blue Star, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was assassinated by her Sikh bodyguards. This event triggered anti-Sikh riots across India, leading to thousands of deaths and deepening communal divisions.
- 1985:** Air India Flight 182 was bombed by Babbar Khalsa, a pro-Khalistani terrorist organization, resulting in 329 fatalities.
- 1986:** The Golden Temple was occupied by militants belonging to the All India Sikh Students Federation and Damdami Taksal. On January 26, a gathering known as the Sarbat Khalsa passed a resolution favouring the creation of Khalistan.

1980s

History of Khalistani Movement in UK

Since 1970s

- **1971:** Jagjit Singh Chohan, a former Punjab Assembly member, moved to the UK and began internationalising the Khalistan cause. He declared himself the president of the "Republic of Khalistan," issuing symbolic passports, postage stamps, and currency to garner support among the Sikh diaspora.
- **1984:** The International Sikh Youth Federation (ISYF) was founded on September 23, 1984, in Walsall, United Kingdom, by Jasbir Singh Rode, the nephew of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. The organisation was established in the aftermath of Operation Blue Star, aiming to advocate for the creation of an independent Sikh state, Khalistan. The inaugural conference of the ISYF was held in Walsall, marking the beginning of its activities within the Sikh diaspora.
- **2001:** The UK government proscribed the ISYF as a terrorist organisation due to its involvement in violent activities. Despite this, pro-Khalistan sentiments persisted within segments of the British Sikh community.
- **2003:** The Sikh Federation (UK) was established, positioning itself as a political party advocating for Sikh issues, including the Khalistan cause. It became one of the prominent organisations representing pro-Khalistan sentiments in the UK.
- **2015:** The Indian government shared a dossier with the UK detailing concerns about the radicalisation of Sikh youth in British gurdwaras, alleging that some were being indoctrinated with separatist ideologies and trained in extremist activities.
- **2021:** The "Khalistan Referendum," organised by Sikhs for Justice, commenced in London, allowing Sikhs in the diaspora to voice their opinion on the creation of an independent Sikh state. The referendum attracted significant participation, reflecting ongoing support for the Khalistan movement within the UK.



Recent Security Breach during Jaishankar's Visit

- On March 5, 2025, a pro-Khalistan protestor breached the security during Jaishankar's visit to Chatham House, attempting to reach his vehicle while holding a Khalistan flag and damaging an Indian flag. The protest was swiftly controlled by the police.
- The incident led to condemnation from the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in India, which called for the UK to uphold its diplomatic responsibilities in ensuring the safety of Indian officials.
- The UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) condemned the breach, emphasizing the unacceptable nature of attempts to intimidate or disrupt public events.

Sikh Population in UK

- The movement for a sovereign Sikh state (Khalistan) began in the 1970s and found significant international support, particularly in Britain, one of the main international centers for Khalistani separatism.
- The Sikh diaspora in the UK is substantial, with 525,865 Sikhs in the 2021 census, making it the second-largest Sikh population globally after Canada. Sikhs are a significant part of the UK's cultural fabric, especially in areas like the West Midlands and Greater London.

Impact on Diplomatic Relations

- The breach follows earlier tensions between **India and the UK** over security incidents involving **Khalistani protestors**. In March 2023, a mob breached the Indian High Commission in London, further straining relations.
- S. Jaishankar's visit** to the UK was seen as part of efforts to **reset diplomatic ties**. The visit focused on strengthening relations and addressing key issues like trade agreements. Talks on a **free trade agreement (FTA)** are currently under discussion, with Jaishankar expressing optimism about the future pace of negotiations.
- The Labour Party's stance on India and Kashmir has been a point of tension with the Indian diaspora, who have historically supported the Conservative Party.

Background of Sikhs for Justice (SFJ)

- Establishment and Objectives:** Founded in **2007** by **Gurpatwant Singh Pannun**, SFJ is a **U.S.-based organisation** advocating for the creation of an independent Sikh state, Khalistan, through initiatives like the "**Referendum 2020**" campaign.
- Legal Status in India:** In **2019**, India declared **SFJ** an "**unlawful association**" under the **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA)**, citing its support for extremist and secessionist activities. Subsequently, in **2020**, **Pannun was designated as an "individual terrorist"** by Indian authorities.

The Assassination Plot and Diplomatic Strain:

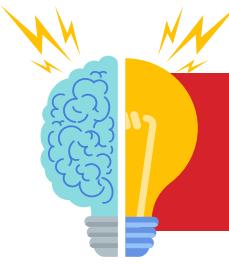
- Foiled Assassination Attempt:** In **November 2023**, **U.S. authorities** revealed they had thwarted a plot to assassinate **Gurpatwant Singh Pannun on American soil**. The plot allegedly involved a **former Indian intelligence officer**, leading to tensions between India and the U.S.
- India's Response:** India denied any official involvement, established a panel to investigate, and, in January 2025, recommended legal action against an unnamed individual linked to the plot.

India's Request to the United States:

- Designation as a Terrorist Organisation:** During discussions in **March 2025** between **Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh** and **U.S. National Intelligence Chief Tulsi Gabbard**, India formally requested that the **U.S. designate SFJ as a Foreign Terrorist Organisation**. This designation would impose legal restrictions on SFJ's activities and finances.
- Rationale:** India asserts that **SFJ's activities are extremist and secessionist**, warranting international recognition as a terrorist entity to curb its influence and operations.

U.S. Position and Implications:

- Current Status:** As of now, the U.S. has not publicly responded to India's request. The designation process involves a **thorough review by the U.S. Department of State**, assessing whether an organisation meets specific criteria under U.S. law.
- Potential Consequences:** If designated, **SFJ would face restrictions including asset freezes**, travel bans, and prohibitions on providing material support. This could significantly impact its operations and support base within the U.S.



MIND MAP

Recent Incident (March 5, 2025)

- Location: Chatham House, London
- Event: Pro-Khalistan protestor breached security during Jaishankar's visit
- Actions: Waved Khalistan flag, damaged Indian flag
- Response: Condemned by MEA (India) and UK FCDO

Key Personalities

Jagjit Singh Chohan:

Moved to UK (1970), promoted Khalistan globally

Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale:

Charismatic leader, seen as militant face of movement

Khalistani Activity in UK Today

- Groups active: SFJ, ISYF
- Actions: Referendum attempts, gurdwara-based activism
- Diaspora presence: 5.25 lakh Sikhs in UK (2021 Census)
- Key regions: West Midlands, Greater London

Sikhs for Justice (SFJ)

- Founded: 2007 by Gurpatwant Singh Pannun
- Activities: Referendum campaigns, anti-India propaganda
- Banned: Under India's UAPA (2020)
- India seeks FTO tag: From US to curb funding/support

SFJ Threats and Rhetoric

- Linked to violence: Air India bombing figure honored
- Threats to leaders: PM Modi and others targeted
- Incitement: Urged arming during farmer protests

Year

Event

1940	First Khalistan demand (pamphlet)
1973	Anandpur Sahib Resolution: by Shiromani Akali Dal (autonomy demand)
1984	Operation Blue Star - Army action in Golden Temple; Gandhi's assassination - Triggered anti-Sikh riots
1985	Air India Flight 182 bombing: 329 killed (Babbar Khalsa)
1995	CM Beant Singh assassinated: Last major insurgency event
2007	SFJ formed
2020	SFJ banned in India
2023	High Commission attack (UK), Nijjar killing (Canada)
2025	Jaishankar visit breach, US asked to designate SFJ as FTO

Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)

- Role: Manages foreign policy, diplomatic missions
- Current Minister: Dr. S. Jaishankar (since 2019)
- Established: 1946; First Minister: Jawaharlal Nehru
- Functions: Consular services, diaspora affairs, cultural exchange

Diplomatic Tensions

- India-UK issues: Previous breaches (2023), strained ties
- India-Canada row: Over Nijjar's killing (2023)
- FTA Talks: Jaishankar's visit aimed at improving relations

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

14. Which divisions of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) are responsible for areas such as policy planning, multilateral organisations, legal affairs, disarmament, consular services, and diaspora engagement?
- (a) Functional Divisions (b) Economic Divisions
(c) Territorial Divisions (d) Cultural Affairs Divisions
15. What is the designation of Shri Kirti Vardhan Singh and Shri Pabitra Margherita, who assist in various capacities within the Ministry of External Affairs?
- (a) Deputy Foreign Secretaries
(b) Ministers of State
(c) Joint Secretaries
(d) Foreign Affairs Advisors
16. Who has been serving as the Foreign Secretary and administrative head of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) since July 2024?
- (a) Harsh Vardhan Shringla (b) S. Jaishankar
(c) T. S. Tirumurti (d) Shri Vikram Misri
17. Who served as the first Minister of External Affairs of independent India from 1947 until becoming Prime Minister in 1952?
- (a) Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
(b) Dr. Rajendra Prasad
(c) C. Rajagopalachari
(d) V.K. Krishna Menon
18. Which Hindu temple in California was vandalized with anti-India and anti-Hindu graffiti on March 8, 2025, in an incident linked to Khalistan movement tensions?
- (a) ISKCON Temple
(b) Meenakshi Temple
(c) Shri Swaminarayan Mandir
(d) Shiva-Vishnu Temple

ANSWER KEYS & EXPLANATIONS

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

Raisina Dialogue 2025

News Highlights:

The **Raisina Dialogue**, inaugurated by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**, is in the spotlight due to its relevance to global geopolitics and geoconomics.

- The **10th edition, held from March 17-19, 2025**, is being discussed extensively for its timely focus on global issues and the participation of international leaders, including those from the **Five Eyes intelligence-sharing alliance**.
- **Christopher Luxon, Prime Minister of New Zealand**, served as **the Chief Guest** and delivered the keynote address, highlighting the importance of multilateral cooperation in addressing global challenges.

Event Overview

- **Origin and Naming:** The name "Raisina Dialogue" is derived from **Raisina Hill**, the location of India's seat of government, symbolising the nation's central role in global governance discussions.
- **Purpose:** The Raisina Dialogue is an annual conference that brings together global leaders and experts to discuss **geopolitics, geoconomics**, and critical international issues.
- **Host and Collaboration:** Organised by the **Observer Research Foundation (ORF)** in partnership with the **Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India**.
- **Theme (2025):** The **10th edition focuses on "Kālachakra - People, Peace and Planet"**, addressing issues such as the environment, digital transformation, and global security.
- **Participants:** The conference will feature representatives from around **125 countries**, including former heads of state, ministers, military commanders, industry leaders, and academic experts.



Key Discussions and Takeaways

- **Engagement with Russia:** A significant topic was the debate among **Western officials regarding re-engaging with Russian counterparts** amidst ongoing global tensions. The conference provided a platform for such dialogues, reflecting India's "**multi-alignment diplomacy**" approach.
- **Indo-Pacific Security:** Concerns over China's assertive maritime presence in the Indian Ocean Region were addressed, with Quad defense leaders emphasising **the need for a peaceful and secure Indo-Pacific**. India highlighted the importance of maintaining the Indian Ocean Region as a peaceful and secure trade corridor and expressed intentions to strengthen ties with small island nations in the region.

- **Weaponisation of Trade:** Discussions highlighted the **increasing use of tariffs, sanctions, and financial controls as tools of economic statecraft**, with calls for establishing trust-based partnerships to mitigate such practices.
- **Global South's Role:** Emphasis was placed on the **importance of engaging with the Global South**, recognising its pivotal role in shaping the future of international relations and economic development.
- **Digital Sovereignty and Technological Governance:** Discussions underscored **India's cautious approach toward data flows, artificial intelligence (AI) development, and digital regulations within trade negotiations**. Establishing robust regulatory frameworks for big data and AI was deemed integral to India's economic diplomacy, ensuring that technological advancements align with national interests and security concerns.
- **Emphasis on Geopolitical Stability for Economic Growth:** Sessions underscored **the critical link between geopolitical stability and economic development**. Panelists discussed the **challenges posed by economic nationalism and protectionism**, advocating for resilient global trade systems that can withstand geopolitical upheavals. The importance of collaborative frameworks to navigate the complexities of modern economic landscapes was a recurring theme.

4th Conference on Global Challenges and Intelligence-Sharing Mechanisms

- Hosted as a **closed-door strategic meet** ahead of the **Raisina Dialogue 2025**.
- Organised by **India's Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW)** and the **National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS)**.
- Attended by intelligence chiefs and national security advisers from over **20 countries, including the Five Eyes alliance (U.S., U.K., Canada, Australia, New Zealand)**.

Key Highlights

- **Counterterrorism Strategies:** Participants emphasised the need for **unified approaches to combat international terrorism**, focusing on intelligence sharing and coordinated operations to dismantle terrorist networks.
- **Transnational Crimes:** The conference addressed challenges posed by **organised crime syndicates, human trafficking, and cybercrime**, highlighting the importance of collaborative frameworks to tackle these issues effectively.
- **Intelligence-Sharing Mechanisms:** Discussions **centered on enhancing protocols for timely and secure exchange of information among nations**, aiming to build trust and improve collective security measures.
- **Immigration and Extradition Laws:** Delegates deliberated on **harmonising immigration policies and extradition treaties** to facilitate the apprehension and prosecution of individuals involved in international crimes.

Five Eye Alliance



The Five Eyes (FVEY) is a renowned intelligence alliance comprising five Anglophone countries: Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States. This coalition facilitates extensive cooperation in signals intelligence (SIGINT) and has played a pivotal role in global security operations.

Origins and Historical Development:

- **World War II Collaboration:** The foundation of the Five Eyes alliance traces back to **World War II**, where the **United States and the United Kingdom** collaborated closely in **code-breaking and intelligence sharing**.
- **UKUSA Agreement (1946):** Formalised on **March 5, 1946**, the **UKUSA Agreement** established a framework for joint SIGINT cooperation between the U.S. and the UK. This agreement later expanded to include **Canada (1948), Australia (1956), and New Zealand (1956)**, forming the Five Eyes alliance.

Expansion and Partnerships: Beyond the core Five Eyes members, the alliance has engaged with other nations through extended groups:

- **Nine Eyes:** Includes the Five Eyes countries plus Denmark, France, the Netherlands, and Norway.
- **Fourteen Eyes:** Comprises the Nine Eyes nations along with Germany, Belgium, Italy, Spain, and Sweden.

Tulsi Gabbard

As the U.S. Director of National Intelligence (DNI), **Tulsi Gabbard** led the American delegation at the **Raisina Dialogue 2025**.

- **Early Life:** Born on April 12, 1981, in American Samoa, Gabbard is of Samoan and European descent.
- **Military Service:** She joined the **Hawaii Army National Guard in 2003**, serving **two tours in the Middle East** and attaining the **rank of lieutenant colonel**.
- **Political Career:** Gabbard represented **Hawaii's 2nd Congressional District** from **2013 to 2021**, becoming **the first Hindu and first Samoan-American** elected to the **U.S. Congress**. She sought the Democratic nomination for president in 2020.
- **Nomination:** In November 2024, **President Donald Trump** nominated Gabbard for **the DNI position**, which was confirmed by the **Senate in February 2025**.



Observer Research Foundation

Establishment: Founded in **1990**, ORF is an independent think tank based in India, dedicated to conducting in-depth research on political, economic, and strategic issues.



- **Mission:** ORF aims to **influence public policy formulation** by providing informed and **viable inputs to decision-makers**.
- **Activities:** The foundation organises conferences, publishes research, and engages in policy dialogues to address global and domestic challenges.

Raisina Dialogue: Since its **inception in 2016**, ORF has **co-hosted the annual Raisina Dialogue**, fostering discussions on global governance, security, and economic development.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which edition of the Raisina Dialogue was held from March 17–19, 2025?
 (a) 8th (b) 9th (c) 10th (d) 11th
2. Who inaugurated the Raisina Dialogue in 2025?
 (a) President Droupadi Murmu
 (b) External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar
 (c) Prime Minister Narendra Modi
 (d) Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar
3. Which of the following is the correct theme of the Raisina Dialogue 2025?
 (a) "Planet, People and Progress"
 (b) "Global Reset: New Rules of Engagement"
 (c) "Redefining Power in a Multipolar World"
 (d) "Kālachakra – People, Peace and Planet"
4. What does the term "Raisina" in Raisina Dialogue refer to?
 (a) A think tank in Geneva
 (b) A mountain range in Central Asia
 (c) An Indian heritage site
 (d) Raisina Hill, the seat of Indian government
5. Which organization co-hosts the Raisina Dialogue with the Ministry of External Affairs?
 (a) Observer Research Foundation
 (b) Indian Council of World Affairs
 (c) NITI Aayog
 (d) Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses
6. How many countries are represented in the 2025 Raisina Dialogue?
 (a) Around 125 (b) Around 100
 (c) Around 75 (d) Around 150
7. Which of the following is not one of the six thematic pillars of the 2025 Raisina Dialogue?
 (a) Green Planet Treaty (b) The Tiger's Tale
 (c) Politics Interrupted (d) Digital Planet
8. What global intelligence-sharing alliance was represented at the Raisina Dialogue 2025?
 (a) G7 (b) BRICS (c) Five Eyes (d) QUAD
9. Who led the recent intelligence chiefs' gathering hosted in India?
 (a) Ravi Sinha (b) Tapan Deka
 (c) Ajit Doval (d) Anil Chauhan
10. Which organisation hosted the intelligence chiefs' meeting in India?
 (a) Ministry of Defence
 (b) Intelligence Bureau
 (c) National Security Council Secretariat
 (d) Research and Analysis Wing
11. Which of the following countries is not a member of the Five Eyes Alliance?
 (a) United Kingdom (b) Germany
 (c) Australia (d) Canada
12. When was the BRUSA agreement, a precursor to the Five Eyes alliance, signed?
 (a) 1941 (b) 1943 (c) 1946 (d) 1949
13. In which year did Canada officially join the Five Eyes intelligence-sharing agreement?
 (a) 1943 (b) 1946 (c) 1949 (d) 1956
14. When did New Zealand and Australia become part of the Five Eyes Alliance?
 (a) 1946 (b) 1950 (c) 1956 (d) 1962

ANSWER KEYS & EXPLANATIONS

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

30 Maoists Shot Dead-Naxalism Evolution

News Highlights:

At least **30 Maoists** were killed in two separate **encounters** in the **Bastar region of Chhattisgarh** on **March 20, 2025**.

- The encounters were part of the **Indian government's** intensified operations to combat **left-wing extremism** under the **Naxal Mukt Bharat Abhiyan**. This major success comes amidst increasing efforts by the government to eradicate **Maoist influence** in the region.

Encounter in Bijapur District:

- Location and Timing:** The operation took place in the dense forests near **Andri village**, situated along **the border of Bijapur and Dantewada districts**. The encounter commenced around 7:00 AM.
- Operational Details:** A joint team comprising the **District Reserve Guard (DRG)**, **Special Task Force (STF)**, **Bastar Fighters**, and **Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)** launched an anti-Maoist operation based on specific intelligence inputs indicating the presence of **Maoist cadres** in the area.
- An intense gunfight ensued, lasting several hours, resulting in the neutralisation of **26 Maoists, including 15 women**. During the exchange, **Raju Oyam, a DRG jawan from Bijapur, was martyred.**

Encounter in Kanker District:

- Location:** The operation occurred in a forested area near the **Abujhmad jungle**, along the **Kanker-Narayanpur border**.
- Operational Details:** A joint team of **Border Security Force (BSF)** and **DRG personnel** acted on intelligence regarding a significant Maoist gathering. The ensuing firefight led to the elimination of four Maoists, including a woman cadre. No security personnel were injured in this operation.

Origins of Naxalism:

Naxalbari Village



- The Naxalbari Uprising (1967):** The genesis of **Naxalism** can be traced to the **Naxalbari village in West Bengal**. In **March 1967**, a sharecropper was attacked by local landlords over a land dispute. This incident ignited a **peasant uprising led by local communist leaders, notably Charu Majumdar, Kanu Sanyal, and Jangal Santhal**. The revolt aimed at redistributing land to the landless and challenged the prevailing feudal structures.
- Ideological Foundations:** The movement drew inspiration from **Mao Zedong's principles of agrarian revolution and protracted people's war**. Charu Majumdar's "Historic Eight Documents" became the **ideological bedrock**, advocating for armed struggle as the path to revolution.

Key Discoveries

Formation of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) [CPI(ML)]:

- Establishment (1969):** The **Naxalbari uprising** culminated in the formation of the CPI(ML) in **April 1969**. Announced by **Kanu Sanyal in Calcutta**, the party sought to propagate the **Naxalite ideology** across India, advocating for the **overthrow of the bourgeoisie state through armed revolution**.

Spread and Intensification (1970s–1980s):

- Geographical Expansion:** The Naxalite movement rapidly spread to states such as **Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Odisha, and Kerala**.
- In **Andhra Pradesh**, the **Srikakulam peasant** uprising became a notable extension of the **Naxalbari movement**, where tribal peasants took up arms against oppressive landlords.

Government Countermeasures:

- Government Countermeasures:** In response to the escalating insurgency, the Indian government launched **Operation Steeplechase in 1971**, deploying the army and paramilitary forces to suppress **Naxalite** activities. This operation led to **the arrest and killing of several Naxalite leaders**, causing a temporary setback to the movement.

Fragmentation and Resurgence (1980s–2000s):

- Emergence of Factions:** The late **1970s** and early **1980s** witnessed the fragmentation of **the Naxalite movement** into various factions. Notably, the **People's War Group (PWG)** was formed in **1980** under the leadership of **Kondapalli Seetharamaiah**, operating primarily in **Andhra Pradesh**. Similarly, the **Maoist Communist Centre (MCC)** became active in **Bihar** and **Jharkhand**. These groups operated independently, each adhering to Maoist ideology but differing in strategies and areas of influence.
- Renewed Insurgency:** During this period, **Naxalite groups** intensified their activities, conducting **guerrilla warfare against state forces**, attacking landlords, and targeting government infrastructure. The insurgency capitalised on issues like **land alienation, unemployment, and exploitation** of tribal communities, gaining support among marginalized sections.

Formation of the Communist Party of India (Maoist) [CPI(Maoist)]:

- Unification (2004):** A significant development occurred in **2004** with the merger of the PWG and the MCC, leading to the **formation of the CPI(Maoist)**. This unification aimed to **consolidate the fragmented Naxalite factions into a more cohesive force**, enhancing their operational capabilities and expanding their influence, particularly in the **"Red Corridor"** regions spanning from West Bengal to Andhra Pradesh.



AT THE CENTRE OF CONTROVERSY

■ Kanu Sanyal was one of the founder members of the Naxalite movement in West Bengal during the late 1960s-early 70s.

■ Under the communist group led by Sanyal and Charu Majumdar, the Naxalite movement began on May 25, 1967 at Naxalbari in North Bengal.

■ Sanyal was arrested in August 1970 and spent time in jail in Andhra Pradesh until 1977. He was released

following intervention by the Centre and the West Bengal government.

■ Sanyal was the general secretary of the CPI till he breathed his last on 23 March 2010. He was found hanging from the ceiling of a room in his house in Hatighisa village in Naxalbari in North Bengal at the age of 78. Sources said Sanyal had been ailing for a long time and suffered from acute depression.



MIND MAP

Operation Name: Naxal Mukt Bharat Abhiyan
Region: Bastar, Chhattisgarh

Origins of Naxalism

- **Started:** Naxalbari village, West Bengal, 1967
- **Trigger:** Sharecropper attacked → Peasant uprising
- **Leaders:** Charu Majumdar, Kanu Sanyal, Jangal Santhal
- **Ideology:** Mao Zedong's agrarian revolution & armed struggle
- **Key Work:** Charu Majumdar's "Historic Eight Documents"

Spread & Intensification (1970s–1980s)

- **Expansion States:** Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Odisha, Kerala
- **Srikakulam Uprising:** Tribal revolt in AP against landlords
- **Govt Response:**
 - Operation Steeplechase (1971)
 - Army + paramilitary crackdown
 - Many leaders arrested/killed → temporary setback

New Factions:

- **PWG (1980):** Andhra Pradesh, Kondapalli Seetharamaiah
- **MCC:** Bihar & Jharkhand
- **Strategies:** Guerrilla warfare, infrastructure attacks

Encounter 1 – Bijapur District

- **Location:** Near Andri village (Bijapur-Dantewada border)
- **Time:** 7:00 AM onward
- **Forces Involved:** DRG, STF, Bastar Fighters, CRPF
- **Outcome:** 26 Maoists killed (15 women), 1 DRG jawan (Raju Oyam) martyred

Encounter 2 – Kanker District

- **Location:** Near Abujhmad jungle (Kanker-Narayanpur border)
- **Forces Involved:** BSF, DRG
- **Outcome:** 4 Maoists killed (1 woman), no casualties on security side

CPI(ML) Formation (1969)

- **Date:** April 1969
- **Announced by:** Kanu Sanyal in Calcutta
- **Goal:** Armed revolution to overthrow bourgeoisie Indian state

CPI(Maoist) Formation (2004)

- **Merger of:** PWG + MCC
- **Objective:**
 - Unite Naxalite factions
 - Strengthen operations across Red Corridor (WB to AP)

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

ANSWER KEY

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

Delimitation and Concerns of Southern States

News Highlights:

Union Home Minister Amit Shah reassured Southern states on February 26, 2025, stating that no state will face "injustice" during the **delimitation process**.

- This came in response to concerns raised by **Tamil Nadu** and other Southern states about potential **representation loss** due to a population-based delimitation exercise after the **2021 Census**.

What is Delimitation?

- Definition:** Delimitation refers to the process of redrawing **parliamentary constituency boundaries** based on the most recent **census data**. This is done to ensure that constituencies have equal representation according to population changes.
- Constitutional Mandate:** It is a **constitutional mandate**, outlined under **Article 82** and **Article 170** of the Indian Constitution, to be conducted after each Census to maintain fairness in representation.

How Will Seats Be Decided?

- The number of Lok Sabha seats allocated to each state is primarily determined by **the average population per parliamentary constituency**. This average acts as the base figure to calculate proportional representation across the country.
- If the **1977 average population per constituency**, which was approximately **10.11 lakh**, is used as the benchmark even today, then the number of Lok Sabha seats would need to increase significantly to reflect the rise in India's overall population. States with large populations, such as **Uttar Pradesh**, would benefit disproportionately from this increase in seats.
- On the other hand, if the **population threshold per constituency is increased**, for instance, by **doubling the average population per seat to 20 lakh**, the representation would change dramatically. Under such a model, **Southern states** like **Tamil Nadu and Kerala**, which have controlled population growth through successful family planning policies, would see **little or no increase** in the number of Lok Sabha seats. In contrast, **Northern states**, especially those with high population growth like **Uttar Pradesh and Bihar**, would see **a significant jump in representation**, giving them more power in the national legislature.

Scenario 1: Population Average Per Constituency is Doubled to 20 Lakh

If the average population per constituency is set at **20 lakh**, the **total strength of the Lok Sabha** would increase to **707 seats**.

Under this revised seat distribution:

- Tamil Nadu** would retain its current number of **seats at 39**, indicating no increase in representation.
- Kerala** would actually lose **2 seats**, reducing its count from **20 to 18 seats**.
- Uttar Pradesh**, when combined with **Uttarakhand**, would see a sharp increase in representation, rising to **126 seats**.
- Bihar and Jharkhand**, taken together, would receive **85 seats**, which marks a substantial increase.

This model, therefore, reflects the disproportionate benefit to states with high population growth, while penalising states that have invested in population control and health infrastructure.

Scenario 2: Population Average Per Constituency is Set at 15 Lakh

If the population threshold per constituency is adjusted to **15 lakh**, the **total strength of the Lok Sabha** would rise further to **942 seats**.

Under this allocation scenario:

- Tamil Nadu** would get **52 seats**, a modest increase from its current strength.
- Kerala** would be allocated **24 seats**, again showing a slight gain.
- Uttar Pradesh** would dominate the **Lok Sabha with 168 seats**, securing a vastly larger share of legislative power.
- Bihar and Jharkhand**, together, would control **114 seats**, another significant increase.

This model, while increasing the overall size of the legislature, still leaves Southern states relatively underrepresented, given their lower population growth and smaller absolute populations compared to their Northern counterparts.

Delimitation Procedure in India

Step	Process	Key Legal Provisions
1. Formation of the Delimitation Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constituted under Article 82 (Lok Sabha) and Article 170 (State Assemblies) through a Delimitation Act passed by Parliament. Chaired by a retired Supreme Court judge, with the Chief Election Commissioner and State Election Commissioners as members. 	Article 82, Article 170
2. Census Data & Redrawing of Boundaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on the latest Census data (currently the 2011 Census) as per Article 81. Boundaries adjusted for geographic compactness, administrative divisions, and public convenience. SC/ST reserved constituencies allocated under Article 330 (Lok Sabha) and Article 332 (State Assemblies). 	Article 81 Article 330 Article 332
3. Public Consultation & Finalisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A draft proposal is published. Public hearings are conducted to seek feedback. The Commission reviews feedback before finalising constituency boundaries. 	Public Consultation Mechanism
4. Implementation & Election Commission's Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final orders are binding and published in the Gazette of India. Cannot be challenged in court. The Election Commission of India (ECI) enforces new constituencies in the next elections. 	Election Laws & ECI Mandate

Regional Disadvantages and Shifting Political Power

- Northern States' Gain:** Northern states, such as **Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Madhya Pradesh**, with larger populations, would gain significantly more seats under a **population-based delimitation**. For instance, **Uttar Pradesh** could see a **threefold increase** in its **Lok Sabha seats**, from 85 to 250.
- Southern States' Loss:** Conversely, Southern states like **Tamil Nadu and Kerala**, which have controlled their population growth, would see a more modest increase, or even a decrease in their share of seats. This disparity in growth could lead to a **shift in political power**, with the **Hindi heartland** potentially gaining more influence at the national level.

Past Delimitation Exercise in India

Year	Delimitation Commission	Chairperson	Key Changes
1952	First Delimitation Commission under the Delimitation Commission Act, 1952	Justice N. Chandrasekhara Aiyar (Retd. Supreme Court Judge)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on 1951 Census. Initial allocation of Lok Sabha and Assembly seats. Total Lok Sabha seats: 494.
1963	Second Delimitation Commission under the Delimitation Commission Act, 1962	Justice K.V. Reddi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on 1961 Census. Adjustments made due to state reorganisation (1956). Minor changes in seat distribution.
1973	Third Delimitation Commission under the Delimitation Commission Act, 1972	Justice J.L. Kapur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on 1971 Census. Number of Lok Sabha seats increased from 494 to 543. Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) constituencies revised.
1976	Delimitation Freeze by 42nd Constitutional Amendment	Not Applicable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The government froze delimitation until 2001 to control political imbalances due to population disparities. No seat adjustments made despite population growth.
2002-2008	Fourth Delimitation Commission under the Delimitation Act, 2002	Justice Kuldip Singh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on 2001 Census. Reorganized constituency boundaries but did not change the total number of seats. Implemented in the 2009 General Elections.

2020-2022	Jammu & Kashmir Delimitation Commission	Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formed after Article 370 abrogation (2019). Assembly seats increased from 83 to 90. First-time reservation of ST seats in J&K.
2023	Northeast Delimitation (Assam, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland)	Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducted as per 2021 notification. Adjustments made to Assembly and Parliamentary constituencies.
2026 (Upcoming)	Expected National Delimitation	To Be Announced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be conducted after 2026 Census. Likely reallocation of Lok Sabha seats based on population shifts. High-population states (UP, Bihar, MP) may gain seats while low-growth states (Kerala, Tamil Nadu) may lose representation.

Why was Delimitation Frozen?

- The 42nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1976, passed during Emergency under Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, froze the delimitation process until 2001 to control political imbalances due to unequal population growth across states.
- The 84th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2002, further extended the freeze until 2026 to avoid penalizing states that successfully controlled population growth.

Southern States' Concerns

- Population Control:** Southern states like Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Andhra Pradesh have successfully implemented family planning measures, resulting in slower population growth. This raises fears that they may lose parliamentary representation if the delimitation is based purely on population figures.
- Economic Contribution:** Southern states contribute more than 30% to India's GDP and tax revenues, but they fear a disproportionate loss of seats, which may lead to neglect in resource allocation and policy attention.
- Political Influence:** At present, Southern states hold 129 seats in the Lok Sabha, accounting for 24% of the total 543 seats. These states fear that northern states, with faster population growth, will gain seats, diminishing the influence of regional parties and weakening the political clout of states like Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

Joint Action Committee (JAC) on Fair Delimitation

On March 22, 2025, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin convened the inaugural meeting of the Joint Action Committee (JAC) on Fair Delimitation in Chennai. This assembly brought together leaders from multiple states to deliberate on the impending parliamentary constituency delimitation and its potential ramifications.

- The assembly unanimously advocated for extending the delimitation freeze by 25 years to protect states with successful population control.
- Panels on federalism were proposed to safeguard equitable representation and state autonomy.
- States were urged to pass assembly resolutions opposing population-based delimitation.



MIND MAP

What is Delimitation?

- Definition:** Redrawing of constituency boundaries based on latest census.
- Purpose:** Ensure equal representation as population changes.
- Constitutional Basis:**
 - Article 82 – Lok Sabha delimitation
 - Article 170 – State Assemblies
 - Article 81 – Basis for seat allocation
 - Article 330/332 – SC/ST reservations

Delimitation Process

- Formation:** Delimitation Commission (SC Judge + ECs)
- Use of Census Data:** Redraw boundaries
- Public Hearings:** Feedback and finalization
- Implementation:** Enforced by Election Commission; not challengeable in court

Year	Commission Chair	Key Changes
1952	Justice N.C. Aiyar	Based on 1951 Census; 494 LS seats
1963	Justice K.V. Reddi	Minor changes; state reorg. LS seats rose to 543; SC/ST revised
1973	Justice J.L. Kapur	
1976	Freeze via 42nd Amend.	Seats frozen till 2001
2002	Justice Kuldip Singh	Used 2001 Census, no seat changes
2022	Justice R.P. Desai (J&K)	First ST reservation in J&K
2023	Justice R.P. Desai (NE States)	Assembly/LS adjustments in 4 states
2026 (upcoming)	TBA	Full-scale national delimitation

Amendments Related to Delimitation

- 42nd (1976):** Freeze till 2001
- 84th (2001):** Extended freeze till 2026
- 87th (2003):** Delimitation allowed using 2001 data (no seat change)

Southern States' Concerns

- Population Control Success:** Slower growth due to family planning.
- Risk:** Loss of seats if based purely on population.
- Economic Contribution:** 30%+ of India's GDP.
- Current Representation:** 129/543 Lok Sabha seats (~24%).
- Fear:** Reduced political influence, skewed resource allocation.

Seat Impact by Population Threshold

Average Pop/Seat	Total LS Seats	TN	Kerala	UP	Bihar+Jharkhand
10.11 lakh (1977)	~543	39	20	85	54
15 lakh	942	52	24	168	114
20 lakh	707	39	18	126	85

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

13. What is the primary provision of Article 330 of the Indian Constitution?

 - (a) Delimitation of parliamentary constituencies
 - (b) Allocation of seats in the Rajya Sabha
 - (c) Reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs)
 - (d) Regulation of election procedures in Union Territories

14. In which year was the Fourth Delimitation Commission established, which revised SC/ST seats based on the 2001 Census without changing the total number of Lok Sabha seats?

 - (a) 2002 (4th Delimitation)
 - (b) 1986 (Special Delimitation)
 - (c) 1973 (3rd Delimitation)
 - (d) 2011 (Population-Based Review)

15. What has been the status of the reservation period for SC/ST seats in Lok Sabha and State Assemblies under Article 334, which was originally set for 10 years (1950-1960)?

 - (a) It was discontinued after 1960
 - (b) It remained unchanged since 1950

(c) It was reduced to five years in 2019
(d) It was extended multiple times

16. What is the frequency of delimitation in France, where an Independent Commission under the Ministry of Interior is responsible for redrawing constituency boundaries?

 - (a) Every 5 years
 - (b) Every 10-15 years
 - (c) Every 20 years
 - (d) Only after a national census

17. What percentage of seats in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies is reserved for women under the Women's Reservation Bill?

 - (a) 33%
 - (b) 30%
 - (c) 40%
 - (d) 50%

ANSWER KEYS & EXPLANATIONS

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

All Day Doubt Clearing Session at LE BHOPAL



Economy & Governance

Navratna status for IRCTC and IRFC: All about Maharatna, Navratnas and Mini Ratnas

News Highlights:

The Indian government approved the **Navratna** status for two major **Indian Railways companies**—Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) and Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC)—on March 3, 2025. With this, IRCTC and IRFC became the **25th and 26th companies** to achieve **Navratna status** among the **Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs)**. This decision ensures that all seven listed **Indian Railways CPSEs** now hold **Navratna status**.



Understanding Navratna Status:

The **Navratna** status is granted to select **Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs)** that demonstrate superior financial performance and operational excellence. This status allows these companies to operate with greater **autonomy**, especially in areas like investment, decision-making, and international operations.

The **Department of Public Enterprises (DPE)**, which is part of the **Ministry of Finance**, is responsible for selecting CPSEs that meet the criteria for **Navratna** status.

Eligibility Criteria for Navratna Status

A CPSE needs to fulfill specific criteria to be eligible for **Navratna status**. These include:

- Profitability:** The company must demonstrate a **high net profit** to net worth ratio.
- Cost Efficiency:** The **manpower cost** should be proportionate to the total cost of production or services.
- Return on Capital:** A strong return on capital employed is necessary to qualify.
- Turnover:** The **PBIT** (Profit before Interest and Taxes) to turnover ratio should be robust.
- Earnings Per Share (EPS):** A company's **EPS** is one of the key indicators of its financial performance.
- Inter-sectoral Performance:** How well the company performs compared to others in the same industry is also a critical factor.

→ If a CPSE scores **60 or higher** across these six indicators and receives an **Excellent or Very Good MOU rating** for **three of the last five years**, it qualifies for the **Navratna status**.

How Does Navratna Status Help Companies?

The **Navratna status** offers a multitude of benefits, such as:

- **Financial Autonomy:** With **Navratna status**, IRCTC and IRFC can now invest up to **₹1,000 crore** or **15% of their net worth** in a single project without requiring prior approval from the central government. This freedom significantly reduces bureaucratic delays.
- **Greater Independence:** These companies can now make business decisions more independently, without needing direct intervention from the government. This includes:
 - **Forming joint ventures** and **subsidiaries**.
 - **Mergers** and **acquisitions** without the need for government approval.
 - **Independent business** and **investment decisions** to compete effectively with private-sector companies.
- **Global Expansion:** The **Navratna status** facilitates the international expansion of these companies. They can now form **strategic alliances** and enter foreign markets with fewer bureaucratic hurdles, increasing their global presence and competitiveness.

- **Increased Investor Confidence:** The status signals **financial stability**, making them attractive to **investors**, and enabling them to raise capital at more favorable terms. This ultimately results in better **returns for shareholders**.



Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation

Overview: The Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) was incorporated on **September 27, 1999**, under the administrative control of the **Ministry of Railways**, Government of India. It was established with the objective of providing catering, tourism, and online ticketing services to passengers using Indian Railways. It is also responsible for managing **e-catering services**, where passengers can order food on trains through online platforms.

Chairman and Managing Director (CMD): Sanjay Kumar Jain

Ownership Structure:

- The Ministry of Railways holds **62.4%** equity in IRCTC, making it the largest stakeholder. The remainder of the shares is publicly traded.



Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC)

Overview: The Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC) was established on **December 12, 1986**, as a **public sector enterprise (PSE)** under the Ministry of Railways. Its primary function is to raise financial resources for the **Indian Railways** by issuing bonds in the domestic and international markets. IRFC helps fund the expansion and modernization needs of the Indian Railways, including the procurement of new **locomotives, coaches, wagons**, and the development of railway infrastructure.

Chairman and Managing Director & CEO: Shri Manoj Kumar Dubey

Ownership Structure:

- The Ministry of Railways holds **86.36%** of the equity in IRFC, making it the **majority shareholder** of the company.

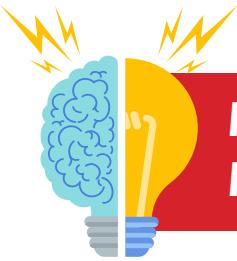
Importance to Indian Railways:

- IRFC's financing capability has been essential in supporting the **Indian Railways' infrastructure projects** and **fleet modernization**. Without its **funding mechanisms**, many of the **railway infrastructure developments** in India would have been delayed or financially unviable.
- The company plays a vital role in the **expansion and modernization** of Indian Railways' operations, helping the country achieve its **rail transport goals**.

Other Navratnas in Indian Railways

Apart from IRCTC and IRFC, several other **Indian Railways CPSEs** hold **Navratna status**:

1. **Container Corporation of India (CONCOR)** – First Railways Navratna in **July 2014**.
2. **Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd (RVNL)** – Achieved **Navratna status** in **2023**.
3. **RITES Ltd** – Achieved **Navratna status** in **2023**.
4. **IRCON International Ltd** – Achieved **Navratna status** in **2023**.
5. **RailTel Corporation of India Ltd** – Achieved **Navratna status** in **August 2024**.



MIND MAP

Benefits of Navratna Status

- Financial Autonomy:** Can invest up to ₹1,000 crore or 15% of net worth per project without govt. approval
- Greater Independence:**
 - Decision-making without direct government intervention
 - Can form JVs, subsidiaries, mergers, and acquisitions freely
- Global Expansion:** Easier entry into foreign markets and strategic alliances
- Investor Confidence:** Attractive to investors, better capital-raising opportunities

- Date:** March 3, 2025
- Companies Upgraded:** IRCTC & IRFC granted Navratna status
- Total Navratna CPSEs:** 26
- Impact:** All **seven** listed **Indian Railways CPSEs** now hold Navratna status

Navratna Status – Overview

- Granted by:** Department of Public Enterprises (DPE), Ministry of Finance
- Purpose:** Recognition of superior financial performance and operational excellence
- Benefits:** Greater autonomy in investment, decision-making, and international expansion

Eligibility Criteria for Navratna Status

Financial Performance Indicators:

- High net profit to net worth ratio
- Manpower cost to total cost proportion
- Strong Return on Capital
- Robust PBIT to turnover ratio
- Earnings Per Share (EPS)
- Performance compared to industry peers

Minimum Score: 60+ across indicators

Performance Rating: Excellent/Very Good MOU rating for 3 of the last 5 years

Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC)

- Established:** September 27, 1999
- Functions:** Catering, tourism, online ticketing, e-catering services
- CMD:** Sanjay Kumar Jain
- Ownership:**
 - Ministry of Railways – 62.4%
 - Rest – Publicly traded shares

Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC)

- Established:** December 12, 1986
- Primary Role:**
 - Raising financial resources for Indian Railways
 - Issuing bonds in domestic and international markets
- CMD & CEO:** Shri Manoj Kumar Dubey
- Ownership:**
 - Ministry of Railways – 86.36%
- Importance:**
 - Funds railway expansion & modernization
 - Key financier for railway infrastructure projects

Indian Railways CPSEs with Navratna Status

- CONCOR** (July 2014) – First Railways Navratna
- RVNL** (2023)
- RITES Ltd** (2023)
- IRCON International Ltd** (2023)
- RailTel Corporation of India Ltd** (August 2024)
- IRCTC & IRFC** (March 2025)

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

ANSWER KEY

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

Vocabulary Vanguard | Dynamic Quiz Contest at LE BHOPAL



International Affairs

USA-Russia-Ukraine Ceasefire Deal

News Highlights:

Ukraine has expressed readiness to accept a **30-day ceasefire** with **Russia**, contingent on **Moscow's** agreement. This development follows high-level talks between **US** and **Ukrainian officials** in **Saudi Arabia**, where the **United States** announced it would lift the suspension of **military aid** to **Kyiv**. This marks a significant step in the diplomatic efforts to pause the ongoing war, which has devastated **Ukraine** since **Russia's invasion in 2022**.

Ukraine and Russia: Evolution as countries

Kievan Rus' - 9th–13th Century

Kievan Rus' was a medieval state from the **9th to 13th century**, considered a **precursor** to both modern-day **Russia** and **Ukraine**. The **Grand Duchy of Lithuania** and later the **Cossack Hetmanate** dominated parts of Ukraine, which were historically part of **Russian Tsarist influence**.

Cossack Hetmanate (mid-1600s) was a **semi-independent state** that sought to align with **Russia** for **military protection** against Poland. This led to the **Treaty of Pereyaslav** in 1654, where Ukraine agreed to be under the protection of the **Russian Tsar** but maintained a degree of autonomy.



Ukraine's status under the **Russian Empire** was complex. While it had **autonomous regions** like the **Cossack Hetmanate**, much of Ukraine was annexed into the **Russian Empire** by the end of the **18th century**.



Emblem of the Kievan Rus'

The emblem of Kievan Rus' is most commonly associated with the trident, known as the **Tryzub** (Тризуб) in Ukrainian. This symbol was used by the **Rurik dynasty**, the ruling house of Kievan Rus', and it remains an important cultural and national symbol in modern Ukraine.

The Soviet Union (1922–1991)



Formation of the Soviet Union (1922)

- In 1922, the **Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR)** was formed, bringing together **Russia** and other territories, including **Ukraine**, under the central control of the **Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU)**.
- Ukraine became one of the **Soviet republics** within the USSR, officially named the **Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic**. The country suffered significant events during Soviet rule, such as:
 - **Holodomor (1932–1933)**: A man-made famine under **Stalin's** rule killed millions of Ukrainians, and some consider it a **genocide**.
- **Soviet Repression and Russification**: Under Soviet leadership, **Ukraine faced significant cultural suppression**, with the promotion of **Russian language** and identity over Ukrainian culture.

World War II and Post-War Period

Ukraine experienced significant devastation during **World War II**, being a frontline state for the German invasion of the Soviet Union. Post-war, **Ukraine was rebuilt**, but Soviet policies continued to centralize power in Moscow, leading to **resentment in Ukrainian society**.

Present-day countries that were part of the Soviet Union:

- Estonia
- Latvia
- Lithuania
- Belarus
- Ukraine
- Moldova
- Georgia
- Armenia
- Azerbaijan
- Kazakhstan
- Uzbekistan
- Turkmenistan
- Kyrgyzstan
- Tajikistan

The Rise of Ukrainian Nationalism and the Fall of the Soviet Union



The 1980s and the Chernobyl Disaster

The Chernobyl nuclear disaster in 1986, which heavily affected Ukraine, highlighted the failures of Soviet leadership and contributed to a rise in **Ukrainian nationalism** and demands for greater autonomy.

Perestroika and Glasnost (1985–1991)

- Under Mikhail Gorbachev, the Soviet Union experienced political and economic reforms through **Perestroika (restructuring)** and **Glasnost (openness)**, leading to growing calls for greater autonomy within Soviet republics, including Ukraine.
- Ukraine sought greater **political independence** and **national sovereignty** during this period.

Independence of Ukraine (1991)

The Collapse of the Soviet Union

- The 1991 Soviet coup attempt and subsequent fall of Mikhail Gorbachev led to the **dissolution of the Soviet Union**, culminating in Ukraine's **declaration of independence** on August 24, 1991.
- Ukraine held a **referendum on independence** in December 1991, with an overwhelming 90% **vote** in favor of seceding from the Soviet Union.
- Ukraine became a **sovereign state**, but the **legacy of Soviet control**, coupled with the **Russian majority in Crimea**, continued to cause tension.
- In 1991, U.S. Secretary of State James Baker under President George H.W. Bush (41st President of the United States) **informally assured Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev** that NATO would not expand "one inch eastward" if the Soviet Union allowed the reunification of Germany and its integration into NATO.
- However, this promise was **not part of any legally binding treaty**, and later U.S. administrations (Clinton, Bush, Obama, etc.) supported NATO's eastward expansion. This has been a key point of contention between Russia and the West, as Russia sees it as a broken assurance.



Territorial Disputes

- Crimea:** After independence, **Ukraine inherited Crimea**, where a large Russian-speaking population resided. In 1954, **Khrushchev** (Soviet leader) had transferred Crimea from the **Russian Soviet Socialist Republic** to the **Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic**, which was relatively uncontroversial under Soviet governance.
- After Ukraine gained independence, **Russia maintained a significant military presence** in Crimea, especially due to the presence of the **Black Sea Fleet** in Sevastopol.



NATO Expansion Towards Russia

What is NATO?

- NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization)** was founded in **1949** as a **Western military alliance** against the Soviet Union.
- It operates under **Article 5**, which states that an **attack on one member** is considered an **attack on all members**.

NATO's Post-Cold War Expansion

- After the **fall of the Soviet Union (1991)**, NATO began expanding into **Eastern Europe**, incorporating **former Warsaw Pact countries and ex-Soviet states**.
- Russia **strongly opposed** this expansion, considering it a **direct security threat**.

By the time the **Soviet Union dissolved in 1991**, NATO had **16 member countries**:

- 12 Founding Members:** United States, Canada, United Kingdom, France, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Italy, Portugal, Denmark, Norway, Iceland.
- Later Additions:** Greece & Turkey (Both joined in 1952), West Germany (joined in 1955; became unified Germany in 1990), Spain (joined in 1982)

**Members of
NATO before
the fall of
USSR**

Year	NATO Expansion (New Members)	Proximity to Russia
1999	Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary	First former Warsaw Pact members join NATO.
2004	Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia	Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania) border Russia, increasing NATO's presence near Russia's western frontier.
2009	Albania, Croatia	Strengthens NATO presence in Southeast Europe.
2017	Montenegro	Expands NATO into Balkan region.
2020	North Macedonia	Further expansion in the Balkans.
2023-2024	Finland (2023) & Sweden (2024)	Finland shares a 1,340 km border with Russia, significantly expanding NATO's presence near Russia's northwest.

The Orange Revolution (2004)

- Ukraine's **2004 Presidential election** saw widespread allegations of electoral fraud in favor of pro-Russian candidate **Viktor Yanukovych**. The protests led to the **Orange Revolution**, resulting in a re-run of the elections and the election of **Viktor Yushchenko**, a pro-Western candidate.

- The revolution represented a clear desire among many Ukrainians to align more with the **European Union** rather than with Russia.

NATO's 2008 Promise to Ukraine:

- The summit concluded with a **formal statement** that "**Ukraine and Georgia will become members of NATO.**"
- However, **no Membership Action Plan (MAP)**—the formal process for joining NATO—was granted at that time, largely due to opposition from some key NATO members like **France and Germany**, who were concerned about provoking **Russia**.
- The declaration was a **political commitment** rather than a concrete step, and it **left the timeline and path to membership undefined**.
- The decision reflected a **compromise** between the **United States and Eastern European members**, who supported fast-tracking Ukraine's membership, and **Western European countries**, who favored a more cautious approach.
- Russia strongly opposed NATO expansion, especially to former Soviet republics like Ukraine and Georgia, seeing it as a threat to its strategic influence.
- The 2008 declaration is often cited as a turning point in Russia-NATO relations, contributing to increased tensions, especially after Russia's war with Georgia in 2008, the annexation of Crimea in 2014, and the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

Euromaidan and the 2014 Crisis

- November 2013–February 2014:** Euromaidan protests erupted in Ukraine after **President Yanukovych** rejected an **Association Agreement with the European Union** in favor of closer ties with Russia. The protests, demanding **closer ties with Europe** and **anti-corruption reforms**, grew violent, leading to **Yanukovych's ousting**.
- Following Yanukovych's removal, **Russia responded by annexing Crimea** in **March 2014**, and **pro-Russian separatists** in the **Donetsk and Luhansk** regions of eastern Ukraine declared independence, leading to the **ongoing war in Donbas**.
- The annexation of Crimea and the support for **separatist movements in eastern Ukraine** were key factors that led to the **2014 Russia-Ukraine conflict**.



Russia-Ukraine Tensions Post-2014

Annexation of Crimea (2014)

- Russia's annexation of Crimea** in 2014, following a controversial **referendum**, has been widely condemned by the international community, resulting in **sanctions against Russia** and a severe **deterioration in relations** with Ukraine.
- The **United Nations General Assembly** passed a resolution affirming **Ukraine's territorial integrity**, and the **European Union** imposed sanctions on Russia.

War in Donbas (2014–Present)

- Russia's support for separatist rebels** in the **Donetsk and Luhansk** regions of Ukraine has led to a **protracted conflict** between Ukrainian forces and pro-Russian separatists, with estimates of **over 13,000 deaths** as of 2021.
- Despite multiple **ceasefire agreements** (Minsk I and II), violence continues sporadically, contributing to ongoing instability in eastern Ukraine.

Minsk Agreements

The **Minsk Agreements** were two ceasefire agreements intended to end the **war in Donbas**, a conflict between **Ukraine and Russian-backed separatists** in the eastern regions of **Donetsk and Luhansk**. Despite diplomatic efforts, both **Minsk I (2014)** and **Minsk II (2015) failed**, leading to the escalation of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, culminating in **Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022**.

I. Minsk I Agreement (September 5, 2014)

Background

- After the **annexation of Crimea (March 2014)**, Russian-backed separatists declared **independence in Donetsk and Luhansk**, leading to heavy fighting with Ukrainian forces.
- In **August 2014**, Russian troops unofficially intervened, pushing Ukrainian forces back.
- To prevent further escalation, Ukraine, Russia, and the **Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)** mediated a **ceasefire agreement** in Minsk, Belarus.

Why Minsk I Failed

- The **ceasefire was repeatedly violated**, with continued fighting in **Debaltseve, Donetsk Airport, and Mariupol**.
- Russian-backed separatists **refused to recognize Ukrainian authority** in Donbas.
- Ukraine accused Russia of **not withdrawing military support** for separatists.

By early 2015, Minsk I had **collapsed**, leading to the need for a new peace deal.

Provision	Minsk I	Minsk II
Immediate ceasefire	Both sides agreed to stop fighting in Donetsk and Luhansk .	Effective February 15, 2015 , requiring both sides to stop military actions.
Withdrawal of heavy weapons	Both Ukrainian and separatist forces were to withdraw artillery and heavy weapons from conflict zones.	Both sides agreed to withdraw artillery and tanks (50km buffer zone).
OSCE monitoring	The OSCE was tasked with monitoring compliance.	The OSCE was given authority to supervise ceasefire compliance.
Local elections & autonomy	Special self-governance status was granted to Donetsk and Luhansk, with local elections to follow.	Ukraine agreed to grant special status to Donetsk and Luhansk after local elections under Ukrainian law
Prisoner exchange	Both sides agreed to exchange prisoners of war (POWs).	A one-for-one prisoner swap was agreed upon.
Border control restoration	-	Ukraine was to regain control of its border with Russia, but only after constitutional reforms were implemented.

Minsk II Agreement (February 12, 2015)

Background

- After Minsk I's failure, renewed **heavy fighting** occurred in **January 2015**, especially in **Debaltseve**.
- Leaders of **Germany, France, Ukraine, and Russia (Normandy Format)** brokered a **new ceasefire deal** known as **Minsk II**.

Why Minsk II Failed

- Ceasefire violations continued, with heavy clashes in Debaltseve, Avdiivka, and Shyrokyne.
- Russia refused to acknowledge military involvement, despite evidence of Russian troops supporting separatists.
- Ukraine did not implement constitutional reforms to grant autonomy to Donbas, fearing loss of sovereignty.
- Russia's influence over separatists grew, further destabilizing Donbas.
- By 2017, the Minsk Agreements were effectively dead, leading to increased tensions.

III. The Minsk Agreements and the 2022 Russian Invasion

- Russia used Minsk II as justification to demand special status for Donetsk and Luhansk.
- February 21, 2022: Russia recognized Donetsk and Luhansk as independent states, violating Minsk II.
- February 24, 2022: Russia invaded Ukraine, citing Ukraine's refusal to implement Minsk II as one of its justifications.

2022 Full-Scale Invasion by Russia

- February 24, 2022: Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, citing a need to protect Russian speakers and de-Nazify Ukraine, claims that were widely criticized as unfounded.
- The invasion has led to massive destruction in Ukraine, hundreds of thousands of deaths, and millions displaced. International sanctions against Russia have intensified, while military and humanitarian aid has flowed to Ukraine from Western countries.

Russia's Opposition and Counteractions Against NATO

Russia's Objections to NATO Expansion

- Vladimir Putin has repeatedly called NATO expansion a security threat, stating that it violates promises made after the Cold War.
- Key Russian concerns:
 - Missile defense systems in Eastern Europe.
 - NATO military exercises near Russian borders.

Potential NATO membership for Ukraine and Georgia, which Russia sees as a red line.

Ceasefire Proposal and Diplomatic Efforts

- Ukraine's Commitment: Ukraine has signalled its willingness to accept a temporary 30-day ceasefire, which could be extended based on mutual agreement.
- US Involvement: The United States has reinstated military aid to Ukraine, including intelligence sharing, after a two-week suspension due to tensions between Presidents Trump and Zelenskyy.
- Global Reactions: European leaders, including UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer and French President Emmanuel Macron, have urged Russia to join the ceasefire.
- Next Steps: Trump's special envoy, Steve Witkoff, is scheduled to present the ceasefire proposal to Russian President Vladimir Putin, with further discussions planned between Trump and Putin.

US Military Aid Resumption

- Suspension and Resumption: US military support to Ukraine was temporarily suspended following a disagreement between Trump and Zelenskyy, but has now been reinstated due to the ceasefire proposal.
- Strategic Significance: The US sees the lifting of the aid suspension as a critical move to ensure Ukraine's stability and to pressurize Russia into peace negotiations.

Russia's Response and Military Operations:

- Russian Position: Russian officials, including Dmitry Peskov, have expressed skepticism about the ceasefire, warning of the possibility of continued conflict.
- Ongoing Military Campaigns: Russia has intensified military activities, especially in the Kursk region, where it has claimed territorial gains. Additionally, Russia faced a major drone attack on Moscow, highlighting the intensity of the ongoing conflict.



MIND MAP

2025 Ceasefire Proposal

- Ukraine offers a 30-day ceasefire if Russia agrees.
- US resumes military aid to Ukraine after high-level talks in Saudi Arabia.
- Special envoy **Steve Witkoff** to present ceasefire proposal to Putin.
- European leaders back the proposal; Russia responds with skepticism.
- Russia continues offensives, especially in **Kursk**; drone attacks hit Moscow.

Histroy: Ukraine & Russia

- **Kievan Rus'** (9th–13th c.): Common medieval roots of Ukraine and Russia.
- **Cossack Hetmanate (1654)**: Allied with Russia via Treaty of Pereyaslav.
- Ukraine gradually absorbed into Russian Empire by the 18th century.

Soviet Era (1922–1991)

- Ukraine became a Soviet Republic under the USSR.
- Holodomor (1932–33): Man-made famine killed millions.
- WWII caused major destruction in Ukraine.
- Soviet policies suppressed Ukrainian culture and identity.
- Chernobyl disaster (1986) sparked nationalist sentiments.
- Gorbachev's reforms (Perestroika, Glasnost) encouraged autonomy demands.

Ukrainian Independence

- Declared independence on August 24, 1991.
- Over 90% voted for independence in a national referendum.
- Legacy of Soviet rule and Russian presence in Crimea created long-term tensions.

NATO Expansion and Russian Opposition

- In 1991, the US informally promised no NATO expansion eastward.
- Despite this, NATO expanded post-1999 to include Eastern European and Baltic states.
- Russia views NATO's growth as a direct threat to its security.
- Finland and Sweden joined NATO in 2023–2024, increasing pressure on Russia.

Minsk Agreements Overview

- Minsk I (2014): Initial ceasefire deal; failed due to violations.
- Minsk II (2015): Reaffirmed ceasefire, elections in Donbas, prisoner swaps.
- Agreements failed due to ongoing hostilities, lack of trust, and political deadlock.
- Russia used Minsk II as justification to recognize Donetsk and Luhansk in 2022.

Ukraine's Shift Toward the West

- Orange Revolution (2004): Rejected pro-Russian leadership.
- NATO in 2008 promised future membership to Ukraine and Georgia.
- Euromaidan Protests (2013–14): Pro-European movement ousted Yanukovych.
- Russia responded by annexing Crimea and backing separatists in Donbas.

2022 Russian Invasion of Ukraine

- Full-scale invasion began on February 24, 2022.
- Russia cited protection of Russian speakers and "de-Nazification" as reasons.
- Led to large-scale destruction, civilian casualties, and global condemnation.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. What has Ukraine expressed readiness to accept, provided that Russia also agrees?
 - (a) Permanent peace treaty
 - (b) Immediate troop withdrawal
 - (c) 30-day ceasefire
 - (d) Joint border monitoring

 2. Following high-level talks in Saudi Arabia, to which country did the United States announce the lifting of the suspension of military aid?
 - (a) Kyiv
 - (b) Warsaw
 - (c) Berlin
 - (d) Moscow

 3. What was Kievan Rus', which existed from the 9th to the 13th century and is considered a precursor to modern-day Russia and Ukraine?
 - (a) City-state
 - (b) Kingdom
 - (c) Empire
 - (d) Medieval state

 4. Which agreement in 1654 marked the Cossack Hetmanate's decision to come under the protection of the Russian Tsar while retaining some autonomy?
 - (a) Union of Lublin
 - (b) Treaty of Pereyaslav
 - (c) Treaty of Andrusovo
 - (d) Peace of Westphalia

 5. By the end of which century was much of Ukraine annexed into the Russian Empire, despite having autonomous regions like the Cossack Hetmanate?
 - (a) 18th century
 - (b) 16th century
 - (c) 19th century
 - (d) 17th century

 6. What political entity was formed in 1922, uniting Russia with other territories including Ukraine ?
 - (a) Russian Empire
 - (b) Warsaw Pact
 - (c) Commonwealth of Independent States
 - (d) Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

 7. What is the full form of CPSU, which held central control in the former Soviet Union?
 - (a) Central Political Soviet Union
 - (b) Communist Party of the Soviet Union
 - (c) Council of Public Socialist Unity
 - (d) Communist Pact of Soviet Union

 8. What was the official name of Ukraine when it became one of the republics within the USSR?
- (a) People's Republic of Ukraine
 - (b) Democratic Republic of Ukraine
 - (c) Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic
 - (d) Federal State of Ukraine
-
9. Which tragic event during Stalin's rule from 1932 to 1933 resulted in the deaths of millions of Ukrainians and is considered by some as a genocide?
 - (a) Great Purge
 - (b) Holodomor
 - (c) October Revolution
 - (d) Battle of Kyiv

 10. Which 1986 event, severely impacting Ukraine, exposed the shortcomings of Soviet leadership and fueled Ukrainian nationalism and calls for autonomy?
 - (a) Kyiv Uprising
 - (b) Soviet Coup Attempt
 - (c) Donbas Crisis
 - (d) Chernobyl nuclear disaster

 11. Which Soviet leader introduced the political reform policy of Perestroika, which led to increased demands for autonomy in Soviet republics such as Ukraine?
 - (a) Mikhail Gorbachev
 - (b) Boris Yeltsin
 - (c) Vladimir Lenin
 - (d) Yuri Andropov

 12. Following the 1991 Soviet coup attempt and the fall of Mikhail Gorbachev, what major event took place in Ukraine on August 24, 1991?
 - (a) Presidential elections
 - (b) Signing of a peace treaty
 - (c) Declaration of independence
 - (d) Adoption of a new currency

 13. In the December 1991 referendum, what percentage of Ukrainian voters supported independence from the Soviet Union?
 - (a) 51%
 - (b) 67%
 - (c) 75%
 - (d) 90%

 14. Which region with a significant Russian-majority population remained a source of tension for Ukraine after it became a sovereign state?
 - (a) Crimea
 - (b) Donetsk
 - (c) Lviv
 - (d) Odessa

 15. What was the name of the protest movement that erupted in response to alleged electoral fraud during Ukraine's 2004 presidential election?
 - (a) Rose Revolution
 - (b) Maidan Uprising
 - (c) Orange Revolution
 - (d) Velvet Revolution

16. The Euromaidan protests in Ukraine (2013–2014) began after President Yanukovych rejected an agreement with which international organization?
(a) NATO (b) European Union
(c) United Nations (d) Eurasian Economic Union
17. After the 2014 annexation of Crimea by Russia, which region in eastern Ukraine became the center of conflict due to pro-Russian separatist movements?
(a) Transnistria (b) Kharkiv
(c) Zaporizhzhia (d) Donbas
18. Which international body passed a resolution affirming Ukraine's territorial integrity following the annexation of Crimea?
(a) International Court of Justice
(b) United Nations General Assembly
(c) European Parliament
(d) G7 Summit
19. What were the names of the two ceasefire agreements aimed at ending the conflict in Donbas between Ukraine and Russian-backed separatists?
(a) Minsk Agreements (b) Geneva Conventions
(c) Budapest Memorandum (d) Vienna Accords

ANSWER KEYS & EXPLANATIONS

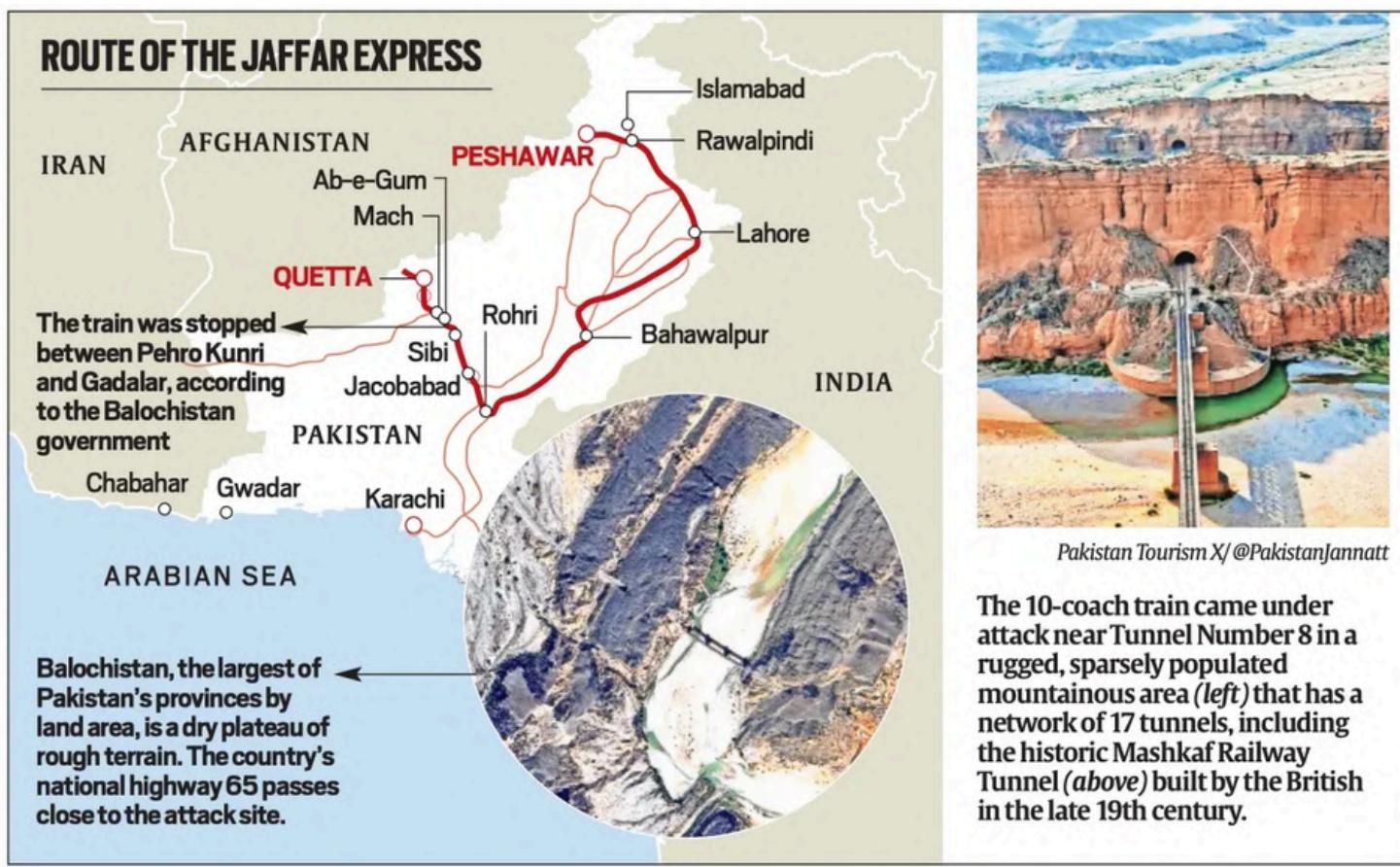
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| 1. (c) | 2. (a) | 3. (d) | 4. (b) | 5. (a) | 6. (d) | 7. (b) | 8. (c) |
| 9. (b) | 10. (d) | 11. (a) | 12. (c) | 13. (d) | 14. (a) | 15. (c) | 16. (b) |
| 17. (d) | 18. (b) | 19. (a) | | | | | |

Pakistan Train Hijack

News Highlights:

On March 11, 2025, the Jaffar Express—a passenger train traveling from Quetta to Peshawar—was hijacked by militants from the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) in the Bolan district of Balochistan province, Pakistan.

- The train, carrying approximately 500 passengers, was attacked after the militants detonated explosives on the tracks, forcing it to halt inside a tunnel.
- Hostages:** The BLA claimed to have taken **184 hostages**, primarily **targeting security personnel** and **non-Baloch civilians**. They issued a **48-hour ultimatum** demanding the release of Baloch political prisoners, threatening to execute hostages if their demands were not met.
- Military Response:** Pakistani security forces launched a **rescue operation**, deploying commandos and **engaging in a 36-hour standoff** with the militants. The operation concluded with the deaths of all **33 attackers**.
- Casualties:** The attack and subsequent rescue operation resulted in the **deaths of at least 31 individuals**, including **23 soldiers, three railway employees, and five passengers**. Additionally, 37 people were injured, some critically.
- In its statement, the BLA said its “**fidaeeyen**” or **suicide squad unit Majeed Brigade** was leading Tuesday's hijacking of the Jaffar Express.



Jaffar Express

- The ten-coach Jaffar Express, which was headed to Peshawar from Quetta, was targeted between **Pehro Kunri and Gadalar** in the **Bolan area of Kachhi district**. Armed men stopped the train with around 500 people on board in **Tunnel No. 8**.
- The train, named after **Mir Jaffar Khan Jamali**, a Baloch tribal leader who was close to Pakistan's founder **Muhammad Ali Jinnah**, began running between the capital of **Balochistan province** and **Rawalpindi** more than 20 years ago.

- In 2017, the train was extended to Peshawar in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for a **journey of more than 1,600 km**, touching several important Pakistani cities along the way.
- Operations of the train have been **frequently impacted by the raging Baloch militancy**. Services were suspended from August 26 to October 10 last year after a series of **bombings by the BLA destroyed critical infrastructure**.
- In early November, **62 people were killed in a blast at Quetta railway station**. The following month, services of the train were suspended again over security concerns.



Administrative Structure of Pakistan

- The administrative structure of Pakistan presently comprises **four provinces at first-order level (ADM1)**: Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab and Sindh, plus the Islamabad Capital Territory.
- Additionally, there are **the two regions of Pakistan-administered Kashmir**: Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan.
- Balochistan is the largest but least populated of Pakistan's four provinces: **Balochistan, Sindh, Punjab, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa**.
- The region has significant natural resources, including **oil, gas, gold, and copper**.
- Despite its resources, **Balochistan** has experienced slower economic growth compared to other provinces.
- Leaders of the **ethnic Baloch minority** have accused the central government of neglecting the region's development.
- They also blame **the dominance of Punjab** over national resources for Balochistan's economic backwardness.

Administrative Structure of Pakistan

**First Conflict
(1948)**

**Third Conflict
(1963-1969)**

**Fifth Conflict
(2003-Present)**

**Second Conflict
(1958-1959)**

**Fourth Conflict
(1973-1977)**

First Conflict (1947):

- **Background:** Following the partition of British India in 1947, the princely state of Kalat, predominantly Baloch, declared independence. However, by March 1948, under pressure, the Khan of Kalat acceded to Pakistan. This decision was met with resistance from factions within Kalat.
- **Insurgency:** Prince Abdul Karim, the Khan's brother, opposed the accession and initiated an armed rebellion, advocating for an independent Balochistan. Lacking widespread support and resources, the insurgency was short-lived. Prince Karim eventually surrendered in 1950.



Second Conflict (1958–1959):

- Prime Minister Muhammad Ali Bogra announced the "One Unit" scheme on 22 November 1954, aiming to address administrative challenges and promote national integration. The National Assembly passed the bill on 30 September 1955, leading to its implementation on 14 October 1955.
- This policy combined the provinces of Punjab, Sindh, the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), and Baluchistan into a single province called West Pakistan, paralleling East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). The One Unit policy remained in effect until its dissolution on 1 July 1970.
- **Rebellion:** Nawab Nauroz Khan led an armed insurgency against the central government, demanding the abolition of the One Unit policy and restoration of provincial autonomy. The conflict escalated but concluded with the arrest of Nauroz Khan and his followers. Several were executed, and Nauroz Khan died in captivity.



Third Conflict (1963-1969):

- Persistent grievances over political marginalisation and economic neglect fueled another wave of insurgency. The discovery of **natural resources in Balochistan, coupled with inadequate local benefits**, intensified discontent.
- Insurgency:** Led by **Sher Muhammad Bijrani Marri**, Baloch militants engaged in **guerrilla warfare against Pakistani forces**.
- The conflict was marked by attacks on **infrastructure and military installations**. It concluded with a **ceasefire in 1969**, leading to the **dissolution of the One Unit policy in 1970** and recognition of Balochistan as a separate province.



Fourth Conflict (1973-1977)

- In **1973**, the political situation in **Pakistan's Balochistan** province deteriorated rapidly when **Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto dismissed the elected provincial government led by the National Awami Party (NAP)**. This dismissal was widely viewed by the **Baloch leadership and populace as a direct attack on Baloch autonomy** and democratic aspirations.
- The **removal of the provincial government** was followed by a **military crackdown, triggering a full-scale insurgency**. Thousands of Baloch nationalist fighters, including tribal militias and student activists, took up **arms against the Pakistani military**. The fighters demanded greater autonomy, control over local resources, and recognition of Balochistan's ethnic and political identity.
- Iran**, fearing the **spillover of Baloch separatism** into its own **Baloch-majority province of Sistan-Balochistan**, provided military assistance to Pakistan, including helicopters, gunships, and intelligence support, to help quell the rebellion.
- The conflict eventually **subsided in 1977** following the ouster of **Zulfikar Ali Bhutto** in a military coup led by **General Zia-ul-Haq**. The new regime adopted a less confrontational approach and offered general amnesties to Baloch insurgents, which contributed to a **reduction in violence**.



Zulfikar Ali Bhutto

Fifth Conflict (2003-Present):

- The early **2000s** saw a revival of insurgent activities, driven by ongoing issues of political exclusion, economic exploitation, and human rights violations. The development of the **Gwadar port** and associated projects heightened fears of demographic changes and resource exploitation without local benefit.
- Groups like the **Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA)** and **Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF)** have been active, employing tactics ranging from guerrilla warfare to attacks on infrastructure and security forces.



Soldiers from BLF

Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF)



- The **Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF)** is an **ethno-nationalist militant organisation** that seeks independence for **Balochistan from Pakistan**.
- It was founded in **1964** by **Mir Ghaus Bakhsh Bizenjo** in **Damascus, Syria**, with the aim of fighting for **Baloch self-determination**.
- The BLF gained prominence during the **1973–1977 Baloch insurgency**, in which it engaged in **armed conflict against the Pakistani state**, especially in **the Marri and Mengal tribal areas**.
- The group initially received covert support from **India, Iraq, and the Soviet Union**, particularly during the 1970s insurgency, as part of regional rivalries.
- The BLF was **weakened after the 1977 military crackdown** by the **Pakistani government**, and many of its members were either killed or forced into exile.
- In **2004**, the group was revived under the leadership of **Dr. Allah Nazar Baloch**, a former medical student turned militant commander.

- The modern BLF primarily operates in southern Balochistan, especially in the Turbat, Gwadar, Panjgur, and Awaran districts, where it carries out attacks against Pakistani security forces and state infrastructure projects, including those related to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).
- The BLF strongly opposes Chinese involvement in Balochistan, viewing it as a form of economic exploitation and militarisation of the region.
- The BLF's ideology is rooted in Baloch nationalism, and it advocates for a secular, socialist, and independent Balochistan free from Pakistani control.
- Its current leader, Dr. Allah Nazar, is among the most wanted figures in Pakistan, and the group maintains a policy of armed resistance rather than political negotiations.

Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA)

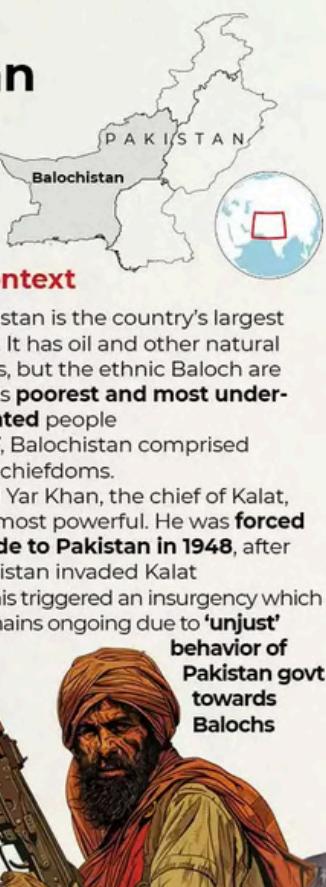
What is Balochistan Liberation Army?

What it is

- The Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), active since 2011, is the most prominent of the many separatist groups in Pakistan's Balochistan province
- Majeed Brigade is the BLA's dedicated suicide squad

The context

- Balochistan is the country's largest province. It has oil and other natural resources, but the ethnic Baloch are Pakistan's poorest and most under-represented people
- Till 1947, Balochistan comprised multiple chiefdoms.
- Ahmed Yar Khan, the chief of Kalat, was the most powerful. He was forced to accede to Pakistan in 1948, after Pakistan invaded Kalat
- This triggered an insurgency which remains ongoing due to 'unjust' behavior of Pakistan govt towards Balochs



- The Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) is a separatist militant organization that seeks the independence of Balochistan from Pakistan.
- It emerged as a prominent force in the early 2000s, although its origins can be traced to earlier Baloch nationalist uprisings, particularly the 1973-77 insurgency.
- The BLA operates primarily in Baloch-majority areas of Pakistan, especially in the provinces of Kohlu, Dera Bugti, Quetta, Kalat, and Makran.
- The BLA first came into the national spotlight in 2000, following the assassination of Pakistani army officials and a series of bomb blasts in Quetta and surrounding areas.
- The organization is reportedly led by commanders from the Marri and Bugti tribes, and has links to exiled Baloch nationalist leaders, particularly in Afghanistan and Europe.
- It is designated as a terrorist organisation by the Government of Pakistan since 2006, and has also been listed as a global terrorist group by the United States (in 2019) and the United Kingdom.
- The Majeed Brigade, a faction of the BLA, has gained notoriety for using suicide bombings, a tactic that marked a shift in Baloch insurgent strategy.

Majeed Brigade

- The Majeed Brigade is a suicide squad associated with the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA).
- It was named after Majeed Langove Sr, who was killed in 1974, and his brother Majeed Langove Jr, who was killed in 2010, both of whom were seen as sympathetic figures in the Baloch nationalist movement.
- The suicide squad was formed by Aslam Achu, a prominent BLA leader.
- The first suicide attack by the Majeed Brigade took place on December 30, 2011.
- After a long period of inactivity, the group became active again in 2018.
- Since 2018, the Majeed Brigade has been very active, often targeting Gwadar Port and Chinese nationals as a response to perceived economic injustice and regional exploitation in Balochistan.
- It gained international notoriety for carrying out high-profile suicide attacks, including: The 2018 attack on the Chinese Consulate in Karachi, the 2019 attack on the Pearl Continental Hotel in Gwadar, the 2020 attack on the Pakistan Stock Exchange in Karachi.



MIND MAP

About Jaffar Express

- **Named After:** Mir Jaffar Khan Jamali (Baloch tribal leader)
- **Route:** Quetta → Rawalpindi (later extended to Peshawar, 1,600+ km)
- **Frequent Disruptions:** Due to Baloch insurgency
- **Recent Incidents:**
 - Aug–Oct 2024: Suspended after BLA bombings
 - Nov 2024: 62 killed in Quetta station blast
 - Dec 2024: Services halted again over security

Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF)

- **Founded:** 1964 (Mir Ghaus Bakhsh Bizenjo, in Damascus)
- **Role in 1973–77 insurgency:** Active in Marri & Mengal areas
- **Revived:** 2004, by Dr. Allah Nazar (current leader)
- **Ideology:** Baloch nationalism, secular, socialist, independent Balochistan
- **Target Areas:** Turbat, Gwadar, Panjgur, Awaran

Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA)

- **Active Since:** Early 2000s
- **Strongholds:** Kohlu, Dera Bugti, Quetta, Kalat, Makran
- **Leadership:** Marri & Bugti tribes; ties to exiled leaders
- **Designated Terror Group:** Pakistan (2006), US & UK (2019)

Train: Jaffar Express (Quetta to Peshawar)

- **Location:** Tunnel No. 8, Bolan district, Balochistan
- **Attackers:** Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), Majeed Brigade (suicide squad)
- **Passengers:** ~500; Hostages: 184 (security personnel & non-Baloch civilians)
- **Demands:** Release of Baloch political prisoners

Pakistan's Administrative Divisions

- **Provinces:** Balochistan, Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
- **Territories:** Islamabad, Azad Jammu & Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan
- **Balochistan:**
 - Largest, least populated
 - Rich in oil, gas, copper, gold
 - Underdeveloped → grievances over resource control, Punjabi dominance

Timeline of Baloch Insurgency

First Conflict (1947–1950):

- Kalat declared independence, later acceded to Pakistan
- Prince Abdul Karim led a failed armed revolt

Second Conflict (1958–59):

- **Trigger:** "One Unit" policy merging provinces into West Pakistan
- **Response:** Baloch armed resistance

Third Conflict (1963–69):

- **Trigger:** Political/economic marginalisation
- Led by **Sher Muhammad Bijrani Marri**
- **Result:** Ceasefire & Balochistan became a province (1970)

Fourth Conflict (1973–77):

- PM Bhutto dismissed elected Baloch govt
- Armed revolt by tribal militias & students
- Demands: Autonomy, resource control, ethnic recognition

Fifth Conflict (2003–Present):

- Trigger: Gwadar Port projects, resource exploitation
- Active Groups: BLA, BLF
- Tactics: Guerrilla warfare, infrastructure attacks

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which group claimed responsibility for the hijacking of the Jaffar Express on March 11, 2025?
 - (a) Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)
 - (b) Islamic State Khorasan (IS-K)
 - (c) Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)
 - (d) Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA)

2. What was the primary demand made by the BLA after hijacking the Jaffar Express?
 - (a) Withdrawal of foreign troops from Balochistan
 - (b) Creation of a separate Baloch state
 - (c) Release of Baloch political prisoners
 - (d) Recognition of BLA as a political party

3. Where was the Jaffar Express halted and hijacked by militants on March 11, 2025?
 - (a) Inside a tunnel in Bolan district
 - (b) Karachi railway junction
 - (c) Khyber Pass
 - (d) Near Peshawar station

4. What was the name of the BLA unit that led the hijacking of the Jaffar Express?
 - (a) Baloch Freedom Corps
 - (b) Majeed Brigade
 - (c) Liberation Strike Wing
 - (d) Baloch Armed Vanguard

5. In which year was the Jaffar Express route extended to Peshawar, making it a journey of over 1,600 km?
 - (a) 2015
 - (b) 2016
 - (c) 2017
 - (d) 2018

6. Which Pakistani city experienced a deadly railway station blast in early November, killing 62 people?
 - (a) Islamabad
 - (b) Quetta
 - (c) Lahore
 - (d) Karachi

7. The Jaffar Express travels from Quetta to Peshawar, covering over 1,600 km. Which province does Peshawar belong to?
 - (a) Punjab
 - (b) Balochistan
 - (c) Sindh
 - (d) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

8. Which of the following statements about Balochistan is true?
 - (a) It is the most densely populated province in Pakistan
 - (b) It is the smallest province in terms of area
 - (c) It has vast natural resources but slower economic growth
 - (d) It is the only province without any natural resources

9. Who led the first Baloch insurgency following the 1948 accession of Kalat to Pakistan?
 - (a) Prince Abdul Karim
 - (b) Nawab Nauroz Khan
 - (c) Khan of Kalat
 - (d) Muhammad Ali Bogra

10. Who led the 1958–1959 Baloch insurgency opposing the One Unit policy?
 - (a) Prince Abdul Karim
 - (b) Khan of Kalat
 - (c) Nawab Nauroz Khan
 - (d) Ayub Khan

11. What was the One Unit policy introduced in 1955 primarily aimed at?
 - (a) Encouraging provincial independence
 - (b) Promoting national integration by unifying western provinces
 - (c) Establishing a new capital city
 - (d) Creating an Islamic constitutional framework

12. Who led the third Baloch insurgency (1963–1969), which was marked by guerrilla warfare and attacks on infrastructure?
 - (a) Sher Muhammad Bijnani Marri
 - (b) Nawab Nauroz Khan
 - (c) Prince Abdul Karim
 - (d) Ataullah Mengal

13. Which foreign country provided military assistance to Pakistan during the 1973–1977 Baloch insurgency due to fears of separatist spillover?
 - (a) Afghanistan
 - (b) United States
 - (c) Iran
 - (d) China

14. What major development project intensified fears of demographic change and exploitation in Balochistan, contributing to the 2003 revival of insurgency?
 - (a) CPEC Industrial Zones in Punjab
 - (b) Thar Coal Project in Sindh
 - (c) Gwadar Port Development
 - (d) Mangla Dam Expansion

15. Who revived the Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF) in 2004 as a militant commander?
 - (a) Sher Muhammad Marri
 - (b) Dr. Allah Nazar Baloch
 - (c) Mir Ghaus Bakhsh Bizenjo
 - (d) Nawab Akbar Bugti

16. What ideological stance does the Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF) advocate?
 - (a) Islamist theocracy under Sharia law
 - (b) Integration of Balochistan into Iran

- (c) Secular, socialist, and independent Balochistan
(d) Federal autonomy within the Pakistani state
16. Which faction of the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) is known for introducing suicide bombings into Baloch insurgent strategy?
(a) Marri Brigade
(b) Mengal Unit
(c) Zikri Front
(d) Majeed Brigade
17. When did the first suicide attack by the Majeed Brigade take place?
(a) 2019
(b) 2010
(c) 2014
(d) 2011
18. Which of the following was not one of the attacks attributed to the Majeed Brigade?
(a) 2018 attack on Chinese Consulate in Karachi
(b) 2019 attack on Pearl Continental Hotel in Gwadar
(c) 2020 attack on Pakistan Stock Exchange in Karachi
(d) 2021 bombing of Lahore's Data Darbar shrine

ANSWER KEYS & EXPLANATIONS

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

U.S. Strikes on Houthis

News Highlights:

The United States conducted over **40 airstrikes** across **Houthi-controlled Yemeni territories**, including **Sanaa, Sadaa, and the Hodeidah Port**, describing them as "**precision strikes against Iran-backed Houthi targets.**"

- President Donald Trump warned both the Houthis and Iran, declaring: "*To all Houthi terrorists, your time is up... To Iran, support for Houthi terrorists must end immediately.*" He later emphasised that **any attack by the Houthis would be treated as an attack from Iran.**
- The Houthis responded with escalatory rhetoric and claimed cruise and ballistic missile attacks on U.S. warships in the **Red Sea**, including **three claimed attacks on the USS Harry S Truman in 48 hours.**

Latest Trigger for the Attack

- The immediate trigger was the **resumption of the Gaza conflict on March 17, 2025**, with **renewed Israeli operations in Jabalia**, which the Houthis linked to their cause.
- Since **December 2023**, Houthi attacks in the **Red Sea disrupted global shipping**, forcing rerouting via the **Cape of Good Hope** and **increasing insurance premiums** for vessels passing through **Bab-el-Mandeb**.
- The U.S. response reflects policy continuity, as **President Biden had listed the Houthis as Specially Designated Global Terrorists in January 2024**, and initiated **Operation Prosperity Guardian in December 2023**.
- Freedom of navigation and protection of global trade routes have historically been central to the U.S. Navy's mandate, forming the **American casus belli**.

ECONOMY

Alternative shipping route to avoid the Red Sea

Attacks by Yemen's Houthi rebels in the Red Sea have disrupted maritime trade along major shipping routes via the Suez Canal and Bab al-Mandeb Strait, leading to an alternative, longer route being taken.



Trump's Objectives Behind Renewed Strikes

- Trump's strikes reflect both a response to Houthi threats and a strategy to pressure Iran without initiating a direct war.
- His **re-designation of the Houthis as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) in early 2025** builds upon his initial FTO designation in 2021.
- The airstrikes serve to **signal U.S. strength and compel Iran to negotiate on terms favourable to the U.S.** in potential nuclear talks.
- Notably, Trump's statements and official White House briefings focus **solely on protecting Red Sea shipping, without specifying broader objectives against the Houthis.**
- Arab states, including **Saudi Arabia**, have largely withheld support for the renewed U.S. military action. Since **January 2024**, Riyadh has advised restraint, and some Saudi officials denied providing logistical support to U.S. forces.

Yemen and its Strategic Importance

- Located in Southeastern corner of the Arabian Peninsula, Yemen is bordered by Saudi Arabia and Oman, with coastlines along the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, and the Arabian Sea.



- A key aspect of Yemen's strategic significance is its control over the **Bab-el-Mandeb Strait**, a critical maritime chokepoint that links the **Red Sea with the Gulf of Aden**.
- This strait is among the most crucial global maritime routes, **facilitating the connection between the Mediterranean Sea (through the Suez Canal) and the Indian Ocean**, which is essential for the transport of global maritime trade and oil shipments, thereby impacting worldwide energy security and commercial shipping.
- Disruptions in Yemen, such as those caused by conflicts or threats from groups like the Houthis, have previously led to significant impacts on the global supply chain, including the rerouting of shipping through the **Cape of Good Hope**, which increases both costs and transit times.

YEMEN

Key players in the conflict

In March 2015, a Saudi-led coalition – backed by the US – intervened militarily in Yemen in a bid to **fight the Houthis**, restore Hadi's government, and reverse what they say is growing **Iranian influence in the region**.



- Yemen also sits at the **crossroads of geopolitical interests**, involving regional powers like **Saudi Arabia, Iran, and the UAE**, as well as global powers such as the **United States, China, and Russia**.

- The country is a key front in the **Saudi-Iran proxy conflict**; while **Saudi Arabia seeks to maintain a friendly regime** on its southern border, **Iran supports the Houthi rebels**, enhancing its regional influence.
- Yemen's coastline along the **Arabian Sea** is also **strategically significant** for naval positioning and monitoring maritime traffic, especially for powers like the U.S. Navy, which seeks to ensure freedom of navigation.
- The region's instability provides fertile ground for terrorist groups like **Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)** and **ISIS**, making Yemen central to counterterrorism efforts.

Houthis (Ansar Allah)

The Houthis, formally known as Ansar Allah ("Supporters of God"), are a Shiite Muslim armed political and religious movement originating from the Zaydi sect in northern Yemen, particularly the Saada region.

- The group was founded in the 1990s by Hussein Badreddin al-Houthi, a religious leader from the powerful Houthi family, who opposed what he saw as foreign interference and marginalization of Yemen's Zaydi Shia community.
- Initially a cultural revivalist group, the Houthis transformed into an armed insurgency in 2004, following the killing of their founder by the Yemeni government, triggering the first of several wars with the state.
- Between 2004 and 2010, the Houthis fought six wars with the government of President Ali Abdullah Saleh, building combat experience and expanding their base in northern Yemen.



Hussein Badr al-Din al-Houthi

Yemen Civil War



President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

Origins and Background (Pre-2011)

- Yemen has a complex political history, having been divided into North Yemen and South Yemen until their unification in 1990 under President Ali Abdullah Saleh.
- Despite unification, political instability, economic disparities, and tribal tensions remained unresolved, especially between the northern tribal elites and southern separatists.
- The Houthi movement, formally known as Ansar Allah, originated in the Saada region of northern Yemen during the 1990s as a Zaydi Shia revivalist group opposed to what it saw as government marginalization and foreign interference.



Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi.

Arab Spring and Power Transition (2011-2012)

- The Arab Spring protests reached Yemen in 2011, with large-scale demonstrations against President Saleh's corruption, authoritarianism, and poor governance.
- Facing intense public pressure and international mediation by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), President Saleh resigned in 2012, transferring power to his Vice President, Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi.
- Hadi's transitional government was tasked with drafting a new constitution, but it failed to address power-sharing concerns, especially those raised by the Houthis and southern separatists.

Rise of the Houthis and Collapse of the Hadi Government (2013-2015)

- The National Dialogue Conference (2013-2014), aimed at rebuilding the Yemeni political system, excluded key stakeholders and deepened mistrust, particularly among the Houthis.
- In September 2014, the Houthis took advantage of public dissatisfaction with fuel price hikes and military weakness, and captured the capital city of Sanaa.
- In January 2015, they placed President Hadi under house arrest. Hadi fled to Aden, and later to Saudi Arabia, effectively collapsing the transitional government.
- The Houthis declared themselves in control of the country, prompting the formation of a Saudi-led military coalition, which launched Operation Decisive Storm in March 2015 to restore Hadi's government.

Regionalisation of the Conflict (2015–2018)

- The conflict quickly **escalated into a regional proxy war**. The Houthis received support from **Iran**, while the **Saudi-led coalition**, backed by the United States, UAE, and Western powers, supported the **Hadi government**.
- The coalition launched extensive airstrikes, targeting **Houthi positions** but also causing massive civilian casualties and destruction of critical infrastructure.
- During this period, **Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)** and **ISIS** exploited the power vacuum to gain control of territory, especially in southern and central Yemen.
- Southern separatists, under the banner of **the Southern Transitional Council (STC)**, began demanding independence for **South Yemen**, leading to tensions with the Hadi government.

Political Fracturing and Humanitarian Crisis (2018–2021)

- By **2018**, the war had reached a stalemate, with the **Houthis controlling most of northern and western Yemen**, and the **Hadi government controlling parts of the south and east**.
- A brief agreement known as **the Stockholm Agreement (December 2018)** attempted to broker a **ceasefire in Hodeidah**, a strategic **Red Sea port**, but implementation failed.
- Yemen entered a deep humanitarian crisis, with over 21 million people in need of assistance, and widespread famine, cholera outbreaks, and mass displacement.
- The **United Nations labeled Yemen the world's worst humanitarian disaster**, as over **370,000 people died due to conflict-related causes by 2023**.
- In 2019, internal tensions erupted between the Hadi government and the STC, resulting in armed clashes in Aden and further fragmenting the anti-Houthi front.

Shifting Alliances and International Repositioning (2022–2023)

- In **2022**, a **UN-mediated ceasefire reduced violence temporarily**, with **signs of Saudi-Houthi backchannel talks and an emerging shift in regional priorities** post **the Abraham Accords** and **shifting U.S. policies**.
- The UAE began reducing direct military involvement, focusing instead on supporting southern forces and maintaining influence over strategic ports and islands.
- **Saudi Arabia**, war-weary and concerned about its own **economic reforms (Vision 2030)**, began pressuring for a negotiated end to the conflict.
- The Houthis, however, continued building their missile and drone capabilities, increasingly targeting Saudi oil facilities and border towns.

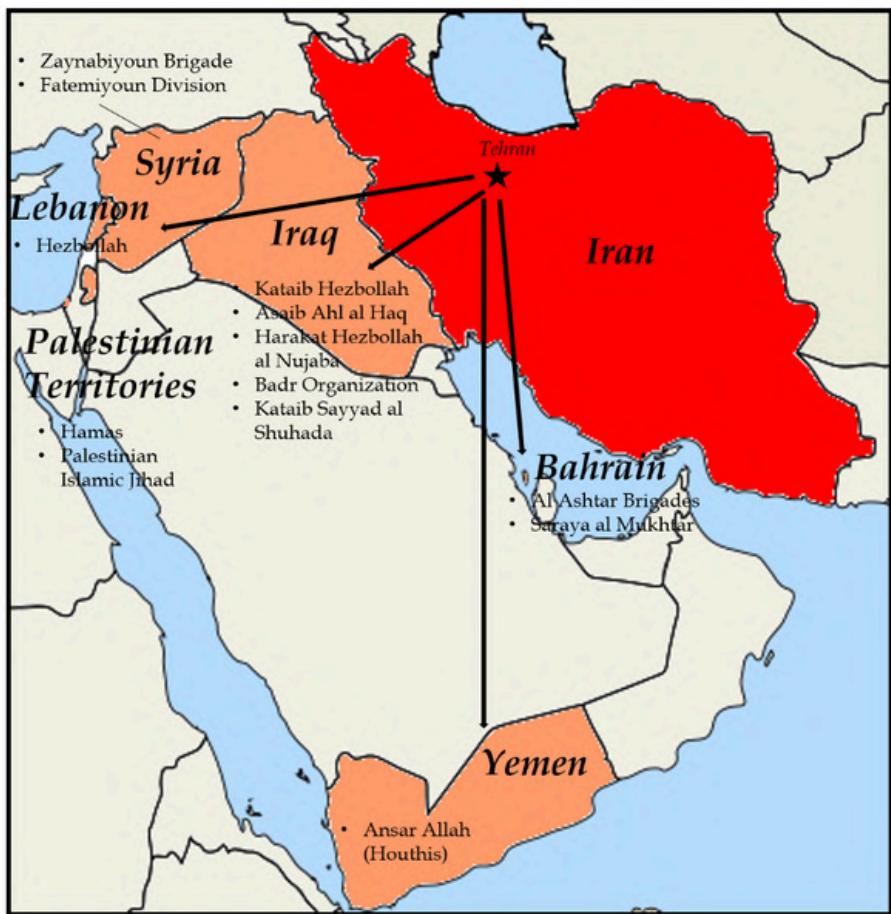
How Iran Backs Houthis

- **Iran is the primary foreign backer of the Houthis**, providing them with military, financial, political, and ideological support, which has **strengthened the Houthis' position** in the **Yemeni civil war**.
- Iran views the Houthis as a **strategic proxy in its broader regional rivalry with Saudi Arabia and the United States**, enabling it to **project power on the Arabian Peninsula** and along vital maritime chokepoints.
- Iran has supplied the **Houthis** with **advanced weapons technology**, including ballistic missile components, **drone systems, and explosive-laden boats** for maritime attacks.
- According to multiple intelligence assessments, many of the **Houthis' anti-ship cruise missiles** and drones are **derivatives of Iranian models**, such as **the Quds missile** and the **Shahed drone series**.
- Iranian support has allowed the **Houthis** to develop a **robust indigenous arms industry**, enabling them to **assemble weapons locally from smuggled parts**, making their arsenals more sustainable and harder to disrupt.
- **Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)**, especially its **elite Quds Force**, has reportedly trained **Houthi fighters** and provided strategic and technical guidance on missile deployment and tactical operations.
- Iran also provides the Houthis **with intelligence and communications support**, and facilitates coordination with other Iran-aligned groups in the region, such as Hezbollah in Lebanon.

- Maritime smuggling networks, including through the Gulf of Aden, the Arabian Sea, and Oman, are allegedly used by Iran to transfer weapons and technology to the Houthis, often concealed aboard fishing boats or merchant vessels.
- Iran gives financial backing to the Houthis through both direct funding and indirect channels, such as allowing Yemen-based intermediaries to access funds through Iranian-linked entities and oil revenues.
- The U.S. and Saudi Arabia regularly accuse Iran of escalating the conflict in Yemen and undermining regional stability through its support for the Houthis.

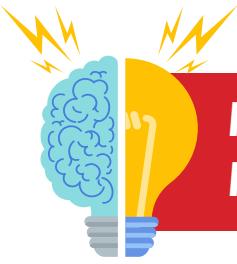
Global Support and Ties of the Houthis

- Beyond Iran, the Houthis receive diplomatic and political backing from Russia and China.
- China's oil imports from Iran (90% of Iran's oil exports in 2024) indirectly finance the Iran-Houthi channel, according to the Atlantic Council.
- The Houthis' anti-ship cruise missiles are often based on Chinese C-802 Saccade designs.
- Russia has deepened ties with the Houthis since 2022, allegedly providing targeting intelligence, small arms, and considering anti-ship missile transfers.
- Due to support from Russia and China, their vessels reportedly face fewer risks while passing through the Red Sea.



Humanitarian Cost of the Yemen Civil War

- The Yemen Civil War, ongoing since 2014, has led to what the United Nations describes as the world's worst humanitarian crisis, with severe impacts on civilians, infrastructure, and basic services.
- As of 2023, the conflict is estimated to have caused over 370,000 deaths, including direct combat casualties and indirect deaths from hunger, disease, and lack of healthcare.
- Nearly 21.6 million people (two-thirds of Yemen's population) are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance, including food, water, shelter, and medical care.
- The war has displaced more than 4.5 million people internally, forcing families to live in temporary shelters or camps under dire conditions with little access to sanitation or clean water.
- Food insecurity has reached catastrophic levels, with more than 17 million people facing acute hunger, and over 2 million children under five suffering from severe malnutrition.
- A widespread cholera outbreak, the largest in modern history, has affected over 2.5 million people since 2016, due to collapsed water and sanitation systems.
- Healthcare infrastructure has been devastated, with less than 50% of medical facilities functional. Many hospitals lack electricity, medical supplies, and trained staff.
- Education has been severely disrupted, with over 2 million children out of school and hundreds of schools destroyed, occupied by armed groups, or used as shelters.



MIND MAP

Major Houthi Events (1990s–2025)

- 2014: Captured Sanaa; President Hadi fled.
- 2015: Yemen Civil War began.
- 2016–2021: Seized major cities; launched missiles at Saudi Arabia.
- 2023–2025: Maritime attacks in Red Sea escalate, prompting US retaliation.

Houthi Attacks in Red Sea

- Nov 2023: Seized M/V Galaxy Leader.
- Dec 2023: Missile strikes on commercial ships.
- Ongoing: Attacks disrupt global shipping; Suez Canal traffic declines.

Houthi Capabilities

- Maintain drones, missiles, asymmetric warfare tactics.
- Use of Chinese C-802 missiles for maritime attacks.
- Iran supplies advanced weaponry and training.
- China and Russia offer indirect support and intelligence.

Geopolitical Context

- Part of Iran-Saudi regional rivalry.
- Houthi attacks framed as support for Palestinians in Gaza.
- Complicates US influence due to Russia-China involvement.
- Shipping reroutes around Africa due to Red Sea threats; global trade impacted.

US Airstrikes on Houthis (2025)

- Ordered by President Trump targeting Houthi sites in Sanaa, Sadaa, and Hodeidah Port.
- Triggered by Houthi attacks on Red Sea shipping lanes since Nov 2023.
- Over 40 precision strikes on missile stockpiles, drone bases.
- Civilian casualties: 53 killed, 98 injured.

Background of the Houthi Movement

- Originated in 1990s as a Zaydi Shia revivalist group led by Hussein al-Houthi.
- Armed uprising in 2004; leadership passed to Abdul-Malik al-Houthi after Hussein's death.
- Influenced by Maoist & Islamist ideologies (Hassan al-Banna).

US Strategy and Trump's Objectives

- Pressure on Iran: Link Houthi attacks to Iranian support.
- Compellence Strategy: Use force to drive Iran to nuclear negotiations.
- Support for Saudi Coalition: Reinforce anti-Houthi efforts while avoiding full-scale war.

Iran's Role

- Key supporter of Houthis: funds, arms, military advisors.
- Denies direct control but seen as enabling Houthi resilience.

China and Russia Involvement

- China: Funds Iran via oil trade, indirectly supporting Houthis.
- Russia: Offers intelligence; may supply arms.

International Responses

- US: Designated Houthis as an FTO (Foreign Terrorist Organization).
- UN: Imposed arms embargo; facilitated Stockholm Peace Talks.
- EU: Applied diplomatic pressure.
- Saudi Arabia: Military intervention + ceasefire initiatives.
- Humanitarian agencies: Aid hindered by Houthi blockades.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. The Houthis, formally known as Ansar Allah, originate from which sect of Islam?
 (a) Sunni Hanafi (b) Twelver Shia
 (c) Zaydi Shia (d) Ismaili
- Who founded the Houthi movement in Yemen?
2. (a) Abdul-Malik al-Houthi
 (b) Hussein Badreddin al-Houthi Ali Abdullah Saleh
 (c) Ali Abdullah Saleh
 (d) Abderrabbuh Mansur Hadi
3. Between 2004 and 2010, the Houthis fought how many wars with the Yemeni government?
 (a) Four (b) Six (c) Two (d) Eight
- Before unification in 1990, Yemen was divided into which two regions?
 (a) East Yemen and West Yemen
4. (b) Northern Yemen and Western Yemen
 (c) North Yemen and South Yemen
 (d) Upper Yemen and Lower Yemen
- Who succeeded President Ali Abdullah Saleh as Yemen's leader following the 2011 Arab Spring protests?
 (a) Hussein Badreddin al-Houthi
5. (b) Abdul-Malik al-Houthi
 (c) Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar
 (d) Abderrabbuh Mansur Hadi
- What event in September 2014 marked a major turning point in the Yemeni conflict?
6. (a) President Hadi was elected for a second term
 (b) The Houthis captured the capital city, Sanaa
 (c) The UN imposed sanctions on Yemen
 (d) A peace deal was signed between Houthis and southern separatists
7. Which military operation was launched by the Saudi-led coalition in March 2015 to restore Hadi's government?
 (a) Operation Freedom Shield
 (b) Operation Northern Storm
 (c) Operation Desert Thunder
 (d) Operation Decisive Storm
8. Which of the following straits, located near Yemen, is considered a vital global maritime chokepoint?
 (a) Strait of Hormuz (b) Bosphorus Strait
 (c) Bab-el-Mandeb Strait (d) Malacca Strait
9. Yemen shares its land borders with which two countries?
 (a) Saudi Arabia and Iraq
 (b) Oman and United Arab Emirates
 (c) Iran and Oman
 (d) Oman and Saudi Arabia
10. Why is the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait considered crucial for global trade and energy security?
 (a) It is a major hub for deep-sea oil drilling.
 (b) It connects Europe directly to East Asia.
 (c) It links the Mediterranean Sea with the Indian Ocean via the Suez Canal.
 (d) It houses the headquarters of OPEC.
11. Yemen is strategically located on which peninsula?
 (a) Anatolian Peninsula (b) Arabian Peninsula
 (c) Sinai Peninsula (d) Horn of Africa
12. The Bab-el-Mandeb Strait, located near Yemen, connects which two bodies of water?
 (a) Arabian Sea and Persian Gulf
 (b) Mediterranean Sea and Black Sea
 (c) Red Sea and Gulf of Aden
 (d) Gulf of Oman and Arabian Sea
13. What was the immediate trigger for the renewed U.S.-Houthi confrontation in March 2025?
 (a) Seizure of a U.S. embassy in Yemen
 (b) Attack on Saudi oil fields by the Houthis
 (c) Resumption of the Gaza conflict with Israeli operations in Jabalia
 (d) Explosion at the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait caused by Houthi mines
14. Which military operation, initiated in December 2023, reflects U.S. efforts to counter Houthi threats in the Red Sea?
 (a) Operation Inherent Resolve
 (b) Operation Prosperity Guardian
 (c) Operation Enduring Freedom - Yemen
 (d) Operation Freedom's Shield

ANSWER KEYS & EXPLANATIONS

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

Former Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte Arrested on ICC's Warrant

News Highlights:

On March 12, 2025, former Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte was flown to the Netherlands to face charges before the International Criminal Court (ICC) for his role in the deadly "war on drugs" during his presidency.

- This marks a significant step for the ICC, though the issue of **jurisdiction** remains a challenge due to the Philippines' withdrawal from the **Rome Statute** in 2019.

Background

Rodrigo Duterte's War on Drugs

- President Rodrigo Duterte** launched the "war on drugs" immediately after **assuming office on June 30, 2016**, continuing a similar tough-on-crime approach he had used during his time as **mayor of Davao City**.
- Duterte claimed that the **Philippines faced a major drug crisis**, particularly from the **use and distribution of methamphetamine (locally known as shabu)**, and vowed to eradicate drugs through aggressive law enforcement.
- The campaign was **positioned as a national security issue**, with Duterte encouraging **police and even civilians to kill suspected drug dealers** and users if they resisted arrest or posed a threat.

Implementation and Law Enforcement Role

- The Philippine National Police (PNP), supported by other law enforcement agencies, carried out "Oplan Tokhang", a program involving **door-to-door operations to persuade drug suspects to surrender**.
- In many cases, operations led to **armed confrontations**, resulting in the **deaths of alleged drug offenders**. Official police reports often stated that suspects had "fought back" or "nanlaban," justifying the **use of deadly force**.
- The government claimed that from 2016 to 2022, more than **6,000 drug suspects were killed in official police operations**, though **human rights groups estimate the actual death toll to be between 12,000 and 30,000**, including many extrajudicial killings.



Rodrigo Duterte

- Rodrigo Roa Duterte** was born on **March 28, 1945**, in **Maasin, Southern Leyte, Philippines**, into a politically active family.
- His father, **Vicente Duterte**, served as **governor of Davao province**, and his mother, Soledad Duterte, was a school teacher and civic leader.
- Duterte studied political science at Lyceum of the Philippines University, graduating in 1968, and later obtained a law degree from San Beda College of Law in 1972.

Career in Public Service

- Duterte began his public career as a **prosecutor in Davao City in the late 1970s**, earning a reputation for being tough on crime.
- He entered politics in **1988** when he was elected as **Mayor of Davao City**, a position he held for over **22 years across multiple terms (1988–1998, 2001–2010, and 2013–2016)**.

Presidency (2016–2022)

- Rodrigo Duterte was elected as the **16th President of the Philippines in May 2016**, running as the candidate for the **Partido Demokratiko Pilipino-Lakas ng Bayan (PDP-Laban) party**.
- He became the **first president from Mindanao**, the southernmost major island group in the Philippines.
- Duterte won the presidency by campaigning on a platform of law and order, anti-corruption, and a promise to eradicate drug crime within six months of taking office.

Background of ICC Case

- In April 2017, Filipino lawyer Jude Sabio filed a formal complaint with the International Criminal Court (ICC), accusing President Rodrigo Duterte of committing **crimes against humanity** in connection with his controversial “war on drugs” campaign.
- In February 2018, the ICC announced a preliminary examination into Duterte’s anti-drug operations. The purpose of this examination was to assess whether the alleged acts amounted to **crimes against humanity**, particularly focusing on extrajudicial killings and human rights violations.
- In March 2018, in response to the ICC’s preliminary examination, President Duterte declared the Philippines’ withdrawal from the Rome Statute, the treaty that established the ICC. This move was seen as an attempt to avoid potential prosecution.
- By March 2019, the Philippines’ withdrawal from the ICC became official. However, the ICC maintained that it retained jurisdiction over alleged crimes committed in the Philippines from November 1, 2011, to March 16, 2019, which includes the period of Duterte’s anti-drug campaign.
- On September 15, 2021, the ICC’s Pre-Trial Chamber officially authorized a full investigation into Duterte’s “war on drugs”, citing credible evidence of **extrajudicial killings and other human rights abuses**.
- On February 10, 2025, the ICC’s Office of the Prosecutor submitted an application for an **arrest warrant against Duterte**, charging him with **crimes against humanity**, including **murder, torture, and rape**.
- On March 7, 2025, the ICC issued a sealed arrest warrant against Duterte. This warrant was later unsealed after his actual **arrest took place**.
- On March 11, 2025, Rodrigo Duterte was arrested at Manila’s Ninoy Aquino International Airport, shortly after arriving from Hong Kong. He was subsequently transferred to the ICC’s custody in The Hague, Netherlands.
- On March 12, 2025, the ICC officially confirmed Duterte’s arrival in the Netherlands and announced that he was being held in detention pending the start of his trial.
- On March 14, 2025, Duterte made his initial appearance before the ICC via **video link**, during which the **charges** against him were formally read out by the court.

Legal and Political Context

- **ICC’s Jurisdiction:** Despite the Philippines’ withdrawal from the Rome Statute in 2019, the ICC maintains jurisdiction over crimes committed before the withdrawal. The **ICC prosecutor** was authorized to resume investigations in January 2023, after rejecting the Philippines’ argument that domestic courts were capable of prosecuting the crimes.
- **Political Shifts in the Philippines:** President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. initially resisted cooperating with the ICC but later facilitated the execution of the arrest warrant following a **political rift** between Duterte and Marcos, who secured the presidency through an alliance with **Duterte’s daughter, Sara**.

Duterte’s Legal Defence

- **Challenges to Extradition:** Duterte’s legal team argued that his **extradition** to the Netherlands was akin to **kidnapping**, and claimed his **medical condition** made him unfit for trial. However, the **ICC judge** dismissed these concerns, confirming that proceedings would continue.
- **Possible Trial Outcome:** The ICC will next hold a hearing to confirm the charges and decide whether to proceed with a trial, which could take **months or years**.

Rome Statute and International Criminal Court

The **Rome Statute** is the foundational treaty that established the International Criminal Court (ICC), which is the first permanent international court created to investigate and prosecute individuals for the most serious crimes of international concern.

The treaty was adopted on July 17, 1998, in Rome, Italy, during a United Nations Diplomatic Conference of Plenipotentiaries, and it entered into force on July 1, 2002, after it was ratified by 60 countries.

The ICC's jurisdiction is limited to four core crimes:

Genocide – acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group.	Crimes against humanity – widespread or systematic attacks against civilian populations, including murder, torture, rape, and forced displacement.
War crimes – serious violations of the laws and customs of war, such as targeting civilians, using child soldiers, or mistreating prisoners of war.	Crime of aggression – the use of armed force by one state against another without justification under the UN Charter (added to the ICC's jurisdiction in 2018 through an amendment to the Rome Statute).

ICC can exercise Jurisdiction if:

The alleged crime occurred on the territory of a State Party or the accused is a national of a State Party.

A situation is referred by the United Nations Security Council, even if the state is not a party to the Rome Statute.

A non-State Party accepts the Court's jurisdiction for a specific case.

The ICC is composed of four main organs:

- **The Presidency** – responsible for the overall administration of the Court.
- **The Judicial Divisions** – composed of 18 judges who handle pre-trial, trial, and appeals matters.
- **The Office of the Prosecutor (OTP)** – an independent body that investigates and prosecutes crimes under the ICC's jurisdiction.
- **The Registry** – provides administrative and operational support to the Court and maintains the court's records, facilities, and support for victims and witnesses.
- **The ICC is headquartered in The Hague, Netherlands, and operates independently of the United Nations, though it maintains a cooperative relationship with the UN.**

Membership and State Participation

- As of 2025, there are **125 States Parties to the Rome Statute**, meaning they have **ratified or acceded to the treaty and are bound by its provisions**.
- Notable countries that are not parties to the Rome Statute include the **United States, China, India, and Russia**, citing concerns over sovereignty, impartiality, and the potential for political misuse.
- A **State Party can withdraw from the Rome Statute** by submitting a **formal notice to the UN Secretary-General**. The withdrawal takes **effect one year after notification**, but the ICC retains jurisdiction over crimes committed while the country was still a member.



MIND MAP

Duterte's Arrest (2025)

- Arrested on March 11, 2025 at Manila Airport; transferred to ICC in The Hague on March 12.
- Initial appearance before ICC on March 14 via video link.
- Charges: Crimes against humanity – murder, torture, rape (Nov 2011 – Mar 2019).

Legal and Political Context

- ICC retained jurisdiction for crimes committed before March 2019.
- Duterte's defense: claims of kidnapping, ill health – rejected by ICC.
- Political rift with President Marcos Jr. enabled arrest cooperation.

War on Drugs in the Philippines

- Launched in June 2016 under Duterte's presidency.
- Oplan Tokhang: Police visited suspects to surrender or face consequences.
- Killings: Estimated 30,000 deaths, including extrajudicial killings and vigilante executions.
- Victims often labeled "drug pushers"; mostly urban poor targeted.

ICC Overview

- Founded:** 2002 under Rome Statute (1998).
- Headquarters:** The Hague, Netherlands.
- Jurisdiction:** Genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, aggression.
- Applies only when national courts are unwilling/unable to prosecute.

ICC Investigation Timeline

- 2017: Lawyer Jude Sabio files complaint to ICC.
- 2018: ICC opens preliminary examination.
- 2019: Philippines officially withdraws from Rome Statute, but ICC retains jurisdiction.
- 2021: ICC authorizes formal investigation.
- 2025: ICC issues and executes arrest warrant against Duterte.

ICC Global Membership (as of 2025):

125 Member States under five regional groups:

- Africa (33)
- Asia-Pacific (19)
- Eastern Europe (20)
- Latin America & Caribbean (28)
- Western Europe & Others (25)

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. What legal framework is central to the International Criminal Court's (ICC) jurisdiction over former Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte, despite the Philippines' withdrawal from it in 2019 ?
 (a) United Nations Charter (b) Hague Convention
 (c) Geneva Conventions (d) Rome Statute
2. Which city is central to the ICC's investigation into alleged extrajudicial killings during Rodrigo Duterte's tenure before his presidency ?
 (a) Quezon City (b) Davao City
 (c) Cebu City (d) Zamboanga City
3. What was the nationality of lawyer Jude Sabio, who filed a complaint with the ICC accusing President Duterte of crimes against humanity ?
 (a) Filipino (b) Dutch
 (c) American (d) British
4. What specific campaign became the focus of the ICC's preliminary examination into possible crimes against humanity under President Duterte's administration?
 (a) Anti-corruption campaign
 (b) Counter-insurgency measures
 (c) Anti-drug operations
 (d) Martial law enforcement
5. After the Philippines' official withdrawal from the ICC, what was the Court's stance regarding crimes committed between November 1, 2011, and March 16, 2019?
 (a) Dismissed all cases
 (b) Retained jurisdiction
 (c) Requested re-ratification
 (d) Transferred cases to local courts
6. In its application for an arrest warrant against former President Duterte, which crimes were included under the ICC's accusation of crimes against humanity ?
 (a) Tax evasion and corruption
 (b) Kidnapping and arson
 (c) Murder, torture, and rape
 (d) Espionage and treason
7. From which location was former President Rodrigo Duterte returning when he was arrested at Manila's Ninoy Aquino International Airport ?
- (a) Singapore (b) The Netherlands
 (c) Malaysia (d) Hong Kong
8. Where was former President Duterte transferred after his arrest to be held under ICC custody?
 (a) The Hague (b) Geneva
 (c) Brussels (d) Strasbourg
9. How did former President Duterte make his initial appearance before the International Criminal Court (ICC) ?
 (a) In-person at a Philippine court
 (b) Through written testimony
 (c) Via a representative
 (d) Via video link
10. According to the ICC's Pre-Trial Chamber, in which country were the crimes against humanity, including murder, allegedly committed under Duterte's indirect responsibility?
 (a) Indonesia (b) Philippines
 (c) Thailand (d) Myanmar
11. What did human rights organisations accuse Duterte of orchestrating during his time in Davao, which he has consistently denied?
 (a) Death squad (b) Election fraud
 (c) Illegal detention camps (d) Surveillance network
12. What is the English translation of "Oplan Tokhang," the official name of Duterte's controversial anti-drug campaign?
 (a) Strike and capture (b) Search and destroy
 (c) Knock and plead (d) Hunt and arrest
13. During Duterte's anti-drug campaign, what label was commonly found on signs left beside victims' bodies to instill fear among the public?
 (a) Criminal (b) Addict
 (c) Gang member (d) Drug pusher
14. Which international human rights organization, along with the United Nations and others, condemned Duterte's anti-drug campaign for widespread human rights violations?
 (a) Red Cross (b) Greenpeace
 (c) Amnesty International (d) WHO

15. Who succeeded Rodrigo Duterte as President of the Philippines in June 2022 and pledged a shift in the country's approach to drug issues?
(a) Ferdinand "Bongbong"
(b) Leni Robredo
(c) Sara Duterte
(d) Isko Moreno
16. How did Ferdinand Marcos Jr. initially secure the presidency of the Philippines in relation to Rodrigo Duterte's political circle?
(a) By opposing Duterte's policies
(b) Through military support
(c) Via independent candidacy
(d) Alliance with Duterte's daughter
17. As of 2025, how many countries have ratified the Rome Statute, thereby recognising the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court (ICC)?
(a) 122
(b) 125
(c) 120
(d) 121
18. Under what condition does the International Criminal Court (ICC) have the authority to intervene in a case?
(a) When the crime involves multiple countries
(b) When the accused is a high-ranking official
(c) When national judicial systems are unwilling
(d) When public protests demand international attention
19. Rodrigo Duterte made history as the first former to be detained by the International Criminal Court (ICC) ?
(a) European prime minister
(b) Asian head of state
(c) African military leader
(d) South American president

ANSWER KEYS & EXPLANATIONS

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

Donald Trump Proposes Negotiations for New Iran Nuclear Deal

News Highlights:

On March 7, 2025, US President Donald Trump revealed that he had sent a letter to Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, seeking to negotiate a new **nuclear deal** to limit

- **Iran's nuclear weapons programme.** However, Iran's mission to the **United Nations** in **New York** stated that it had not yet received the letter. Trump's renewed efforts come amidst growing concerns over Iran's nuclear ambitions.

Early Development of Iran's Nuclear Program

- Iran's nuclear program began in the **1950s** under the **Atoms for Peace** program, initiated by the **United States** to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy in allied nations.
- In **1957**, Iran signed a civil nuclear cooperation agreement with the United States, and by **1967**, the Tehran Nuclear Research Center was established with **U.S.-supplied reactors and fuel**.
- Iran signed the **Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)** in **1968** and ratified it in **1970**, committing not to pursue nuclear weapons and to allow inspections by the **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)**.
- After the **1979 Islamic Revolution**, the nuclear program stalled due to the deterioration of Iran-U.S. relations, but it was **revived in the late 1980s and 1990s**, with **Russian assistance**.

Rise of Western Suspicion and Nuclear Controversy (2000s)

- In **2002**, an Iranian opposition group revealed the existence of **secret nuclear facilities** at **Natanz** (uranium enrichment) and **Arak** (heavy water reactor), which were not declared to the IAEA.
- This revelation raised international alarm that Iran might be seeking to **develop nuclear weapons capabilities**, in violation of its NPT obligations.
- The **IAEA launched investigations**, reporting **non-compliance and lack of transparency**, while Iran insisted its program was solely for **peaceful civilian energy** and **medical research** purposes.
- Between **2003 and 2005**, Iran temporarily suspended uranium enrichment under agreements with the **EU-3** (France, Germany, and the UK) but later resumed enrichment activities.

Formation of the P5+1 Group

- The "**P5+1**" was formed in **2006** when the **United States, Russia and China joined France, Britain and Germany** to negotiate an agreement concerning Iran's nuclear program, with the goal of preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. This is what became known as the **P5+1 group** (P5 referring to the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, plus Germany).
- The P5+1 was formed to **negotiate with Iran** over its nuclear program and ensure that Iran would not develop nuclear weapons, while **offering sanctions relief and economic incentives**.
- The **UN Security Council**, influenced by these negotiations, passed **multiple resolutions** between 2006 and 2010 imposing **sanctions** on Iran for non-compliance with IAEA requests and its uranium enrichment activities.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), 2015

- After years of negotiations, the P5+1 and Iran reached a historic agreement known as the **Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)** on **July 14, 2015**, in Vienna, Austria.
- Under the JCPOA, Iran agreed to:
 - **Reduce its stockpile of enriched uranium by 98%.**
 - **Limit uranium enrichment to 3.67%**, far below weapons-grade.
 - **Reduce the number of operational centrifuges** from around 19,000 to **5,060 IR-1 centrifuges** for ten years.
 - **Stop construction of new heavy water reactors** and reconfigure the Arak reactor.
 - **Allow comprehensive IAEA inspections** under the **Additional Protocol**.
- In exchange, the **UN, EU, and U.S. lifted nuclear-related sanctions**, unlocking access to **frozen assets** (estimated at \$100 billion) and opening **global trade** to Iran.

LOOKING AT THE JCPOA

Iran sought the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) nuclear deal to lift the burden of nuclear program-linked sanctions on its economy. The JCPOA lifted European Union sanctions and suspended the application of United States sanctions. The agreement was signed on July 14, 2015, by Iran, the P5+1 and the European Union. The P5+1 are the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council: China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States, plus Germany.

Key Stipulations

98%

reduction of uranium stockpile

- Low-enriched uranium reduced from 10,000 kg to 300 kg

3.67%

limit on uranium enrichment

- Below the 90% threshold required for the production of a nuclear bomb

EXPORT

of spent nuclear fuel and heavy water

- Heavy water not used for medical research and production of selected chemical compounds will be sold on the international market

CAP

on centrifuges by number and type

- Enrichment will be restricted to a single site, where Iran's oldest, least efficient centrifuges will be operating for a duration of 10 years

FULL ACCESS

to declared and suspected nuclear sites

- Monitoring and inquiry into past work on nuclear warhead design by the International Atomic Energy Agency
- The JCPOA Joint Commission monitors implementation of the agreement and resolves disputes

PUNISHMENT

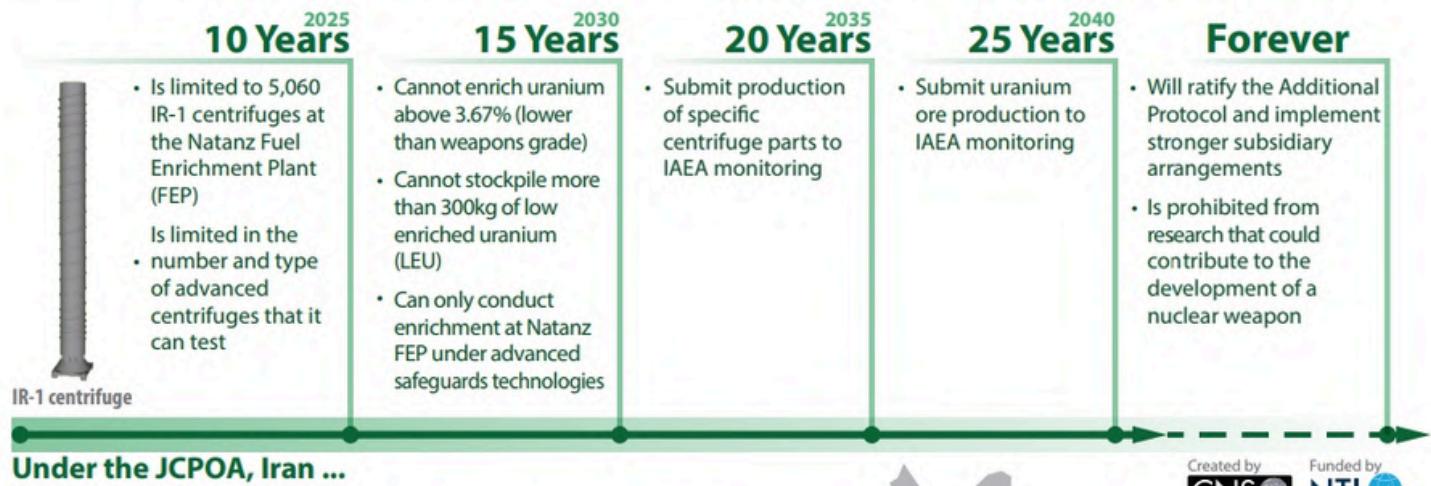
for non-compliance

- Reintroduction of sanctions if Iran is found not to be following the agreement

U.S. Withdrawal and JCPOA Crisis (2018–2021)

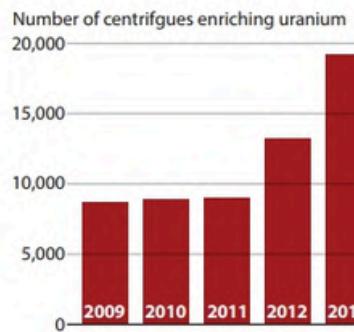
- On **May 8, 2018**, President Donald Trump announced that the **United States would unilaterally withdraw** from the JCPOA, citing Iran's alleged continued destabilizing behavior and concerns over the sunset clauses.
- Following the U.S. withdrawal, Washington re-imposed **stringent economic sanctions** on Iran under its "**maximum pressure**" campaign, targeting Iran's oil exports, banking, and industrial sectors.
- In response, Iran began **violating JCPOA limits**, including **increasing uranium enrichment levels** (up to 60%), **installing advanced centrifuges**, and **blocking full IAEA inspections**.
- Despite U.S. withdrawal, **other P5+1 members (especially the EU3, China, and Russia)** sought to **preserve the agreement**, but **economic benefits for Iran diminished significantly**.
- Under President Joe Biden, the U.S. expressed willingness to return to the JCPOA, initiating indirect talks with Iran via **European intermediaries in Vienna starting in 2021**.

The Iran Nuclear Deal: Blocking Iran's Path to the Bomb



With No JCPOA, Iran has the:

- Ability to build an unlimited number of centrifuges at an unlimited number of sites
- Ability to enrich uranium to any level and stockpile as much as it chooses
- Ability to develop and test more advanced centrifuges without restriction



Prior to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, Iran had built a large uranium infrastructure that would have produced enough highly enriched uranium (HEU) to build a nuclear weapon in a matter of weeks. Iran was also building a heavy water reactor that would open a second route to the bomb.

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Nov 2017

Do's and Don'ts for Iran under the Deal

Current Status and Geopolitical Implications

- As of 2025, Iran has:
 - Amassed uranium enriched up to 60%, technically close to weapons-grade (90%).
 - Continued restricting IAEA monitoring access to nuclear facilities.
 - Maintained advanced centrifuges, violating key JCPOA terms.
- The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has repeatedly warned of Iran's limited transparency and potential breakout capability.
- The JCPOA's collapse has escalated regional tensions, especially with Israel, which has threatened military action to stop Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons.
- The global community remains divided:
 - The U.S. and European nations continue pushing for diplomatic engagement.
 - Russia and China maintain stronger relations with Iran, criticizing Western sanctions.
 - Gulf states remain concerned about Iran's expanding nuclear and regional influence.



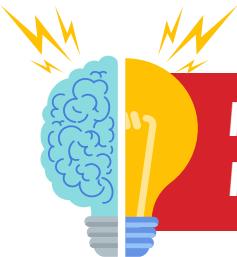
Ayatollah Ali Khamenei

Ayatollah Ali Hosseini Khamenei was born on July 17, 1939, in **Mashhad, Iran**, into a **devout Shia clerical family**.

His father, Ayatollah Javad Khamenei, was a religious scholar of Azerbaijani descent, and young Khamenei was educated in Islamic theology and jurisprudence from an early age.

He pursued advanced religious **studies in Qom, the center of Shia scholarship in Iran**, where he studied under prominent clerics, including Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who would later become the founder of the Islamic Republic.

- In the **1960s and 1970s**, Khamenei became politically active as a supporter of **Ayatollah Khomeini's opposition to the Shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi**.
- He was repeatedly **imprisoned and exiled by the Shah's regime** for his anti-monarchist sermons and writings, which promoted Islamic governance and denounced Western imperialism.
- His activism made him one of the key religious figures during the **Islamic Revolution of 1979**, which overthrew the monarchy and established the Islamic Republic of Iran.
- After the revolution, **Khamenei became a prominent figure in the new Islamic Republic** and held several key positions.
- In **1981**, after the assassination of President Mohammad-Ali Rajai, Khamenei was elected as the **third President of Iran**, becoming the **first cleric to hold the presidency**.
- He served as **President from 1981 to 1989**, under the leadership of Supreme Leader **Ayatollah Khomeini**, and worked closely with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and other elements of the security establishment.
- During his presidency, he **survived an assassination attempt** in 1981 that left his **right arm paralyzed**, further elevating his status as a revolutionary martyr among supporters.
- Following the death of **Ayatollah Khomeini in June 1989**, Khamenei was **unexpectedly chosen as Supreme Leader** by the **Assembly of Experts**, despite not holding the traditional title of "Marja-e-Taqlid" (the highest authority in Shia Islam).
- The Iranian Constitution was **amended** to permit a cleric of **lesser religious rank** to assume the position of Supreme Leader, enabling Khamenei's appointment.
- As **Supreme Leader**, Khamenei assumed the **highest political and religious authority** in Iran, with **ultimate control** over all branches of government, the military, judiciary, and state media.
- Khamenei holds **absolute authority** over Iran's political system, including the ability to:
 - Appoint and dismiss **heads of the military, judiciary, and state broadcasters**.
 - Oversee the **Guardian Council**, which vets electoral candidates and laws.
 - Influence **foreign policy**, particularly Iran's stance on the U.S., Israel, and nuclear negotiations.
 - Command the **Armed Forces** and the **Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)**.
- His office, known as **Beit-e-Rahbari**, or "The Supreme Leader's Office," wields vast power and includes advisors on military, foreign affairs, intelligence, and religious matters.
- Khamenei has the **final say on all nuclear policy**. While he has issued a **fatwa (religious decree)** stating that **nuclear weapons are forbidden (haram)** in Islam, he has simultaneously supported Iran's **right to peaceful nuclear energy** and uranium enrichment.
- He **endorsed the JCPOA** (Iran nuclear deal) in 2015 but expressed **deep mistrust of the United States**, warning of Western betrayal—sentiments reinforced after the U.S. withdrawal from the deal in 2018.



MIND MAP

Trump's 2025 Proposal for a New Nuclear Deal

- March 7, 2025: Trump sent a letter to Ayatollah Khamenei proposing new nuclear talks.
- **Goal:** Avoid military conflict, limit Iran's nuclear weapons program.
- **Iran's Response:** Rejected offer, accused US of coercion, opposed restrictions on missiles & regional role.
- **Trump's Warning:** Military action possible if Iran refuses negotiations.

Iran's Current Nuclear Status

- Enriched uranium stockpile 27x above JCPOA limit.
- Declared capability to produce nuclear weapons.
- IAEA & UN raised concerns in late 2024.

Political Context in Iran

- Hardline shift: Economy Minister impeached; Javad Zarif resigned.
- Increased resistance to US negotiations.
- Economic crisis persists; foreign policy remains anti-West.

What is JCPOA?

- Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (2015 deal).
- Agreement between Iran and P5+1 to limit Iran's nuclear program in exchange for sanctions relief.
- Enforced via IAEA inspections and gradual lifting of sanctions.

JCPOA Timeline & Key Events

- 1950s: Iran's nuclear program began with US support.
- 2002: Secret nuclear sites (Natanz, Arak) revealed.
- 2015: JCPOA signed with P5+1; strict nuclear limits imposed.
- 2016–2018: Iran complied; sanctions lifted.
- 2018: Trump withdrew US from JCPOA.
- 2019–2021: Iran breached deal; enriched uranium over 60%.
- 2024–2025: Renewed global push for negotiations.

P5+1 Countries and Roles

- US, UK, France, Russia, China (UNSC permanent members) + Germany.
- Worked collectively to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons.
- Russia & China: Stronger ties with Iran; support continued diplomacy.

India's Position on JCPOA

- Supports peaceful resolution and non-proliferation.
- Regretted US withdrawal (2018), remained non-confrontational.
- Energy Impact: Stopped oil imports from Iran due to US sanctions.
- Chabahar Port: Maintained engagement despite US pressure.
- Strategic Approach: Balanced ties with US, Iran, and Israel.

India's Actions (2018–2025)

- 2018–2019: Halted oil imports, sought sanctions waiver for Chabahar.
- 2024: Resumed limited engagement amid JCPOA revival talks.
- 2025: Supported diplomatic efforts but remained cautious

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

ANSWER KEYS & EXPLANATIONS

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

India 2nd largest Arms Importer: SIPRI

News Highlights:

Ukraine emerged as the largest arms importer in the **2020-2024** period, with a dramatic increase in arms imports due to the ongoing war with **Russia**.

- The global volume of international arms **transfers between 2020 and 2024 remained largely the same as in the previous two periods, 2015-2019 and 2010-2014**, though it was **18 percent higher** than the volume recorded during **2005-2009**.

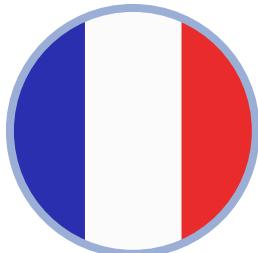
Top Arm Exporters

United States as the Largest Exporter



- The **United States** increased its share of **global arms exports to 43 percent in the 2020–2024** period, up from **35 percent in 2015–2019**, maintaining its position as the world's leading arms exporter.
- The United States exported arms to **107 countries**, with **Europe receiving the largest share (35 percent) of U.S. arms exports**, overtaking the Middle East (33 percent) for the first time in two decades.
- Saudi Arabia** was the **top individual recipient of U.S. arms**, accounting for **12 percent of total U.S. exports during this period**.
- The U.S. also dominated exports of **long-range land-attack missiles**, supplying **45 percent of global exports in this category to seven states**, with additional deliveries pending to **13 more countries**.

France's Rise as a Major Exporter



- France became **the second-largest arms exporter** in the world during **2020–2024**, with a **global export share of 9.6 percent**.
- France exported arms to **65 countries**, with **exports to European states increasing by 187 percent**, largely due to deliveries of **combat aircraft to Greece, Croatia, and Ukraine**.
- Despite increased intra-European sales, **India remained France's largest client**, receiving **28 percent of France's arms exports—almost twice the amount received by all European recipients combined**.
- Qatar** was the **second-largest recipient of French arms**, accounting for **9.7 percent of France's total arms exports during the reporting period**.

Decline in Russia's Arms Exports



- Russia's arms exports fell dramatically by **64 percent** between **2015–2019** and **2020–2024**, reducing its global share to just **7.8 percent**, and pushing it to the **third position** among the world's top exporters.
- Russia delivered **major arms to 33 states**, but **two-thirds of its total exports went to just three countries: India (38 percent), China (17 percent), and Kazakhstan (11 percent)**.
- The decline in Russian arms exports began before the **full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022** and was accelerated by wartime demands, international sanctions, and buyer nations turning to alternative suppliers or domestic production.



China's Role in the Arms Trade

- China remained the fourth-largest exporter of arms, with a global share of **5.9 percent**.
- While China has actively sought to expand its arms export market, many major importers avoid purchasing Chinese arms due to political concerns and strategic calculations

Top Arm Exporters

Ukraine Emerges as the Largest Arms Importer



- Ukraine became the world's largest importer of major arms in the 2020–2024 period, with imports increasing nearly 100-fold compared to the 2015–2019 period.
- Ukraine received **8.8 percent** of total global arms imports during this time, primarily from the United States (45 percent), Germany (12 percent), and Poland (11 percent).
- At least **35 countries supplied arms to Ukraine** following **Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022**, and many more shipments are expected in the future.

India's Import Profile



- India retained its position as the world's second-largest importer of arms, though its import volume declined by **9.3 percent**.
- India continued to import weapons in response to perceived threats from **both Pakistan and China**.
- **Russia remained India's largest supplier**, accounting for **36 percent of India's imports**, although this represented a sharp decline from **55 percent in 2015–2019** and **72 percent in 2010–2014**.

Regional Arms Transfer Trends

Europe

- Arms imports by European states grew by **155 percent**, driven primarily by concerns about **Russia's invasion of Ukraine** and uncertainty surrounding U.S. foreign policy.
- NATO's European members increased their arms imports by **105 percent** compared to the previous period.
- The United States supplied **64 percent** of all arms imported by European NATO states, up from **52 percent** in 2015–2019.

Asia and Oceania

- Asia and Oceania remained the largest arms-importing region, although its global share dropped from **41 percent** to **33 percent**.
- Imports by countries in the region fell by **21 percent**, mainly due to China reducing its imports by **64 percent** as it increasingly relied on domestically produced weapons.
- India, Pakistan, Japan, and Australia were among the top ten arms importers in the region, while **China dropped out of the top ten for the first time since 1990–1994**.

Middle East

- Arms imports by **Middle Eastern states** fell by **20 percent**, although the region still featured **four of the top ten global importers: Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Kuwait**.
- **Qatar** rose from the **10th to the 3rd largest importer globally**.
- **Saudi Arabia's imports dropped by 41 percent**, but the region remained heavily reliant on **U.S. arms**, which accounted for **52 percent of all imports**.
- **Israel's arms imports remained stable**, with **66 percent coming from the U.S.** and **33 percent from Germany**. Recent conflicts, including the war in Gaza, have drawn upon previously supplied arms rather than new imports.

Africa

- **Africa's arms imports declined by 44 percent**, primarily due to **sharp drops in Algeria (-73 percent)** and **Morocco (-26 percent)**.
- In contrast, **West Africa's arms imports almost doubled (+82 percent)** compared to the **2010–2014 period**, as countries responded to **worsening regional insecurity**.
- **Nigeria accounted for 34 percent of all West African arms imports**, with other countries like Burkina Faso, Mali, and Senegal also increasing their arms purchases.
- New suppliers like **Türkiye are gaining influence in West Africa**, competing alongside traditional suppliers such as China, France, Russia, and the U.S.

Americas

- **Arms imports** in the Americas rose by **13 percent** overall.
- The **United States** was the **largest importer in the region**, accounting for **3.1 percent of global arms imports** and **50 percent of all imports in the Americas**.
- **Brazil's arms imports increased by 77 percent**, making up **49 percent of all arms imports in South America**.
- France (30 percent), the United States (12 percent), and the United Kingdom (11 percent) were the main suppliers to South America.

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute

- The **Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)** is an **independent international institute** that conducts research on conflict, armaments, arms control, and disarmament.
- SIPRI was established in 1966 by the **Swedish government**, in memory of **150 years of unbroken peace in Sweden**.
- The institute is based in Stockholm, Sweden, and is known globally for providing data-driven, policy-relevant insights into issues related to international security and military dynamics.
- SIPRI is best known for its annual publications, which are widely respected and cited by researchers, governments, and international organisations.
- Notable publications include:
 - The **SIPRI Yearbook**, which covers armaments, disarmament, and international security trends.
 - The **SIPRI Arms Transfers Database**, which tracks and analyzes major global arms deals.
 - The **SIPRI Military Expenditure Database**, which reports on global defense spending by country.
- These tools provide free and open-source data and are used extensively by media, policymakers, researchers, and institutions like the United Nations.



PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which country became the largest arms importer in the world during the 2020–2024 period?
 (a) Saudi Arabia (b) India
 (c) Ukraine (d) Qatar
2. Which country was the second-largest arms exporter in the world during 2020–2024?
 (a) Russia (b) China
 (c) Germany (d) France
3. What was the percentage decrease in Russia's arms exports between the 2015–2019 and 2020–2024 periods?
 (a) 48% (b) 35% (c) 64% (d) 22%
4. Which country received the largest share of U.S. arms exports during the 2020–2024 period?
 (a) Saudi Arabia (b) Ukraine
 (c) India (d) France
5. Which country remained France's largest arms client during 2020–2024?
 (a) Greece (b) Qatar
 (c) Croatia (d) India
6. Which country was the fourth-largest arms exporter in the world during the 2020–2024 period?
 (a) Germany (b) France
 (c) China (d) Israel
7. From which country did Ukraine receive the largest share of its arms imports during the 2020–2024 period?
 (a) Poland (b) France
 (c) United States (d) Germany
8. What was Russia's share in India's total arms imports during 2020–2024?
 (a) 36% (b) 72% (c) 55% (d) 28%
9. What was the percentage increase in Ukraine's arms imports during the 2020–2024 period compared to 2015–2019?
 (a) Ten-fold (b) Fifty-fold
 (c) Hundred-fold (d) Two hundred-fold
10. How many countries supplied arms to Ukraine following the 2022 Russian invasion?
 (a) 12 (b) 22 (c) 50 (d) 35
11. Which of the following statements about India's arms imports in 2020–2024 is true?
 (a) India became the world's largest arms importer.
 (b) India's arms imports increased by 9.3%.
 (c) India was the second-largest arms importer despite a 9.3% decline in import volume.
 (d) India stopped importing arms from Russia.
12. Which country accounted for the largest share of arms imported by European NATO states during the 2020–2024 period?
 (a) Germany (b) United States
 (c) United Kingdom (d) France
13. Why did Asia and Oceania's share in global arms imports decline from 41% to 33% in the 2020–2024 period?
 (a) The U.S. imposed arms embargoes on Asian countries.
 (b) Japan and Australia halted arms purchases.
 (c) China significantly reduced imports due to increased domestic production.
 (d) Regional peace initiatives led to fewer arms orders.
14. Which country was responsible for the highest share of West Africa's arms imports during the recent reporting period?
 (a) Morocco (b) Algeria
 (c) Nigeria (d) Ghana

ANSWER KEYS & EXPLANATIONS

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

Lalit Modi and Vanuatu Citizenship include the news on USA's Gold Card for Citizenship

News Highlights:

On **March 9, 2025**, Vanuatu made the remarkable decision to revoke the citizenship of **Lalit Modi**, an Indian businessman and fugitive, known for his involvement in the **Indian Premier League (IPL) controversy**.

- The move came amidst growing scrutiny over Vanuatu's **Citizenship by Investment (CBI)** program, which has been increasingly used by individuals seeking to evade legal consequences. Vanuatu's decision is significant given the broader trend of countries, like the **United States**, offering **unrestricted citizenship programs** for the ultra-rich.

Vanuatu's Unique Geography and Economy

- Geography:** Vanuatu is an archipelago of **83 islands** located in the **South Pacific Ocean**, between **Fiji** and **Australia**. The country has a total land area of **12,199 sq km**.
- Economy:** The country's economy is primarily based on **agriculture**, with major exports including **copra** (dried coconut), **kava**, and **cocoa**. It is also a **tax haven**, not charging personal income tax, capital gains tax, inheritance tax, or wealth tax.
- Revenue from Citizenship Sales:** As much as **30%** of Vanuatu's **revenue** comes from its **Citizenship by Investment program**, making it one of the most significant sources of income for the country.



Vanuatu's Citizenship by Investment Program

- Vanuatu's **Citizenship by Investment (CBI) Program**, also known as the **Development Support Program (DSP)**, was formally launched in **2017** as a means of **raising government revenue** through economic citizenship.
- The program allows **foreign nationals to acquire Vanuatuan citizenship** in exchange for a **non-refundable financial contribution** to the government, without requiring residency or physical presence in the country.
- It is one of the few **citizenship-by-investment programs** in the **Asia-Pacific region** and has attracted high-net-worth individuals from around the world.
- Applicants must make a **donation of at least USD 130,000** (for a single applicant) to Vanuatu's government fund, with the amount increasing for families or dependents.
- There is **no requirement to visit or reside in Vanuatu**, and the process is relatively **quick**, typically completed within **30 to 60 days**.
- Vanuatu permits **dual citizenship**, which makes the program attractive to international investors who wish to retain their original citizenship.
- Successful applicants receive a **passport valid for 10 years**, which allows **visa-free or visa-on-arrival access to over 90 countries**, including the **United Kingdom, Singapore, and many Caribbean nations**.
- In recent years, Vanuatu has faced **international scrutiny over its Citizenship by Investment (CBI) program**, particularly due to allegations that **individuals with criminal records or security red flags were granted citizenship**.
- As a result, the Vanuatuan government has **initiated a series of reform measures aimed at tightening the screening process and restoring international trust**, especially with partners like the **European Union**.

LALIT MODI

- Lalit Modi is an Indian businessman and cricket administrator who is best known as the founder and first chairman of the Indian Premier League (IPL), a professional Twenty20 cricket league under the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).
- He served as the IPL commissioner from 2008 to 2010, during which the league became a massive commercial success and revolutionised the business of cricket through franchise bidding, broadcasting rights, and player auctions.
- Lalit Modi also held high-ranking positions in Indian cricket administration, including Vice President of the BCCI and President of the Rajasthan Cricket Association.



Lalit Modi

Controversies and Legal Issues

- In 2010, following the conclusion of the IPL season, Lalit Modi was suspended by the BCCI on charges of financial irregularities, misconduct, and corruption.
- He has been accused of money laundering, misuse of broadcasting deals, rigging team ownership rules, and conflict of interest in IPL contracts.
- The Enforcement Directorate (ED) of India initiated investigations and issued non-bailable warrants against him under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).
- Lalit Modi has denied all charges and has remained in self-imposed exile in the United Kingdom since 2010, stating that he left India due to threats to his life.

Why Was Lalit Modi Seeking Vanuatu Citizenship?

- In 2020, Lalit Modi reportedly applied for citizenship in Vanuatu under its Citizenship by Investment (CBI) program, which allows foreign nationals to acquire citizenship through a financial donation without the need to reside in the country.
- According to investigative reports, he was granted Vanuatu citizenship in 2021, raising questions about the vetting process, given his high-profile legal issues in India.
- Lalit Modi was likely seeking Vanuatuan citizenship to access a second passport, which would provide greater global mobility, protection from extradition, and a possible legal shield from Indian authorities.
- Vanuatu's program, at the time, did not require a police clearance from the country of origin and had a reputation for lax due diligence, making it attractive to individuals facing legal issues.
- His case became a symbol of criticism of the Vanuatu CBI program, particularly after international media highlighted how individuals with pending criminal investigations could obtain Vanuatu passports without scrutiny.

Vanuatu's Stance on Fugitives and Criminals

- **Zero Tolerance Policy:** Prime Minister Napat emphasised that Vanuatu would not harbour fugitives or criminals seeking to evade justice. The country's government has been increasingly selective, rejecting applicants who fail to meet enhanced scrutiny.

- Revocation of Modi's Citizenship:** The Prime Minister of Vanuatu, **Jotham Napat**, announced the cancellation of **Lalit Modi's** citizenship, stating that the country's passport is a **privilege** and should not be used by individuals seeking to **escape justice**.
- Previous Rejections:** Before revoking Modi's citizenship, **Vanuatu** had already rejected applications from **Nirav Modi**, a diamond jeweller and fugitive involved in a multi-billion-dollar scam. This decision was based on negative findings from a **Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU)** check.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- The revocation of Lalit Modi's Vanuatu citizenship has drawn global attention to which type of program that allows individuals to acquire nationality through financial contributions?
 - Citizenship by Investment
 - Dual Citizenship Treaty
 - Economic Asylum Program
 - Diplomatic Visa Access Scheme
- Who announced the revocation of Lalit Modi's Vanuatu citizenship, emphasizing that the country's passport is a privilege not meant for fugitives?
 - Foreign Minister
 - Immigration Commissioner
 - President
 - Prime Minister
- What enhanced due diligence method has Vanuatu implemented in recent years to strengthen its Citizenship by Investment (CBI) screening process?
 - AI-based identity verification
 - Real-time financial monitoring
 - Triple-agency checks
 - Blockchain-backed passport tracking
- Vanuatu previously rejected the citizenship application of Nirav Modi based on a report from which investigative body?
 - Central Bureau of Investigation
 - Financial Intelligence Unit
 - Interpol
 - Enforcement Directorate
- In December 2024, what measure did the European Union (EU) revoke in response to concerns over Vanuatu's Citizenship by Investment (CBI) program?
 - Trade partnership
 - Diplomatic immunity status
 - Development aid package
 - Visa-free agreement
- Which U.S. immigration initiative, introduced under President Donald Trump, allowed wealthy individuals to obtain citizenship through a \$5 million investment?
 - Investor Green Card Scheme
 - Platinum Entry Program
 - Gold Card Visa program
 - High-Net-Worth Citizenship Act
- Vanuatu is located in the South Pacific Ocean between which two countries?
 - Fiji and Australia
 - New Zealand and Papua New Guinea
 - Indonesia and Samoa
 - Tonga and the Philippines
- In addition to agriculture-based exports like copra, kava, and cocoa, how is Vanuatu's economy uniquely characterized in terms of taxation?
 - Free trade zone
 - Tax haven
 - Subsidy-driven economy
 - Offshore oil exporter
- Approximately what percentage of Vanuatu's national revenue is generated through its Citizenship by Investment (CBI) program?
 - 20%
 - 28%
 - 25%
 - 30%
- Which international body has issued warnings about the potential abuse of Citizenship by Investment programs around the world?
 - World Trade Organization
 - International Monetary Fund
 - Financial Action Task Force
 - United Nations Development Programme

ANSWER KEYS & EXPLANATIONS

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

Armenia, Azerbaijan agree to end 40 yrs of conflict

News Highlights:

Azerbaijan and Armenia have finalised a peace agreement aimed at **ending nearly four decades of conflict**, primarily over the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region.

- The agreement has resolved key issues that had stalled previous negotiations, with both sides expressing readiness to sign the peace treaty. This breakthrough is significant as it marks a potential shift in regional dynamics, involving major international players such as **Russia**, the **EU**, the **US**, and **Turkey**.

Background

- Nagorno-Karabakh** is a landlocked region in Azerbaijan with a majority **ethnic Armenian** population. The conflict dates back to the **late 1980s**, when the region declared independence from **Azerbaijan**, supported by **Armenia**. Two major wars occurred: one in the early **1990s** and another in **2020**, both over control of the territory.
- In **September 2023**, Azerbaijan successfully regained control of Nagorno-Karabakh following a rapid military offensive, displacing more than **100,000** ethnic Armenians who fled to **Armenia**.



- The **Soviet Union's collapse** left both countries with unresolved territorial disputes, leading to periodic escalations.
- Historically, it has had a **majority ethnic Armenian population**, despite being located within Azerbaijani territory.
- The name "**Nagorno-Karabakh**" is of mixed origin: "**Nagorno**" (Russian for "mountainous"), "**Kara**" (Turkic for "black"), and "**Bakh**" (Persian for "garden").

First Nagorno-Karabakh War (1992–1994)

- The First Nagorno-Karabakh War began in **1992**, following the **dissolution of the Soviet Union**, when full-scale hostilities erupted between **Armenia** and **Azerbaijan** over the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh, a territory internationally recognized as part of **Azerbaijan**, but mostly populated and controlled by **ethnic Armenians**.
- The conflict had its roots in the late 1980s, when the **Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast**, then part of Soviet Azerbaijan, **demanded unification with Armenia**, leading to escalating ethnic violence and political confrontation.
- After Armenia and Azerbaijan declared independence from the USSR, the conflict escalated into a **brutal and bloody war** involving **ethnic cleansing**, **large-scale displacement**, and thousands of casualties on both sides.
- By the end of the war in **1994**, **Armenian forces had gained control** not only of Nagorno-Karabakh but also **seven adjacent districts of Azerbaijan**, forming a territorial corridor between Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh.
- A **Russia-brokered ceasefire** was signed in **May 1994**, which ended the active fighting but did **not lead to a peace agreement**, leaving the conflict unresolved.
- The war resulted in the **displacement of around one million people**, mostly **Azerbaijanis** from Nagorno-Karabakh and the surrounding territories, and **some Armenians** from parts of Azerbaijan.

Status Quo (1994–2020)

- From **1994** to **2020**, the region remained under the **control of ethnic Armenian forces**, backed by **Armenia**, despite being **legally recognized as part of Azerbaijan** by the international community.
- The region declared itself an independent republic known as the "**Republic of Artsakh**", although it was **not recognized** by any United Nations member state, including Armenia.
- The **Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group**, co-chaired by **Russia, France, and the United States**, led diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict, but no lasting solution was achieved.

- Despite the ceasefire, there were **frequent border skirmishes, sniper fire, and clashes** between the two sides, with occasional escalations, such as the **four-day war in April 2016**.
- The region remained a **frozen conflict zone**, with **tense political rhetoric, military buildups**, and no progress on core issues like the status of Nagorno-Karabakh, return of displaced persons, or recognition of territorial integrity.
- The status quo favored **Armenia and the ethnic Armenian authorities** in Karabakh, who maintained control over the territory for nearly **three decades**.

Second Nagorno-Karabakh War (September–November 2020)

- The **Second Nagorno-Karabakh War** began on **September 27, 2020**, when Azerbaijan launched a major **military offensive** to retake territory controlled by Armenian forces.
- The war was marked by **heavy artillery battles, drone warfare, and advanced military technology**, with Azerbaijan making extensive use of **Turkish and Israeli drones**.
- Azerbaijan received **military and diplomatic backing from Turkey**, while Armenia had **limited support** and found itself diplomatically isolated.
- Over the course of **44 days**, Azerbaijani forces recaptured significant portions of **Nagorno-Karabakh** and the surrounding districts, including the strategically important city of **Shusha (Shushi)**.
- On **November 9–10, 2020**, a **Russia-brokered ceasefire agreement** was signed between **Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Russia**, ending active hostilities.
- Under the terms of the ceasefire:
 - Armenia agreed to withdraw from the remaining occupied Azerbaijani territories.
 - Russian peacekeeping forces were deployed to **monitor the ceasefire** and provide security along the **Lachin corridor**, the only route connecting Armenia to Nagorno-Karabakh.
- The war caused **over 6,500 deaths** and led to **thousands of new displacements**, mostly of ethnic Armenians from territories retaken by Azerbaijan.
- The 2020 war **significantly altered the balance of power** in the region, with Azerbaijan **reclaiming large portions** of its internationally recognized territory and **Russia emerging as a key security guarantor**.

2023 Azerbaijani Offensive and Exodus

- In **September 2023**, Azerbaijan launched a **24-hour military operation**, regaining full control over **Nagorno-Karabakh**.
- The local ethnic Armenian authorities **surrendered**, leading to the **dissolution of the unrecognized Republic of Artsakh**.
- Over **100,000 ethnic Armenians** fled to Armenia, citing fears of persecution and lack of guarantees.

2023 Azerbaijani Offensive and Exodus

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Key Terms of the Agreement:

1

Sovereignty Recognition

- Armenia's Recognition of Azerbaijan's Sovereignty over Nagorno-Karabakh:** In a landmark move toward normalising relations, **Armenia officially recognised Azerbaijan's sovereignty over Nagorno-Karabakh in 2025**. This recognition is a significant shift in Armenian policy and directly addresses one of Azerbaijan's central demands following the 2020 ceasefire agreement.

- This recognition also brings an end to the claims of **Nagorno-Karabakh's independence** and the **Republic of Artsakh**, which Armenia had supported since the early 1990s. This is in line with Azerbaijan's stance that **Nagorno-Karabakh** is an integral part of its sovereign territory, despite the region's Armenian-majority population.
- The recognition is a crucial step in restoring diplomatic relations, reducing tensions, and enabling both countries to move forward with **economic cooperation** and **regional stability**.

Constitutional Amendments

2

- **Azerbaijan's Demand for Constitutional Changes in Armenia:** Azerbaijan has demanded that **Armenia amend its constitution** to remove all references to **territorial claims** over **Nagorno-Karabakh**. This includes eliminating any mention of the **Republic of Artsakh** or the right to self-determination for Nagorno-Karabakh, which Armenia had previously supported.
- The **constitutional amendments** would formally erase any claims Armenia has over **Nagorno-Karabakh**, signaling a definitive end to its territorial ambitions in the region. This aligns with Azerbaijan's goal of ensuring that the conflict remains resolved and that any future legal claims are preemptively neutralized.
- The possibility of holding a **referendum in Armenia** is being explored as a means to gain public approval for these constitutional changes. This referendum would seek the Armenian public's opinion on whether the constitution should be revised to remove any reference to Nagorno-Karabakh's status.

Third-party Forces

3

- **Disagreements Over the Deployment of Third-Party Forces:** One of the most contentious issues in the negotiations was the deployment of **third-party forces** along the **shared border** between Armenia and Azerbaijan. This issue stems from concerns about border security, the need for impartial monitoring, and the continued volatility of the region.
- **Armenia** proposed that **third-party peacekeeping forces** be deployed in specific areas where the **border demarcation** between the two countries has been completed. These areas would be those where there is a high potential for dispute over territorial lines, and where both sides require neutral oversight.
- **Azerbaijan**, however, opposed the presence of any third-party forces, arguing that they could undermine **Azerbaijan's sovereignty** and create the conditions for ongoing foreign influence in its internal affairs. Azerbaijan sought a **blanket ban** on the deployment of foreign peacekeepers, fearing that such forces could prevent the full reintegration of **Nagorno-Karabakh** into Azerbaijan's control.
- As part of the peace deal, an agreement was reached that **peacekeeping forces** would be **limited** and placed only in areas where both countries mutually agreed, with the **Russian peacekeepers** remaining in some areas until a final agreement is established. Armenia accepted this compromise, as it ensures security in sensitive regions without undermining Azerbaijan's territorial claims.

Legal Cases

4

- **Withdrawal of Legal Cases in International Courts:** Over the course of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, both Armenia and Azerbaijan pursued numerous legal cases in international courts. These included allegations of human rights violations, war crimes, and violations of international humanitarian law during both the First Nagorno-Karabakh War (1992-1994) and the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War (2020).
 - Armenia took Azerbaijan to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), alleging the use of discriminatory practices against ethnic Armenians in areas under Azerbaijani control, including allegations of cultural destruction, forced displacement, and targeting of civilians.
 - Azerbaijan also filed counterclaims regarding the treatment of Azerbaijanis by Armenian forces, including accusations of ethnic cleansing and illegal occupation of Azerbaijani territories during the 1990s.
 - As part of the 2025 peace agreement, both countries agreed to withdraw all ongoing legal cases and renounce any future legal claims related to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. This agreement includes a commitment to settle any disputes through diplomatic means rather than legal battles, thus preventing future escalations in international courts.
 - By renouncing these legal cases, both Armenia and Azerbaijan aim to create a clean slate for their bilateral relations and avoid the legal avenues that have been exploited in the past to fuel the conflict.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

7. During peace negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan, which of the following became a major point of contention due to concerns over border security and impartial monitoring?
- (a) Trade agreements (b) Airspace rights
(c) Cultural heritage sites (d) Third-party forces
8. As part of the Armenia-Azerbaijan peace deal, which forces were agreed to remain in certain areas until a final agreement is established, based on mutual consent?
- (a) UN observers (b) Russian peacekeepers
(c) NATO forces (d) OSCE monitors
9. In legal cases brought by Armenia and Azerbaijan to international courts over the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which of the following issues has been a primary focus of allegations ?
- (a) Human rights violations
(b) Environmental damage
(c) Trade disputes
(d) Maritime boundary conflicts
10. In response to alleged discriminatory practices against ethnic Armenians, which international legal body did Armenia approach to seek justice against Azerbaijan?
- (a) European Court of Human Rights
(b) United Nations Security Council
(c) International Criminal Court
(d) International Court of Justice
11. Under which agreement did Armenia and Azerbaijan decide to withdraw all ongoing legal cases and commit to resolving future disputes through diplomacy rather than international litigation?
- (a) Treaty of Shusha
(b) Ceasefire Agreement of 2020
(c) 2025 peace agreement
(d) OSCE Minsk Protocol
12. Which Russian-led military alliance, aimed at mutual defense among former Soviet states, has Armenia been a member of?
- (a) Warsaw Pact
(b) Collective Security Treaty Organization
(c) Eurasian Defense Council
(d) Eastern Bloc Security Union
13. Which international body has played a key diplomatic role in advocating for a peaceful resolution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict while supporting Azerbaijan's sovereignty and territorial integrity?
- (a) European Union (b) United Nations
(c) OSCE Minsk Group (d) NATO
14. Following the 2023 conflict, which country was accused by the United States of harbouring separatist sentiments due to its support for Nagorno-Karabakh's de facto independence?
- (a) Iran (b) Georgia
(c) Turkey (d) Armenia
15. Which strategically located region between Europe and Asia has been viewed as a vital corridor for global trade, including the transit of oil, gas, and goods from the Caspian Sea to Europe?
- (a) Balkan Peninsula (b) Central Asia
(c) Caucasus region (d) Baltic region
16. Which proposed trade route, mentioned in peace negotiations, aims to connect Azerbaijan with Turkey via Armenia, boosting regional connectivity and reducing transportation costs?
- (a) Silk Road Express
(b) Caspian Transit Route
(c) Trans-Caucasus Rail Line
(d) Zangezur Corridor

ANSWER KEYS & EXPLANATIONS

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

Holi Celebration at LE KOLKATA



Environment & Biodiversity

India designates 58th Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh

News Highlights:

On March 9, 2025, the **Madhav National Park** in **Madhya Pradesh** was officially declared as India's **58th Tiger Reserve**, marking a significant milestone in the country's efforts to preserve its tiger population. This makes Madhya Pradesh the state with the highest number of tiger reserves, with **nine reserves** in total. The park's inclusion highlights the ongoing conservation efforts and India's commitment to **protecting its tiger population**.

Madhav National Park

- **Location:** **Shivpuri, Madhya Pradesh**
- **Area:** **165.32 sq km** (the tiger reserve now has a **core area** of **355 sq km**, with a **buffer zone** of **4-6 sq km**)
- **Significance:** Madhav National Park serves as an important connecting corridor between the **Ranthambore Tiger Reserve** in **Rajasthan** and **Kuno National Park**, which is notable for housing **cheetahs**. This connection facilitates wildlife movement and biodiversity conservation.
- **Tiger Population:** **Seven** (as of March 2025); No tigers until **2023**, when a male and two female tigers were relocated into the park.
- It was initially notified as a **National Park** in **1956** under the **Madhya Pradesh National Parks Act, 1955**.

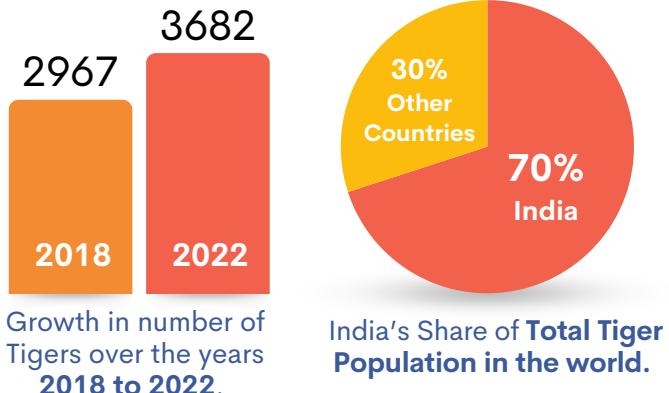
Process of Declaring a Tiger Reserve

- 
- **Identification and Proposal:** The state government identifies a suitable area based on **ecological assessments**, including the **prey base**, **vegetation**, and potential to support a viable tiger population.
 - **NTCA Review:** After preparing a detailed proposal, the state submits it to the **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)**, which reviews and approves the proposal before forwarding it to the **Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change**.
 - **Approval & Govt. Notification:** Once the proposal is approved, the state government issues a **preliminary notification** under the **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**. After addressing objections, a final notification is issued, officially declaring the area as a **tiger reserve**.

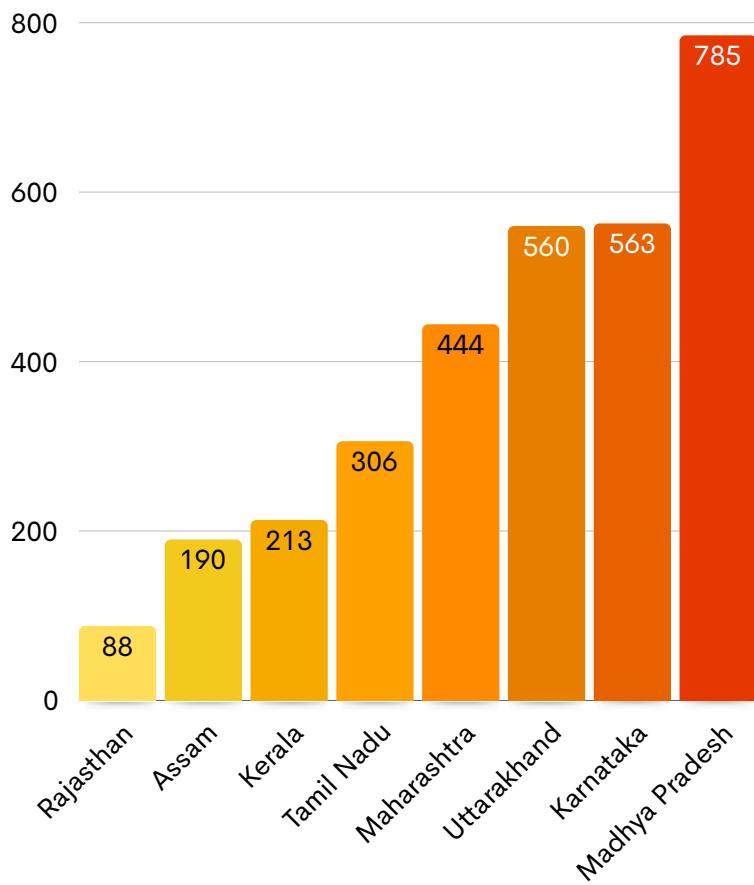
Tiger Population in India (2022 Census)

Total Tiger Population: According to the **2022 All India Tiger Estimation**, India's tiger population is estimated to be **3,682 tigers**, making it home to **approximately 70% of the world's wild tiger population**.

Growth in Tiger Numbers: The **2022 census** marks a significant increase in the tiger population compared to previous estimates. In **2018**, the population was recorded at **2,967 tigers**, indicating a steady rise due to successful conservation efforts and habitat management.



Tiger Populations by State (2022)



Top States with Highest number of Tiger Reserves



Tiger Conservation in India

- Project Tiger:** Initiated in **1973**, Project Tiger has been a cornerstone of India's tiger conservation efforts. It established the **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)** in 2006 to oversee tiger reserves and ensure their management according to specific guidelines.
- Tiger Reserves:** A **tiger reserve** is an area dedicated to protecting the **tiger population** and their habitat. It consists of a **core zone**, where human activities are

IUCN Status:

The **tiger** (*Panthera tigris*) is classified as **Endangered** by the **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)**, due to its declining population globally. India's efforts are vital in maintaining the species' survival.

restricted, and a buffer zone, which allows for limited human activities and acts as a transitional area for wildlife movement.

- Funding:** The central government provides **60%** of the funds for the conservation activities under **Project Tiger**, with the remaining 40% contributed by the state. In **Northeastern** and **Himalayan States**, the Centre covers **90%** of the funding.

Tiger Reserves in India

Overview

- A **tiger reserve** in India is a designated area established under the **Project Tiger initiative**, which was launched in **1973** by then Prime Minister **Indira Gandhi** to ensure the conservation of tigers and their habitats.
- These reserves are crucial for **protecting tiger populations**, conserving biodiversity, and maintaining **ecological balance**.

Structure of Tiger Reserves

- Core Zone:** The core zone of a tiger reserve is designated as a **national park** or **sanctuary**, where human activities are strictly controlled or prohibited. It serves as the primary habitat for tigers and other wildlife.
- Buffer Zone:** The buffer zone surrounds the core area and allows for **limited human activities**, including regulated tourism, agricultural activities, and forest management. It acts as a **transitional space** for wildlife movement.

Number of Tiger Reserves

- As of **March 2025**, India has **58 tiger reserves**, with **Madhya Pradesh** hosting the most (9 tiger reserves).
- The **largest tiger reserve** in India by area is **Sundarbans Tiger Reserve** in **West Bengal**, covering over **2,500 sq km**, while the **smallest** is **Bor Tiger Reserve** in **Maharashtra**, covering about **138.12 sq km**.

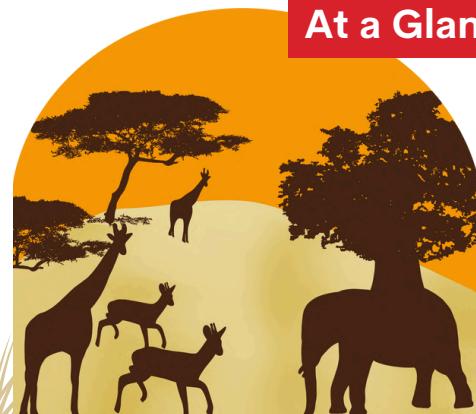
Interesting Facts about Key Tiger Reserves in India

- Nagarjunsagar-Srisailam Tiger Reserve, Andhra Pradesh:** Largest tiger reserve in India, encompassing the Nallamala Hills.
- Melghat Tiger Reserve, Maharashtra:** Located in the Satpura Hill Range, it's **one of the first nine tiger reserves established in 1973-74**.
- Sundarbans Tiger Reserve, West Bengal:** World's largest mangrove forest, home to unique **swimming tigers** adapted to the deltaic environment.
- Pench Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh:** Inspiration for Rudyard Kipling's "The Jungle Book," known for significant tiger population and conservation efforts.
- Corbett Tiger Reserve, Uttarakhand:** India's **oldest national park**, established in 1936, and the first to come under Project Tiger in 1973.
- Kaziranga National Park, Assam:** It shelters the world's largest population of **Indian one-horned rhinoceroses** and significant numbers of wild water buffalo and eastern swamp deer.
- Panna Tiger Reserve (Madhya Pradesh):** Known for its **successful tiger reintroduction program** after the reserve lost its tiger population in the early 2000s.

Biodiversity Reserves vs Wildlife Sanctuaries

- Biodiversity Reserves focus on ecosystem-level conservation and include human-nature interaction.
- Wildlife Sanctuaries focus on species-level protection, especially of wild fauna.
- Biosphere reserves often promote sustainable development, while sanctuaries focus more on protection and regulation.

At a Glance



Biodiversity Reserves vs Wildlife Sanctuaries

Comparative Analysis

Aspect	Biodiversity Reserves	Wildlife Sanctuaries
Legal Basis	Biological Diversity Act, 2002	Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972
Definition	Areas designated to conserve biodiversity and promote sustainable use of biological resources. These include Biosphere Reserves, Community Reserves, and Conservation Reserves.	Areas established for protecting wildlife species and their habitat, where certain human activities are permitted but regulated.
Main Objective	Conservation of entire ecosystems, genetic resources, traditional knowledge, and sustainable use of resources.	Protection of wild animals and their habitats with limited human interference.
Management Authority	Managed by State Biodiversity Boards and National Biodiversity Authority in coordination with local communities.	Managed by State Forest Departments under supervision of Chief Wildlife Wardens.
Human Activity	Often encourages community participation, sustainable development, and traditional practices.	Regulated human activities like grazing or firewood collection may be allowed, but commercial exploitation is prohibited.
Zonation (if applicable)	Biosphere Reserves have three zones: Core (no human activity), Buffer (research/limited activity), Transition (settlements, agriculture).	No zonation system. Some activities may be regulated by permit, but there's no formal zoning like in biosphere reserves.
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve (Tamil Nadu-Kerala-Karnataka) Achanakmar-Amarkantak Biosphere Reserve (Chhattisgarh-MP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sariska Wildlife Sanctuary (Rajasthan) Kawal Wildlife Sanctuary (Telangana)
International Status	Some biosphere reserves are part of the UNESCO Man and Biosphere (MAB) Programme.	Generally do not have international recognition unless part of a World Heritage Site or Ramsar site.

UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Program

The **UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme** is an international initiative aimed at fostering a balanced relationship between humans and the environment. The program seeks to integrate **biodiversity conservation, sustainable development, and cultural preservation.**

- **Launched in 1971:** The **MAB Programme** was established by UNESCO in **1971** with the goal of promoting sustainable development and protecting the world's biospheres. It aims to ensure that the relationship between people and their environment is sustainable.
- **Biosphere Reserves:** The core component of the MAB program is the establishment of **Biosphere Reserves**, which are areas of land or coastal environments recognized by UNESCO for their significant ecological and cultural value. These reserves are recognized for their role in **conservation, scientific research, and sustainable development.**
- **Three-Zone Approach:** Biosphere Reserves follow a three-zone concept: Core Zone, Buffer Zone and Transition Zone,

Biosphere Reserves under the MAB Program:

- **Global Network:** The MAB Program has established a **World Network of Biosphere Reserves** (WNBR) consisting of **700 biosphere reserves** across **124 countries**, promoting global cooperation for **environmental protection**.
- **India's Biosphere Reserves:**
 - a. **Sundarbans Biosphere Reserve:** A UNESCO Biosphere Reserve known for its **mangrove ecosystem** and the **Bengal tiger**.
 - b. **Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve:** Located in **Uttarakhand**, it is recognized for its rich biodiversity, including the **snow leopard** and **Himalayan musk deer**.
 - c. **Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve:** Spanning **Tamil Nadu**, **Kerala**, and **Karnataka**, it is one of the largest biosphere reserves in India, home to **endemic species** and vital ecosystems.



Tiger Reserves in India

- Total Tiger Reserves (March 2025): **58**
- Latest (58th): **Madhav National Park, Madhya Pradesh** (Declared: March 9, 2025)
- **Madhya Pradesh:** Highest number of tiger reserves (9) & tiger population (785)
- **Oldest: Corbett (1973)**
- **Largest: Sundarbans** (2,500+ sq km, West Bengal)
- **Smallest: Bor** (138.12 sq km, Maharashtra)

Madhav National Park

- Location: **Shivpuri, Madhya Pradesh**
- Declared National Park: **1956**
- Area: **165.32 sq km**
- Core Area (now, Tiger Reserve): **355 sq km**; Buffer Zone: **4–6 sq km**
- Tiger Reintroduction: **Started 2023** (1 male + 2 females → now 7 tigers)
- Corridor: Links **Ranthambore (Rajasthan)** & **Kuno (MP – Cheetahs)**

UNESCO MAB Programme

Launched: **1971** to promote sustainable human-environment interaction

Zones:

- **Core:** No human activity
- **Buffer:** Research, limited use
- **Transition:** Settlements, farming
- Global Network: **700 Biosphere Reserves** in **124 countries**
- India's Notable MAB Reserves:
- **Sundarbans:** Mangroves, Bengal tiger
- **Nanda Devi:** Snow leopard, musk deer
- **Nilgiri:** Endemic species across TN, Kerala, Karnataka

All India Tiger Estimation – 2022 (Released: July 29, 2023)

- Population: **3,682**
- India's Share: ~**75%** of global wild tiger population

States by Tiger Population:

- **1st:** Madhya Pradesh (**785**)
- **2nd:** Karnataka (**563**)
- **3rd:** Uttarakhand (**560**)
- **4th:** Maharashtra (**444**)

Difference between Biosphere Reserve and Wildlife Sanctuaries

Aspect	Biosphere Reserves	Wildlife Sanctuaries
Law	Biological Diversity Act, 2002	Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972
Focus	Ecosystem & sustainable use	Species & habitat protection
Zonation	Core, Buffer, Transition	No formal zonation
Human Activity	Allowed with community role	Regulated (e.g., grazing/firewood)
Authority	Biodiversity Boards & NBA	Forest Dept, Chief Wildlife Warden

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which national park in Madhya Pradesh was officially declared India's 58th Tiger Reserve on March 9, 2025 ?
(a) Satpura National Park (b) Kanha National Park
(c) Madhav National Park (d) Pench National Park
2. With the inclusion of Madhav National Park as a tiger reserve in 2025, how many tiger reserves does Madhya Pradesh now have, making it the state with the highest number in India ?
(a) Six (b) Seven (c) Eight (d) Nine
3. What has happened to the tiger population in Madhav National Park since the relocation of a male and two female tigers in 2023 ?
(a) Increased (b) Disappeared
(c) Remained unchanged (d) Decreased
4. Madhav National Park acts as a vital wildlife corridor connecting Kuno National Park with which prominent tiger reserve in Rajasthan ?
(a) Sariska Tiger Reserve
(b) Ranthambore Tiger Reserve
(c) Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve
(d) Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve
5. In the process of declaring a Tiger Reserve in India, which authority is responsible for reviewing and approving the state's proposal before it is sent to the Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change ?
(a) Wildlife Institute of India
(b) Central Zoo Authority
(c) National Tiger Conservation Authority
(d) Indian Board for Wildlife
6. When is Global Tiger Day celebrated annually to raise awareness about tiger conservation worldwide ?
(a) June 5 (b) August 12
(c) March 3 (d) July 29
7. Which national-level survey, released at Corbett Tiger Reserve, provides comprehensive data on the status of India's tiger population and assesses the progress of Project Tiger ?
(a) All India Tiger Estimation
(b) National Wildlife Census
8. As a result of conservation efforts like Project Tiger, what percentage of the world's wild tiger population is now found in India ?
(a) 70% (b) 75% (c) 65% (d) 60%
9. According to the latest estimates from the All India Tiger Estimation 2022, what is the current estimated tiger population in India ?
(a) 2,967 (b) 3,925
(c) 3,682 (d) 2,461
10. According to the All India Tiger Estimation 2022, which Indian state has the highest tiger population ?
(a) Karnataka (b) Uttarakhand
(c) Maharashtra (d) Madhya Pradesh
11. Which of the following regions, along with Central India and the Gangetic Plains, recorded a notable increase in tiger population according to the latest estimates?
(a) Shivalik Hills (b) Eastern Ghats
(c) Western Desert (d) Deccan Plateau
12. Which tiger reserve has the highest number of tigers in India, according to the latest estimates?
(a) Bandipur Tiger Reserve
(b) Corbett Tiger Reserve
(c) Nagarhole Tiger Reserve
(d) Kanha Tiger Reserve
13. Which of the following states has five tiger reserves, along with Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, as per the latest data?
(a) Maharashtra (b) Madhya Pradesh
(c) Gujarat (d) Rajasthan
14. As of the latest data, India's 58 tiger reserves are spread across how many states?
(a) 18 states (b) 21 states
(c) 15 states (d) 25 states
15. Which of the following is the scientific name of the tiger, a species classified as Endangered by the IUCN?

- (a) *Panthera leo* (b) *Panthera pardus*
(c) *Felis tigrina* (d) *Panthera tigris*
16. Which body was established in 2006 under Project Tiger to oversee the management of tiger reserves in India?
(a) Wildlife Crime Control Bureau
(b) National Tiger Conservation Authority
(c) Central Zoo Authority
(d) Indian Forest Management Council
17. In a tiger reserve, which zone is strictly protected with minimal or no human activity to ensure safe breeding and conservation of tigers?
(a) Eco-sensitive zone (b) Community zone
(c) Core zone (d) Buffer zone
18. Under Project Tiger, what percentage of conservation funding is provided by the central government to Northeastern and Himalayan states ?
(a) 90% (b) 75%
(c) 60% (d) 40%
19. Which UNESCO World Heritage Site in Uttarakhand is renowned for its alpine meadows and rich Himalayan flora ?
(a) Great Himalayan National Park
(b) Nanda Devi and Valley of Flowers
(c) Hemis National Park
(d) Kaziranga National Park
20. Which UNESCO program, launched in 1971, aims to promote sustainable development by fostering a balanced relationship between humans and the environment?
(a) World Heritage Sites Initiative
(b) Global Geoparks Network
(c) International Hydrological Programme
(d) Man and the Biosphere

ANSWER KEYS & EXPLANATIONS

- | | | | | | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1. (c) | 2. (d) | 3. (a) | 4. (b) | 5. (c) | 6. (d) | 7. (a) | 8. (b) |
| 9. (c) | 10. (d) | 11. (a) | 12. (b) | 13. (d) | 14. (a) | 15. (d) | 16. (b) |
| 17. (c) | 18. (a) | 19. (b) | 20. (d) | | | | |

World Air Quality Report 2024

News Highlights:

The 7th Edition of the **World Air Quality Report 2024**, published by IQAir, provides an analysis of global air pollution levels, focusing on particulate matter (PM2.5) concentrations. The report compiles data from over **40,000** air quality monitoring stations across **8,954 cities in 138 countries**.



Key Findings of the 2024 World Air Quality Report

- Air Pollution Levels:** Only 17% of global cities meet the WHO's air pollution guideline, a slight improvement from last year.
- Most Polluted Cities:**
 - Byrnihat, India was the **most polluted city** in 2024 with an average PM2.5 concentration of **128.2 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$** .
 - Central & South Asia accounted for the **top seven most polluted cities**, with India hosting six of the nine cities.

Top 5 Most Polluted Countries

Rank	Country	PM2.5 Level
1	Chad	91.8 18 times higher than the WHO guideline
2	Bangladesh	78.0 15 times higher than the WHO guideline
3	Pakistan	73.7 14 times higher than the WHO guideline
4	DR Congo	58.2 11 times higher than the WHO guideline
5	India	50.6 10 times higher than the WHO guideline

Cleanest Regions

Oceania:

It is the **cleanest**, with 57% of cities meeting WHO guidelines.

Mayaguez, Puerto Rico:

It is the **cleanest metropolitan area** of 2024 with a PM2.5 concentration of **1.1 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$** .

Most Polluted Cities by Global Region based on the 2024 PM2.5 levels

Region	Capital City	Country	PM2.5 level
East Asia	Hotan	China	84.8
Southeast Asia	South Tangerang	Indonesia	61.1
Central & South Asia	Byrnihat	India	128.2
West Asia	Baghdad	Iraq	40.5
Europe	Sarajevo	Bosnia & Herzegovina	30.8
Northern America	Fresno	USA	18.3
Latin America & Caribbean	Lima	Peru	18.2
Africa	N'Djamena	Chad	91.6
Oceania	Canberra	Australia	3.9



Least Polluted Countries (meeting WHO PM2.5 guideline)

- Australia
- New Zealand
- Bahamas
- Barbados
- Grenada
- Estonia
- Iceland

India's Air Quality in 2024

Progress:

- **Reduction in PM2.5 Levels:** India experienced a 7% decline in average PM2.5 concentrations in 2024, recording 50.6 µg/m³ compared to 54.4 µg/m³ in 2023.
- **National Ranking:** The country improved its position to the fifth most polluted globally, down from third in the previous year.

Urban Pollution:

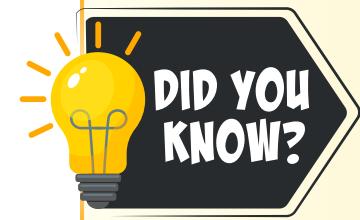
- **Most Polluted Cities:** Six of the world's ten most polluted cities are in India. Notably:
 - **Byrnihat:** Recorded the highest global PM2.5 concentration at 128.2 µg/m³.
 - **New Delhi:** Maintained high pollution levels with an annual average of 91.6 µg/m³, a slight decrease from 92.7 µg/m³ in 2023.
 - Other Indian cities are: **Delhi, Mullanpur, Faridabad, Loni**

Health Impacts:

- **Life Expectancy:** Air pollution in India reduces life expectancy by an estimated **5.2 years**.

Primary Pollution Sources:

- **Vehicular Emissions:** Major contributor in urban centers like Delhi, exacerbated by traffic congestion and fuel adulteration.
- **Industrial Discharges:** Significant emissions from industries.
- **Construction Dust:** Contributes notably to particulate matter.
- **Crop Residue Burning:** Particularly in Punjab and Haryana, deteriorates air quality during winter months.



Air pollution has been a recognized issue for centuries:

- **Circa 400 BC:** Hippocrates identified air quality as a factor influencing health.
- **1661:** John Evelyn's "Fumifugium", pamphlet addressed to **King Charles II** discussed London's air pollution problems, marking one of the earliest known works on the subject.
- **19th Century:** The Industrial Revolution led to severe air pollution, prompting early environmental legislation like the UK's Alkali Acts of 1863.

Initiatives and Measures by the Indian Government to tackle Air Pollution

Step/Framework	Description	Key Features/Action Taken
Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP)	Developed by Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) for Delhi and NCR to control air pollution levels.	Specific measures for different pollution levels, like closing schools , stopping construction , and implementing odd-even schemes .
Air Quality Monitoring	CPCB and State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs) monitor air quality through AQI systems .	Over 1500 air quality monitoring stations across cities. Real-time AQI data is used to inform the public and regulate emissions.
Electric Vehicles (EV) Policy	National Electric Mobility Mission Plan (NEMMP) encourages the use of electric vehicles (EVs) to reduce air pollution from vehicles.	Subsidies, incentives , and rebates for EVs, and development of charging infrastructure .
Crop Residue Management	Aims to address stubble burning in northern states like Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh .	Incentives and funding for in-situ management and happy seeders to prevent burning.
Renewable Energy Initiatives	India is expanding its renewable energy capacity to reduce reliance on fossil fuels .	Target of 175 GW by 2022 and 500 GW by 2030 in solar and wind energy to reduce air pollution.
National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)	Launched by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) to reduce PM2.5 and PM10 concentrations in cities.	Aims to reduce pollution by 20-30% by 2024 . States and cities required to implement localized air quality action plans.



- Overview:** IQAir is a Swiss-based air quality technology company specializing in air purification and monitoring solutions.
- Founding:** Established in 1963 by brothers Manfred and Klaus Hammes in Germany, initially focusing on residential air filters.

- Headquarters:** Located in **Steinach, Switzerland**.
- Global Presence:** Operations extend to Germany, the U.S., and China, with approximately 500 employees as of February 2020.
- Products:** Offers air purifiers, HVAC-based air cleaning systems, air quality instruments, and operates AirVisual, a real-time air quality information platform.

- Technological Approach:** Utilizes various particulate and gas-phase removal technologies; opposes ionizing and ozone-producing air cleaning methods.
- Recent Developments:** Continues to innovate in air quality technology, expanding product lines and services to address global air pollution challenges.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- (a) Long-term: chronic respiratory diseases
(b) Short-term: sneezing and skin rash
(c) Long-term: increased bone density
(d) Short-term: weight loss and fatigue
16. Which initiative launched by IQAir aims to equip over 1 million schools with air quality monitors to promote awareness and community action?
(a) CleanAir Campus Program
(b) AirWatch Global
(c) Schools4Earth Initiative
(d) BreatheEasy Network
17. Which platform, launched by the Climate and Clean Air Coalition in September 2024, aims to promote international cooperation on air pollution through data sharing and best practices?
(a) Global Clean Air Network
(b) Air Quality Management Exchange Platform
(c) International Smog Monitoring Grid
(d) UN Clean Air Partnership
18. Which regulatory measure is aimed at discouraging the use of high-emission vehicles by imposing additional charges, and has been implemented in states like Delhi?
(a) Scrappage Incentive Policy
(b) Vehicle Emission Compliance Rule
(c) Clean Vehicle Subsidy Scheme
(d) Green Tax
19. Which organization developed the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) to address escalating air pollution levels in Delhi NCR?
(a) Central Pollution Control Board
(b) National Green Tribunal
(c) Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
(d) Delhi Pollution Control Committee

ANSWER KEYS & EXPLANATIONS

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

Sports Day At LE BHOPAL



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at LE BHOPAL**



Science & Technology

Aditya-L1 Captures First-Ever Image of Solar Flare 'Kernel'

News Highlights:

India's **Aditya-L1 mission**, launched by ISRO, has made a groundbreaking observation using its **Solar Ultra-violet Imaging Telescope (SUIT)**, capturing the **first-ever image of a solar flare kernel** in the lower solar atmosphere, specifically the **photosphere and chromosphere**. This unprecedented image was taken in the **Near Ultra-Violet (NUV)** wavelength, marking a major leap forward in understanding solar activity and its potential impact on Earth.

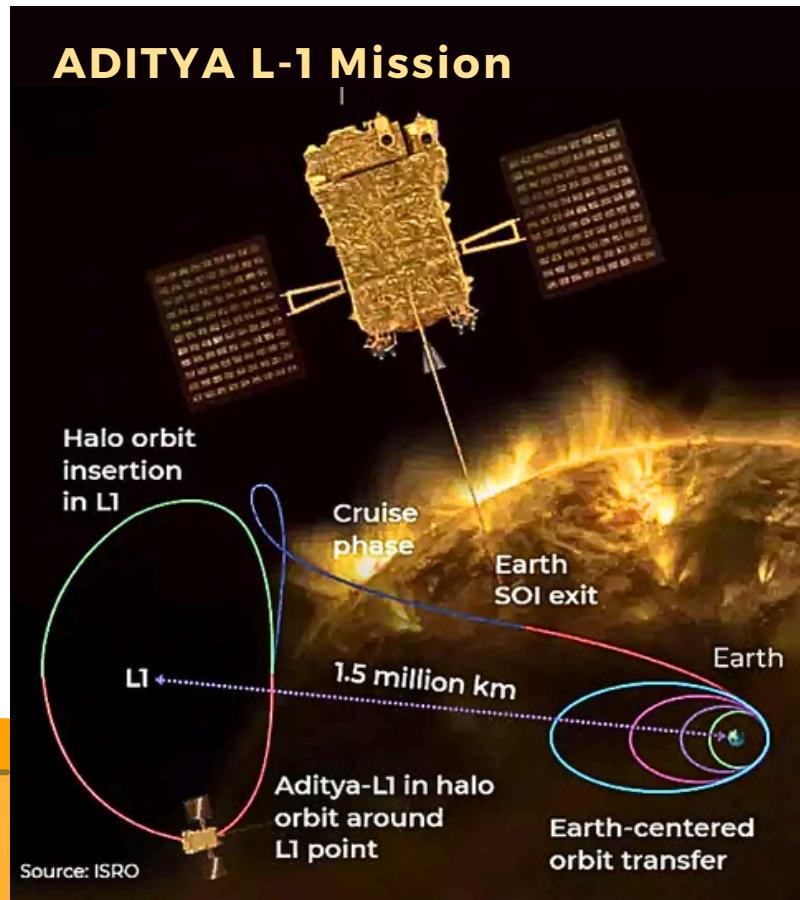
Background:

The **Aditya-L1 mission** was launched on **September 2, 2023**, aboard ISRO's **PSLV C-57** rocket, and placed into a **large halo orbit** around the **Lagrange Point 1 (L1)** on **January 6, 2024**, about **1.5 million km** from Earth, allowing for continuous observation of the Sun without interference from Earth's shadow.

Key Observations & Scientific Breakthroughs

First-Ever Image of a Solar Flare Kernel:

- On **February 22, 2024**, Aditya-L1 captured an **X6.3-class solar flare**, one of the most intense solar eruptions observed.
- SUIT** detected **brightening** in the **NUV wavelength range (200-400 nm)**, providing a level of detail that had never been achieved before in this wavelength range.
- The observation confirmed that the **energy from the flare** spread across different layers of the Sun's atmosphere, offering insights into **solar flare dynamics** and their impact on space weather.



Linkage Between Solar Flares and Solar Corona:

- A key revelation from the data is that the **localized brightening** observed in the **lower solar atmosphere** (photosphere and chromosphere) directly corresponded with an increase in the **temperature of plasma** in the **solar corona**, the Sun's outermost layer.
- This finding confirms the linkage between **flare energy deposition** and the **temperature evolution** in the **solar corona**, validating long-standing theories and offering new data for reshaping the understanding of solar flare physics.

ADITYA-L1 MISSION		LAUNCH DATE: 2 Sep, 2023
LAUNCH VEHICLE:	ISRO's PSLV C-57 Rocket	DISTANCE: 1.5 mn km (from earth)
INSTRUMENTS ONBOARD:	COST: 378.53 cr	TIME: 4 months
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solar Ultraviolet Imaging Telescope (SUIT): Captures high-resolution images in 11 different NUV wavebands, focusing on the Sun's layers from the photosphere to the chromosphere. Solar Low Energy X-ray Spectrometer (SoLEXS) and High Energy L1 Orbiting X-ray Spectrometer (HEL1OS): Monitor solar X-ray emissions, aiding in solar flare detection and study. 		PAYLOADS: 7 (VELC, SUIT, SoLEXS, HEL1OS, ASPEX, PAPA, Digital Magnetometers)
MAJOR OBJECTIVES: To understand corona, solar wind, solar atmosphere, sun flares, and near-earth space weather		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solar flares are typically classified into categories based on their intensity. The X-class is the most powerful, capable of affecting satellite communication, GPS systems, and power grids on Earth. 		

Key Observations from SUIT on February 22, 2024

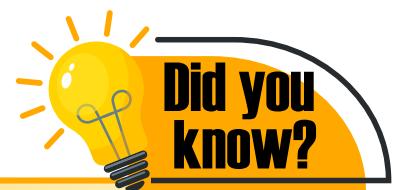
- X6.3-Class Solar Flare:**
 - The **X6.3-class flare** observed on **February 22, 2024**, was one of the most intense solar eruptions, with **SUIT** capturing unprecedented detail in the **NUV wavelength range** (200-400 nm).
- Unique Observation in NUV Range:**
 - This was the first time that solar flare dynamics were studied in such great detail in the **NUV range**, a wavelength range that had previously been difficult to observe due to limitations in ground-based telescopes.
 - The **NUV** observations from **SUIT** offer new insights into how **energy** from solar flares propagates through different layers of the Sun's atmosphere, confirming theories and offering data to refine the understanding of flare physics.
- Linking Lower and Higher Solar Atmosphere:**
 - The brightening captured in the **lower solar atmosphere** (photosphere and chromosphere) was directly linked to a rise in the **temperature of plasma** in the **solar corona**, confirming the connection between flare energy and temperature evolution.

What is a Solar Flare?

- Solar flares** are sudden, intense bursts of **solar energy** that occur when the Sun's magnetic fields suddenly release energy. These eruptions release light/radiation and high-energy charged particles, and they can have significant impacts on space weather.
- Solar flares are typically classified into categories based on their intensity. The **X-class** is the most powerful, capable of affecting satellite communication, GPS systems, and power grids on Earth.

How Does Aditya-L1 Study Solar Flares?Solar Flare?

- Observation of Solar Flares:** During and before a solar flare, the affected region of the Sun becomes significantly **brighter** in **UV and X-ray wavelengths**. **SUIT, SoLEXS, and HEL1OS** onboard **Aditya-L1** can observe these brightening events, providing detailed information about the solar flare phenomena.
- Space-based Observation:** Since **Earth's atmosphere** blocks harmful **UV and X-ray radiation**, these observations can only be made from **space**. Aditya-L1's location at **Lagrange Point 1 (L1)** provides a unique vantage point for continuous and uninterrupted monitoring of solar activity.



A powerful solar flare can release more energy in just a few minutes than all the energy produced by all humans on Earth in an entire year — enough to disrupt satellites, radio signals, and power grids!

SUIT Payload Details

- **SUIT** (developed by **Inter University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA)** in collaboration with **ISRO centres**) is capable of capturing high-resolution images across **11 different wavebands** in the **NUV range**.
- **Wavebands:** These wavebands range from **214 nm (NB01)** to **396 nm (NB08)**, with filters designed to study specific regions of the Sun's atmosphere in **fine detail**.

Why is this Observation Historic?

- **First-ever Solar Flare Kernel Image:** The observation of the **solar flare kernel** is historic because it provides unprecedented detail about the **lower solar atmosphere**, particularly in the **photosphere** and **chromosphere**.
- **No Prior NUV Observations:** Ground-based telescopes cannot capture this data because **UV radiation** is absorbed by Earth's atmosphere. **Aditya-L1's SUIT** is filling this gap by capturing NUV data, which was nearly non-existent in prior solar flare studies.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- What is the name of the telescope aboard Aditya-L1 that captured the first-ever image of a solar flare kernel?
 - (a) Solar Spectrograph Unit
 - (b) Sun Observation Radiometer
 - (c) Solar Ultra-violet Imaging Telescope
 - (d) Heliospheric Monitoring Camera
- In which part of the solar atmosphere did Aditya-L1 capture the solar flare kernel?
 - (a) Corona and heliosphere
 - (b) Magnetosphere and thermosphere
 - (c) Photosphere and chromosphere
 - (d) Mesosphere and ionosphere
- On what date was the Aditya-L1 mission launched by ISRO?
 - (a) August 15, 2023
 - (b) September 2, 2023
 - (c) October 10, 2023
 - (d) January 6, 2024
- Which rocket was used to launch Aditya-L1?
 - (a) GSLV Mk III
 - (b) PSLV C-53
 - (c) GSLV F10
 - (d) PSLV C-57
- When was Aditya-L1 placed into a halo orbit around Lagrange Point 1 (L1)?
 - (a) January 6, 2024
 - (b) December 1, 2023
 - (c) November 10, 2023
 - (d) February 15, 2024
- How far is Lagrange Point 1 (L1) from Earth?
 - (a) 384,400 km
 - (b) 800,000 km
 - (c) 1.5 million km
 - (d) 2.3 million km
- In which wavelength did SUIT capture the image of the solar flare kernel?
 - (a) Near Ultra-Violet
 - (b) X-ray
 - (c) Infrared
 - (d) Gamma-ray
- On which date did Aditya-L1 capture the X6.3-class solar flare?
 - (a) February 22, 2024
 - (b) February 10, 2024
 - (c) January 6, 2024
 - (d) March 5, 2024
- In which wavelength range did SUIT detect the solar flare brightening?
 - (a) Infrared (700–900 nm)
 - (b) Near Ultra-Violet (200–400 nm)
 - (c) Microwave (1–10 mm)
 - (d) Gamma-ray (below 0.01 nm)
- What onboard instrument of Aditya-L1 monitors high-energy solar X-ray emissions?
 - (a) SUIT
 - (b) SoLEXS
 - (c) HEL1OS
 - (d) MAG
- What orbit does Aditya-L1 follow to observe the Sun without obstruction?
 - (a) Geostationary orbit
 - (b) Polar orbit
 - (c) Sun-synchronous orbit
 - (d) Halo orbit around Lagrange Point 1
- Which instrument onboard Aditya-L1 specifically tracks low-energy solar X-ray emissions?
 - (a) SoLEXS
 - (b) HEL1OS
 - (c) SUIT
 - (d) VELC

ANSWER KEYS & EXPLANATIONS

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

India-Argentina sign MoU on Lithium Partnership

News Highlights:

India and Argentina have strengthened their collaboration in **lithium exploration** and **mining** with the signing of a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** on **February 19, 2025**. This agreement aims to enhance resource development of critical minerals, particularly **lithium**, essential for **electric vehicle (EV) batteries** and **renewable energy storage**. The MoU was signed between **Mineral Exploration and Consultancy Limited (MECL)**, a public sector undertaking under India's **Ministry of Mines**, and the **Provincial Government of Catamarca, Argentina**.



Key Details of the Agreement

Parties Involved:



- India:** Represented by **Union Minister for Coal and Mines, Shri G. Kishan Reddy**.
- Argentina:** Represented by **Governor Raúl Alejandro Jalil of Catamarca**, a province in Argentina known for its vast **lithium reserves**.

Focus of Discussions:



- Expanding cooperation in **lithium exploration** and investment opportunities.
- The agreement covers **joint ventures, long-term supply agreements**, and **increased participation of Indian companies** in Argentina's mining projects.

Strategic Importance:



- Argentina's **lithium reserves** are part of the '**Lithium Triangle**', an area that includes **Argentina, Chile, and Bolivia**, known for holding the world's largest deposits of **lithium**.
- India** is looking to secure essential minerals for its rapidly expanding **electric vehicle** and **renewable energy sectors**, with **lithium** playing a crucial role in the production of **EV batteries** and energy storage systems.

Ongoing Projects and Future Opportunities

1. Ongoing Exploration Efforts:

- Khanij Bidesh India Ltd. (KABIL)** and **Greenko** are already involved in **lithium exploration** projects in the **Catamarca** region of Argentina.

2. Opportunities for Investment:

- Both India and Argentina are exploring avenues for greater **investment** in Argentina's **mining sector**, including further participation by Indian companies in the country's mining operations.

3. Sustainability Focus:

- The MoU emphasizes **sustainable mining practices** and regulatory frameworks that ensure the partnership is mutually beneficial for both countries while preserving environmental standards.

Political and Economic Significance

- India's Need for Critical Minerals:** As India strives to boost its **green energy** capabilities, securing access to **critical minerals** like **lithium** is vital for the country's **energy transition**.
- Argentina's Role:** As one of the top global sources of **lithium**, Argentina is a key partner in ensuring India's access to the mineral, which will be essential for the production of EVs and energy storage systems, supporting **India's sustainable development goals**.

Lithium

Lithium Deposits

- The largest known **lithium reserves** are found in the "**Lithium Triangle**," a region in South America, shared by **Chile, Argentina, and Bolivia**. These countries are home to about **60% of the world's known lithium reserves**.
- Chile** has the largest lithium deposit globally, and the **Salar de Atacama** in Chile is one of the driest places on Earth, making it an ideal location for lithium extraction.
- Lithium is the lightest metal and the **lightest solid element** in the periodic table. Its low weight makes it incredibly useful in industries where lightness is important, such as aerospace and electronics.



Top Producers and Exporters

- 1 Australia
- 2 Chile
- 3 China

- Australia** is currently the world's largest producer of lithium, primarily from hard rock mining in **Western Australia**.
- Chile** is a major exporter, ranking second in lithium production, extracting lithium from vast salt flats like **Salar de Atacama**.
- China** also plays a significant role in lithium production and is a major **importer** of lithium, particularly from Australia and South America.

Lithium in Electric Vehicles

- Lithium is a key component in the production of **batteries**, particularly **lithium-ion batteries** that power **electric vehicles (EVs)**, smartphones, laptops, and other electronics.

Import & Export

- China** imports a significant amount of lithium from countries like Australia, Chile, and Argentina, refining the lithium into products used for batteries and other electronics.
- The United States** is a major importer of lithium, especially for the growing electric vehicle market. However, domestic lithium production is increasing, with new mines being developed in states like **Nevada**.



As electric vehicle demand surges globally, the demand for lithium has skyrocketed. For instance, **Tesla** and other EV manufacturers are key consumers of lithium for their battery packs.

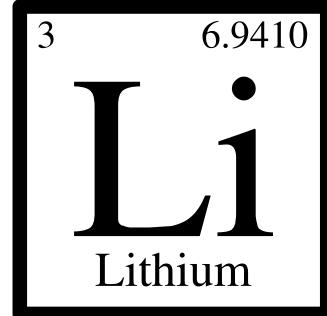
Environmental Impact

- Lithium mining, particularly **from salt flats**, can have a considerable environmental impact, including water usage concerns in already dry regions.
- However, companies are exploring more sustainable methods of extraction, such as **direct lithium extraction (DLE)**, which promises to reduce water usage and environmental degradation.



Price Volatility

- Lithium prices have been extremely volatile, surging due to the rapid rise in demand for EVs and battery storage systems. For instance, the price of lithium jumped from **\$7,000 per ton** in 2020 to over **\$70,000 per ton** in 2023, sparking a global rush to secure supplies.



Did you know?

Lithium was first discovered in **1817** by Swedish chemist **Johan August Arfvedson**, and it became commercially important with the rise of battery technologies in the 20th century.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- On which date did India and Argentina sign the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for enhanced collaboration in lithium exploration and mining?

 (a) January 15, 2025 (b) March 5, 2025
 (c) February 19, 2025 (d) March 15, 2024
- Which two parties were involved in signing the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for lithium exploration and mining?

 (a) MECL and the Government of Argentina
 (b) MECL and the Provincial Government of Catamarca, Argentina
 (c) Ministry of Mines, India, and the Government of Argentina
 (d) Ministry of Coal and Mines, India, and the Government of Argentina
- Which province in Argentina is known for its vast lithium reserves, which were the focus of the MoU?

 (a) Buenos Aires (b) Mendoza
 (c) Catamarca (d) Córdoba
- Who represented India in the signing of the MoU for lithium exploration and mining?

 (a) Prime Minister Narendra Modi
 (b) Union Minister for Coal and Mines, Shri G. Kishan Reddy
 (c) Minister of Finance, Nirmala Sitharaman
 (d) Minister of External Affairs, S. Jaishankar
- Which region is referred to as the 'Lithium Triangle,' which includes Argentina's lithium-rich reserves?

 (a) Kenya, Tanzania, and Argentina
 (b) Argentina, Chile, and Bolivia
 (c) Zambia, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Argentina
 (d) Indonesia, Argentina, and Papua New Guinea

ANSWER KEYS & EXPLANATIONS

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

Sunita Williams & Butch Wilmore return to Earth

News Highlights:

NASA astronauts **Butch Wilmore** and **Sunita Williams** returned to Earth on March 18, 2025, after spending 286 days in space, far longer than initially planned. Their mission, originally set for a brief duration, was extended due to issues with the **Boeing Starliner** spacecraft and **SpaceX capsule delays**. They returned aboard a **SpaceX Crew Dragon** spacecraft after undocking from the International Space Station (ISS).



The Mission: Background

Astronauts Involved:

1

Initial Launch and Boeing Starliner Test Flight: The mission began in **June 2024** with a **Boeing CST-100 Starliner test** flight. The Starliner spacecraft was supposed to carry the astronauts to and from the International Space Station (ISS), as part of NASA's plan to use it for future crewed missions.

However, during the test phase, multiple **technical issues** were identified with the spacecraft's design and functionality, which delayed its operational readiness.

Sunita Williams (left) & **Butch Wilmore** (right)

2

Transfer to SpaceX Crew Dragon:

Because of the delays with the Boeing Starliner, the astronauts were transferred to the **SpaceX Crew Dragon capsule**, a spacecraft already in use for **NASA's Commercial Crew Program**. This decision was made to ensure the astronauts' safe return to Earth. The Crew Dragon spacecraft, launched by SpaceX, was undocked from the International Space Station (ISS) on March 18, 2025.

3

Extension of Mission Duration:

Originally, their mission was expected to last just a few months, but the delay in the return spacecraft forced them to stay in space far longer than anticipated. Their extended stay underlined the complexity and unpredictability of human spaceflight. The astronauts' prolonged mission also provided valuable data on human health and behavioral adaptation to long-duration space travel, a critical factor for future missions to the Moon, Mars, and beyond.

4

Spacecraft Delays and Technical Issues:

The delay in both the **Boeing Starliner** and the **SpaceX Crew Dragon capsules** was due to both manufacturing challenges and delays in certification by NASA. The Starliner faced software glitches, communication failures, and orbital maneuvering issues, which caused setbacks in its planned flight schedule. Although SpaceX had delivered operational spacecraft to the ISS in prior missions, the logistical complications caused by global supply chain disruptions in 2024 led to the delay of Crew Dragon capsules designed for this mission.

5

Importance of Extended Mission:

Despite the challenges, the extended duration of this mission provided NASA with critical insights into the impact of extended space exposure on astronauts' physical and mental health. During their stay aboard the ISS, the astronauts performed scientific research, conducted maintenance tasks, and participated in technology tests to improve space travel safety and efficiency.

6

Mission Conclusion:

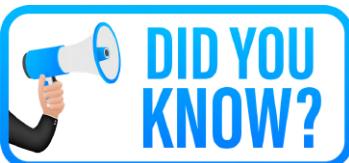
After spending more than **nine months** in orbit, **Wilmore and Williams** returned aboard the SpaceX Crew Dragon, a fully autonomous spacecraft designed for long-duration missions. Their journey back to Earth highlighted the ongoing evolution of commercial space travel and the growing reliance on private companies like SpaceX to support NASA's deep-space exploration goals.

Key Highlights:

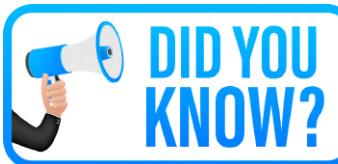
- On March 18, 2025, at 5:57 p.m. EDT, the **SpaceX Dragon Freedom** capsule carrying NASA astronauts **Butch Wilmore** and **Sunita Williams**, along with fellow astronaut **Nick Hague** and Russian cosmonaut **Aleksandr Gorbunov**, splashed down safely in the **Gulf of Mexico**, off the coast of **Tallahassee, Florida**.
- Initially intended as an **eight-day mission**, their stay aboard the **International Space Station (ISS)** was prolonged to **286 days [orbiting Earth 4,576 times and covering 121 million miles (195 million kilometers)]** due to technical issues with the **Boeing Starliner spacecraft**, including **helium leaks** and **thruster failures**.
- Wilmore and Williams' extended mission became a public sensation, with both astronauts actively contributing to **spacewalks**, conducting **experiments**, and maintaining equipment.
- Sunita Williams** set a new record for the most time spent on spacewalks by a female astronaut, totaling **62 hours and 6 minutes** over nine spacewalks.

Impact:

- Extended Mission Challenges:** NASA astronauts **Barry "Butch" Wilmore** and **Sunita "Suni" Williams** embarked on a mission initially intended for **eight days** but faced an **extended stay of 286 days** aboard the **International Space Station (ISS)**. This unprecedented duration was primarily due to **technical malfunctions** in the **Boeing Starliner spacecraft**, which was initially intended to return them to Earth.
- Physical and Mental Adjustments:** Prolonged exposure to microgravity led to significant physiological changes, including **muscle atrophy**, **bone density loss**, and **fluid shifts** affecting vision and cardiovascular health. Psychologically, the extended confinement necessitated robust coping mechanisms to maintain mental well-being.
- Spacewalk Record:** During their extended mission, Williams conducted a **spacewalk on January 30, 2025**, surpassing **Peggy Whitson's** record for the most time spent spacewalking by a female astronaut. Williams' cumulative spacewalk time now stands at **62 hours and 6 minutes** over **nine missions**, ranking fourth overall in spacewalk duration.
- Personal Hardships:** The mission's unexpected length led to the astronauts missing significant family events, including **Thanksgiving**, **Christmas**, and personal milestones. Wilmore missed his younger daughter's **senior year** of high school, while Williams was unable to attend family gatherings and events on Earth.

**Williams' Record-Breaking Spacewalk:**

On **January 30, 2025**, during her ninth spacewalk, Williams surpassed Peggy Whitson's record for the most time spent spacewalking by a woman. This achievement highlights her extensive experience and dedication to extravehicular activities (EVAs).



DID YOU KNOW?

Wilmore's First Spacewalk:

Wilmore conducted his first spacewalk of the mission on **January 30, 2025**, alongside Williams. The primary objectives included removing a malfunctioning antenna and inspecting the ISS's exterior for microbial life.

NASA's Commercial Crew Program (CCP):

- **Objective:** Established to develop safe, reliable, and cost-effective crew transportation to and from the International Space Station (ISS) in the post-Space Shuttle era.
- **Contract Awards:** In 2014, NASA awarded development contracts to **SpaceX** and **Boeing**. SpaceX received approximately **\$2.6 billion**, and Boeing up to **\$4.2 billion** for their respective crewed spacecraft programs.

SpaceX Crew Dragon:

- **Development:** SpaceX's Crew Dragon is a variant of the Dragon 2 spacecraft, designed for crewed missions. It features a pressurized capsule with seating for up to seven astronauts and is launched atop a **Falcon 9** rocket.
- **Operational Status:** As of March 2025, Crew Dragon has successfully completed multiple missions, including the Crew-9 flight, which launched on September 28, 2024, for a five-month science mission aboard the ISS.

Boeing Starliner:

- **Development:** The CST-100 Starliner is Boeing's entry, designed to transport crew to low-Earth orbit (LEO). It features a pressurized crew module and an unpressurized service module, accommodating up to seven astronauts.
- **Challenges:**
 - **June 2024:** The Starliner experienced propulsion system anomalies, including **helium leaks** and **thruster failures**, during an uncrewed test flight, leading to mission delays and safety concerns.
 - **September 2024:** A subsequent uncrewed test flight concluded with the capsule landing safely in the New Mexico desert, but without the planned crew, who remained aboard the ISS due to unresolved technical issues.
 - **March 2025:** NASA officials indicated that Boeing's Starliner may require a third uncrewed test flight before being cleared for crewed missions, highlighting ongoing technical and safety challenges.
- **Design and Features:**
 - **Dimensions:** Approximately 4.6 meters in diameter and 5.1 meters in height.
 - **Capacity:** Seats up to seven astronauts.
 - **Safety Features:** Includes multiple propulsion systems, such as Reaction Control System (RCS) and Orbital Maneuvering and Attitude Control (OMAC) thrusters, each providing varying levels of thrust for precise maneuvering and launch escape scenarios.
- **Operational Milestones:** **Orbital Flight Test (August 2024):** An uncrewed test flight that encountered technical issues, including propulsion anomalies, leading to the decision to land the capsule without crew.

SpaceX Crew Dragon

- **Design and Features:**
 - **Dimensions:** Approximately 3.7 meters in diameter and 4.4 meters in height without the service module; up to 7.2 meters with it.
 - **Capacity:** Seats up to seven astronauts.
 - **Safety Features:** Equipped with eight SuperDraco thrusters, each providing 71,000 newtons of thrust, designed for launch escape scenarios.
 - **Recovery:** Terminates missions with a controlled splashdown in the Atlantic Ocean near Florida, utilizing parachutes for safe landing.
- **Operational Milestones:**
 - **Demo-2 Mission (May-August 2020):** First crewed test flight, transporting NASA astronauts Robert Behnken and Douglas Hurley to the ISS.
 - **Crew-1 Mission (November 2020):** First operational mission, delivering astronauts to the ISS for extended missions.

Health of the Astronauts and Environmental Concerns:

- **Space Anaemia:** The prolonged exposure to **microgravity** can lead to health issues like **space anaemia**, where astronauts experience reduced red blood cell counts due to fluid shifts in their body.
- **Cosmic Radiation:** Prolonged space missions expose astronauts to higher levels of **cosmic radiation**, potentially leading to **DNA damage**, which could increase cancer risks over time.
- **Bone Density Loss:** Astronauts also suffer from bone density loss due to the absence of gravity, which can be mitigated with exercise but remains a challenge for long-duration space missions.



MIND MAP

Astronauts: Butch Wilmore, Sunita Williams

- **Returned:** March 18, 2025 (286 days in space)
- **Splashdown:** Gulf of Mexico, near Tallahassee, Florida
- **Capsule:** SpaceX Crew Dragon "Freedom"
- **Others aboard:** Nick Hague, Aleksandr Gorbunov

Human Impact

- **Health Challenges:**
 - Space anaemia (low red blood cell count), Bone density loss, Muscle atrophy, Fluid shift → vision/cardiovascular effects, Exposure to cosmic radiation → DNA damage, cancer risk.
- **Mental Strain:** Prolonged confinement, isolation

Mission Timeline & Events

- **Launch (June 2024):** Boeing Starliner test flight
- **Starliner Issues:** Helium leaks, thruster failures, software glitches, communication problems
- **Transferred to Crew Dragon:** Due to Starliner delays and SpaceX capsule certification hold-ups
- **Extended Stay:** Planned 8 days → 286 days due to return delays

Sunita Williams' Record

- **Spacewalk Record (Women):** 62 hrs 6 min over 9 EVAs
- **Broke record:** Jan 30, 2025
- **Notable Walk:** With Wilmore, removed antenna & inspected exterior

Wilmore's Milestone: First Spacewalk (Mission): Jan 30, 2025

Achievements & Activities

- **Earth Orbits:** 4,576 times
- **Distance Traveled:** 121 million miles (195 million km)
- **Tasks:** Experiments, equipment maintenance, tech tests
- **Public Sensation:** Due to prolonged mission and contributions

SpaceX Crew Dragon

Design:

- Diameter: 3.7 m, Height: 4.4–7.2 m
- Capacity: 7 astronauts
- Safety: 8 SuperDraco thrusters (71,000 N each)
- Recovery: Ocean splashdown near Florida
- **Milestones:**
 - Demo-2 (May–Aug 2020): First crewed test
 - Crew-1 (Nov 2020): First operational mission
 - Crew-9 (Sept 28, 2024): 5-month ISS science mission

Boeing Starliner CST-100

Design:

- Diameter: 4.6 m, Height: 5.1 m
- Capacity: 7 astronauts
- Safety: RCS & OMAC thrusters

Problems:

- **Aug 2024:** Propulsion anomalies during test
- **Sept 2024:** Safe landing without crew
- **March 2025:** Possible need for 3rd uncrewed test

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. How long did NASA astronauts Butch Wilmore and Sunita Williams spend in space before returning to Earth?
 (a) 250 days (b) 320 days (c) 300 days (d) 286 days
2. Which spacecraft did the astronauts return aboard after undocking from the International Space Station (ISS)?
 (a) Boeing CST-100 Starliner
 (b) SpaceX Crew Dragon
 (c) Russian Soyuz
 (d) NASA Orion Capsule
3. When did the NASA astronauts Butch Wilmore and Sunita Williams return to Earth?
 (a) March 18, 2025
 (b) February 28, 2025
 (c) March 10, 2025
 (d) April 1, 2025
4. Which spacecraft did Butch Wilmore and Sunita Williams initially plan to return to Earth aboard?
 (a) SpaceX Crew Dragon
 (b) Boeing CST-100 Starliner
 (c) Soyuz
 (d) Orion Capsule
5. What year did the mission of Butch Wilmore and Sunita Williams begin?
 (a) 2023 (b) 2024 (c) 2025 (d) 2022
6. What was the original duration of the mission before it was extended?
 (a) 10 days (b) 20 days (c) 30 days (d) 8 days
7. How many times did the astronauts orbit Earth during their extended mission?
 (a) 1,500 (b) 2,000 (c) 4,576 (d) 5,000
8. What technical issues delayed the astronauts' return to Earth?
 (a) Fuel shortage
 (b) Thruster failures and helium leaks in the Boeing Starliner
 (c) Spacecraft navigation issues
 (d) Life support system failure
9. How many spacewalks did Sunita Williams complete during her extended mission?
 (a) 5 (b) 7 (c) 9 (d) 12
10. Where did the SpaceX Dragon Freedom capsule carrying the astronauts splash down?
 (a) Atlantic Ocean off the coast of New York
 (b) Indian Ocean off the coast of Australia
 (c) Pacific Ocean off the coast of California
 (d) Gulf of Mexico off the coast of Tallahassee
11. Who were the additional astronauts aboard the SpaceX Dragon Freedom capsule along with NASA astronauts Butch Wilmore and Sunita Williams?
 (a) Michael Hopkins and Kjell N. Lindgren
 (b) Timothy Creamer and Scott Kelly
 (c) Nick Hague and Aleksandr Gorbunov
 (d) Mark Vande Hei and Robert Behnken
12. What physiological effects did the astronauts experience due to prolonged exposure to microgravity?
 (a) Enhanced muscle strength
 (b) Muscle atrophy and bone density loss
 (c) Improved cardiovascular health
 (d) Increased vision clarity
13. On which date did Sunita Williams surpass Peggy Whitson's record for the most time spent spacewalking by a female astronaut?
 (a) January 20, 2025 (b) March 5, 2025
 (c) February 15, 2025 (d) January 30, 2025
14. How much time did Sunita Williams spend in total during her spacewalks by the end of her mission?
 (a) 45 hours and 8 minutes (b) 55 hours and 7 minutes
 (c) 62 hours and 6 minutes (d) 72 hours and 5 minutes
15. What was the main objective of NASA's Commercial Crew Program (CCP)?
 (a) To develop reusable rockets for Mars missions
 (b) To develop safe, reliable, and cost-effective crew transportation to and from the ISS
 (c) To develop robotic spacecraft for deep space exploration
 (d) To build a new space shuttle

ANSWER KEYS & EXPLANATIONS

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

Static Scoop

55th Anniversary of NPT and Indian nuclear programs evolutions and capacity

News Highlights:

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), marking its **55th year on March 5, 2025**, is a significant milestone in global efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons.

- The treaty, approved by the **UN General Assembly on June 12, 1968**, came into force on **March 5, 1970**.
- Its primary objectives include the disarmament of **Nuclear-Weapon States (NWS)**, promoting peaceful nuclear energy use, and preventing the spread of nuclear weapons technology.

What is the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)?

- The **Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)** is a landmark international treaty aimed at preventing the spread of nuclear weapons and promoting peaceful uses of nuclear energy. It was **opened for signature on July 1, 1968**, and entered into **force on March 5, 1970**. The treaty has **191 signatories**, making it one of the most widely accepted arms control agreements in history.
- **Treaty Depositories: Russia, United Kingdom & United States**
- These three countries are responsible for maintaining the treaty and overseeing its obligations.

Objectives of the NPT

Non-Proliferation

- Non-proliferation refers to the **international effort to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons** beyond the **five recognised nuclear-weapon states**, which are the **United States, Russia, China, France, and the United Kingdom**.
- Under the **Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)**, **nuclear-weapon states (NWS)** are prohibited from **transferring nuclear weapons**, nuclear technology, or related materials **to any non-nuclear weapon state (NNWS)**.
- In return, **non-nuclear weapon states are obligated not to acquire or develop nuclear weapons** or related explosive devices under any circumstances.

Disarmament

- All parties to the NPT, including both **nuclear and non-nuclear weapon states**, are committed to actively pursuing efforts aimed at nuclear disarmament.
- According to **Article VI of the NPT**, the recognised nuclear states must negotiate in good faith towards ending the nuclear arms race and achieving complete nuclear disarmament.
- The long-term goal enshrined in the treaty is to **establish a world that is entirely free of nuclear weapons**, ensuring lasting global peace and security.

Peaceful Use of Nuclear Energy

- The NPT affirms that **all signatory states have the right to access nuclear technology** for peaceful purposes, including the generation of energy, medical applications, agriculture, and scientific research.
- The **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)** is the **international body responsible** for verifying that nuclear energy is used strictly for peaceful purposes and not diverted to weapon programs.
- **Developed nations that possess advanced nuclear technology agree to assist developing countries** in acquiring **peaceful nuclear capabilities**, but such assistance must take place under IAEA safeguards to prevent misuse.

History of Nuclear Weapons: Origins and Development

- The idea of nuclear energy was rooted in early 20th-century discoveries in atomic physics, including the understanding of radioactive decay and the concept of nuclear fission.
- Albert Einstein** and **Leo Szilard** developed the **Einstein-Szilard letter** in 1939 to inform President Franklin D. Roosevelt about the potential for creating nuclear weapons, triggering the **Manhattan Project**.
- The Manhattan Project was a top-secret U.S. government research program during World War II, which aimed to build the first nuclear weapons.
- Led by J. Robert Oppenheimer and General Leslie Groves, the project successfully developed the first atomic bomb.

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Who has carried out nuclear tests?

According to the US-based Arms Control Association, at least eight countries have carried out a total of 2,056 nuclear tests since 1945. The United States has conducted just more than half of all tests.

							
US 1,030 tests	USSR/ Russia 715 tests	France 210 tests	UK 45 tests	China 45 tests	N. Korea 6 tests	India 3 tests	Pakistan 2 tests

1945 -

USSR

August 29, 1949:

Conducts the Soviet Union's first nuclear test at the Semipalatinsk Test Site in Kazakhstan.



1950 -



United States

March 1, 1954:

Detonates its largest nuclear test, code-named Castle Bravo.

United States

July 16, 1945:

Conducts the world's first nuclear test explosion, code-named Trinity, over the New Mexico desert.

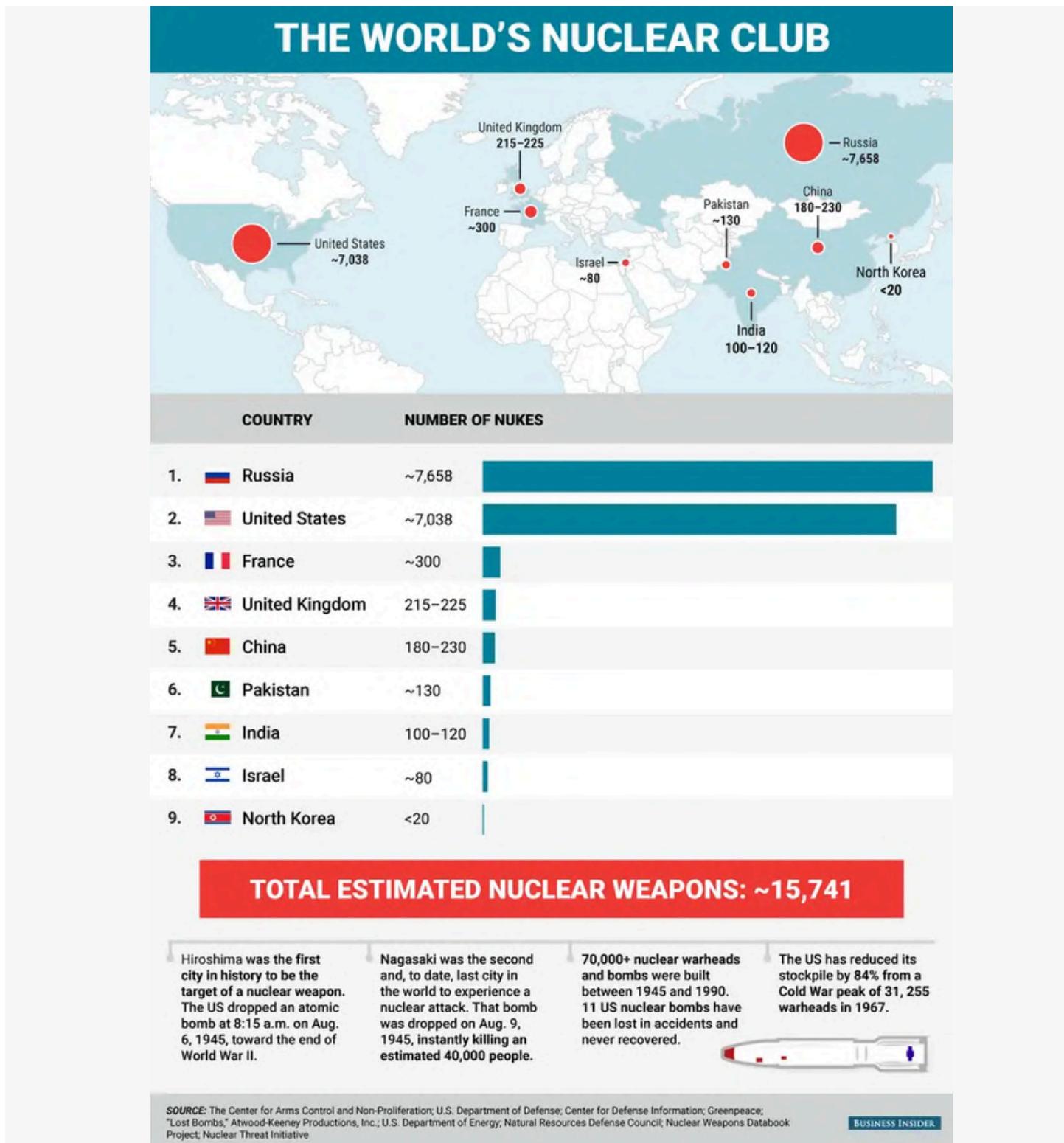
1955 -

United Kingdom

October 3, 1952:

Conducts its first nuclear test over the west coast of Australia.

- The first successful nuclear test, codenamed **Trinity**, occurred on **July 16, 1945**, at the **White Sands Proving Ground** in New Mexico, USA. This test marked the beginning of the nuclear age.
- Hiroshima** was bombed on **August 6, 1945**, with the "**Little Boy**" uranium bomb.
- Nagasaki** was bombed on **August 9, 1945**, with the "**Fat Man**" plutonium bomb.
- These bombings led to Japan's surrender and the end of World War II.



Nuclear Tests in India

- India's nuclear program began in the late **1940s** under the guidance of **Dr. Homi J. Bhabha**, who is regarded as the father of India's nuclear program.
- The primary aim was to harness nuclear energy for **peaceful purposes**, especially for energy production, while maintaining the option for strategic deterrence due to **regional security concerns**.
- India has conducted two sets of nuclear tests, **first in 1974** and then in **1998**, marking critical milestones in its strategic defence capabilities.

First Nuclear Test - Pokhran-I (1974)

- India conducted its first nuclear test on **May 18, 1974**, at the **Pokhran Test Range in Rajasthan**. The operation was codenamed "**Smiling Buddha**".
- It was carried out under the leadership of **Prime Minister Indira Gandhi** and involved the detonation of a **15-kiloton nuclear device**.
- India declared the test as a "peaceful nuclear explosion", but it was a clear demonstration of its nuclear capability.
- The test led to international sanctions, including the **formation of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) in 1975** to restrict nuclear commerce with non-NPT signatories.

Second Nuclear Tests - Pokhran-II (1998)

- The second series of nuclear tests, known as **Pokhran-II**, were conducted between **May 11 and May 13, 1998**, under the leadership of **Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee**.
- A total of five nuclear tests were carried out:
- On **May 11**, India tested **three nuclear devices**: one thermonuclear (hydrogen bomb), one fission bomb, and one sub-kiloton device. On **May 13**, India tested two more sub-kiloton devices.

WHEN THE TESTS HAPPENED

May 18, 1974

India's first nuclear test took place in Pokhran, in the desert state of Rajasthan

May 11 & 13, 1998

Second test. 17 days later, Pak retaliated with its own tests in Chagai Hills of Balochistan

May 1998

Then PM AB Vajpayee declared a voluntary moratorium on tests

HISTORY OF INDIA'S NUCLEAR PROGRAMME

After gaining independence in 1947, then PM Jawaharlal Nehru entrusted the development of the programme to Homi Bhabha. The Atomic Energy Act of 1948 stressed on peaceful development of nuclear energy. The framework for a US-India nuclear deal forms part of the 2005 statement between former PM Manmohan Singh and former US president George Bush

Aug 1, 2008 Board of Governors of IAEA adopts India-specific safeguards agreement

Sept 6, 2008 India gets waiver from guidelines of Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG)

Sept 27, 2008 US House of Representatives approves the Indo-US nuclear deal

Oct 1, 2008 Senate approves the deal with 86 votes for and 13 against

Oct 4, 2008 The White House announces that President Bush will sign the legislation on the deal into a law on October 8

Oct 8, 2008 President Bush signs legislation to enact the landmark US-India civilian nuclear agreement

Oct 10, 2008 The deal is signed between then external affairs minister Pranab Mukherjee and his counterpart, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, in Washington DC.

Introduction to the IAEA

- The **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)** is an independent international organisation that promotes the peaceful use of nuclear energy and seeks to prevent its use for military purposes, including the development of nuclear weapons.
- The IAEA is often referred to as the "**nuclear watchdog**" of the world, playing a central role in verifying compliance with nuclear non-proliferation commitments.

- It was established in **1957**, in response to the “Atoms for Peace” proposal by U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower at the United Nations in 1953.
- The IAEA is **headquartered in Vienna, Austria**, and operates under the **framework of the United Nations**, although it is autonomous in its operations and decision-making.
- As of 2025, the IAEA has **178 member states**.
- It reports to **both the United Nations General Assembly and the UN Security Council** when necessary, especially on issues related to nuclear security and weapons proliferation.
- It was awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize in 2005** along with its then Director-General Mohamed ElBaradei, for efforts to prevent nuclear energy from being used for military purposes.



MIND MAP

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)

- Opened for signature:** July 1, 1968
- Came into force:** March 5, 1970
- Signatories:** 191 countries; **Treaty Depositories:** US, UK, Russia

Objectives:

- Non-Proliferation:** NWS not to transfer nuclear weapons/tech to NNWS
 - NNWS not to acquire/develop nuclear weapons
- Disarmament:** All parties to pursue nuclear disarmament (Article VI)
 - Long-term goal: world free of nuclear weapons
- Peaceful Use of Nuclear Energy:** Right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes
 - Assistance under IAEA safeguards

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

- Established:** 1957 (Atoms for Peace, 1953)
- Headquarters:** Vienna, Austria
- Members (2025):** 178
- Role:** Promote peaceful use, verify non-military use
- Reports to:** UNGA & UNSC
- Award:** Nobel Peace Prize 2005 (with Mohamed ElBaradei)

Pokhran-I (1974):

- Date:** May 18, 1974
- Codename:** Smiling Buddha
- Leader:** PM Indira Gandhi
- Result:** Sanctions, formation of NSG (1975)

History of Nuclear Weapons

- Origins:** Early 20th-century atomic physics
- Einstein-Szilard Letter (1939):** Warned of nuclear weapon potential
- Manhattan Project:** US WWII project, led by Oppenheimer & Groves
- First Test (Trinity):** July 16, 1945, New Mexico

Pokhran-II (1998):

- Dates:** May 11 & 13, 1998
- Leader:** PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee
- Tests:** 5 total (thermonuclear, fission, sub-kiloton devices)

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. When did the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) come into force?
 (a) June 12, 1968 (b) March 5, 1970
 (c) March 5, 2025 (d) June 12, 1970
2. Which organisation approved the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)?
 (a) United Nations Security Council
 (b) World Trade Organisation
 (c) International Atomic Energy Agency
 (d) United Nations General Assembly
3. What is the primary objective of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)?
 (a) Promote nuclear energy production
 (b) Prevent the spread of nuclear weapons technology
 (c) Ensure the use of nuclear weapons in defense
 (d) Increase the number of Nuclear-Weapon States
4. What anniversary did the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) mark on March 5, 2025?
 (a) 55th (b) 50th (c) 60th (d) 70th
5. When was the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) approved?
 (a) June 12, 1966 (b) June 12, 1970
 (c) June 12, 1968 (d) March 5, 1970
6. When was the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) opened for signature?
 (a) July 1, 1966 (b) July 1, 1968
 (c) March 5, 1970 (d) June 12, 1970
7. How many signatories does the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) have?
 (a) 170 (b) 180 (c) 191 (d) 200
8. Which three countries are responsible for maintaining the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)?
 (a) Russia, United Kingdom, United States
 (b) Russia, United States, China
 (c) United States, France, United Kingdom
 (d) Russia, China, France
9. Which international agency is responsible for overseeing the peaceful use of nuclear technology under the NPT?
 (a) World Health Organization (WHO)
 (b) United Nations Security Council (UNSC)
 (c) International Court of Justice (ICJ)
 (d) International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)
10. Under which article of the NPT must nuclear-weapon states not transfer nuclear weapons or technology to non-nuclear weapon states?
 (a) Article I (b) Article III
 (c) Article V (d) Article IX
11. Which article of the NPT calls for negotiations towards disarmament and cessation of the nuclear arms race?
 (a) Article IV (b) Article VI
 (c) Article VII (d) Article IX
12. Which of the following is true about nuclear-weapon states (NWS) according to the NPT?
 (a) NWS are those who tested nuclear weapons after January 1, 1967
 (b) NWS are those who tested nuclear weapons before January 1, 1967
 (c) NWS are restricted from using nuclear energy
 (d) NWS must give up nuclear weapons after 20 years
13. Which article of the NPT allows states to withdraw from the treaty if their national security is threatened?
 (a) Article VI (b) Article VII
 (c) Article IV (d) Article X
14. How often is the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference (RevCon) held?
 (a) Every 5 years (b) Every 3 years
 (c) Every 10 years (d) Every 7 years
15. Who verifies compliance with the NPT for Non-Nuclear Weapon States (NNWS)?
 (a) United Nations Security Council (UNSC)
 (b) International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)
 (c) International Court of Justice (ICJ)
 (d) World Health Organization (WHO)

ANSWER KEYS & EXPLANATIONS

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

Life of VD Savarkar, Prime Minister remembering Sawarkar's role in Freedom Struggle

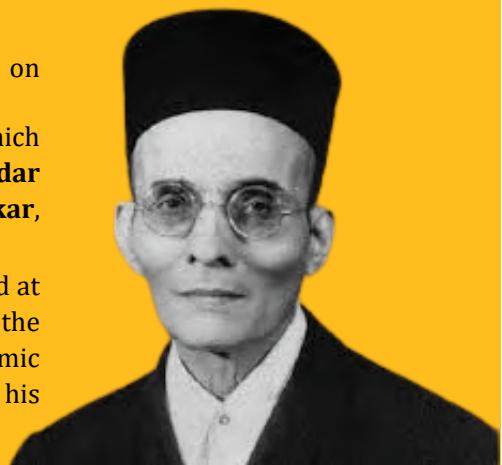
News Highlights:

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Marseille, France, on February 11, 2025, to inaugurate the new Consulate General of India.

- The visit also includes paying homage to **Veer Savarkar**, a prominent freedom fighter, who made a **courageous escape** attempt from this port city during the British colonial rule. Modi's arrival marked the beginning of engagements aimed at strengthening the ties between **India** and **France**.
- Veer Savarkar, one of India's most notable freedom fighters**, attempted an escape from **British captivity on July 8, 1910 in Marseille**. He had been on the **British ship Morea en route to India for trial**.
- Savarkar managed to slip out of the ship's porthole and swam ashore but was captured by French authorities and handed back to the British, leading to a diplomatic controversy. He was later sentenced to life imprisonment at the **Cellular Jail in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands**.

Life of Veer Savarkar

- Birth:** Veer Savarkar, full name **Vinayak Damodar Savarkar**, was born on **May 28, 1883**, in the village of **Bhagur** near Nashik, Maharashtra, India.
- Family Background:** He was born into a **Chitpavan Brahmin family**, which had a long history of social and political involvement. His father, **Damodar Savarkar**, was a well-respected teacher, and his mother, **Radhabai Savarkar**, played a significant role in his early life.
- Education:** Savarkar was an academically inclined student. He first studied at the **Lokmanya Tilak's School** and later pursued his higher education at the **Elphinstone College in Bombay (now Mumbai)**. His early academic interests were focused on history, which significantly shaped his revolutionary ideals.



Groups founded by Savarkar

- Mitra Mela (Founded in 1899):** Mitra Mela was the **first revolutionary organisation** founded by Vinayak Damodar Savarkar at the young age of **16 while he was a student in Nashik**. The group consisted of like-minded young men who pledged to liberate India from British rule through armed revolution and patriotic education.
- Abhinav Bharat Society (Formed in 1904):** In **1904**, Savarkar transformed **Mitra Mela** into a **more structured revolutionary organisation** called the **Abhinav Bharat Society (Young India Society)**, inspired by **Giuseppe Mazzini's Young Italy movement**.
- Members of **Abhinav Bharat** were involved in **the assassination of British officer A.M.T. Jackson in 1909** and **the Curzon Wyllie shooting** in London.
- Hindu Mahasabha (Revived and Led in 1937):** Although not the founder, **Savarkar became the President of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha in 1937** and played a key role in reshaping it into a political platform for Hindutva ideology.
- He used the platform to promote his ideas of **Hindu Rashtra**, the **Two-Nation Theory**, and the cultural and political unity of Hindus.

Revolutionary Activities in India and London

- In **1906**, Savarkar went to **London on a scholarship to study law at Gray's Inn** and continued his revolutionary work there. In London, he became associated with **India House**, a hub for Indian revolutionaries, and inspired young nationalists like **Madan Lal Dhingra**. Savarkar's most influential act during this time was the writing and distribution of the book "**The History of the First War of Indian Independence (1857)**", in which he interpreted the **1857 uprising as a nationalist revolt rather than a mere mutiny**. He also wrote a book "Hindutva: who is Hindu?" in 1923.

- On **July 1, 1909**, **Madan Lal Dhingra**, influenced by the ideology propagated by **Savarkar and India House**, assassinated **Sir William Hutt Curzon Wyllie**, a senior British official, in London.
- Although Savarkar was not directly involved in the act, the British authorities began closely monitoring his activities.
- He was found to be **distributing bomb-making manuals, promoting seditious literature**, and inspiring acts of political violence through Abhinav Bharat's network in India.
- On **March 13, 1910**, Savarkar was **arrested in London** on charges related to his involvement in **revolutionary conspiracies** and the **Jackson assassination in India**.
- He was placed aboard the ship **SS Morea** for deportation to India.
- On **July 8, 1910**, in a daring attempt to escape, **Savarkar** jumped from the ship while it was **docked in Marseilles, France**, and **reached French soil**.
- He was quickly recaptured by **British police with the cooperation of French authorities**, which later led to a **diplomatic controversy known as the Savarkar Case in international law** regarding the legality of his extradition from French territory.
- Upon his return to India, Savarkar was charged in connection with:
 - Conspiracy to wage war against the British Crown
 - Distribution of seditious literature
 - Involvement in the assassinations carried out by **Abhinav Bharat members (including the murder of British collector A.M.T. Jackson in Nashik in 1909)**.
- In 1911, after a trial in the **Bombay Special Tribunal**, **Savarkar was sentenced to two consecutive life imprisonments of 25 years each, totalling 50 years**, on charges of sedition and abetment to murder.
- Savarkar was transferred to the **Cellular Jail in Port Blair, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, in July 1911**, where he endured harsh conditions, including solitary confinement, hard labor, and corporal punishment.
- During his time in jail, he submitted multiple mercy petitions to the British government, including one **in 1911**, in which he promised good behavior and cooperation in exchange for leniency.

Role After Release

- **Release and Exile:** In 1924, after serving over a decade in prison, Savarkar was released under the condition that he would not engage in political activities. He was sent into **exile in Port Blair**, where he remained for several years.
- **Post-Prison Life:** After his release, Savarkar spent time in **London** and other places in Europe. During this period, he continued to write and propagate his nationalist views. He also kept a low profile to avoid British surveillance but was an active voice in the Hindu nationalist movement.

Hindutva and Politics

- **Leader of the Hindu Mahasabha:** In the 1930s, Savarkar became involved with the **Hindu Mahasabha**, where he became a prominent leader. He continued to advocate for **Hindu unity** and **self-defense** against both British rule and Muslim separatism.
- **Opposition to Muslim League:** Savarkar was vocal in his opposition to the **Muslim League** and its demand for a separate Muslim nation, which led to the creation of Pakistan. He argued that India should remain a unified **Hindu nation**, a view that gained support among the Hindu nationalist community but led to controversy and division.
- **Views on Gandhi:** Savarkar's relationship with **Mahatma Gandhi** was complex. Though he initially admired Gandhi's efforts in the struggle for independence, he later distanced himself from Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence. He criticized Gandhi's policy of appeasement toward Muslims and his support for **Khilafat Movement**. His most controversial stance was during the **Quit India Movement** (1942), when he opposed the non-violent approach and was critical of Gandhi's tactics.

Later Years and Death

- **Declining Influence:** After India gained independence in 1947, Savarkar's influence began to wane, and he became more isolated from mainstream political activities. However, he continued to be a strong advocate for Hindu causes and was a vocal critic of the **Nehruvian secularism** and policies of the Indian government.

- **Death:** Veer Savarkar passed away on **February 26, 1966**, in **Mumbai** (then Bombay). He had remained active in promoting his ideas of Hindutva and was widely regarded as a pioneering figure in the **Hindu nationalist movement**.

Legacy and Controversies

- **Hindutva Legacy:** Savarkar's ideas laid the groundwork for the **Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)** and other Hindu nationalist organisations. His **Hindutva** philosophy has influenced many modern-day political figures and parties in India.
- **Criticism:** While he is admired by some for his courage and contribution to the independence movement, others criticise him for his narrow view of nationalism, particularly his emphasis on religious identity. His association with Gandhi's assassination remains a point of contention.
- **Recognition:** Despite controversies, Savarkar has been honoured by many as a **freedom fighter**, with several statues and memorials dedicated to him in India.



MIND MAP

Full Name: Vinayak Damodar Savarkar

- **Born:** May 28, 1883, Bhagur, Nashik, Maharashtra **Died:** February 26, 1966, Mumbai
- **Family:** Chitpavan Brahmin; father – teacher, mother – influential in early life **Education:** Lokmanya Tilak's School, Elphinstone College, later law at Gray's Inn, London

Revolutionary Activities

- **Mitra Mela (1899):** First revolutionary group founded at age 16
- **Abhinav Bharat (1904):** Inspired by Mazzini's Young Italy; linked to Jackson assassination & Curzon Wyllie shooting
- **India House (London):** Hub for revolutionaries; influenced **Madan Lal Dhingra (1909 Wyllie assassination)**
- **Writings:** Book on **1857** revolt as first war of independence; distributed bomb-making manuals
- **Arrested:** March 13, **1910**, in London for revolutionary activities
- **Escape Attempt:** July 8, **1910**, jumped from **SS Morea at Marseille**; recaptured by **French**, handed to British → **led to Savarkar Case in international law**
- **Trial:** Bombay Special Tribunal; sentenced to 2 life terms (50 years) in 1911
- **Cellular Jail:** Port Blair; solitary confinement, hard labor, torture
- **Mercy Petitions:** Submitted multiple, first in 1911 promising good behavior
- **Release:** 1924, after over a decade, with condition to abstain from political activities
- **Post-Release Exile:** Lived in Port Blair, later travelled to Europe, maintained low profile.

Political Role & Ideology

- **Hindu Mahasabha Leader (1937):** Promoted Hindutva, Two-Nation Theory, Hindu Rashtra
- **Opposed:** Muslim League, Gandhi's non-violence, Quit India Movement, Khilafat Movement
- **Views on Gandhi:** Initially admired, later opposed due to appeasement policies
- Critic of Nehruvian secularism post-independence

Legacy & Controversies

- **Hindutva Ideology:** Inspired RSS, modern Hindu nationalist groups
- **Controversial Figure:**
 - Praised for revolutionary courage
 - Criticised for religious nationalism
 - Alleged (but acquitted) link to Gandhi's assassination
- **Recognition:** Memorials, statues across India
- **Recent Tribute:** PM Modi paid homage in Marseille (Feb 11, 2025), site of 1910 escape attempt.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Where did Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurate the new Consulate General of India?
(a) Marseille (b) Paris (c) Lyon (d) Toulouse
 - Which prominent freedom fighter attempted an escape from British captivity in Marseille on July 8, 1910?
(a) Sardar Patel (b) Bhagat Singh
(c) Veer Savarkar (d) Subhas Chandra Bose
 - Who among the following accompanied Prime Minister Modi during the inauguration of the Indian Consulate General?
(a) German Chancellor Olaf Scholz
(b) British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak
(c) French President Emmanuel Macron
(d) Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni
 - When was Veer Savarkar (Vinayak Damodar Savarkar) born?
(a) May 28, 1883 (b) July 14, 1882
(c) December 25, 1884 (d) August 15, 1883
 - What was the family background of Veer Savarkar?
(a) He came from a family of farmers
(b) He was born into a Chitpavan Brahmin family
(c) He belonged to a family of merchants
(d) He was born into a political family
 - Who greatly influenced Veer Savarkar's ideology of Hindu nationalism?
(a) Swami Vivekananda (b) Bal Gangadhar Tilak
(c) Lala Lajpat Rai (d) Subhas Chandra Bose
 - What is the title of the book Veer Savarkar published in 1923?
(a) The History of the First War of Indian Independence
(b) India's Struggle for Independence
(c) The Indian National Movement
(d) Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?
 - Which secret organization did Veer Savarkar join to fight British colonialism?
(a) Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh
(b) Indian National Congress
 - Abhinav Bharat Society
(d) Hindustan Socialist Republican Association
 - What was the failed plot Savarkar was involved in, leading to his arrest in 1909?
(a) Assassination of Lord Curzon
(b) Assassination of W.C. Rand
(c) Assassination of Edward VII
(d) Bombing of the British Parliament
 - Where did Veer Savarkar endure harsh conditions after his arrest?
(a) Andaman Cellular Jail (b) Red Fort
(c) Fort William (d) Alipur Jail
 - In which year was Veer Savarkar released from prison?
(a) 1920 (b) 1924
(c) 1930 (d) 1935
 - What position did Veer Savarkar hold in the Hindu Mahasabha in the 1930s?
(a) General Secretary (b) Founder
(c) Vice President (d) President
 - Which movement did Savarkar criticize due to its non-violent approach and appeasement towards Muslims?
(a) Quit India Movement
(b) Civil Disobedience Movement
(c) Khilafat Movement
(d) Non-Cooperation Movement
 - In which year was Mahatma Gandhi assassinated?
(a) 1946 (b) 1947
(c) 1948 (d) 1950
 - In which of the following years did Veer Savarkar pass away?
(a) 1962 (b) 1963
(c) 1966 (d) 1970

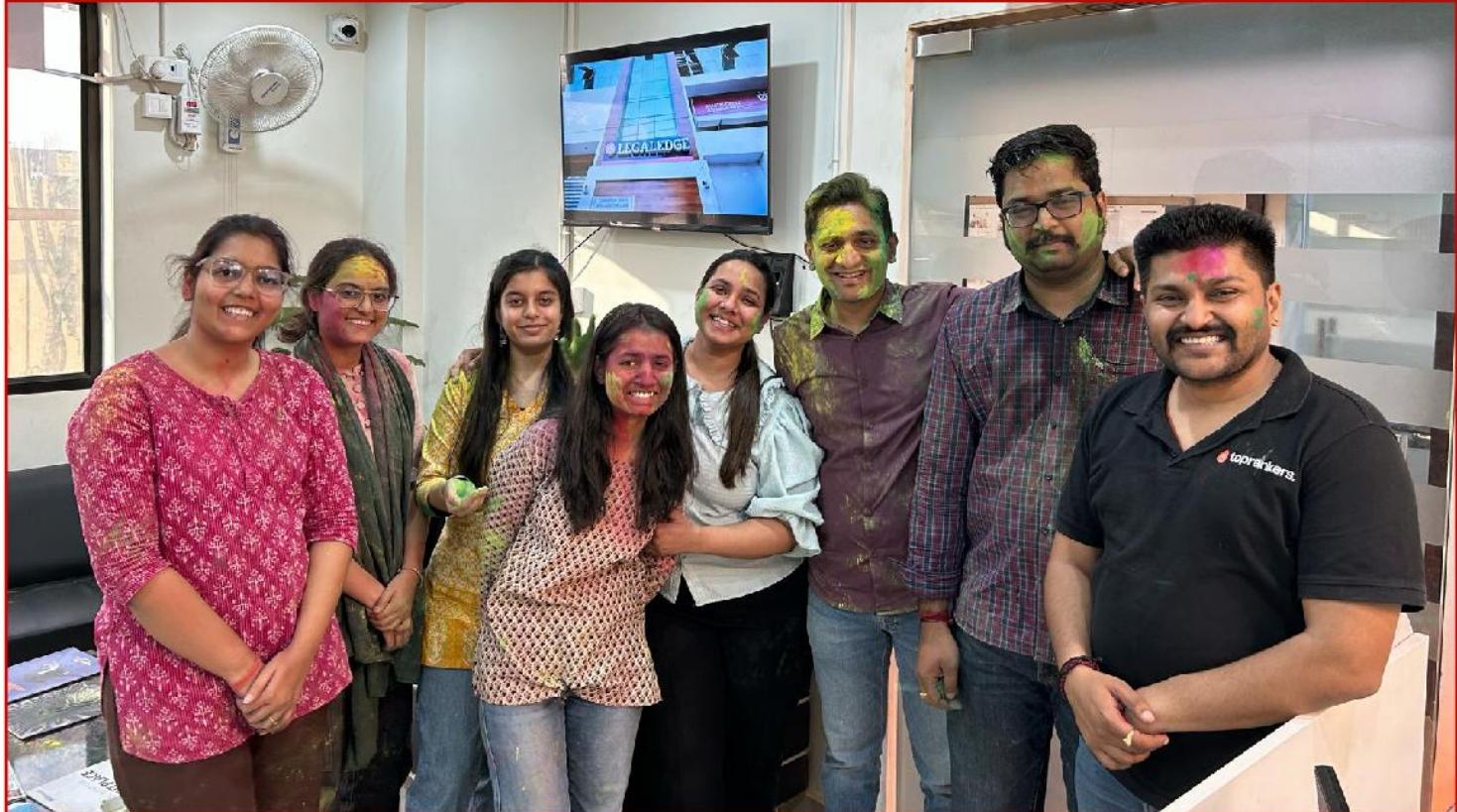
ANSWER KEYS & EXPLANATIONS

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

Holi Celebration at LE BHOPAL



Holi Celebration at LE JODHPUR



Miscellaneous

International Women's Day

News Highlights:

International Women's Day (IWD) is celebrated annually on **March 8** to honor the **social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women** while also advocating for **gender equality**. The day serves as a global platform to **highlight women's contributions**, raise awareness of **gender disparities**, and encourage actions to accelerate progress toward **women's empowerment**.

Overview of International Women's Day

Aspect	Details
Event Name	International Women's Day (IWD) 2025
Date	March 8, 2025
First Observed	1909 (United States), 1911 (Europe)
Theme for 2025	The United Nations has designated the theme "For ALL Women and Girls: Rights. Equality. Empowerment." Concurrently, the International Women's Day organization has adopted the campaign theme "Accelerate Action."
Purpose	Celebrate women's achievements, promote gender equality
Official Colors	Purple (justice), Green (hope), White (purity)

Overview of International Women's Day

- The roots of International Women's Day lie in the **early labor and socialist movements** in the **United States and Europe** during the early 1900s.
- The **first observance of a "Women's Day"** was held in the **United States on February 28, 1909**, organised by the **Socialist Party of America** in honor of the **1908 garment workers' strike in New York**, where women protested for better working conditions and fair wages.
- The idea of an international day to celebrate women's rights was first proposed by **Clara Zetkin**, a German Marxist theorist and women's rights activist, at the **International Socialist Women's Conference** held in **Copenhagen in 1910**.
- Zetkin's proposal was unanimously approved, and the **first International Women's Day** was celebrated on **March 19, 1911**, in several countries including **Germany, Austria, Denmark, and Switzerland**, with rallies and events attended by over **a million people**.



- The date of **8th March** was first associated with International Women's Day in **1914**, when women across **Europe** marked the day with **rallies and demonstrations** calling for women's suffrage and protesting war.
- The date gained **greater significance in 1917** when **Russian women** began a massive strike on **8th March**, demanding "**bread and peace**". This protest played a pivotal role in triggering the **Russian Revolution**.
- After the revolution, the Soviet Union made **8th March an official holiday**, and the date gradually became the **global standard** for International Women's Day.
- In **1975**, the **UN declared the year as "International Women's Year"** and held the **first World Conference on Women in Mexico City**.
- In **1977**, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution urging member states to proclaim a **United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace**, to be observed on any day in accordance with national traditions, though **March 8** was widely accepted.

International Treaties and Conventions for Women Rights

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) – 1979

- The **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)** was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in **1979** and is often referred to as the **international bill of rights for women**.
- It defines what constitutes **discrimination against women** and sets up an agenda for **national action to end such discrimination** in all forms, including in legal, political, economic, and cultural spheres.
- CEDAW obligates signatory states to ensure **equal rights for women** in education, employment, marriage, healthcare, and law.
- As of 2025, over **189 countries have ratified CEDAW**, though some (including the **United States**) have signed but not ratified it.

The Nairobi World Conference on Women – 1985

- The **Third World Conference on Women** was held in **Nairobi, Kenya**, in **1985**, marking the **culmination of the United Nations Decade for Women (1976–1985)**.
- The conference adopted the "**Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women**," a detailed policy framework for governments to improve women's access to education, employment, and healthcare.
- It was the first major global platform that recognized the **diversity of women's experiences** across different regions and emphasized the need for **context-specific strategies** for empowerment.

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action – 1995

- The **Fourth World Conference on Women** took place in **Beijing, China**, in **1995**, and resulted in the **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action**, a landmark global agenda for **women's empowerment**.
- This declaration set out **12 critical areas of concern**, including: Women and poverty, Education and training, Violence against women, Women in armed conflict, Economic and political participation, Health, Media representation, Institutional mechanisms for women's advancement,
- The **Platform for Action** remains one of the most **comprehensive frameworks** for evaluating and advancing gender equality at national and international levels.

International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) – 1994

- Held in **Cairo, Egypt**, in **1994**, the ICPD shifted the global focus from **population control to reproductive health and women's rights**.
- The conference emphasised that **women's empowerment and reproductive health** are central to population and development policies.
- It advocated for **access to family planning, safe motherhood, education for girls**, and the elimination of **gender-based violence**.

UN Security Council Resolution 1325 – 2000

- Adopted in **October 2000**, **UNSC Resolution 1325** was the first resolution to formally recognize the **impact of armed conflict on women and girls**, and the **importance of women's participation in peace processes**.

- It established the **Women, Peace, and Security (WPS)** agenda, urging member states to ensure greater involvement of women in peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and post-conflict recovery.
- It has since been followed by **multiple follow-up resolutions**, strengthening legal obligations to protect women in conflict and post-conflict zones.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - 2015

- Adopted by the United Nations in 2015, the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** includes **Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls**.
- SDG 5 addresses a wide range of issues, including **ending all forms of discrimination and violence, eliminating harmful practices** such as child marriage and FGM, and ensuring **equal access to leadership, resources, and technology**.
- It serves as a **cross-cutting goal**, influencing progress across all other SDGs, from health and education to climate action and economic growth.

Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) - Ongoing

- The **Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)** is a **functional commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)**, established in **1946**.
- It meets annually in **New York** to review progress, identify challenges, and formulate **policy recommendations** on gender equality and the **empowerment of women**.
- The CSW is responsible for **monitoring the implementation** of the Beijing Platform for Action and other global commitments related to women's rights.

Generation Equality Forum - 2021

- The **Generation Equality Forum** was a **global initiative convened by UN Women** in 2021, co-hosted by **Mexico and France**, to mark the **25th anniversary of the Beijing Platform**.
- It launched **concrete commitments and action coalitions** in areas such as **gender-based violence, economic justice, reproductive rights, feminist movements, and tech innovation**.
- It aimed to **accelerate gender equality progress** by mobilizing governments, civil society, youth organizations, and private sector partners.

National Women's Day in India

- **National Women's Day in India** is observed annually on **13th February** to celebrate the **achievements, legacy, and contributions of Indian women**, particularly in the fields of **social reform, politics, and literature**.
- The date commemorates the **birth anniversary of Sarojini Naidu**, a prominent Indian freedom fighter, poet, and the first Indian woman to become the **President of the Indian National Congress** and the **Governor of an Indian state**.
- Sarojini Naidu was born on **13th February 1879** in Hyderabad and became widely known as the "**Nightingale of India**" for her lyrical poetry infused with patriotism, nature, and Indian culture.
- She was a leading figure in **India's struggle for independence**, actively participating in the **Civil Disobedience Movement**, the **Quit India Movement**, and campaigns for **women's rights and education**.
- In 1925, she became the **first Indian woman to preside over the Indian National Congress**, and after independence, she served as the **first female Governor of Uttar Pradesh**.



Key Female Revolutionaries in India:

1. Savitribai Phule (1831–1897)

- Savitribai Phule was a pioneer of **women's education in India** and is widely regarded as the first female teacher of India.
- In **1848**, along with her husband Jyotirao Phule, she co-founded India's first **school for girls in Bhidewada, Pune**, marking a revolutionary step at a time when women's education was considered taboo.
- She actively promoted **education for girls from all castes**, including **Dalits and marginalised communities**, challenging Brahmanical patriarchy and caste oppression.
- Savitribai also worked tirelessly to **eradicate untouchability, oppose child marriage, and support widow remarriage**—issues deeply rooted in 19th-century Indian society.
- She started the **Home for the Prevention of Infanticide, offering shelter and support for pregnant widows** who were otherwise abandoned or forced to commit suicide.



2. Pandita Ramabai Saraswati (1858–1922)

- Pandita Ramabai was a **social reformer, scholar, and feminist**, who advocated strongly for the **rights of widows and women's education**.
- In **1882**, she founded the **Arya Mahila Samaj** in Pune to **promote women's education and social reform**, especially targeting upper-caste Hindu society.
- She challenged oppressive practices like **child marriage, the lack of education for women**, and the **marginalization of widows**.
- Later, she founded the **Mukti Mission** at **Kedgaon, near Pune**, providing shelter, education, and vocational training to **widows, destitute women, and orphans**, including child widows rescued from famine-stricken regions.
- Ramabai also translated religious texts and advocated for **women's literacy in Indian languages**.



3. Chandraprabha Saikiani (1901–1972)

- Chandraprabha Saikiani was a leading **social reformer and educationist from Assam**, known for her commitment to **women's rights and education**.
- At the age of **13**, she **founded a school for girls** in her village, defying deeply entrenched social norms that opposed female education.
- She actively **spoke at public gatherings**, challenging practices like **child marriage, polygamy, and the denial of education to women**.
- In **1925**, she became the **first woman to address the Indian National Congress session in Assam**, demanding equal rights for women.
- She also played a pivotal role in founding the **Assam Pradeshik Mahila Samiti**, which worked for women's empowerment and legal reforms.



4. Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain (1880–1932)

- Begum Rokeya, also known as Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain, was a **pioneering Muslim feminist, educator, and writer** from Bengal.
- She is best known for her **novella "Sultana's Dream" (1905)**, a feminist utopia that imagined a world where **women ruled and men were confined to the private sphere**.
- In **1909**, she established the **Sakhawat Memorial Girls' School** in **Bhagalpur**, and in **1911**, she re-established it in **Kolkata**, providing **modern education to Muslim girls**, a radical step at that time.
- Through her writing and activism, she **challenged purdah, promoted scientific and rational thinking**, and **encouraged female literacy** among Muslims.



5. Sarala Ray (1861–1946)

- Sarala Ray** (also known as **Sister Nivedita's associate in education**) was a **pioneer of women's education in Bengal**.
- In **1920**, she founded the **Gokhale Memorial Girls' School** in Kolkata, promoting **holistic education** for girls in both academics and cultural training.
- She further extended her educational efforts by establishing the **Gokhale Memorial Girls' College in 1938**, ensuring **access to higher education** for women at a time when it was still rare.
- Sarala Ray was also deeply involved in **social and educational reform**, encouraging **intellectual independence and confidence** among young Indian women.

**PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

- When is International Women's Day celebrated?
 - (a) March 8
 - (b) March 10
 - (c) March 12
 - (d) March 15
- What is the United Nations theme for International Women's Day 2025?
 - (a) "Break the Bias"
 - (b) "Empower Her Future"
 - (c) "For ALL Women and Girls: Rights. Equality. Empowerment."
 - (d) "Each for Equal"
- Which campaign theme has been adopted by the International Women's Day organisation for 2025?
 - (a) "Choose to Challenge"
 - (b) "Accelerate Action"
 - (c) "Empower Women Now"
 - (d) "Strong Women Strong World"
- What are the official colors of International Women's Day?
 - (a) Red, Yellow, and Blue
 - (b) Orange, White, and Black
 - (c) Purple, Green, and White
 - (d) Blue, Green, and Violet
- When was International Women's Day first observed in the United States and Europe?
 - (a) 1920 (US), 1925 (Europe)
 - (b) 1909 (US), 1911 (Europe)
 - (c) 1895 (US), 1900 (Europe)
 - (d) 1910 (US), 1912 (Europe)
- Which of the following countries observes International Women's Day as a public holiday?
 - (a) India
 - (b) United States
 - (c) United Kingdom
 - (d) Russia
- When was the first observance of a "Women's Day" held in the United States?
 - (a) March 8, 1908
 - (b) February 28, 1909
 - (c) March 19, 1910
 - (d) February 28, 1911
- Who proposed the idea of an International Women's Day?
 - (a) Simone de Beauvoir
 - (b) Emmeline Pankhurst
 - (c) Clara Zetkin
 - (d) Eleanor Roosevelt
- In which year was the first International Women's Day celebrated?
 - (a) 1909
 - (b) 1911
 - (c) 1914
 - (d) 1917
- When was March 8 first officially associated with International Women's Day?
 - (a) 1914
 - (b) 1913
 - (c) 1911
 - (d) 1917
- Which country made March 8 an official holiday after a major women-led protest in 1917?
 - (a) Germany
 - (b) France
 - (c) Soviet Union
 - (d) United Kingdom
- What event did the 1908 garment workers' strike in New York inspire?
 - (a) The first Women's Day observance in the U.S.
 - (b) The formation of the Socialist Party of America
 - (c) The UN World Conference on Women
 - (d) Women's labor union legislation
- In which year did the United Nations first declare an International Women's Year?
 - (a) 1975
 - (b) 1977
 - (c) 1980
 - (d) 1965
- Which UN convention is often referred to as the "international bill of rights for women"?
 - (a) CEDAW
 - (b) Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
 - (c) Convention on the Rights of the Child
 - (d) Convention on the Political Rights of Women

ANSWER KEYS & EXPLANATIONS

1. (a) 2. (c) 3. (b) 4. (c) 5. (b) 6. (d) 7. (b) 8. (c)
9. (b) 10. (a) 11. (c) 12. (a) 13. (a) 14. (d) 15. (c) 16. (a)
17. (b) 18. (c) 19. (d) 20. (c)

Parent Teacher Meeting at LE JAIPUR



Parent Teacher Meeting at LE LUCKNOW



Champions Trophy 2025

News Highlights:

India's cricket team secured a record-extending third ICC Champions Trophy title by defeating New Zealand in the final of the 2025 ICC Champions Trophy held in Dubai. India clinched the title with a 4-wicket win, marking the end of a 12-year wait since their last victory in 2013.

ICC Champions Trophy 2025

Teams & Qualification Process



India



New Zealand



Australia



South Africa



Afghanistan



Pakistan



Bangladesh



England

Prize Money



**\$6.9
Million**



ICC
**CHAMPIONS
TROPHY**

The total prize pool for the 2025 Champions Trophy was \$6.9 million, a 53% increase from the 2017 edition. The champions received \$2.24 million, while the runners-up took home \$1.12 million. Semi-finalists received \$560,000 each.



Winner: India First Runner-up: New Zealand
Semi-finalists: Australia & South Africa

India's Record in ICC Tournaments

ICC Titles: Seven (Total)
2 World Cups (1983, 2011)
3 Champions Trophies (2002, 2013, 2025)
2 T20 World Cups (2007, 2024).

Rohit Sharma: With this win, Rohit Sharma became only the second Indian captain after **MS Dhoni** to win multiple ICC trophies, further cementing his legacy in Indian cricket history.



Qualification:

The 2025 Champions Trophy qualification was based on the 2023 ICC Men's Cricket World Cup results. Teams finishing in the top eight in the World Cup secured their spot in the Champions Trophy, unlike previous editions where rankings determined qualification.

Key awards and their recipients

Award	Recipient	Team	Performance Highlights
Player of the Tournament	Rachin Ravindra	New Zealand	Scored 251 runs at an average of 62.75, including two centuries; also contributed as a spin bowler.
Player of the Match (Final)	Rohit Sharma	India	Captain's knock of 76 runs off 83 balls in the final against New Zealand
Golden Bat (Most Runs)	Rachin Ravindra	New Zealand	Accumulated 263 runs throughout the tournament, making him the leading run-scorer.
Golden Ball (Most Wickets)	Matt Henry	New Zealand	Took 10 wickets at an average of 16.7, including a five-wicket haul.

Tournament Host & India's Security Concerns

The 2025 ICC Champions Trophy was co-hosted by **Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates (UAE)**, with India's matches specifically held in **Dubai** due to **security concerns and political tensions between India and Pakistan**.

The 2025 ICC Champions Trophy faced significant adjustments due to India's security concerns and political tensions with Pakistan.

- **Security Concerns:** India **declined** to play matches in Pakistan, the original host nation, citing security issues and political tensions.
- **Hybrid Hosting Model:** To accommodate India's participation, the International Cricket Council (ICC) implemented a hybrid model, scheduling all of India's matches at the **Dubai International Cricket Stadium** in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).
- **Tournament Schedule:** While other teams competed across various venues in **Pakistan—Karachi, Lahore, and Rawalpindi—India played exclusively in Dubai**.
- **Security Alerts:** Concerns were further heightened when **Pakistan's Intelligence Bureau** reported potential terror threats targeting **foreign guests** during the tournament, underscoring the security challenges that influenced India's decision.

International Cricket Council (ICC)

The International Cricket Council (ICC), established in **1909**, is cricket's global governing body.

Headquartered in **Dubai**, it comprises **108 member nations**, including **12 Full Members** authorized to play Test matches. The ICC organizes major tournaments like the **Cricket World Cup, T20 World Cup, and Champions Trophy**, and oversees international cricket regulations, appoints match officials, and enforces the sport's code of conduct. As of 2025, **Jay Shah** serves as the ICC Chairman.

ICC Champions Trophy: History

- The ICC Champions Trophy began as the **ICC Knockout in 1998** in Dhaka, Bangladesh, and was renamed in **2002**. It was held **biennially until 2009**, and then every four years.
- The format features **8 teams, split into 2 groups of 4**. Each team plays the others in its group once; the top 2 teams from each group advance to semi-finals, followed by a final. As of March 2025, the tournament has been **held 9 times**.
- **Most Wins:** India – 3 titles (2002 [joint], 2013, 2025), Australia – 2 titles (2006, 2009)

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. How did India secure victory against New Zealand in the final of the 2025 ICC Champions Trophy held in Dubai?

(a) 25-run win (b) 6-wicket win
 (c) 4-wicket win (d) Super Over
2. With the 2025 ICC Champions Trophy win, what is the total number of ICC titles India has won in its cricketing history?

(a) Seventh (b) Sixth
 (c) Fifth (d) Eighth
3. Which global cricket tournament, originally launched as the ICC Knockout in 1998, was renamed in 2002?

(a) ICC Super Series
 (b) ICC World Test Championship
 (c) ICC T20 World Cup
 (d) ICC Champions Trophy
4. Since 2009, what has been the scheduling cycle of the ICC Champions Trophy, after previously being held every two years?

(a) Four-year (b) Three-year
 (c) Biennial (d) Five-year
5. What was the total prize pool for the 2025 ICC Champions Trophy, marking a 53% increase from the 2017 edition?

(a) \$5.2 million (b) \$6.9 million
 (c) \$4.8 million (d) \$7.5 million
6. With India's win in the 2025 ICC Champions Trophy under Rohit Sharma, he became only the second Indian captain after whom to win multiple ICC trophies?

(a) Sourav Ganguly (b) Virat Kohli
 (c) MS Dhoni (d) Kapil Dev
7. How many member nations are represented by the International Cricket Council (ICC), the global governing body of cricket?

(a) 92 (b) 98 (c) 100 (d) 108
8. During the 2025 ICC Champions Trophy, which Indian cricketer appealed to the ICC to lift the ban on using saliva to shine the cricket ball?

(a) Jasprit Bumrah (b) Mohammad Shami
 (c) Ravindra Jadeja (d) Hardik Pandya
9. Which country won the inaugural ICC KnockOut (now Champions Trophy) held in 1998 in Bangladesh?

(a) South Africa (b) West Indies
 (c) India (d) Pakistan
10. Rachin Ravindra, who was named Player of the Tournament in the 2025 ICC Champions Trophy, represented which country?

(a) Australia (b) England
 (c) New Zealand (d) South Africa
11. Who was named Player of the Match in the final of the 2025 ICC Champions Trophy for his crucial 76-run innings against New Zealand?

(a) Shubman Gill (b) Rohit Sharma
 (c) Rachin Ravindra (d) Mohammed Siraj
12. Who won the Golden Ball for taking the most wickets in the 2025 ICC Champions Trophy?

(a) Matt Henry (b) Mohammed Siraj
 (c) Jasprit Bumrah (d) Trent Boult

ANSWER KEYS & EXPLANATIONS

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

97th Academy Awards

News Highlights:

The 97th Academy Awards, commonly known as the **Oscars 2025**, were held on **March 2, 2025**, at the **Dolby Theatre** in **Hollywood, Los Angeles**. The ceremony honored films released in 2024 and was hosted by comedian **Conan O'Brien**.

THE 97TH ACADEMY AWARDS 2025

Best Picture
Anora

Director
Sean Baker, Anora

Actor
Adrien Brody, The Brutalist

Actress
Mikey Madison, Anora

Supporting Actor
Kieran Culkin, A Real Pain

Supporting Actress
Zoe Saldaña, Emilia Pérez

Animated Feature Film
Flow

Animated Short Film
In the Shadow of the Cypress

International Feature Film
I'm Still Here (Brazil)

Original Screenplay
Anora, Sean Baker

Adapted Screenplay
Conclave, Peter Straughan

Production Design
Wicked

**and the
Oscar
goes to...**



Cinematography
The Brutalist, Lol Crawley

Costume Design
Wicked, Paul Tazewell

Film Editing
Anora, Sean Baker

Documentary Feature Film
No Other Land

Documentary Short Film
The Only Girl in the Orchestra

Original Score
The Brutalist, Daniel Blumberg

Original Song
El Mal, from Emilia Pérez

Makeup and Hairstyling
The Substance

Live Action Short Film
I'm Not a Robot

Sound
Dune: Part Two

Visual Effects
Dune: Part Two

Key Highlights

- **Anora's Historic Victory: Best Picture, Best Director** (Sean Baker), **Best Actress** (Mikey Madison), **Best Film Editing**, and **Best Original Screenplay**. The film was a clear front-runner, taking home five Oscars out of six nominations.
- **Adrien Brody's Win: Best Actor** for his portrayal of László Tóth in *The Brutalist*, marking his second Academy Award.
- **Zoe Saldaña's Triumph: Best Supporting Actress** for her role in *Emilia Pérez*, earning her first-ever Oscar.
- **Other Notable Winners: No Other Land**, a documentary about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, won **Best Documentary Feature**. *Dune: Part Two* claimed **Best Sound** and **Best Visual Effects** awards.
- **Indian Setback: Anuja**, directed by Adam J Graves and backed by **Priyanka Chopra Jonas**, **Guneet Monga**, and **Mindy Kaling**, lost the Oscar for **Best Live Action Short Film** to *I'm Not a Robot*.
- The tribute to **Los Angeles firefighters**, who battled the **Southern California wildfires**, also underscored the Academy's support for public services.
- The **Oscar's global influence** on box office performance is evident, with films like *Wicked* grossing over **\$472 million** in North America, surpassing the earnings of other nominees combined. This showcases the economic power of films featured at the Oscars.
- **Whoopi Goldberg** and **Oprah Winfrey** paid tribute to **Quincy Jones**, a legend in music and entertainment, further merging the worlds of music and film.

Other Highlights of the Event

Anora's Triumph at the 2025 Oscars

- **Historic Wins:** *Anora*, directed by **Sean Baker**, secured **five Academy Awards**, including **Best Picture**, **Best Director**, **Best Actress** for **Mikey Madison**, **Best Original Screenplay**, and **Best Film Editing**. This achievement marked *Anora* as the fourth film to win both the **Palme d'Or** at the Cannes Film Festival and the **Best Picture** Oscar, following *The Lost Weekend*, *Marty*, and *Parasite*.
- **Budget and Production:** Made on a modest budget of **\$6 million**, *Anora* demonstrated that compelling storytelling could achieve critical acclaim without major studio backing. Director Sean Baker's multifaceted involvement—writing, producing, directing, and editing—highlighted the impact of visionary leadership in independent cinema.
- **Industry Recognition:** The film's success underscored the growing appreciation for independent films within the industry, encouraging studios and investors to consider supporting diverse and unconventional narratives.

James Bond Tribute at the Oscars

- **Celebration of Legacy:** The 2025 Oscars featured a tribute to the **James Bond** franchise, acknowledging its longstanding cultural impact and the recent contributions of producers **Barbara Broccoli** and **Michael G. Wilson**.
- **Notable Performances:** *BLACKPINK's Lisa* became the first K-pop artist to perform at the Oscars, delivering a rendition of "Live and Let Die." *Doja Cat* and *Raye* also contributed performances of "Diamonds Are Forever" and "Skyfall," respectively. These acts highlighted the Oscars' openness to diverse musical genres and artists.
- **Cultural Integration:** Incorporating artists like Lisa into the Oscars not only reflected the globalization of popular culture but also demonstrated the blending of traditional Hollywood with international music scenes, potentially attracting a broader and more diverse audience.

"No Other Land" and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

- **Documentary Overview:** "**No Other Land**" is a collaborative project by Palestinian activist **Basel Adra** and Israeli journalist **Yuval Abraham**. The film documents the displacement of Palestinian communities in the Masafer Yatta region of the West Bank, where Israeli forces have demolished homes to establish military training zones. Filming occurred between **2019 and 2023**, culminating in its premiere at the **2024 Berlin International Film Festival**, where it won the **Berlinale Documentary Award**.
- **Oscar Recognition:** At the 2025 Academy Awards, "**No Other Land**" secured the Oscar for **Best Documentary Feature**. During their acceptance speech, Adra and Abraham addressed the audience, highlighting the ongoing struggles faced by Palestinians and advocating for political solutions that recognize the national rights of both Palestinians and Israelis.

Mikey Madison's Advocacy for the Sex Worker Community

- **Role in "Anora":** Mikey Madison portrayed Anora, a character inspired by real-life experiences of sex workers, in the film "Anora." Her performance was lauded for its depth and authenticity.
- **Acceptance Speech:** Upon receiving the Oscar for Best Actress, Madison used her platform to express solidarity with the sex worker community. She stated, "I want to again recognise the sex worker community. I will continue to support and be an ally."

Adrien Brody's Stand Against Discrimination

- **Role in "The Brutalist":** Adrien Brody's portrayal of László Tóth in "The Brutalist" earned him the Oscar for Best Actor. The film delves into themes of **identity and societal challenges**.
- **Acceptance Speech:** In his speech, Brody addressed the audience, reflecting on personal and societal issues. He emphasized the importance of confronting and addressing hate in all its forms, advocating for a more inclusive and compassionate world.

Oscar Statuette Resale Restrictions

- **Academy's Resale Policy:** Since the 1950s, the **Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS)** has enforced strict regulations on the resale of Oscar statuettes. Award winners are prohibited from selling their Oscars without first offering them back to the Academy for a nominal fee of **\$1**. This policy aims to preserve the integrity and prestige of the award, preventing the statuettes from becoming commodities in the marketplace.
- **Legal Precedents:** In 1989, the Academy successfully obtained a permanent injunction to prevent the sale of **Michael Todd's Oscar**, reinforcing the enforceability of its resale restrictions. Similarly, in 1992, **Harold Russell's** decision to auction his Oscar led to significant controversy and highlighted the Academy's commitment to controlling the distribution of its awards.
- **Controversial Exclusions:** The 2025 Oscars' "In Memoriam" segment faced criticism for omitting several notable figures who passed away in the previous year. Notably, **Michelle Trachtenberg**, who died on February 26, 2025, was excluded, sparking outrage among fans and colleagues. Other significant omissions included **Shannen Doherty**, **Tony Todd**, **Olivia Hussey**, and **Martin Mull**.
- **Academy's Selection Process:** The selection of individuals honored in the "In Memoriam" segment is managed by an executive committee comprising members from the Academy's 19 branches. This committee prioritizes individuals who have won or been nominated for major awards, such as Oscars, Governors Awards, or Scientific and Technical Awards. This prioritization often leads to the exclusion of other deserving individuals, resulting in public dissatisfaction.
- **Public Reaction:** The exclusion of these figures led to significant public outcry. For instance, actress **Jennie Garth** publicly criticised the Academy for omitting Shannen Doherty, referring to the exclusion as "messed up" and suggesting that the Academy should issue an apology. Fans and industry professionals alike expressed their disappointment, highlighting the emotional weight such omissions carry within the entertainment community.

The Academy Awards: An Overview

- The **Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS)** is a **professional honorary organization** established to **advance the arts and sciences of motion pictures**.
- AMPAS is best known globally for organizing the **Academy Awards**, popularly known as the **Oscars**, which honor outstanding achievements in the film industry.
- The Academy was **founded on May 11, 1927**, in **Los Angeles, California**, by **36 industry professionals**, including iconic figures like **Louis B. Mayer**, the head of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM).
- The Academy is composed of over **10,000 members (as of 2024)**, who are divided into **17 branches**, each representing a **different craft or discipline within the film industry** (e.g., actors, directors, producers, editors, costume designers, etc.).



- Each branch votes on its own category of the Oscars (e.g., actors vote for Best Actor), while all members vote for **Best Picture**.
- The **Academy Museum of Motion Pictures**, located in **Los Angeles**, was opened to the public in **September 2021**.
- It is the **largest institution in the United States** devoted to the **history, science, and cultural impact of filmmaking**.
- The museum includes exhibits, film screenings, educational programs, and showcases iconic items such as **Oscar statuettes**, scripts, costumes, and props.
- The Academy is governed by a **Board of Governors**, with representatives from each branch.
- The **President of AMPAS** is elected from among the Board members and serves a **one-year term**, renewable once.
- The Academy's **Chief Executive Officer (CEO)** oversees day-to-day operations, including the production of the Oscars.

Interesting Facts about the Oscars

- **Longest Ceremony:** The longest Academy Awards ceremony lasted for **4 hours and 23 minutes** in **2002**.
- **Youngest Winner:** **Tatum O'Neal**, at **10 years old**, remains the youngest-ever Oscar winner for **Best Supporting Actress** for her role in *Paper Moon* (1973).
- **Most Oscars Won:** **Walt Disney** holds the record for the most Oscars won by an individual, with **22 Academy Awards**.
- **Most Awards for a Film:** *Ben-Hur* (1959), *Titanic* (1997), and *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* (2003) each won **11 Oscars**.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

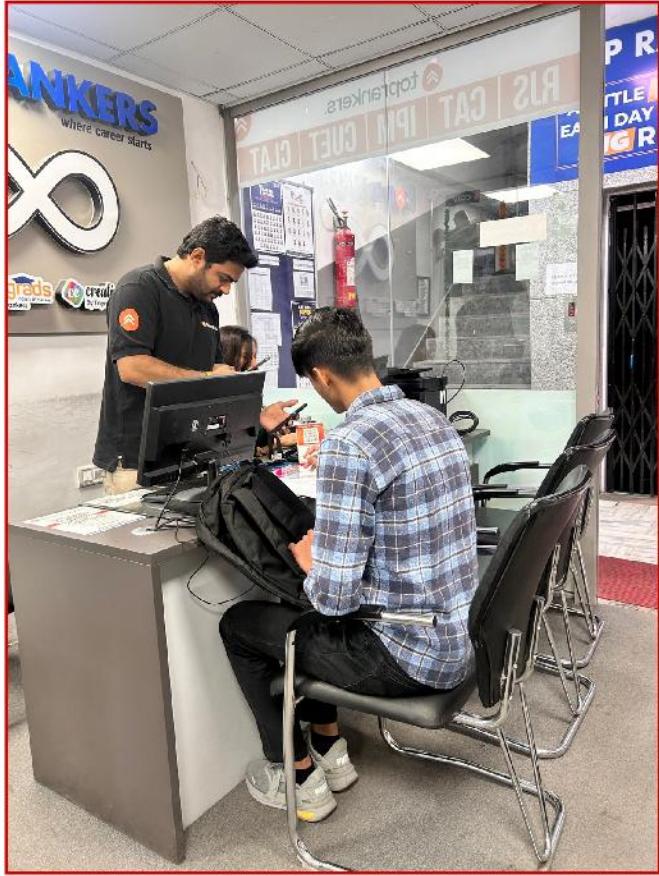
1. Which film emerged as a major winner at the Oscars by securing five awards, including Best Picture, Best Director, Best Actress, Best Film Editing, and Best Original Screenplay?
 (a) Oppenheimer (b) Anora
 (c) Poor Things (d) Maestro
2. Who won the Best Actor award for portraying László Tóth in *The Brutalist*, marking his second Academy Award?
 (a) Cillian Murphy (b) Bradley Cooper
 (c) Adrien Brody (d) Paul Giamatti
3. Who won the Oscar for Best Supporting Actress for her role in *Emilia Pérez*?
 (a) Viola Davis (b) Sandra Bullock
 (c) Jennifer Lawrence (d) Zoe Saldaña
4. Which documentary based on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict won the Oscar for Best Documentary Feature?
 (a) Gaza Fights for Freedom (b) The Present
 (c) No Other Land (d) 5 Broken Cameras
5. Which film won the Oscars for both Best Sound and Best Visual Effects?
 (a) Dune: Part Two (b) Oppenheimer
 (c) The Creator (d) Avatar: The Way of Water
6. Which Indian-backed short film lost the Oscar for Best Live Action Short Film?
 (a) Anuja (b) Night of Knowing Nothing
 (c) The White Lotus (d) The Elephant Whisperers
7. Which short film won the Oscar for Best Live Action Short Film?
 (a) The Long Goodbye (b) The Letter Room
 (c) I'm Not a Robot (d) Skin
8. Who were among the producers backing the short film *Anuja*?
 (a) Mira Nair and Deepa Mehta
 (b) Priyanka Chopra Jonas and Guneet Monga
 (c) Zoya Akhtar and Farhan Akhtar
 (d) Ritesh Batra and Nandita Das

9. What did the Academy pay tribute to during the Oscars, reflecting its support for public services?
(a) U.S. postal workers (b) Los Angeles firefighters
(c) Healthcare workers (d) Police personnel
10. What milestone did the film Wicked achieve in relation to other Oscar-nominated films?
(a) First to stream on Netflix
(b) Lowest budget among nominees
(c) Grossed over \$472 million in North America
(d) Only musical nominated
11. Who were the two major entertainment personalities that paid tribute to Quincy Jones at the Oscars?
(a) Beyoncé and Jay-Z
(b) Ellen DeGeneres and Steve Martin
(c) Tom Hanks and Meryl Streep
(d) Whoopi Goldberg and Oprah Winfrey
12. Mikey Madison won the Best Actress Oscar in 2025 for which film?
(a) Poor Things (b) Anora
(c) Anatomy of a Fall (d) Barbie
13. Anora became the fourth film to win both the Palme d'Or and the Best Picture Oscar after which of the following films?
(a) The Godfather, Moonlight, The Artist
(b) Slumdog Millionaire, Spotlight, 1917
(c) Birdman, Roma, CODA
(d) The Lost Weekend, Marty, Parasite
14. What iconic film franchise was honored with a tribute at the 2025 Oscars?
(a) Star Wars (b) The Godfather
(c) James Bond (d) Harry Potter
15. Who became the first K-pop artist to perform at the Oscars in 2025?
(a) Lisa (b) Jungkook
(c) Jisoo (d) RM
16. Which artists performed alongside Lisa during the James Bond tribute at the Oscars?
(a) Billie Eilish and Adele
(b) Doja Cat and Raye
(c) Beyoncé and SZA
(d) Olivia Rodrigo and H.E.R.
17. Who collaborated with Palestinian activist Basel Adra on the documentary No Other Land?
(a) Yuval Abraham
(b) Shireen Abu Akleh
(c) Ari Folman
(d) Joseph Cedar
18. What region does No Other Land focus on in documenting displacement and demolitions?
(a) Gaza Strip (b) Golan Heights
(c) Masafer Yatta (d) East Jerusalem
19. Which international film festival awarded No Other Land the Berlinale Documentary Award in 2024?
(a) Venice (b) Cannes
(c) Sundance (d) Berlin
20. What social group did Mikey Madison express solidarity with during her Oscar acceptance speech?
(a) Sex worker community
(b) Refugees
(c) LGBTQ+ community
(d) Homeless veterans

ANSWER KEYS & EXPLANATIONS

- | | | | | | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1. (b) | 2. (c) | 3. (d) | 4. (c) | 5. (a) | 6. (a) | 7. (c) | 8. (b) |
| 9. (b) | 10. (c) | 11. (d) | 12. (b) | 13. (d) | 14. (c) | 15. (a) | 16. (b) |
| 17. (a) | 18. (c) | 19. (d) | 20. (a) | | | | |

CLATathon At LE JAIPUR



How to Kickstart Your CLAT Preparation After School Exams Are Over

- ❖ So, your school exams are done! Whether you've wrapped up your 10th, 11th, or 12th exams, now's the perfect time to focus on something big — CLAT! But hey, before you dive in, let's take a moment to understand where you stand because everyone's journey is different.
- ❖ Let's break it down into three types of students — you might fit into one of these categories, or maybe a mix of them!



The CLAT 2027 Superstar (You've Just Completed Your 10th)

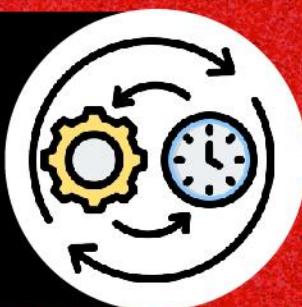
- ❖ First of all — take a deep breath. You've got time on your side! You're moving into 11th grade, and trust me, that's a game-changer.
- ❖ Here's your golden rule: Start building your foundation early. You don't need to stress about CLAT just yet, but you can start getting familiar with the basics.

- ❖ **Develop a Reading Habit:** Start with newspapers (The Hindu, Indian Express), magazines, and general knowledge books. It'll help you with the reading section and improve your vocabulary.



- ❖ **Start with the Basics :** For now, focus on developing a solid understanding of English, Logical Reasoning, and basic Legal Principles. Maybe look for some introductory study material & coaching or refer to some Free Resources like YouTube Videos, Educational Blogs etc. to kickstart your prep.

- ❖ **Consistency > Intensity :** At this stage, it's not about hardcore prep, but rather setting the tone. Dedicate a bit of time daily to CLAT-related material and increase the time gradually.



The CLAT 2026 Dreamer (You've Completed Your 12th and Taking a Drop)

Okay, you're in a bit of a different boat! With 8 months to go before CLAT 2026, you need to gear up for an intense prep journey. But don't worry, you've got this!



Set Up Your Study Plan :
Start with a study timetable that includes all sections of the CLAT — Legal Reasoning, English, Logical Reasoning, and General Knowledge. Make sure to balance your schedule, don't burn yourself out by focusing too much on just one section.



Focus on Concepts along with Practice:
Keep working on your concepts along with intense practice of Questions ,Topic & Sectional Tests.



Take Full-Length Mocks : Practice is key. Start taking mock tests every week to get used to the exam pattern. This helps you understand where you need to improve.

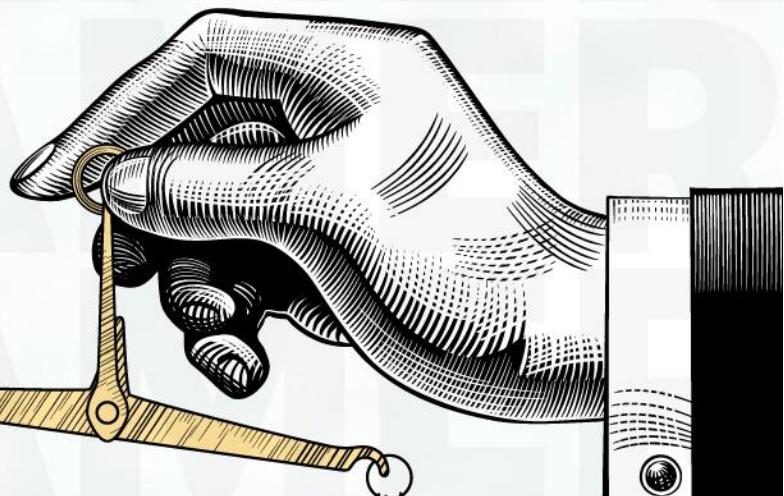


Don't Skip Your Breaks : I know it's tempting to grind 24/7, but taking breaks is essential for keeping your mind fresh.

Balance your preparation with some downtime (a walk, a hobby, a Netflix series!)..



Track Your Progress :
Keep a journal of your prep, noting down what's working and what needs more attention. Adjust as you go. This reflection process is crucial for improvement.



CLAT 2026 alongside Class 12th Balance is Key

❖ This is definitely a tougher challenge, but hey, you're a pro-in-the-making! Balancing your 12th boards and CLAT prep requires discipline and time management. But it's possible!



Prioritise Your CLAT 2026 First: As you know that CLAT 2026 will happen in December while your boards will be in Feb-Mar. So, Till December give your 70% to intense CLAT Prep and Post CLAT in first week of Dec, you will have enough time to prepare and excel in your board exams.



Use Your Downtime Wisely: Use any free periods or travel time for revising CLAT topics or reading newspapers. Multitasking is your secret weapon!



Focus on Concepts along with Practice: Keep working on your concepts along with intense practice of Questions Topic & Sectional Tests.



Mock Test Marathon: Try taking mock tests on weekends to simulate the exam experience. You'll get used to the pressure and improve your time management skills for CLAT.



Avoid Burnout: Your health is important, so make sure to get enough sleep and stay hydrated. Keeping your body and mind in peak condition is key to managing everything smoothly.

MOTIVATION BOOST:

❖ No matter which type of student you are, here's the key: Stay consistent. Whether it's just a few hours a week or several months of intense prep, every bit of effort counts. Be patient with yourself

❖ You've already crossed a huge milestone by deciding to aim for CLAT — the journey might feel overwhelming but remember that every small step adds up to big progress. You've got the time, and with the right approach, you'll be well on your way to cracking CLAT like a pro!

IMPORTANT ONE LINERS

NATIONAL

PM Modi To Attend Mauritius' National Day Celebrations as Guest of Honour

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Mauritius as the **Guest of Honour** at the **National Day celebrations** on **March 12, 2025**, marking the **country's independence** from British rule in 1968.
- Mauritian Prime Minister Navin Ramgoolam highlighted that Modi's presence underscores the **strong bilateral ties** between **India and Mauritius**. Modi's visit emphasizes the deep **diplomatic, economic, and cultural** relations between the two nations. India has supported **Mauritius' development initiatives**, including key **infrastructure projects** and **strategic partnerships**.
- Previous Indian dignitaries, including **President Droupadi Murmu**, have attended **Mauritius' National Day**, reaffirming the ongoing **India-Mauritius friendship**. India and Mauritius collaborate in various sectors, including:
 - **Economic and Trade Cooperation:** India is Mauritius' **largest trade partner**, with agreements like the **CECPA** enhancing bilateral trade and investment.
 - **Infrastructure Development:** India funds projects like the **Metro Express, Supreme Court renovation**, and **Social Housing Project**.
 - **Defense and Security:** Joint **maritime security, military training**, and **naval collaboration** strengthen Mauritius' security.
 - **Cultural and Historical Ties:** With nearly **70% of the Mauritian population** having **Indian roots**, languages like **Bhojpuri, Hindi, and Tamil** are widely spoken, reinforcing cultural connections.

Purnima Devi Barman Named in TIME's Women of the Year List

- Purnima Devi Barman, an Indian biologist and wildlife conservationist, has been named in **TIME's Women of the Year 2025** list, recognizing her leadership in creating a **more sustainable world**.
- Barman is the **only Indian representative** on this year's list, which also includes global figures like **Nicole Kidman** and **Gisele Pelicot**. Her conservation efforts have significantly impacted the **greater adjutant stork (Hargila)** population, particularly in **Assam**, where the stork population grew from **450 in 2007** to over **1,800 in 2023**.
- The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) changed the stork's status from "**Endangered**" to "**Near Threatened**".
- Barman formed the '**Hargila Army**', a network of over **20,000 women** dedicated to protecting storks' nests and promoting conservation through community-led initiatives. Her efforts have integrated **conservation into Assamese culture**, with initiatives like **baby showers for stork chicks** and promoting **traditional textile weaving** with stork motifs.

'Desh Ka Prakriti Parikshan Abhiyaan' Sets 5 Guinness World Records

- India's '**Desh Ka Prakriti Parikshan Abhiyaan**' has achieved **five Guinness World Records**, highlighting the nation's commitment to **holistic healthcare** and **Ayurveda**. The event was organized by the **National Commission for Indian System of Medicine (NCISM)**, with support from the **Ministry of Ayush**, and concluded its first phase in **Mumbai** on **February 20, 2025**.
- The five world records set include:
 1. **Most pledges received for a health campaign in one week:** 6,004,912 pledges.
 2. **Most pledges received for a health campaign in one month:** 13,892,976 pledges.
 3. **Most pledges received for a health campaign (Overall):** 13,892,976 pledges.
 4. **Largest online photo album of people displaying a digital certificate:** 62,525 photos.
 5. **Largest online video album of people saying the same sentence:** 12,798 videos.
- The campaign saw **1.29 crore** participants and over **1.81 lakh** volunteers, including **Ayurveda students, teachers, and physicians**. Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the initiative on **National Ayurveda Day**, with **President Droupadi Murmu** being the first participant.
- The **closing ceremony** was attended by key dignitaries, including **Shri Prataprao Jadhav, Shri Prakash Abitkar**, and **Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha**, with **Mr. Richard Williams Stenning**, a Guinness adjudicator, confirming the records.

Sarbananda Sonowal Unveils 'One Nation-One Port' Initiative

- The **Union Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways (MoPSW)** has launched the '**One Nation: One Port Process' (ONOP)** and other key initiatives to **modernise India's maritime infrastructure** and strengthen its position in global trade. ONOP aims to **standardize port operations** across India, eliminating inconsistencies in documentation and processes, reducing costs, and improving operational efficiency.
- Sagar Ankan**, which includes the **Logistics Port Performance Index (LPI) 2023-24**, was also introduced to benchmark port efficiency, competitiveness, and sustainability, fostering improvement in service quality and global competitiveness.
- The **Bharat Global Ports Consortium** aims to **expand India's maritime influence** by fostering **international collaborations**, enhancing port-to-port connectivity, attracting **foreign direct investment (FDI)**, and developing **smart, green, and digital ports**.
- Future initiatives will focus on **smart ports**, utilizing **AI and blockchain** for automation, adopting **renewable energy** sources, and enhancing **maritime security** and **digitalization**. These efforts align with India's broader goals of '**Atmanirbhar Bharat**' and '**Viksit Bharat 2047**', positioning India as a **global maritime hub**.

India's First River Dolphin Population Survey

- India's first comprehensive river dolphin population survey** was conducted from **2021 to 2023**, covering the **Ganga, Brahmaputra, and Beas rivers**, and revealed a total of **6,327 river dolphins** across the country.
- The survey was conducted by the **Wildlife Institute of India (WII)**, in collaboration with **state forest departments, non-profit organizations** like **WWF, Aaranyak, and Turtle Survival Alliance**. Key findings include:
Gangetic Dolphins (*Platanista gangetica gangetica*): **6,324 dolphins**, with the highest concentration in **Uttar Pradesh** (2,397) and **Bihar** (2,220).
Indus River Dolphins (*Platanista gangetica minor*): **3 dolphins**, found only in the **Beas River, Punjab**.
Survey Area: A total of **8,507 km** surveyed, including **7,109 km** in the **Ganga basin** and **101 km** in the **Beas river**.
- Project Dolphin**, launched by **Prime Minister Modi** on **August 15, 2020**, aims to enhance conservation efforts for river dolphins. Key findings in the Ganga Basin:
Chausa-Manihari stretch in Bihar had the highest concentration with **1,297 dolphins**.
The **Bhind-Pachnada stretch** of the **Chambal River** in **Uttar Pradesh** had the highest dolphin density.
Kanpur-Vindhya and **Narora-Kanpur** stretches had lower dolphin densities.

Uttarakhand Cabinet Approves Unified Pension Scheme and New Excise Policy for 2025

- The **Uttarakhand Cabinet**, led by **Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami**, has approved two significant decisions: the **Unified Pension Scheme (UPS)** and the **Excise Policy 2025. Unified Pension Scheme (UPS)**:
- > The scheme aligns with the **Central Government's** initiative and aims to provide a **stable, assured pension payout** for **government employees** covered under the **National Pension System (NPS)**.
- > The UPS will come into effect from **April 1, 2025**, offering **financial security** to retirees and reducing uncertainties in post-retirement income.
- The new policy includes **liquor sale restrictions** near **religious places** to respect cultural sentiments. The government has abolished **sub-shops** and **metro liquor sales** to curb unauthorized sales and ensure more **transparency** in the sector.
- The policy enforces **MRP regulations**, with penalties for shops charging more than the maximum retail price. The state aims to achieve an **excise revenue target of ₹5,060 crore** for **2025-26**, with significant growth in revenue collection in recent years.
- The Uttarakhand government has introduced **financial aid for 45 writers** and **21 new literary awards**, alongside the **Uttarakhand Sahitya Bhushan award**, to preserve and promote the region's rich cultural heritage.

Ganga Water Treaty: India-Bangladesh Begin Talks Ahead of 2026 Renewal

- On **March 6, 2025**, India and Bangladesh held the **86th Joint Committee meeting** in Kolkata under the **Ganga Water Treaty**, initiating discussions for its renewal before it expires on **December 12, 2026**.
- Signed in **1996** by **PM H.D. Deve Gowda** and **PM Sheikh Hasina**, the **30-year treaty** governs the **sharing of Ganga waters at Farakka** and emphasizes bilateral cooperation. The **Joint Rivers Commission (JRC)**, set up in **1972**, oversees water-related matters concerning **54 shared rivers**.
- Water Sharing Provisions** under the treaty:
 - ≤**70,000 cusecs**: Shared equally (50%-50%).
 - 70,000-75,000 cusecs**: Bangladesh gets 35,000 cusecs, India gets the rest.

- >75,000 cusecs: India receives 40,000 cusecs, the balance goes to Bangladesh.

PM Modi Conferred with Honorary Order of Freedom of Barbados

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi was awarded the **Honorary Order of Freedom of Barbados**, the country's highest honour. The award was presented by **President Dame Sandra Mason** in Bridgetown, and received on Modi's behalf by **Union Minister Pabitra Margherita**.
- The recognition highlights Modi's leadership and assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic. The announcement was made by **Barbados PM Mia Mottley** during her meeting with Modi at the **2nd India-CARICOM Leaders' Summit** on **November 20, 2024**, in Georgetown, Guyana.
- PM Modi dedicated the honour to **1.4 billion Indians** and emphasized **India-Barbados ties**. **India and Barbados** have shared diplomatic relations since 1966, marked by consistent engagement and development cooperation.

PAC questions NHAI on delay in Bharatmala project

- The **Public Accounts Committee (PAC)** headed by senior Congress leader and Lok Sabha MP K.C. Venugopal has raised concerns over delays and cost escalations in the implementation of the **Bharatmala Pariyojana**, India's ambitious highway development program.
- The **Bharatmala Pariyojana Phase-I**, initially scheduled for completion by **FY2022**, is now anticipated to extend to **FY2026**, indicating a **four-year delay**. The average cost per kilometer has risen to ₹23.80 crore, a **54% increase from the initially estimated ₹15.52 crore per km**.
- The **Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG)** highlighted irregularities in the awarding of contracts, including violations of tendering processes and instances where successful bidders did not meet tender conditions or provided falsified documents. Projects were awarded without securing necessary land acquisitions and forest clearances, leading to delayed commencements and completions.

Tahawwur Rana's Extradition to India Approved by U.S. Supreme Court

- The **U.S. Supreme Court** has denied Tahawwur Rana's plea to block his **extradition to India**, where he faces charges linked to the **2008 Mumbai terror attacks**. Rana, a Pakistani-Canadian and former **Pakistan Army doctor**, is accused of aiding **David Coleman Headley** in conducting **reconnaissance** for the attacks that killed **166 people**.
- In **2011**, a **U.S. court** convicted him for supporting **Lashkar-e-Taiba** and plotting against a **Danish newspaper**, sentencing him to **14 years in prison**. **U.S. President Donald Trump** approved his extradition in **February 2025**.
- Rana's plea, claiming risk due to his **Pakistani origin**, was **rejected** by the court in **March 2025**. **India and U.S. authorities** are coordinating the extradition, expected to be **completed by the end of March 2025**.

Suman Chakraborty Wins 2026 TWAS Award for Engineering and Computer Sciences

- Professor Suman Chakraborty of IIT Kharagpur received the **2026 TWAS Award** by UNESCO for his work in **low-cost medical diagnostic technologies**. The **biennial award** by **The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS)** honors scientists from **developing countries** for significant contributions to science and sustainable development.
- He pioneered **Paper and Pencil Microfluidics**, enabling **miniaturized diagnostic devices** and **energy-harvesting systems** using basic materials. Developed a **reagent-free anemia screening** technique using **blood drop patterns** on pre-wetted paper.
- Invented a **portable CBC device** using a **spinning disc**, suitable for **resource-limited settings**. Led the creation of **COVIRAP**, a **molecular diagnostic platform** for **infectious diseases**, offering **rapid, cost-effective testing** and receiving **global regulatory approvals**.

Supreme Court Upholds Arrest Powers under GST with Safeguards

- The **Supreme Court of India** upheld the **constitutional validity** of arrest provisions under the **Customs Act, 1962** and the **CGST Act, 2017**, while stressing the need for **legal safeguards** to prevent misuse.
- It ruled that officials under both Acts, possessing powers like **arrest, search, and seizure**, must follow **procedural safeguards** laid down in the **CrPC, 1973**. **Recording of "reason to believe"** based on substantial evidence is mandatory before initiating an arrest to ensure **transparency and accountability**.
- Arrested individuals must be **informed of specific grounds**, including evidence, to enable them to **exercise legal rights** such as seeking **bail** or **challenging the arrest**. The Court declared that using arrest powers to **coerce tax payments** is **unlawful**, affirming that such recovery is **impermissible**, and affected individuals may **seek refunds** and initiate **disciplinary action** against erring officials.

Lok Sabha Passes Bills of Lading Bill, 2025 to Modernize Maritime Law

- On March 10, 2025, the Lok Sabha passed the Bills of Lading Bill, 2025, replacing the Indian Bills of Lading Act, 1856 to align with modern international shipping standards. The 1856 Act, consisting of only three sections, focused on transfer of rights and confirmation of goods loaded onto vessels.
- The new bill simplifies language, logically reorganizes provisions, and empowers the Central Government to issue directions for effective implementation. It repeals colonial-era provisions, supporting India's legal modernization and business facilitation in maritime trade.
- The reform aims to boost global trade relations and improve alignment with international maritime practices. Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal highlighted the bill as a step toward realizing PM Modi's vision of a modern, accessible, and decolonized legal system.

Dr. Jayshree Vencatesan Becomes First Indian to Receive Ramsar Award

- Dr. Jayshree Vencatesan, co-founder of Care Earth Trust, became the first Indian to receive the Ramsar Award for 'Wetland Wise Use' in recognition of her contributions to sustainable wetland management.
- The Ramsar Award, under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, is given in three categories: international collaboration, wise use, and wetland protection. Dr. Vencatesan is a prominent scientist advocating for diverse knowledge systems in environmental research. She also mentors young female conservationists, promoting women's leadership in environmental protection.
- Her organization, Care Earth Trust, established in 2000, focuses on biodiversity conservation through research, advocacy, and capacity building. She led the documentation of the Pallikaranai Marsh in Chennai, identifying it as vital for flood control and home to over 337 species.

Parliamentary Standing Committee Recommends Key Reforms for Farmer Welfare

- The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture, chaired by Charanjit Singh Channi, submitted a report proposing major reforms to improve farmers' and farm laborers' welfare. It recommended renaming the Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare to include 'Farm Labourers Welfare' in its title.
- The report proposed establishing a National Commission for Minimum Living Wages to ensure fair pay for farm laborers. It suggested extending the PM-Kisan scheme to include farm laborers and doubling the benefit from ₹6,000 to ₹12,000 per farmer annually.
- The committee called for a legally guaranteed Minimum Support Price (MSP) for all crops, including organic produce. A debt waiver scheme was proposed for both farmers and farm laborers to reduce financial distress.
- It recommended financial incentives for crop residue management to curb stubble burning and encourage sustainability. The report suggested compulsory free crop insurance for smallholder farmers with up to two hectares of land. It raised concerns over declining agriculture budget allocations, which fell from 3.53% in 2020–21 to 2.54% in 2024–25, urging increased funding.

Education Ministry Launches APAAR ID for Student Record Digitization

- The Ministry of Education, under the NEP 2020, introduced the Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry (APAAR) ID to digitize and streamline student academic records. Each student is assigned a unique 12-digit APAAR ID, acting as a digital academic identity throughout their education.
- The system maintains centralized records of all academic qualifications and co-curricular achievements in a single digital repository. APAAR IDs are integrated with DigiLocker and the Academic Bank of Credits (ABC) for secure storage and efficient management of academic credentials and credits.

India Advances Carbon Credit Trading Scheme for 2026 Launch

- India is developing its Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS) to build a carbon market aligned with its Paris Agreement climate goals. The Energy Conservation (Amendment) Act, 2022 authorizes the government to implement the scheme, replacing the PAT scheme to focus on reducing GHG emission intensity.
- The CCTS includes a compliance mechanism for obligated entities and a voluntary mechanism for broader participation in carbon trading. Carbon Credit Certificates (CCC) represent one tonne of CO₂ equivalent (tCO₂e) reduction, enabling entities to buy, sell, or offset emissions.
- The scheme is governed by the National Steering Committee for Indian Carbon Market (NSCICM) and implemented by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE). The Indian carbon market is scheduled to become operational in 2026.

Supreme Court Issues Notice on PIL Challenging CAG Appointment Process

- On March 17, 2025, the Supreme Court issued a notice to the central government over a PIL challenging the current method of appointing the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India.
- The Centre for Public Interest Litigation (CPIL) filed the PIL, arguing that the executive-only appointment by the Prime Minister undermines the independence of the CAG.
- The petition proposes a neutral selection committee comprising the Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition, and the Chief Justice of India. A bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kotiswar Singh sought the government's response and tagged the PIL with a related pending matter.
- Advocate Prashant Bhushan, representing CPIL, raised concerns over alleged stalled audits in BJP-ruled states like Maharashtra. Article 148 of the Constitution governs the CAG's appointment and tenure, ensuring protections similar to a Supreme Court judge.

Maharashtra Inaugurates First Temple Dedicated to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj

- Maharashtra inaugurated its first Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj temple in Maradepada, Bhiwandi (Thane district), marking a historic cultural milestone.
- The 2,500 sq ft temple, inspired by Maratha fort architecture, includes a 5,000 sq ft fort-style boundary wall with bastions, surveillance paths, and a 42-foot entrance gate.
- The temple houses a 6.5-foot blackstone (krishnashila) statue of Shivaji Maharaj, sculpted by Arun Yogiraj, also known for crafting the Ayodhya Ram Temple idol.
- The site aims to honour the valour and legacy of the Maratha ruler, with Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis proposing to declare it a pilgrimage site to promote Maratha cultural heritage.

Farmer Leaders Arrested Amid Escalating Protests in Punjab

- On March 19, 2025, 28 farmer leaders, including Sarwan Singh Pandher and Jagjit Singh Dallewal, were detained by Punjab Police in Mohali after meeting Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan in Chandigarh to discuss demands such as a statutory Minimum Support Price (MSP).
- Dallewal, who was on an indefinite hunger strike, was moved to a medical facility following his detention. Simultaneously, Punjab Police dismantled protest sites at the Shambhu and Khanauri borders, which had been occupied by farmers for over a year.
- The Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) and SKM-Non Political (SKM-NP) accused the BJP-led Centre and AAP-led Punjab government of acting in corporate interests. Union Minister Ravneet Singh Bittu criticized CM Bhagwant Mann, claiming the arrests were done under central directives.
- In response, farmer unions announced plans to intensify protests, including demonstrations outside AAP legislators' residences on March 10 and 15, demanding fulfillment of their demands.

Aurangzeb's Tomb Sparks Controversy Amid Demolition Demands in Maharashtra

- In March 2025, demands for the demolition of Aurangzeb's tomb by right-wing groups and some political leaders triggered communal tensions in Maharashtra. The tomb is located in Khuldabad, within the dargah of Sheikh Zainuddin, and features an open-air, unadorned grave in accordance with Aurangzeb's wish for simplicity.
- A marble screen was added by Lord Curzon in the early 20th century to honor Aurangzeb's legacy.
- The site is designated a 'Monument of National Importance' and is protected by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), preventing any unauthorized alteration or demolition.
- Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis acknowledged public sentiments but stressed that legal procedures must be followed due to the tomb's protected status. Former CM Uddhav Thackeray criticized the controversy, arguing it distracts from present-day issues, noting that Aurangzeb died over 300 years ago.

Andhra Pradesh to Honour Potti Sriramulu with 58-Foot Statue in Amaravati

- The Andhra Pradesh government announced a 58-foot-tall statue of Potti Sriramulu in Amaravati, commemorating his 58-day hunger strike that led to the creation of the Andhra State.
- The statue will be accompanied by a memorial and completed before his next birth anniversary. Sriramulu's ancestral home in Padamatipalli village, Prakasam district, will be converted into a museum showcasing his life and legacy.
- Plans include building a modern health center and high school in the village to improve local infrastructure in Sriramulu's memory. His 125th birth anniversary will be celebrated through monthly events, culminating in a grand celebration on March 16, 2026.

- Born on **March 16, 1901**, Sriramulu's death on **December 15, 1952**, after a prolonged fast, led to the formation of **Andhra State** on **October 1, 1953**, setting a precedent for **linguistic states in India**.

Bengal Leads India in Bird Count for Third Consecutive Year

- Bengal has topped India's **Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC)** for the **third consecutive year**, recording **543 species** out of the total **1,068 species** documented across the country. The GBBC 2025 took place from **February 14 to 17**, with **fewer participants** due to **exam conflicts**, but Bengal maintained its dominance in species diversity and number of observers.
- The top **district in Bengal** for species count was **Darjeeling**, with **252 species**, although this was a decrease from 308 in 2024. **South 24 Parganas** had the most **checklists** in Bengal, with **513 entries**. Notable bird sightings included **Ibisbill** in **Jhalong (North Bengal)**, **Spotted Crake** in **Baruipur**, and **Common Starling** in **Malda**.
- Over **5,300 participants** took part across India, with **344 participants** from Bengal. **Baharuddin Sk** was the top observer, recording **310 species**, and **Santanu Manna** uploaded the most checklists (**112**). **Top 5 States** based on species count:
 - Bengal: **543 species**
 - Uttarakhand: **446 species**
 - Assam: **414 species**
 - Maharashtra: **414 species**
 - Karnataka: **380 species**

INTERNATIONAL

Brazil Joins OPEC+ as Observer for Global Energy Influence

- Brazil has joined **OPEC+ as an observer**, allowing participation in global oil policy discussions without committing to **production quotas**. The decision was approved by **Brazil's National Council for Energy Policy** and aligns with **President Lula's strategy** to use **oil revenues** for funding **green energy transition**. As an observer, Brazil retains **full control over its oil production**, enabling it to protect national interests while influencing energy market policies.
- Brazil's entry into OPEC+ strengthens its **global energy presence** and enhances ties with other **major oil producers**. Environmental concerns have been raised over Brazil's oil exploration near the **Amazon River**, but the government argues these are essential for **economic growth** and **climate funding**.
- **Petrobras**, the state-run oil company, plans to increase **diesel production by 120,000 barrels per day** in 2025 to reduce fuel import dependence. Petrobras faced a **10.5% drop** in oil and gas output in Q4 2024 due to **maintenance and offshore disruptions**.
- Brazil aims to use its observer status to encourage OPEC+ members to **invest in renewable energy** while preparing to host the **UN climate summit**. The move positions Brazil as a **key voice in global energy policy**, balancing **economic priorities** with **environmental sustainability**.

FATF Plenary Session (February 2025)

The **February 2025 FATF Plenary**, led by **President Elisa de Anda Madrazo (Mexico)**, hosted delegates from **200+ jurisdictions**, addressing key issues like **money laundering**, **terrorism financing**, and **online child exploitation**. Updates to **FATF Standards** were approved to strengthen the **risk-based approach** and encourage **financial inclusion**, acknowledging that **1.4 billion people** lack banking access.

- A **landmark report** on financial flows linked to **online child sexual exploitation** was approved and will be launched in **London on March 13, 2025**. **Lao PDR** and **Nepal** were added to the **Grey List**, while the **Philippines** was removed for progress in **AML/CFT compliance**.
- **Kenya** joined the plenary as a **guest jurisdiction**, while **Russia's suspension** from FATF continues. **Public consultations** were launched on **Recommendation 1** (financial inclusion), **Recommendation 16** (payment transparency), and **proliferation financing compliance**.
- **Giles Thomson (UK)** was appointed **FATF Vice-President (2025–2027)**, succeeding **Jeremy Weil (Canada)**. Participation of **FATF-Style Regional Bodies (FSRBs)** was expanded to strengthen **global cooperation**.
- The **Women in FATF Initiative** continued, with the **2nd Mentoring Programme** set to launch in **March 2025**. A **Private Sector Collaborative Forum** will be held from **March 25–27, 2025**, in **Mumbai**, focusing on compliance by lawyers, accountants, and real estate professionals.

Green Transition Alliance India: Denmark's New Climate Initiative

- Denmark launched the **Green Transition Alliance India (GTAI)** to enhance collaboration with **India** on **sustainable energy solutions** under the **Green Strategic Partnership (GSP)** framework established in 2020. The initiative is led by the **Embassy and Consulate General of Denmark in India** and focuses on **renewable energy, green fuels, and energy efficiency**.
- GTAI supports **India's net zero goal by 2070** and **Denmark's target of 2045**, aiming to fast-track global **carbon neutrality** efforts. Participating Danish companies include **Grundfos, Copenhagen Infrastructure Partners, Baettr, Novonesis, MASH Makes, ROCKWOOL, and A.P. Moller-Maersk**.
- Strategic partners include the **Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC)**, **Indo-Danish Chamber of Commerce (IDCC)**, **Confederation of Danish Industry (DI)**, and **IIT Madras Energy Consortium**. The alliance will operate through three **working groups** on **renewable energy, green fuels, and energy efficiency**.
- GTAI builds on earlier initiatives like the **Green Fuels Alliance India (GFAI)** and **Wind Alliance India (WAI)** to promote **technology transfer** and **green investment**. **Ambassador Rasmus Abildgaard Kristensen** emphasized Denmark's expertise in green technologies and called for urgent global climate action.

Cali Fund Launched at CBD COP16 to Boost Biodiversity Finance

- The **Cali Fund** was launched on **February 25, 2025**, at **CBD COP16 in Rome**, aiming to boost **biodiversity finance** through direct contributions from **private companies** benefiting from **Digital Sequence Information (DSI)**.
- Developed after a historic agreement at **COP16 in Colombia (2024)**, the fund supports the **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF)** target to halt biodiversity loss by **2030**.
- Industries such as **pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, agriculture, and biotechnology** using **DSI** must now contribute a share of their revenue to conservation efforts. **DSI** refers to digital genetic data derived from plants, animals, and microorganisms, widely used in **research and commercial applications**.
- The fund will support **conservation projects, biodiversity action plans in developing countries, scientific research, and indigenous communities**, with at least **50% of funds** allocated to the latter.
- Managed by **UNDP, UNEP, and the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTFO)**, the fund ensures **transparent governance** and global collaboration.
- Key figures supporting the fund include **Susana Muhamad (COP16 President), Astrid Schomaker (CBD Executive Secretary), and Marcos Neto (UNDP)**. The Cali Fund is the **first UN biodiversity fund** to receive **direct business contributions**, setting a global precedent for **equitable benefit-sharing** in biodiversity conservation.

UAE Introduces Blue Visa: 10-Year Residency for Foreigners

- The **UAE** launched the **Blue Visa**, a **10-year residency permit** for individuals contributing to **environmental sustainability** and **climate action**, during the **World Governments Summit 2025** in **Dubai** (February 11-13).
- The initiative was introduced by the **Ministry of Climate Change and Environment (MoCCA)** in collaboration with the **Federal Authority for Identity, Citizenship, Customs, and Ports Security (ICP)**. The visa targets **sustainability leaders, researchers, NGO members, corporate leaders, and global sustainability award recipients**.
- In the **initial phase**, **20 sustainability experts** will be granted the visa; candidates can apply through the **ICP website and mobile app**, or be **nominated by UAE authorities**. The Blue Visa expands the UAE's long-term residency options, complementing the existing **Golden Visa** and **Green Visa** schemes.
- Dr. Amna Bint Abdullah Al Dahak**, Minister of Climate Change and Environment, highlighted the UAE's commitment to **global sustainability leadership**. **Major General Suhail Saeed Al Khaili**, Director-General of ICP, confirmed the visa's availability through **24/7 digital platforms**.

Trump Declared English as the Official Language of the United States

- On **March 1, 2025**, **President Donald Trump** signed an **executive order** officially declaring **English** as the **national language** of the **United States**, a first in U.S. federal history. The order **removes a rule** from the **Bill Clinton era** that required federal agencies to provide services in **multiple languages** using public funds.
- Under the new policy, **government agencies** can now **choose** whether to offer services in languages other than English. The decision aims to **improve communication, strengthen national unity, and encourage immigrants** to learn English for better integration.
- While **over 30 states** had previously adopted English as their official language, this is the **first federal recognition** of a national language. The order could reduce the availability of **non-English services**, making it more difficult for non-English

speakers to access essential information. The **Spanish version of the White House website** was removed following the order, sparking confusion and concern among the public.

Yamandú Orsi Sworn in as Uruguay's President

- **Yamandú Orsi** was sworn in as **Uruguay's President** on **March 1, 2025**, marking the return of the **leftist Broad Front coalition** after five years of **centre-right** governance under **Luis Lacalle Pou**. A **former history teacher and mayor**, Orsi pledged to expand **social welfare** and address **economic stagnation**, while promoting **dialogue and unity**.
- His presidency faces challenges including **economic inequality**, **rising crime**, and pressure from **trade unions** for pro-labor reforms. Businesses remain cautious as Orsi attempts to balance **leftist expectations** with **economic competitiveness** and **investor confidence**.
- Labour Minister **Juan Castillo**, a **Communist**, supports **stronger worker protections**, intensifying tensions with the **private sector**, especially after the exit of Japanese firm **Yazaki** over high costs. Key policy issues include **pension reform**, labor disputes, and achieving **fiscal stability** while expanding social programs.
- Orsi advocates a policy of "**safe change**", emphasizing **gradual reforms** over radical shifts, aiming for **long-term stability**. Internationally, Orsi aligns with **leftist Latin American leaders** such as **Brazil's Lula da Silva**, **Colombia's Gustavo Petro**, and **Chile's Gabriel Boric**.

Egypt Proposes \$53 Billion Gaza Reconstruction Plan – The 2025 Cairo Declaration

- On **March 4, 2025**, an **Arab Summit in Cairo** endorsed Egypt's **Cairo Declaration**, proposing a **\$53 billion plan to rebuild Gaza** without displacing its Palestinian population.
- The declaration **firmly rejects relocation proposals**, including those previously suggested by **U.S. President Donald Trump**, which aimed to resettle Palestinians in neighboring countries such as **Jordan and Egypt**.
- The plan involves **the Palestinian Authority** and **UNRWA** (United Nations Relief and Works Agency) in rebuilding efforts, emphasizing continuity of Palestinian governance and identity.
- **Israel criticized the plan** for ignoring the role of **Hamas** in initiating hostilities and failing to condemn it as a **terrorist organization**. **Hamas welcomed** the declaration, calling it a move toward greater **Arab and Islamic unity** and **support for Palestinian sovereignty**, while urging compliance with a **ceasefire agreement**.

Trump Proposes 'Golden Dome' Missile Defence System for USA

- Former U.S. President **Donald Trump** announced the development of a new comprehensive missile defence system named the "**Golden Dome**", aimed at countering **ballistic, cruise, and hypersonic missiles**.
- The initiative is inspired by **Israel's Iron Dome**, operational since **2011**, which has a **90% interception success rate** for short-range rockets and artillery shells. An **Executive Order** has been signed to **expedite development and prioritize domestic manufacturing**.
- A proposed **\$19.5 billion budget** for **FY 2026** has been introduced, reflecting **bipartisan interest** in enhancing U.S. national defence. **Israel's Iron Dome: A mobile defence system** that uses radar and interceptor missiles to neutralize aerial threats.
- **India's Raksha Kavach (2025):**
 - Unveiled by **DRDO** at **Aero India 2025**.
 - Features:
 - QRSAM with a range of **25–30 km**.
 - Netra AEW&C S-band 3D surveillance system.
 - ATAGS 155mm/52 caliber artillery with a **45 km range**.

Cyclone Alfred, a Category 2 tropical cyclone, is approaching southeastern Queensland, Australia

- **Cyclone Alfred**, initially identified as a **tropical low on February 20, 2025**, formed in the **Coral Sea** and was upgraded to **Category 1 on February 22**, peaking at **Category 4 on February 27**, before being **downgraded to Category 1** near landfall at **Brisbane**.
- The cyclone brought **wind speeds up to 95 km/h** and **gusts reaching 120 km/h**, causing **heavy rainfall** and **life-threatening flash floods** in **Brisbane and the Gold Coast**. **Record waves** were recorded, including a **12.4-meter wave** off the **Gold Coast**.
- Over **250,000 homes** in **Queensland and New South Wales** lost power; **Brisbane Airport** suspended operations, **over 1,000 schools** closed, and **public transport** was halted. **Evacuation orders** were issued for vulnerable regions, with over **1,000 volunteers** and **178 defense personnel** deployed.

- Cruise ships like Carnival's Luminosa and Quantum of the Seas were stranded or diverted due to port closures. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese urged public compliance with safety directives, and federal aid, including Australian Defense Force personnel, was mobilized.

Violent Clashes in Syria leaves 1000 dead in 2 days

- Syria experienced a severe escalation in violence resulting in over 1,000 deaths within two days. The clashes occurred between the forces of the new Islamist government and loyalists of the ousted President Bashar al-Assad, primarily in the coastal regions, including Latakia and Jableh.
- In December 2024, insurgent groups led by Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) overthrew President Bashar al-Assad's regime, ending decades of his family's rule.
- The new government, under interim President Ahmed al-Sharaa, has faced ongoing challenges in stabilizing the nation amidst deep-seated sectarian tensions.
- The violence began with an ambush by Assad loyalists on government forces near Jableh, leading to intense fighting and significant casualties on both sides.
- Reports indicate that approximately 745 civilians were killed, many in execution-style killings, exacerbating fears of sectarian violence, particularly against the Alawite minority, which had been supportive of Assad's regime.

India and Ireland establish a Joint Economic Commission

- India and Ireland have agreed to establish a Joint Economic Commission (JEC) to enhance bilateral trade, investment, and technological collaboration.
- The JEC will serve as a bilateral forum for consultations on key trade and investment issues, including developments at the World Trade Organization (WTO), and aims to increase awareness of the economic priorities of both countries.
- Both nations have approved an action plan to reinvigorate ties, focusing on measures under four strategic goals to be pursued and implemented by relevant government departments and agencies.
- External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar met with Irish President Michael D. Higgins and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Simon Harris in Dublin. Discussions encompassed bilateral cooperation, including trade, education, mobility, and emerging sectors like cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, financial technology, and semiconductors.
- Jaishankar also visited Queen's University in Belfast, which is set to establish a campus in Gujarat's GIFT City, highlighting the potential of India-Ireland ties in education.

Canada's new Prime Minister and Liberal Party leader

- Mark Carney has been elected as the new leader of the Liberal Party of Canada and is set to become the country's next Prime Minister, succeeding Justin Trudeau.
- Carney, 59, is a distinguished economist with degrees from Harvard and Oxford. He has served as the Governor of both the Bank of Canada and the Bank of England, earning recognition for his adept management during financial crises.
- Carney secured the leadership of the Liberal Party with 85.9% of the vote, defeating notable figures such as Chrystia Freeland.
- Justin Trudeau announced his resignation as Prime Minister and Liberal Party leader on January 6, 2025, amid declining poll numbers and internal party pressures.
- Carney assumes leadership during heightened tensions with the United States, particularly concerning a 25% tariff imposed by President Trump on Canadian goods and discussions about Canada's sovereignty.

United States withdraws from Loss and Damage Fund

- The United States has withdrawn from the United Nations' Loss and Damage Fund, an international initiative established to compensate developing countries for the adverse effects of climate change.
- The Loss and Damage Fund was created during the COP28 UN climate summit in 2023, following extensive advocacy by nations most affected by climate change. Under the Biden administration, the United States pledged \$17.5 million to support the fund.
- The Trump administration has retracted the U.S. commitment and withdrawn from the fund, aligning with its broader strategy to reduce involvement in international climate initiatives.
- This withdrawal contributes to a significant reduction in global climate finance, affecting efforts to assist developing countries in combating climate change.
- Despite the U.S. withdrawal, other countries, including Italy and France, have maintained or increased their contributions, with the fund currently holding approximately \$741 million in pledges.

U.S. Considers New Visa Restrictions on 43 Countries over Security Concerns

- The U.S. administration has proposed a **three-tier visa restriction system** affecting **43 countries**, citing **national security concerns** and inadequate **security protocols**. The **first group**, facing **full visa suspensions**, includes **11 countries** such as **Afghanistan, Iran, and North Korea**.
- The **second group** of **10 countries**, including **Eritrea** and **Myanmar**, may face **partial suspensions** on certain visa types like **tourist or student visas**. The **third group** of **22 countries**, including **Pakistan** and **Belarus**, faces **conditional restrictions** subject to **compliance within 60 days**.
- The move is aligned with **President Trump's immigration vetting efforts** and aims to **tighten entry controls** from high-risk regions. The proposals are currently **under internal review**, with final decisions and the **list of affected countries subject to change**. The plan follows **previous travel bans**, which were **upheld by the Supreme Court in 2018** despite facing **legal challenges**.

Indian Student Ranjani Srinivasan Self-Deports After U.S. Visa Revocation

- **Ranjani Srinivasan**, a **doctoral student in Urban Planning at Columbia University**, self-deported from the **United States** after her **student visa was revoked on March 5, 2025**.
- Her academic credentials include degrees from **CEPT University, Harvard University**, and an **M.Phil from Columbia**, along with **Fulbright Nehru and Inlaks Scholarships**.
- The **U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS)** alleged her **involvement in activities supporting Hamas**, a **designated terrorist organization**, and for **advocating violence and terrorism**.
- Her research focused on the **political economy of development, spatial politics of land**, and the **sociology of labor**. Following visa revocation by the **U.S. Department of State**, she **voluntarily left the country**.

India and New Zealand Sign Defence Pact, Resume FTA Talks

- Prime Ministers **Narendra Modi** and **Christopher Luxon** met in **New Delhi**, leading to a **defence cooperation agreement** and revival of **free trade agreement (FTA) negotiations**. The **defence pact** will institutionalize **military training, joint exercises, and port visits**, promoting a **secure Indo-Pacific against expansionist threats**.
- **FTA negotiations**, relaunched after a **decade**, aim for conclusion by **end of 2025**; in **2023**, India's exports to New Zealand stood at **\$682 million**, imports at **\$369 million**. The countries signed agreements on **food processing, pharmaceuticals, renewable energy, and critical minerals**.
- A **horticulture memorandum** targets **post-harvest infrastructure**, benefiting sectors like the **kiwi fruit industry**.

Trump Invokes Alien Enemies Act to Deport Tren de Aragua Members

- U.S. President Donald Trump invoked the **Alien Enemies Act of 1798** to deport over **250 alleged members** of the **Venezuelan gang Tren de Aragua** to **El Salvador**, marking the **first use of the Act since World War II**.
- **Tren de Aragua**, formed in **2014** in **Aragua, Venezuela**, evolved from prison-based operations into a **transnational criminal group active in extortion, trafficking, kidnapping, illegal mining, and arms smuggling**.
- The gang has expanded across **Latin America** and entered the **U.S.** in the **early 2020s**, amid rising migration from **Venezuela**. In **January 2024**, the **FBI** confirmed its presence in the **U.S.**, followed by **sanctions** and a "**transnational criminal organization**" designation by the **U.S. Treasury** in **July 2024**.
- The **March 2025 deportations** proceeded despite a **court order blocking** the use of the Act, leading to **legal and political controversy** over the administration's **authority and due process** concerns.

Serbia Accused of Using Sonic Weapon Against Protesters During Belgrade Rally

- On **March 15, 2025**, during a major protest in **Belgrade**, Serbian security forces were accused of deploying a **sonic weapon** to disperse a peaceful crowd. The protest was held to demand **accountability** for the **Novi Sad train station collapse**, which killed **15 people**.
- A **piercing, jet-like noise** disrupted a **15-minute silence**, causing **panic** and a brief **stampede**. Protesters reported **ear pain, nausea, headaches, and disorientation**, symptoms linked to exposure to **high-decibel acoustic devices**.
- The government, including **President Aleksandar Vučić**, denied using sonic devices, calling the allegations **unfounded**. Vučić invited international agencies such as the **FBI** and **Russia's FSB** to **investigate the claims**.
- The suspected device resembles a **Long-Range Acoustic Device (LRAD)**, which emits sound up to **160 decibels** and is used for **crowd control**, with potential to cause **hearing damage and confusion**.

India-Kyrgyzstan Conduct Exercise Khanjar-XII in Tokmok

- Exercise Khanjar-XII, the 12th edition of the India-Kyrgyzstan joint military exercise, was held from March 10 to 23, 2025, in Tokmok, Kyrgyzstan. The exercise began in 2011 and reflects deepening defence ties, held alternately in both countries; the previous edition took place in India in January 2024.
- India was represented by Parachute Regiment (Special Forces), known for counter-terrorism and high-altitude warfare expertise. Kyrgyzstan participated with the Scorpion Brigade, trained in special operations and mountain warfare.

India and Japan Conduct 6th Edition of Exercise Dharma Guardian

- The 6th Edition of Exercise Dharma Guardian was held from February 24 to March 9, 2025, at the East Fuji Training Area in Japan. The exercise saw expanded participation at a company-strength level, signaling strengthened defense cooperation between India and Japan.
- It focused on counter-terrorism in urban settings, joint urban warfare, and operations under a UN mandate, including Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR). Cultural exchange activities included Yoga sessions, and martial arts demonstrations such as Kalari Payattu by Indian troops and traditional Japanese martial arts.
- The 72-hour validation phase featured a simulated joint counter-terrorism operation using heli-borne insertion, slithering, and storming techniques.

India and Bangladesh Conduct Bongosagar 2025 Naval Exercise in Bay of Bengal

- Bongosagar 2025, a bilateral naval exercise between India and Bangladesh, was held in March 2025 in the Bay of Bengal to boost maritime cooperation and interoperability.
- The Indian Navy deployed INS Ranvir, a guided-missile destroyer, while the Bangladesh Navy participated with BNS Abu Ubaidah, a frigate.
- Key components included surface firing exercises, tactical maneuvers, underway replenishment, and Visit, Board, Search, and Seizure (VBSS) operations. Communication drills were also conducted to enhance coordination and information sharing.
- The exercise emphasized strengthening bilateral ties and improving joint readiness to tackle maritime threats like piracy and smuggling. It supports regional stability and aligns with India's SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) initiative for collective maritime security.

APPOINTMENTS

Vivek Joshi Assumes Charge as Election Commissioner

- Vivek Joshi has been appointed as the Election Commissioner of India. He is 58 years old and brings extensive experience in governance, financial regulation, and administrative services.
- Joshi holds a B.Tech in Mechanical Engineering from IIT Roorkee, a Master's in International Business from IIFT, and a Ph.D. in International Economics from the Graduate Institute, Geneva. He is a 1989-batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer of the Haryana cadre.
- Joshi has held key positions, including Chief Secretary of Haryana, Secretary of the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT), Secretary of the Department of Financial Services, and Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India. His tenure as Election Commissioner will last from February 2025 to February 18, 2031, in line with the legal framework governing the appointment.
- Given the upcoming retirements of current Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar and Election Commissioner Sukhbir Singh Sandhu, Joshi may become the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) in 2029, overseeing the 2029 Lok Sabha elections.

V Anantha Nageswaran's Term as Chief Economic Advisor Extended to March 2027

- V. Anantha Nageswaran's tenure as Chief Economic Advisor (CEA) has been extended until March 2027, as approved by the Union Cabinet under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- Nageswaran has been instrumental in advising the government on economic policies and drafting the Economic Survey, which projected GDP growth of 6.3%-6.8% for the FY26. India's economy has shown signs of a slowdown, with GDP growth dropping to 5.4% in the September quarter of the previous year, marking the slowest growth in nearly two years.

- Before his appointment as CEA, Nageswaran held key positions at **Credit Suisse, Julius Baer**, and was a member of the **Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council (PM-EAC)**. His expertise, both in **academia** and the **corporate sector**, reinforces his crucial role in shaping India's **economic future**.

Kash Patel Sworn in as the Ninth Director of the FBI, Takes Oath on Bhagavad Gita

- Kash Patel** was sworn in as the **ninth Director of the FBI** on **February 21, 2025**, taking the oath on the **Bhagavad Gita** at a ceremony attended by family, friends, and notable Republican figures. The oath was administered by **U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi**.
- Patel's appointment was confirmed by a **narrow Senate vote** of **51-49**, with opposition from some Republicans, such as **Susan Collins** and **Lisa Murkowski**.
- While Patel's swearing-in on the Bhagavad Gita attracted attention, he is not the first Indian-American to do so; **Congressman Suhash Subrahmanyam** had previously taken the oath on the same text.
- Patel takes over an **FBI in turmoil**, with recent personnel changes and a contentious history with former **FBI Director Christopher Wray**. Many Republicans view Patel as a reformer to counter what they see as political bias in law enforcement.
- Patel's plans for the FBI include **decentralizing operations**, with a move to relocate **1,500 FBI employees** from Washington, D.C. to field offices across the country, including a new facility in **Huntsville, Alabama**.
- Before his appointment, Patel served as a **counterterrorism prosecutor** and held national security roles during the **Trump administration**. He was nominated by **Trump** in **November 2024** after **Christopher Wray's resignation**.

Shaktikanta Das Appointed Principal Secretary-2 to PM Modi

- Shaktikanta Das**, a retired IAS officer and former **RBI Governor**, has been appointed as **Principal Secretary-2 to Prime Minister Narendra Modi**.
- Das is the first to hold this position with extensive expertise in both **fiscal** and **monetary policy**, making his appointment particularly significant as India faces challenges like **trade wars**, **rupee volatility**, and an **economic slowdown**. His tenure will align with **Prime Minister Modi's** term or until further orders.
- Das served as **RBI Governor** from **December 2018 to December 2024** and previously held key roles in the **Ministry of Finance**, including **Revenue Secretary**, **Economic Affairs Secretary**, and **Fertilisers Secretary**.
- As **RBI Governor**, Das managed **financial stability** during crises such as the **IL&FS collapse**, the **Russia-Ukraine war**, and **COVID-19**, with significant policy decisions including **repo rate cuts** and a **loan moratorium**.
- He played a crucial role in banking sector reforms, reducing **Gross Non-Performing Assets (GNPA)** from **10.8% in 2018** to **2.8% in 2024**. Das also led the **demonetization** process in **2016**, was involved in **budget planning**, and served as a key official for the **15th Finance Commission** and **G20 Sherpa** in **2017**.

Vijender Gupta Elected Speaker of Delhi Assembly

- Vijender Gupta**, a **BJP leader**, was elected as the **Speaker of the Delhi Legislative Assembly** on **February 20, 2025**. Gupta's election is politically significant, as he was **expelled from the same Assembly in 2015** during his tenure as the **Leader of Opposition**, marking a major turnaround in his career.
- He has had a long political journey, starting as a **municipal councillor** and representing **Rohini** in the Delhi Assembly for multiple terms. He served as **Leader of Opposition** from **2015 to 2020**, often clashing with the AAP government.
- As Speaker, Gupta has pledged to uphold **democratic values** and ensure fair proceedings. His **immediate priority** is to present **14 pending Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) reports**, which were not tabled under the previous administration, aiming for greater **transparency** in governance.

Tuhin Kanta Pandey Appointed as 11th SEBI Chairperson

- Tuhin Kanta Pandey** has been appointed as the **11th Chairperson** of the **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** for a three-year term, starting **March 1, 2025**, succeeding **Madhabi Puri Buch**.
- Pandey, a **1987-batch IAS officer** from the **Odisha cadre**, previously served as **Finance Secretary** and has held several key positions, including **Secretary of Civil Aviation** and **Head of DIPAM**, where he played a major role in the **Air India sale** and **LIC's public listing**.
- His appointment comes at a critical time when the **Indian stock market** is facing challenges, such as a significant capital outflow of **₹1.13 lakh crore** due to **foreign portfolio investor (FPI)** withdrawals in 2025.
- Pandey holds a **Master's in Economics** from **Panjab University** and an **MBA** from the UK. He will focus on regulating **capital markets**, enhancing **investor protection**, improving **corporate governance**, and attracting both **foreign** and **domestic investments**.

- Key priorities during his tenure include **strengthening market stability**, enforcing stricter compliance measures, focusing on **digital compliance** and **AI-driven regulations**, and **improving transparency** in IPO processes. Pandey's leadership is expected to revamp **SEBI's role**, enhancing its efficiency in managing market volatility and bolstering confidence among investors.

Senior Advocate Manan Kumar Mishra Re-Elected as Chairman of Bar Council of India

- Manan Kumar Mishra**, a **Senior Advocate**, has been re-elected as the **Chairman of the Bar Council of India (BCI)** for a **seventh consecutive term**. Mishra's leadership is bolstered by strong trust from the legal community, and he also serves as a **BJP Member of Parliament** in the **Rajya Sabha** from **Bihar**.
- Following his re-election, Mishra emphasized his commitment to **advocate welfare** and **maintaining the Bar's independence** while implementing necessary reforms. His key initiatives include:
 - Introduction of the **Advocates Amendment Bill** to safeguard the profession's integrity and welfare.
 - Strengthening the **autonomy of the Bar**.
 - Launching **structured training programs** for young lawyers.
 - Implementing the **Advocate Protection Act** to ensure security for legal professionals.
 - Enhancing **financial and social security** for advocates.
- The **BCI Vice Chairman** election is ongoing, with **S. Prabhakaran** (Tamil Nadu & Puducherry) and **Ved Prakash Sharma** (Delhi) contesting the position.
- A **national meeting** of advocate representatives and State Bar Councils will be held in **Delhi on May 17**, focusing on **advocate welfare schemes**, the **Advocate Protection Act**, and **legal policy discussions**.

Kirsty Coventry Elected First Woman and African President of IOC

- On **March 20, 2025**, Kirsty Coventry of **Zimbabwe** was elected **President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC)** during the **144th IOC Session** in **Costa Navarino, Greece**.
- Coventry received **49 out of 97 votes** in the **first round**, defeating **Juan Antonio Samaranch Jr. (28 votes)** and **Sebastian Coe (8 votes)**. She becomes the **first woman** and **first African** to lead the IOC. A **seven-time Olympic medallist**, including **two golds**, Coventry is a celebrated former **Olympic swimmer**.
- She previously served as **Zimbabwe's Minister of Youth, Sport, Arts, and Recreation** and chaired the **IOC Athletes' Commission (2018–2021)**. Coventry will officially succeed **Thomas Bach** on **June 23, 2025**, following his **12-year tenure**.

SPORTS

Pankaj Advani Wins 2025 Asian Snooker Championship

- Pankaj Advani** won the **2025 Asian Snooker Championship** men's title by defeating **Amir Sarkosh** of **Iran** 4-1 in the final. This win marked his **14th Asian title** across various **snooker and billiards** formats. He defeated **Chang Yu Kiu** of **Hong Kong, China** in the semifinal.
- Advani has won **five Asian snooker titles** in 15-red, 6-reds, and team formats, and **nine Asian billiards titles**. He is also a **two-time Asian Games gold medallist** (Doha 2006 and Guangzhou 2010). The championship was held in **Doha, Qatar** from **February 15-21, 2025**, and organized by the **Asian Confederation of Billiards Sports (ACBS)**.
- In the women's category, **Narantuya Bayarsaikhan** of **Mongolia** defeated **Ng On Yee** of **Hong Kong, China**. In the men's under-21 category, **Shaheen Sabzi** of **Iran** beat **Zihao Dong** of **China** in the final. **Dhruv Patel** of **India** reached the semifinals in the under-21 category.
- ACBS**, established in **1984**, governs non-professional English billiards and snooker in Asia, with **25 member federations**. The ACBS is headquartered in **Doha, Qatar**, and its current president is **Mohamed Salem Al-Nuaimi**.

Vidarbha Clinch Their Third Ranji Trophy Title in Seven Seasons

- Vidarbha** won their **third Ranji Trophy title** in **seven seasons** after defeating **Kerala** in the **2024-25 final** on the basis of a **first-innings lead**. The final was held at **Vidarbha Cricket Association Stadium, Nagpur**, and ended in a **draw** with Vidarbha scoring **379** to Kerala's **342** in the first innings. **Karun Nair** was a key performer, scoring **86** in the first innings and **135** in the second.

- **Danish Malewar**, aged **21**, scored a century in the first innings and was named **Player of the Match**. **Harsh Dubey** set a new **Ranji Trophy record** with **69 wickets** in a single season, surpassing **Ashutosh Aman's** previous record of 68, and also contributed **476 runs** with five fifties.
- Vidarbha had a dominant season, winning **6 out of 7 league matches**, securing **40 points**, and achieving **outright wins** in the **quarterfinal** against **Tamil Nadu** and the **semifinal** against **Mumbai**. On the final day, Vidarbha extended their lead to **412 runs**, with **Darshan Nalkande** remaining unbeaten on **51** and **Danish Malewar** contributing **73** in the second innings.
- Vidarbha's previous Ranji titles came in **2017-18** and **2018-19**, and this win signifies their **resurgence in domestic red-ball cricket**. The team's success highlights a **balanced mix of experience and youth**, positioning players like **Harsh Dubey** and **Danish Malewar** as emerging stars for Indian cricket.

Mumbai Indians Win Second WPL Title with 8-Run Victory Over Delhi Capitals

- On **March 15, 2025**, the **Mumbai Indians (MI)** secured their **second Women's Premier League (WPL) title**, defeating the **Delhi Capitals (DC)** by **8 runs** at **Brabourne Stadium, Mumbai**.
- MI scored **149/7** in 20 overs, with **captain Harmanpreet Kaur** top-scoring **66 off 44 balls**, anchoring the innings with key boundaries. DC, chasing 150, ended at **141/9**, falling short despite determined efforts from their batters.
- **Natalie Sciver-Brunt** delivered a crucial bowling performance, taking **3 wickets for 30 runs** in 4 overs, pivotal in restricting DC's chase. This win marks **MI's second WPL title in three seasons**, repeating their **2023 victory over DC at the same venue**.

Ministry Releases Draft National Code Against Age Fraud in Sports (NCAAFS) 2025

- The **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports** released the draft **NCAAFS 2025** to ensure **fairness and integrity** in Indian sports by curbing **age fraud**. Athletes must submit **three documents** for **mandatory age verification**, with details **digitally locked** in a **centralized database** to prevent tampering.
- In case of disputes, age will be verified through **medical tests**, including **TW3 method**, **MRI**, and **AI-based bone assessments**; appeals can be made to a **designated medical panel**.
- **First-time violators** face a **two-year ban** and loss of titles, while **repeat offenders** receive a **lifetime ban** and may face legal action; coaches and officials involved face **suspension or debarment**.
- A **whistle-blower platform** with **confidential reporting** and a **reward system** will be introduced. A **six-month amnesty window** will allow athletes to self-declare correct age without penalties, followed by **performance review** and reassignment.
- The code provides a **two-tier appeals process** through **Regional Appellate Panels** and the **Central Appeals Committee (CAC)**. **NSFs must appoint Integrity Officers** to verify documents and report violations; a **QR-enabled ID card** will be issued post-verification and stored in **DigiLocker**.
- A **national database**, integrated with **NSRS**, will be created in compliance with the **Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023**. The code applies to all **athletes, coaches, officials, and sports entities** under NSFs, SAI, PSUs, and NGOs engaged in **sports development**.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Microsoft's Majorana 1: Quantum Computing Breakthrough

- Microsoft has introduced **Majorana 1**, a quantum chip that uses **topological qubits** to improve **stability** and **scalability** in quantum computing. The chip is built using **topological superconductors** that enable the creation and control of **Majorana particles**, which form the **topological qubits**, offering greater **robustness against errors** compared to traditional qubits.
- Majorana 1 aims to reduce the need for **error correction**, making quantum computing **more practical and scalable** by allowing for **millions of qubits** to work together effectively. The chip features a **fully digital control mechanism**, using **voltage pulses** to manage qubit states, instead of relying on delicate **analog tuning**, which reduces errors and simplifies quantum operations.
- This advancement could lead to **large-scale quantum computing**, enabling complex tasks like **simulations, encryption, and optimization** that are challenging for classical supercomputers. The introduction of Majorana 1 is seen as a significant milestone, with the potential to **revolutionize industries** such as **cryptography, artificial intelligence, and materials science** by solving problems beyond the capabilities of classical systems.

ISRO Develops World's Largest Vertical Propellant Mixer

- ISRO has developed the world's largest **10-tonne vertical planetary mixer** for solid propellant production, in collaboration with the **Central Manufacturing Technology Institute (CMTI)** in Bengaluru.
- The mixer, weighing approximately **150 tonnes** and measuring **5.4 meters** in length, **3.3 meters** in breadth, and **8.7 meters** in height, is designed to improve the **efficiency, safety, and productivity** of solid rocket motor manufacturing. The mixer is equipped with **multiple hydrostatic agitators**, and operates remotely using a **Programmable Logic Controller (PLC)**-based control system, with **SCADA** monitoring.
- It was formally handed over on **February 13, 2025**, at **CMTI**, Bengaluru, where the **Director of ISRO's Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC)** received it. This development enhances India's **self-reliance** in the space sector and underscores the country's growing technological capabilities in **solid propellant production**.

First Astronaut with Disability Cleared for ISS Mission

- **John McFall**, a 43-year-old British former Paralympian, has become the first astronaut with a **disability** approved for **long-duration missions** to the **International Space Station (ISS)**.
- McFall lost his right leg in a **motorcycle accident** at age 19 and went on to win a **bronze medal** in the 100m sprint at the **2008 Beijing Paralympics**. He later pursued a career in medicine as a trauma and orthopaedic surgeon.
- In **2022**, McFall was selected by the **European Space Agency (ESA)** for its "**Fly! Feasibility**" study, which assessed the viability of astronauts with disabilities in space. The study explored over 80 challenges, including the functionality of **prosthetic limbs in microgravity** and **emergency evacuation** procedures from the ISS.
- The study concluded that a **lower-limb amputee** can safely train for, participate in, and return from long-duration missions. McFall's certification marks a significant step toward making space exploration more **inclusive**, challenging traditional physical requirements for astronauts.
- Although McFall is medically cleared for spaceflight, he has not yet been assigned to a specific mission. He remains part of ESA's **astronaut reserve**, with opportunities for potential assignments, including in **private space missions** such as those by **Axiom Space**.

Moon's South Pole

Indian scientists have created the **first detailed geological map** of the **Moon's south pole** using data from the **Chandrayaan-3 mission**. The map reveals a **diverse terrain**, including **highlands, lowland plains, and secondary craters**, with an estimated age of **3.7 billion years**, corresponding to the time when early microbial life was emerging on Earth.

- The map also traces **crater alignments**, showing that debris from the **Schomberger crater** influenced the surface around the Chandrayaan-3 landing site.
- This breakthrough helps understand the **lunar impact history** and provides valuable insights into the Moon's geological evolution. **Chandrayaan-3's Pragyan rover** detected traces of **ancient magma**, supporting the **lunar magma hypothesis** that the Moon was once covered by a molten lava ocean.
- The map enhances knowledge of lunar geology and will assist in planning **future lunar missions**, including **safe landing sites** and **resource exploration**. This research also lays the groundwork for **human settlements on the Moon**, with a focus on areas like the **south pole**, which may contain **frozen water** in shadowed craters.

India's First Hyperloop Test Track: A High-Speed Revolution

- **IIT Madras** and **Indian Railways** have launched **India's first hyperloop test track**, a **422-meter** facility designed to develop **ultra-fast travel** using **electromagnetically levitated pods** inside **vacuum tubes**.
- The technology reduces **air resistance**, enabling **speeds** of up to **1,200 km/h**, which could cut intercity travel times to just **30 minutes**, for routes like **Delhi to Jaipur** or **Bengaluru to Chennai**. The project is a collaboration between the **Indian government** and **academia**, with funding from the **Ministry of Railways** and a \$1 million grant to accelerate research and testing.
- The next phase involves identifying a **40-50 km stretch** for **full-scale implementation**, with plans for **commercial deployment** if the pilot tests are successful. The test track is a crucial step in making **hyperloop travel** a reality in India, positioning the country at the forefront of **futuristic transportation technology**.

IndiaAI Mission: Union IT Minister Launches Compute Portal and AIKosha Dataset Platform

- **Union IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw** launched the **IndiaAI Compute Portal** and the **AIKosha Dataset Platform** as part of the **IndiaAI Mission** to boost AI accessibility and innovation in India.

- The **IndiaAI Compute Portal** provides access to **18,000+ GPUs**, cloud storage, and AI-related services, supporting students, startups, researchers, academia, and government departments. It offers **affordable AI computing** (below ₹100 per hour), aiming to develop India's **own foundational AI model**.
- The **AIKosha Dataset Platform** serves as a one-stop resource for accessing **high-quality, non-personal datasets** for AI model training. It also offers tools, mentorship, and resources for AI developers, enabling the creation of **India-specific AI models**.
- The government received **67 applications** for developing India's **foundational AI model**, with a vision to build AI at a **lower cost**, similar to the cost-effective approach of **Chandrayaan**. India plans to develop its **own GPUs** in the next 3-4 years.
- Additional initiatives include the **AI Competency Framework** for public sector officials, the **India AI Startups Global Acceleration Programme** to support global expansion of AI startups, and the **India AI Fellowship Programme** recognizing top AI students and applications.
- The **IndiaAI Mission** has a **budget of ₹10,371.92 crore**, approved by the **Union Cabinet** in March 2023, and is focused on fostering AI research, development, and public-private partnerships for AI innovation across sectors like **healthcare, agriculture, education, and governance**.

Gandiva Air-to-Air Missile Renamed and Enhanced by DRDO

- The **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** has renamed the **Astra MK-III missile** as **Gandiva**, inspired by **Arjuna's bow** from the Mahabharata. Gandiva uses a **Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet (SFDR)** engine, enabling **sustained supersonic speeds and extended range**.
- It has a **maximum range of 340 km at 20 km altitude**, and **190 km at 8 km altitude**. Launch speed varies from **Mach 0.8 to 2.2**, and it can intercept targets flying at **Mach 2.0 to 3.6**.
- It can engage **fighter jets, bombers, military transport aircraft, refueling planes, and AWACS**, with a **±10 km snap-up/snap-down** capability and up to **20° angle of attack**. Gandiva will be integrated with the IAF's **Su-30MKI** and **LCA Tejas** platforms.
- Its range surpasses that of **China's PL-15 (300 km)** and **U.S. AIM-174 (240 km)**, making it one of the **longest-range BVR missiles** globally. It has passed **ground tests** including **booster and nozzleless booster trials**, with **flight tests** planned from **Su-30MKI and Tejas** aircraft.

Chandrayaan-3 Detects Subsurface Ice on the Moon

- Chandrayaan-3** has detected **ice deposits** just centimeters beneath the Moon's surface, mainly in the **polar regions**. The **ChaSTE probe** on the **Vikram lander** recorded extreme surface temperatures, reaching up to **82°C during the day** and dropping to **-170°C at night**.
- These large **temperature variations** indicate conditions suitable for **ice formation** beneath the surface. **Localized variations** due to surface texture and solar exposure suggest ice may exist in **more regions** than previously estimated.
- Slopes with angles over **14° facing away from the Sun** are likely cool enough to **support ice accumulation**. The discovery is significant for future missions, aiding understanding of **lunar geology** and providing a **potential resource for human exploration and habitation**.

NASA Launches PUNCH Mission to Study Sun's Corona and Solar Wind

- On **March 12, 2025**, NASA launched the **Polarimeter to Unify the Corona and Heliosphere (PUNCH)** mission to study the **Sun's outer atmosphere and solar wind**. The mission deployed **four microsatellites** into **low Earth orbit** to conduct **continuous imaging** of the **inner solar system**.
- It aims to create **global, 3D observations** of the **Sun's corona** and its **transformation into solar wind**, aiding research on **solar phenomena and space weather**.
- One satellite features a **Narrow Field Imager (NFI)** with a **coronagraph** to image the **solar corona**, while the other three carry **Wide Field Imagers (WFIs)** to observe the **heliosphere**.
- Key objectives include studying **solar wind formation** and analyzing **transient structures** like **coronal mass ejections (CMEs)**. PUNCH is the **first mission** to employ **light polarization** to measure the **corona and solar wind in 3D**.

India Demonstrates Satellite Docking and Undocking, Joins Elite Global Group

- India, through **ISRO's Space Docking Experiment (SpaDEx)**, has successfully demonstrated **satellite docking and undocking**, becoming the **fourth nation** after the **U.S., Russia, and China** to achieve this milestone.

- The mission involved two **220-kg satellites** named '**Chaser**' and '**Target**', launched on **December 30, 2024**, via **PSLV-C60**. **Docking** was successfully conducted on **January 16, 2025**, marking India's entry into **in-space docking capability**.
- After over **120 simulations**, **undocking** was achieved on **March 13, 2025**, at **9:20 AM IST**, on the **first attempt**. This advancement is vital for **satellite servicing, space station operations**, and **interplanetary missions**.
- It supports future projects including **Gaganyaan** and India's **planned space station**. ISRO Chairman Dr. V Narayanan credited the success to **extensive planning and precision**, reaffirming ISRO's commitment to **space technology innovation**.

Government Approves Chandrayaan-5 Mission to Advance Lunar Exploration

- On **March 16, 2025**, ISRO Chairman V. Narayanan announced the Indian government's approval of the **Chandrayaan-5 mission**. The mission will deploy a **250 kg lunar rover** for **detailed surface studies**, a major upgrade from the **25 kg rover** in earlier missions.
- ISRO will collaborate with **Japan**, underscoring **international cooperation** in space exploration. Chandrayaan-5 follows the success of **Chandrayaan-3**, which achieved a **south pole soft landing** in **August 2023**.
- The program will be succeeded by **Chandrayaan-4**, set for launch in **2027**, aimed at **returning lunar samples** to Earth.

Airtel and Jio Partner with SpaceX to Launch Starlink in India

- Bharti Airtel and Reliance Jio have partnered with Elon Musk's SpaceX to introduce **Starlink satellite internet services** in **India**, subject to **regulatory approval**. Airtel announced its collaboration with **SpaceX**, followed by **Jio's agreement** to distribute Starlink through its **retail network**.
- The service aims to **expand high-speed internet access** in **remote and underserved regions**, supporting **businesses, education, and healthcare**. The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has proposed a **five-year license period** for satellite broadband, opposing Starlink's **request for a 20-year license**.

India's First CAR T-Cell Therapy Trial Shows 73% Success Rate in Blood Cancer Patients

- India's first clinical trial of **CAR T-cell therapy** demonstrated a **73% response rate** among patients with **relapsed or refractory B-cell malignancies** including **leukaemia and lymphoma**.
- The trial involved **64 patients** aged **15 to 57**, with **51 evaluable**, showing either **cancer regression or remission**. The procedure included **leukapheresis, genetic modification of T-cells** to express **CD19-targeting CARs**, and reinfusion of the engineered cells.
- Common severe side effects were **neutropenia (96%)**, **thrombocytopenia (65%)**, and **anaemia (61%)**. **Cytokine Release Syndrome (CRS)** was observed in **68%**, though **no cases of ICANS** were reported.
- There were **two treatment-related deaths** from **febrile neutropenia** and **pulmonary haemorrhage**. The therapy, **talicabtagene autoleucel (NexCAR19)**, is priced at **₹25 lakh (USD 30,000)**—far lower than international alternatives costing over **₹8 crore (USD 1 million)**.

Aditya-L1 Mission Captures First-Ever Solar Flare Kernel in NUV Wavelength

- On **February 22, 2024**, ISRO's **Aditya-L1 mission** captured the first-ever image of a **solar flare kernel** in the **photosphere and chromosphere**, using the **SUIT (Solar Ultraviolet Imaging Telescope)**.
- The observation of an **X6.3-class flare** in the **Near Ultra-Violet (200-400 nm)** marked a scientific milestone, offering new insights into **solar flare dynamics** and their influence on **space weather**.
- Launched on** September 2, 2023, aboard **PSLV-C57. Orbit**: Reached **Lagrange Point 1 (L1)** on January 6, 2024—1.5 million km from Earth—for uninterrupted solar observation.

Instruments used SUIT (NUV imaging), SoLEXS and HELIOS (X-ray spectrometry).

- SUIT's NUV imaging** revealed energy transmission from lower layers (photosphere/chromosphere) to the **solar corona**, confirming a **direct correlation between flare brightening and coronal temperature rise**. Validated long-held theories about **flare energy deposition** and expanded knowledge of **solar atmospheric layers**.
- These observations are critical as **UV/X-ray wavelengths cannot be captured from Earth**, making **Aditya-L1's L1 location essential** for solar science.
- Aditya-L1 is **India's first solar observatory** in space, placing India among elite nations conducting **advanced heliophysics research**.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

Kailash Satyarthi's Autobiography 'Diyasrai' Discussed at IGNCA

- The Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), in collaboration with the Satyarthi Movement for Global Compassion, hosted a literary event on March 1, 2025, discussing **Diyasrai**, the autobiography of Nobel Peace laureate Kailash Satyarthi.
- Diyasrai** chronicles Satyarthi's journey from **Vidisha, Madhya Pradesh**, to becoming a global icon in the **fight against child labor and exploitation**.
- The book covers his leadership of the **Global March Against Child Labour**, which reached **186 countries**, highlighting his **international advocacy for child rights and education**.
- Satyarthi emphasizes **compassion as a democratic value**, calling literature a means to awaken empathy and action for **social justice**. He reflects on the paradox of global prosperity failing to address urgent human issues, reiterating his **lifelong commitment** to children's freedom and global equity.

'March of Glory' Launched to Mark 50 Years of India's 1975 Hockey World Cup Victory

- The book '**March of Glory**' was launched on **March 18, 2025**, at **Shivaji Stadium, New Delhi**, to commemorate the **Golden Jubilee of India's 1975 Hockey World Cup victory**.
- Co-authored by **hockey historian K. Arumugam** and **journalist Errol D'Cruz**, the book documents India's journey to its historic win in **Kuala Lumpur** on **March 15, 1975**.
- It features **key match summaries, player quotes, statistics**, and over **250 rare photographs**, including India's **loss to Argentina**, dramatic **comebacks**, and final **win over Pakistan**.
- The event was attended by **Hockey India President Dilip Tirkey**, 1975 heroes **Ashok Kumar** (who scored the winning goal) and **H. J. S. Chimni**, along with Olympians and **300 young players** from **One Thousand Hockey Legs (OTHL)**.
- Dilip Tirkey** emphasized the **need for literature** on Indian hockey and praised the book for preserving its **rich legacy** and **inspiring future generations**.

IMPORTANT DAYS

Zero Discrimination Day 2025 Observed with Theme "We Stand Together"

- Zero Discrimination Day 2025** was observed on **March 1**, promoting **equality, inclusion**, and the right to live free from discrimination. Initiated by **UNAIDS** in **2014**, the day focuses on eliminating **stigma** and **discriminatory practices**, especially against **marginalized communities**.
- The **2025 theme, "We Stand Together,"** emphasizes the vital role of **community-led efforts** in sustaining the **HIV response** and advancing **global health**.
- UNAIDS called for **legal recognition, sustainable funding**, and protection of **community organizations** from discrimination and harassment. **41 countries** support the **Global Partnership** to eliminate HIV-related stigma, but **funding cuts** and **legal barriers** remain challenges.
- Notable global advocacy efforts include **LGBTQ+ rights in India**, **HIV awareness in Liberia**, and remembrance campaigns by **Armenian Americans** in the **USA**. The day urges countries to **end criminalization, gender inequality**, and **strengthen human rights protections** to meet the **2030 HIV goals**.

World Wildlife Day 2025 Observed with Theme "Wildlife Conservation Finance: Investing in People and Planet"

- World Wildlife Day 2025** was observed on **March 3**, marking the anniversary of the **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)** adopted in **1973**.
- The **2025 theme, "Wildlife Conservation Finance: Investing in People and Planet,"** emphasizes the need for **financial investments** in long-term **conservation efforts** and sustainable biodiversity protection.
- Initiated by the **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** in **2013** following a proposal by **Thailand**, the day raises global awareness about **wildlife protection** and **biodiversity loss**. CITES, signed by **184 countries**, regulates the global trade of wildlife and provides protection to **over 38,000 species**, preventing their overexploitation.
- Key global activities included **educational workshops, advocacy campaigns, policy dialogues, community-based projects**, and **wildlife sponsorship programs**. The day served as a reminder of the growing threats from **climate change, habitat destruction**, and **pollution**, and called for urgent global action to reverse **biodiversity loss** by **2030**.

World Consumer Rights Day 2025 Observed on March 15 with Theme "A Just Transition to Sustainable Lifestyles"

- World Consumer Rights Day 2025 was observed globally on **March 15 (Saturday)** to promote **consumer rights**, ensure fair **marketplace practices**, and raise awareness on **ethical and sustainable consumption**.
- The **2025 theme**, "A Just Transition to Sustainable Lifestyles," emphasizes making **eco-friendly choices** accessible while ensuring the protection of **consumer rights** and promoting **responsible consumption**.
- The observance was inspired by **U.S. President John F. Kennedy's 1962 speech** that outlined four basic consumer rights: **Safety, Information, Choice, and Being Heard**.
- First celebrated in **1983**, the day now serves as a platform for **governments, regulatory bodies**, and **consumer organizations** to strengthen consumer protection laws and ensure **corporate accountability**.
- Focus areas include **affordable access to sustainable products**, fighting **misleading advertisements**, and promoting **climate-friendly consumption habits**. Activities included **awareness campaigns, consumer rights workshops, social media movements**, and **advocacy for fair digital practices**, including **cybersecurity and data privacy**.

International Day of Happiness 2025 Celebrated Globally on March 20

- The **International Day of Happiness 2025** was observed on **March 20** to promote **happiness and well-being** as core human goals, emphasizing the importance of **sustainable development and social equity**.
- The United Nations General Assembly adopted **Resolution 66/281** on **July 12, 2012**, officially declaring March 20 as the annual day of observance. The initiative was spearheaded by **Bhutan**, which introduced the concept of **Gross National Happiness (GNH)** as an alternative to GDP in the 1970s.
- The day aims to encourage governments and organizations to incorporate **happiness-focused policies**, uphold **human rights**, ensure **equal opportunities**, and align with the **UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.
- Key SDGs linked to happiness include **No Poverty (SDG 1), Good Health and Well-being (SDG 3), Quality Education (SDG 4), Gender Equality (SDG 5), and Decent Work (SDG 8)**.

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination 2025 Marks 60 Years of ICERD

- The **International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination 2025** was observed on **March 21**, commemorating the **60th anniversary** of the **International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)**, adopted by the **UN General Assembly** on **December 21, 1965**.
- The date marks the **Sharpeville Massacre** in **1960**, where **69 people were killed** during a peaceful anti-apartheid protest in **South Africa**, sparking global action against racial injustice.
- **ICERD**, the first UN human rights treaty, mandates global efforts to **eliminate racial discrimination**, criminalize racist acts, and promote **racial equality** in law and practice.
- Over 60 years, major achievements include the **abolition of apartheid**, establishment of **legal frameworks**, and global initiatives like the **Durban Declaration (2001)** and the **International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024)**.

International Day of Forests 2025 Observed on March 21 with Theme "Forests and Food"

- The **International Day of Forests 2025** was celebrated on **March 21**, focusing on the theme "**Forests and Food**", which emphasizes the vital role of forests in ensuring **nutrition, food security, and sustainable livelihoods**.
- Established by the **United Nations General Assembly** in **2012**, the day raises awareness about **forest conservation**, ecological balance, and sustainable development.
- Forests are essential for **oxygen production, biodiversity, medicinal resources**, and **livelihoods**—particularly for **indigenous and rural communities**.
- In India, key government initiatives supporting forest conservation include:
 1. **National Agroforestry Policy (2014)**: Promotes climate-resilient farming by integrating trees and crops; implemented by **ICAR-CAFRI** with support from **ICFRE, CSIR**, and others.
 2. **Green India Mission (GIM)**: A part of **NAPCC**, aims to expand and improve **10 million hectares** of forest/tree cover and enhance **ecosystem services and rural livelihoods**.
 3. **Forest Fire Prevention & Management Scheme**: Aims to reduce forest fires using **remote sensing, GIS, GPS**, and real-time alerts; supported by the **Forest Survey of India** and coordinated by a **Crisis Management Group**.
 4. **Pradhan Mantri Van Dhan Yojana (PMVY)**: Launched in **2018** to enhance tribal livelihoods through **Van Dhan Vikas Kendras**, which facilitate **processing, branding, and marketing of Minor Forest Produce (MFPs)**.

OBITUARIES

Legendary Odissi Dancer Mayadhar Raut Passes Away at 92

- Renowned **Odissi maestro Mayadhar Raut**, known as the “**Father of Odissi dance**,” passed away at the age of **92** on **February 22, 2025**, at his home in **Delhi**, due to natural causes. Born on **July 6, 1933**, in **Odisha**, Raut began training in **Gotipua** at the age of 7 and was the first to perform it on stage in **1944**.
- He played a pivotal role in the **revival and codification of Odissi dance** during the 1950s, introducing **Sanchari Bhava, Mudra Vinyoga**, and the **Rasa Theory** into its structure. Raut **co-founded Kala Vikas Kendra** in **1952** and **Jayantika Association** in **1959**, laying the foundation for modern Odissi dance education.

Russian Chess Grandmaster Boris Spassky Passes Away at 88

- Boris Spassky**, the **10th World Chess Champion**, passed away at the age of **88**, as confirmed by **FIDE general director Emil Sutovsky**. Born in **Leningrad (now St. Petersburg)**, Spassky became an **International Grandmaster** in **1955** and clinched the **World Championship title** in **1969** by defeating **Tigran Petrosian**.
- He is best remembered for the **1972 "Match of the Century"** in Reykjavik against **Bobby Fischer**, where he lost the title **12.5–8.5**, but gained worldwide admiration for his **gracious sportsmanship**. In **1978**, Spassky moved to **France**, became a citizen, and represented the country in three **Chess Olympiads (1984, 1986, 1988)**.

Nobel Laureate Daniel Kahneman Chooses Assisted Suicide at 90 in Switzerland

- Daniel Kahneman**, Nobel Prize-winning psychologist and economist, chose **assisted suicide** in **Switzerland** at the age of **90**, despite being in **relatively good health**, to avoid the challenges of advanced age.
- He spent his **final days in Paris** with loved ones before traveling to **Switzerland**, where **assisted dying** is legal under specific conditions. He is best known for his 2011 book "**Thinking, Fast and Slow**", a seminal work on **human decision-making**.
- Kahneman, an **Israeli-American**, won the **2002 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences** for integrating **psychological insights** into economics, notably through **prospect theory** with **Amos Tversky**.
- In **India**, **active euthanasia** remains **illegal**, while **passive euthanasia** has been **legal under specific conditions** since Supreme Court rulings in **2011 and 2018**. The **2018 judgment** allowed for **advance directives** (living wills), and in **January 2023**, the process for implementing them was further **streamlined** by the **Supreme Court**.

RANKINGS

Women Billionaires Global List 2025: Forbes Billionaire Rankings Unveiled

- According to the **Forbes Billionaire List 2024**, **women now make up 13.3%** of the global billionaire population. The top 10 richest women in the world have collectively amassed over **\$500 billion in net worth**, reflecting their growing influence across various sectors.
- Alice Walton**, heiress to the Walmart fortune, tops the list with a staggering **\$112.5 billion**, followed by **Francoise Bettencourt Meyers** of L'Oréal and **Julia Koch** of Koch Industries, both commanding fortunes over **\$74 billion**.
- Indian billionaire **Savitri Jindal** of the **JSW Group** ranks 7th with **\$32.3 billion**, sharing her spot with **MacKenzie Scott**, ex-wife of Jeff Bezos.
- The list features a blend of **inherited and self-made wealth**, with industries ranging from retail, shipping, and pharmaceuticals to hedge funds and steel manufacturing.

Top Cleanest Cities in India: Indore Featured for the 7th Time

- Indore has once again been ranked **India's cleanest city** in the **Swachh Survekshan 2024**, marking its **7th consecutive win**. The rankings were announced in the **9th edition** of the Swachh Survekshan survey, launched by **Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Manohar Lal Khattar**.
- The survey introduced the **Super Swachh League**, recognizing top cities based on **population categories** and consistent performance over the past three years. **Top Cleanest Cities (Population-wise):**
 - Very Small Cities:** Panchgani (Maharashtra), Patan (Gujarat)
 - Small Cities:** Vita, Sasvad (Maharashtra)
 - Medium Cities:** Ambikapur (Chhattisgarh), Tirupati (Andhra Pradesh)
 - Big Cities:** Noida (UP), Chandigarh

- **Million-Plus Cities:** Indore, Navi Mumbai, Surat, New Delhi Municipal Council
- Indore's success is due to 100% **door-to-door waste collection**, Bio-CNG plant, AI-driven garbage monitoring, and **strong citizen engagement**. The initiative encourages **transparency, sustainability, and innovation** in sanitation, setting benchmarks for cleanliness across India.

Top 10 Most and Least Expensive Passports in 2025

- In 2025, **passport costs** vary significantly across countries, influenced by factors like security features, diplomatic reach, and administrative fees. **Mexico** issues the **world's most expensive passport** at ₹19,481.75 (\$230.85) for 10 years with access to **162 countries**, followed by **Australia** (₹19,047.14 / \$225.70, 190 countries) and the **USA** (₹13,911.92 / \$164.85, 189 countries). Other high-cost nations include **New Zealand, Italy, Canada, the UK, and Fiji**, all offering broad **visa-free travel access**.
- In contrast, the **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** offers the **cheapest passport** globally at ₹1,493.73 (\$17.70), followed by **India** at ₹1,524.95 (\$18.07), with visa-free access to **62 countries**. Other affordable passports include those from **Hungary, South Africa, Spain, Poland, and Brazil**, many with **strong global mobility**.
- As per the **Henley Passport Index 2025**, **India ranks 82nd**, offering access to **73 destinations**. Despite limited access, India's passport is notable for being the **second most affordable** globally.

Top 10 Most Valuable Indian Brands of 2025

- As per the **Brand Finance Global 500 Report 2025**, Indian brands are making global strides, contributing **1.7% of the total global brand value**. **Tata Group** leads as India's most valuable brand, followed by **Infosys, HDFC, and LIC**.
- **Tata Group** tops the list with a brand valuation of **\$31.6 billion**, ranked **60th globally**, marking a **10% rise**. **Infosys** holds **\$16.3 billion** in brand value, ranked **132nd**, and leads IT services with the **highest CAGR**.
- **HDFC Group**, valued at **\$14.2 billion**, ranks **164th**, debuting as a major **banking brand**. **LIC** is India's **fastest-growing brand** with a **36% surge**, valued at **\$13.3 billion**, ranked **177th**. **Reliance Group**, worth **\$9.8 billion**, ranks **237th**, driving growth in **energy, telecom, and digital services**.
- **SBI Group**, at **\$9.6 billion**, ranks **241st**, remaining a **banking leader** with a strong digital push. **HCLTech**, with **\$8.9 billion**, ranks **262nd**, excelling in **AI and cybersecurity**. **Airtel** is valued at **\$7.7 billion**, ranked **292nd**, leading India's **telecom market**. **Larsen & Toubro (L&T)** debuts with **\$7.4 billion**, ranked **316th**, known for **infrastructure and smart cities**. **Mahindra Group**, at **\$7.2 billion** and ranked **330th**, shines in **automobiles and sustainability**.

India Ranks 4th in Global Wealth Rankings: Knight Frank's Wealth Report 2025

- Knight Frank released the 19th edition of *The Wealth Report 2025* in March, analysing the global distribution of wealth. **India ranks 4th globally** with **85,698 High Net-Worth Individuals (HNWIs)** in 2024, a **6% year-on-year increase**, accounting for **3.7% of the global wealthy population**.
- The **top three countries** are the **USA** (905,413 HNWIs), **China** (471,634), and **Japan** (122,119). The **global HNWI population** rose by **4.4%**, reaching **2.34 million in 2024**.
- **India ranks 3rd** in the number of **billionaires (191)** with a combined wealth of **USD 950 billion**. **Delhi** climbed to **18th place** in luxury property rankings (from 37th), while **Mumbai** dropped to 28th.
- By **2028**, India's HNWI population is projected to reach **93,753** (9.4% growth). The report highlighted that **47% of new female billionaires are under 30**, signalling a **gender shift in global wealth creation**. Among young HNWIs, **29.8% prefer luxury real estate**, followed by **27.8% for luxury cars**, and **15.1% for private jets**.

India's Free Speech Ranking in Global Index: Key Highlights from 2025 Report

- According to the 2025 global survey by U.S.-based think tank *The Future of Free Speech*, **India ranks 24th out of 33 countries** with a score of **62.6**, placed between South Africa (66.9) and Lebanon (61.8). The report, titled "*Who in the World Supports Free Speech?*", found that **37% of Indians support restricting criticism of government policies**—the highest among all surveyed nations.
- Despite this, a majority of Indians believe free speech has improved, even as the actual global ranking reflects a decline in protections. Norway (87.9) and Denmark (87.0) topped the index, while **Pakistan (57.0), Indonesia (56.8), and Malaysia (55.4)** showed notable improvements.
- India is grouped with **Hungary and Venezuela** as exceptions—nations where public support for free speech exists despite weak legal or institutional safeguards. Globally, support for free speech has declined since 2021, particularly in democracies like the U.S., Japan, and Israel, highlighting the increasing tension between public perception and democratic freedoms.

Glass-Ceiling Index 2025 Ranks Sweden Best for Working Women

- The Glass-Ceiling Index 2025, compiled by The Economist, assessed 29 OECD countries on gender equality in the workplace. Sweden topped the index, surpassing Iceland, which had led for the past two years; Nordic countries maintained top positions due to strong gender policies.
- The top 10 countries include Sweden, Iceland, Finland, Norway, Portugal, New Zealand, France, Spain, Denmark, and Australia. The average gender wage gap stands at 11.4%, with female labor-force participation at 66.6%, compared to 81% for men.
- Women hold 33% of corporate board positions, and parliamentary representation averages 34% across OECD nations. Japan's female parliamentary share rose from 10% to 16%, and Britain's from 35% to 41%, while the U.S. declined to 28.7%.
- New Zealand rose eight ranks to sixth place, and South Korea improved for the first time in 11 years, now at 28th. Japan, Turkey, and South Korea remain at the bottom due to low female representation in leadership and entrenched gender norms.

Global Terrorism Index 2025 Highlights Shifting Epicenters and Rising Threats

- The Global Terrorism Index (GTI) 2025, by the Institute for Economics and Peace, covers 163 countries, analyzing terrorism trends globally. In 2024, countries with terrorist incidents rose from 58 to 66, the highest since 2018, though deaths fell by 13% to 7,555, and attacks declined 3% to 3,492.
- 45 countries saw deteriorated terrorism scores, while 34 improved. The Sahel region emerged as the epicenter, accounting for over 50% of global terrorism deaths, with a tenfold increase since 2019.
- Factors include weak governance, ethnic tensions, and ecological degradation, with JNIM expanding into coastal West Africa. Sub-Saharan Africa remains the most affected region for eight consecutive years, contributing significantly to the 95% of global deaths along with the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia.
- Nigeria recorded 565 deaths, despite fewer attacks; Boko Haram and ISWA remain active. Pakistan saw a 45% surge in terrorism deaths, led by TTP and BLA, marking the largest annual rise in a decade. In Afghanistan, deaths dropped by 12%, but attacks rose 20%, with ISK continuing as a major threat.

Global Free Speech Survey 2024 Ranks India 24th Out of 33 Countries

- The Global Free Speech Survey 2024, conducted by The Future of Free Speech, analyzed attitudes toward free expression across 33 countries in October 2024.
- Global support for free speech ranged from 54% to 88%, with Norway (87.9) and Denmark (87.0) leading the rankings.
- Support has declined since 2021 in several democracies, including Japan (-10.6 points), Israel (-5.7), and the U.S. (-3.2), dropping the U.S. from 3rd to 9th place.
- Surprisingly, Hungary (85.5) and Venezuela (81.8) scored high despite being authoritarian-leaning, indicating a disconnect between public sentiment and state policies. India ranked 24th, scoring 62.6, with general support for free speech, but lower tolerance for criticism of the government.

SUMMIT'S AND MOU'S

India Assumes Chairmanship of Bay of Bengal Inter-Governmental Organisation

- India has assumed the Chairmanship of the Bay of Bengal Programme Inter-Governmental Organisation (BOBP-IGO) from Bangladesh during the 13th Governing Council Meeting held in Malé, Maldives from February 20-22, 2025.
- The transition occurred during the Policy Guidance for Mainstreaming Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) conference, attended by delegates from Sri Lanka, Maldives, and Bangladesh.
- Representing India, Dr. Abhilaksh Likhi, Secretary, Department of Fisheries, reaffirmed India's commitment to sustainable fisheries, marine resource management, and regional cooperation.
- Under its chairmanship, India will prioritize capacity building, policy innovation, tackling Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, and improving livelihoods of small-scale fishers.
- The leadership aligns with the Viksit Bharat 2047 vision and is expected to strengthen partnerships with global bodies such as FAO, SEAFDEC, and UNODC for ecosystem sustainability and economic growth in the Bay of Bengal region.

Advantage Assam 2.0: A New Dawn for Investment and Infrastructure

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the **Advantage Assam 2.0 Investment & Infrastructure Summit 2025** in Guwahati, spotlighting Assam as a gateway to Southeast Asia.
- Major industrial players **Reliance Industries and Adani Group** each pledged **₹50,000 crore** in investments over five years to strengthen **energy, logistics, digital infrastructure, and tourism** sectors.
- Assam's **GDP growth is projected at 15.2%**, with CM Himanta Biswa Sarma aiming for a **\$143 billion economy by 2030**. The summit attracted **global delegates** from **Australia, South Korea, Japan, Malaysia, and Singapore**, reinforcing investor confidence in Assam's development under the **Act East Policy**.
- PM Modi termed the initiative a "**mega campaign**" for global economic integration of the Northeast.

Union Minister Shri Manohar Lal Inaugurates GRIDCON 2025

- **Union Minister Shri Manohar Lal** inaugurated **GRIDCON 2025** on March 9 at IICC, Yashobhoomi, New Delhi, with focus on "**Innovations in Grid Resilience**". Organized by **POWERGRID** under the **Ministry of Power**, the event brought together **2,000+ delegates, 150 exhibitors**, and experts from **30+ countries**.
- The 3-day international conference featured **technical papers**, global panels, and a **major tech exhibition** showcasing AI-driven grid solutions, energy storage, and smart transmission systems. Key focus areas included **renewable energy integration, grid resilience, smart asset management, and digital transformation** of the power sector.
- Union Minister of State **Shripad Yesso Naik** and POWERGRID CMD **R.K. Tyagi** emphasized India's vision of modernizing energy infrastructure and boosting smart grid technologies. GRIDCON 2025 aims to shape India's **low-carbon energy transition** and policy innovation in grid modernization.

India's Role in the 4th 'No Money for Terror' (NMFT) Conference

- India participated in the **4th 'No Money for Terror' (NMFT) Conference** held in **Munich**, reiterating its commitment to global anti-terror financing collaboration. India raised concerns over **cross-border fund flows, digital financial channels, and cryptocurrency misuse** in terror financing.
- Cited measures like **UAPA (1967), PMLA (2002)**, and 2019 **amendments** empowering NIA for asset seizure and stronger enforcement. Established **specialized verticals** in NIA (Cyber Terrorism, Explosives, Human Trafficking), and institutions like **FCORD, FIU-IND, and NATGRID** for financial surveillance and intelligence sharing.
- India mandated **AML/CFT compliance for Virtual Digital Asset Service Providers**, ensuring enhanced crypto transaction monitoring. Highlighted India's role in creating a **Permanent Working Group** involving law enforcement, social media, and crowdfunding platforms for better tracking of suspicious activities.

Haryana Witness Protection Scheme 2025

- The **Haryana Witness Protection Scheme, 2025** was launched by **Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini** to ensure the safety of witnesses in serious criminal cases. The scheme applies to witnesses involved in cases punishable by **death, life imprisonment, or seven years or more imprisonment**, including offenses under the **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS)** and **POCSO Act, 2012**.
- Witnesses are categorized into three levels of threat perception: **Category A**, for life-threatening risks, including for family members; **Category B**, for risks to safety, reputation, or property; and **Category C**, for intimidation or harassment that may affect the ability to testify.
- Protection measures include preventing contact between **witnesses and the accused during investigations and trials**, monitoring communications to detect potential threats, identity concealment, including new names or professional identities, relocation assistance within Haryana or elsewhere in India if needed, enhanced security at the witness's residence, including CCTV, alarms, and fencing, and in-camera trials to protect witness identities during court proceedings.
- The Witness Protection Cell will be set up in each district, led by the **Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) or Superintendent of Police (SP)**, who will oversee protection orders, typically reviewed every three months. The scheme aims to strengthen the legal system, ensure witness safety, and encourage fearless testimonies in the pursuit of justice.

India's Participation in the 69th Session of UNCSW

- India actively participated in the **69th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW)**, held at the UN Headquarters, New York (March 10–21, 2025). The Indian delegation was led by **Union Minister Smt. Annpurna Devi (WCD Ministry)**, who delivered India's **National Statement** at the Ministerial Forum.

- India emphasized a **whole-of-government and whole-of-society** approach, focusing on health, nutrition, education, and economic empowerment for women. Participated in **Ministerial Round Tables**, advocating stronger **national gender equality mechanisms** and accelerated policy implementation.
- Held **bilateral meetings** with leaders from **Sierra Leone, Uzbekistan, Guyana, and Chile**, promoting international collaboration on women's rights. Reaffirmed its alignment with **SDGs** and the **Beijing Platform for Action**, stressing India's vision of **holistic women and child development**.

World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) 2025

The **World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) 2025** was inaugurated by **Union Minister Bhupender Yadav** in New Delhi, organized by **The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)**. The summit focused on strengthening **global partnerships** to accelerate **sustainable development and climate solutions**.

- The **theme** of the summit was "**Partnerships for Accelerating Sustainable Development and Climate Solutions**". India's **climate leadership** was highlighted, with significant initiatives like the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)**, **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)**, and **Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment)**.
- India's climate achievements** include a **7.93% reduction** in **greenhouse gas emissions** in **2020** and a **36% reduction** in the **emission intensity of GDP** from **2005 to 2020**. India's **long-term vision** includes the goal of **Viksit Bharat 2047**, aiming for a **net-zero emissions** target by **2070**.
- Key discussions** at the summit included **biodiversity conservation**, **climate finance**, and **strengthening global cooperation**. Notable **international attendees** included **Guyana's Prime Minister, Brigadier Mark Phillip**, **Brazil's Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Marina Silva**, and **Nitin Desai**, Chairman of TERI.
- The summit also emphasized the need for **developed nations** to fulfill **financial and technological commitments** under the **Paris Agreement** and advocated for greater **adaptation finance** for vulnerable regions.

ECONOMY

India's Q3 FY25 GDP Growth Set at 6.4%- ICRA

- India's **GDP** is projected to grow at **6.4%** in **Q3 FY25**, an increase from **5.4%** in the previous quarter. This growth is driven by **higher government spending** and a **rebound in exports**. **Gross Value Added (GVA)** is expected to rise by **6.6%**, with **industry** growing at **6.2%**, **services** at **7.7%**, and **agriculture** at **4.0%**. A notable highlight is the **record \$36.9 billion** in **service exports** in **December 2024**, along with a strong recovery in **merchandise exports**.
- Increased government spending** on infrastructure and social welfare, along with a **revival in exports**, particularly in services and merchandise, have significantly contributed to the economic growth. **The State Bank of India (SBI)** projects a slightly lower GDP growth of **6.2% to 6.3%** for **Q3 FY25**, driven by **capital expenditure trends** and **improved corporate earnings**. The **IMF** maintains India's growth forecast at **6.5%** for **FY25 and FY26**.

RBI to Inject \$10 Billion Through Forex Swap to Ease Liquidity Crunch

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has announced a **\$10 billion foreign exchange (forex) swap** to ease the **liquidity crunch** in the banking sector, scheduled for **February 28, 2025**. The **forex swap** involves the RBI purchasing **US dollars** from banks in exchange for **rupees**, with an agreement to sell the dollars back at a future date. This will inject rupee liquidity into the banking system, helping to address the **₹2 trillion** liquidity deficit.
- This move follows a **\$5 billion forex swap** in **January 2025** and is expected to **lower short-term interest rates**, providing relief to the banking system. The liquidity shortage has been exacerbated by **RBI's dollar sales** to stabilize the rupee, as well as the typical **year-end liquidity stress** faced by banks.
- Additional measures by the RBI include **open market bond purchases**, **longer-term variable repo auctions**, and **interest rate cuts** to support the economy. Traders expect this forex swap to ease **short-term liquidity pressures** and help manage **fiscal year-end stress** for banks.

Centre's Proposal to Reduce States' Share of Central Taxes from 2026

- The **Union government** is considering a proposal to reduce the share of **central tax revenues** allocated to states from **41% to 40%**, with implementation expected from the **2026-27 fiscal year**.
- This reduction could provide the Centre with an additional **₹350 billion** (\$4.03 billion) in revenue. The proposal will be submitted to the **Finance Commission of India**, chaired by **Arvind Panagariya**, and is expected to be approved by the **Union Cabinet** by **March 2025**.

- The Centre's fiscal deficit for 2024-25 is estimated at **4.8% of GDP**, while states' fiscal deficit is at **3.2%**, highlighting the rising expenditure requirements of the federal government.
- The share of states in **tax devolution** has increased from **20% in 1980 to 41% now**, and the Centre plans to adjust this to manage its growing fiscal needs, particularly after economic slowdowns and the COVID-19 pandemic.
- States contribute to over 60% of total government spending**, primarily on **health, education, and welfare programs**, whereas the Centre focuses on **infrastructure projects**. The **GST system** has limited states' ability to raise additional revenues, and reducing tax transfers could force states to **reallocate spending priorities**.
- The Centre is also considering imposing **conditions on revenue-deficit grants** to discourage states from offering **freebies, debt waivers, and cash handouts** for political gain. These grants have already seen a significant decline, from **₹1.18 trillion** (\$13.61 billion) in **2021-22** to **₹137 billion** (\$1.58 billion) in **2025-26**.

India's Circular Economy: A \$2 Trillion Market and 10 Million Jobs by 2050

- India's **circular economy** is projected to generate over **\$2 trillion** in market value and create **10 million jobs** by 2050, according to Union Minister **Bhupender Yadav**. This shift represents a move from the traditional "take, make, waste" model to a more sustainable **reuse and recycle-based system**.
- India is also bidding to host the **World Circular Economy Forum (WCEF)** in 2026, with **WCEF 2025** set to be held in **São Paulo, Brazil**. Key policy initiatives include the **Plastic Waste Management Rules (2016)**, a **ban on single-use plastics** since 2022, and **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)** rules for plastics, e-waste, and metals recycling.
- Circular Economy Action Plans** have been finalized for **10 waste categories**. Notable developments include the launch of the **SBM Waste to Wealth PMS Portal**, the **IFC Document Reference Guide** for solid waste management, and the release of **India's Circular Sutra**, a guide on the **3R principles** (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle).
- A MoU between the **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)** and the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)** was signed to focus on research-driven solutions for urban waste management. The **CEEW report** on solid waste management highlights **decentralized waste solutions** for growing urban areas.
- Technical visits were conducted to study a **Waste-to-Energy Plant**, **sanitary landfill**, and the **Dehlawas Sewage Treatment Plant**. Delegates also visited **heritage sites** in Jaipur, including **Hawa Mahal, City Palace, Albert Hall, and Patrika Gate**.

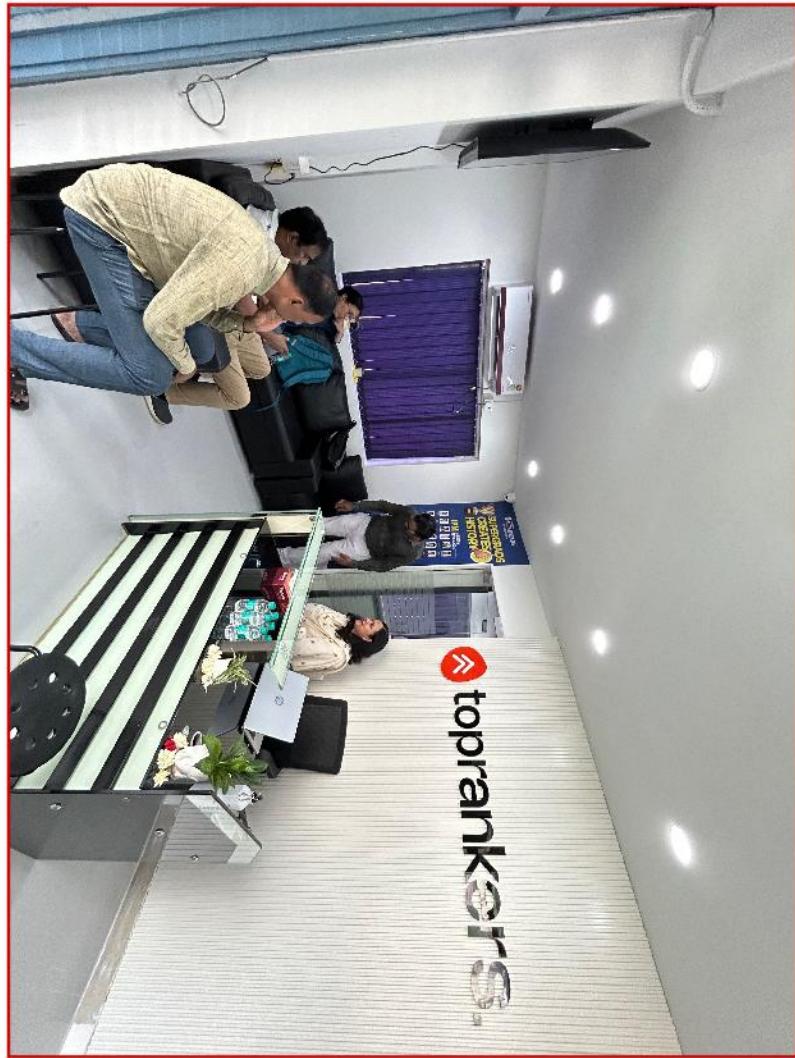
Retail Inflation Drops to 3.61% in February 2025, Lowest in Seven Months

- India's **retail inflation**, based on the **Consumer Price Index (CPI)**, fell to **3.61% in February 2025**, down from **4.31% in January**, marking a **seven-month low**. **Food inflation**, measured by the **Consumer Food Price Index (CFPI)**, declined to **3.75%** from **5.97%** in January.
- Rural inflation** eased to **3.79%**, and **urban inflation** dropped to **3.32%** in February 2025. The fall was mainly driven by **declining vegetable prices** and a **favorable food price outlook**.
- With inflation within the **RBI's 2-6% target range**, the **Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)** has space for further easing; in **February 2025**, the **benchmark interest rate** was cut by **0.25 percentage points to 6.25%**, the **first reduction in nearly five years**.

India's Trade Deficit Falls to \$14.05 Billion in February 2025, Lowest in Over Three Years

- India's **merchandise trade deficit** narrowed to **\$14.05 billion** in **February 2025**, down from **\$22.9 billion** in **January 2025**, marking a **three-and-a-half-year low**. **Exports** stood at **\$36.91 billion**, a **10.9% year-on-year decline** from **\$41.41 billion in February 2024**, the sharpest drop in **20 months**.
- Imports** declined to **\$50.96 billion**, down from **\$60.92 billion** a year earlier, mainly due to lower **gold and crude oil imports**. For April 2024–February 2025, **total exports** (merchandise & services) reached **\$750.53 billion (+6.24%)** and **total imports** were **\$839.89 billion (+7.28%)**.
- The **cumulative merchandise trade deficit** rose to **\$261.06 billion**, up from **\$225.81 billion** during the same period last year. The reduction in the monthly deficit was influenced by **global economic uncertainties**, potential U.S. tariffs, and **declining petroleum prices**, lowering import costs.

Grand Opening of LE HYDERABAD



Hyderabad: 3rd floor, R K PLAZA, Vittal Rao Nagar, Madhapur

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LEGALEDGE TEST SERIES

MOCK COMMON LAW ADMISSION TEST 2025-26

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(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

Passage (Q.1-Q.6): The moon rises and sets, stitching eternity together, night by night. Love-spun thread binds family when even years, or blue skies, stand between one and another's touch. Generations travel the same footprints, reach hands to the same climbing branches, and warm the same brown skin under the Alabama sun. Maybe "family" brings to mind only blood, marital relations, and it's easy to understand that way of thinking. But love by my hand tethers generations to generations, as well as kin by skin, in this place where all in me, and of me, can thrive.

Yet even the strongest thread will snap with constant tension and no slack. The heavens overflow with memories lost. So as life requires I hold taut and I give. In most ways, my people know, if, in some, they never will. But in all ways, my moon rises and sets for family.

So in eternity, the time had come for me to leave the home where I was born. The sun was setting and the half-bald red sweetgum around the fields announced November just a few days coming. But 1957 was still October-old when our landlord ended up face down on the ground for trying to drag me behind him to the toolshed. I was the last to leave the home house in Rensler: Daddy had passed a couple weeks before, and I had settled him next to Mama, though his burial left me scrambling for the rent. My sister Rosie was rooming with a nice family in Chicago, doing hair, and my need to keep a roof over my head had mellowed my worry to wonder about when her next letter would arrive. There was plenty of gleaning left to make November's payment, and then I'd scratch around for whatever came available to buy myself some time. I had never planned, or wanted, to leave Alabama. But with old man Todd shouting curses at my back, his face split open and gushing sweetgum-red, my plans to stay began to fade.

After sleeping a night at the neighbors, and an hours-long walk with the dawn, I arrived at the bus station with just my thrown-together knapsack. The man behind the counter assured me that my little money would carry me to Birmingham. Not Nashville, or Louisville, or Cleveland, let alone Chicago. Birmingham, he said. And no further. In those hours I waited on the bus to depart, the world came undone piece by piece. Unable to get to a place I never wanted to go, with ticket in hand to a place I knew not a single soul, first, the landscape flattened. Direction was next—north, south, east, west, all headed towards the unfamiliar. Then finally color, until everything faded to black and white. I rode the bus into this flat, directionless, colorless world, until it shushed to a stop in my new home.

Excerpted from Moonrise Over New Jessup by Jamila Minnicks .

1. What does the protagonist's decision to leave Alabama after the incident with the landlord suggest about her character?
 - (a) She is quick to flee from challenging situations.
 - (b) She values her safety and recognizes when a situation becomes untenable.
 - (c) She is impulsive and makes decisions without considering the consequences.
 - (d) She is seeking adventure and new experiences.

2. How does the protagonist's perception of the changing landscape during her bus journey reflect her emotional state?
 - (a) She feels a sense of excitement and anticipation for the unknown.
 - (b) She is indifferent to her surroundings and focused on practical concerns.
 - (c) She experiences a feeling of relief and liberation from her past.

3. What does the protagonist's reflection on family and the moon's cycles reveal about her view of relationships?
 - (a) She believes family connections are fleeting and changeable.
 - (b) She sees family bonds as enduring and cyclical, like the moon.
 - (c) She feels disconnected from her family and her past.
 - (d) She views family relationships as burdensome and restrictive.

4. How does the protagonist's reaction to leaving her home in Rensler reflect her connection to the place?
 - (a) She feels a sense of relief and eagerness to embrace new opportunities.

- (b) She is indifferent to the place, focusing only on practical aspects of moving.
- (c) She experiences a deep sense of suffering and uprooting from a place she cherishes.
- (d) She views the departure as a necessary step towards personal growth.
5. What does the protagonist's journey to Birmingham symbolize in her life?
- (a) An involuntary shift towards an uncertain and unplanned future.
- (b) An escape from past traumas and a chance for healing.
- (c) A deliberate choice to seek new adventures and challenges.
6. What does the protagonist's contemplation of the sweetgum tree signify about her state of mind?
- (a) She finds beauty and solace in the natural world around her.
- (b) She is reminded of the violence and bloodshed she has witnessed.
- (c) She feels a deep connection to the changing seasons and nature's cycles.
- (d) She is nostalgic for her childhood and simpler times.

Passage (Q.7-Q.12): Have you heard the one in which a comic, a judge, and a heckler walk into a bar and have a laugh together? Neither have I, and it seems improbable that we will encounter such a situation, other than in a joke. Given the rather tenuous relationship between comedy, law, and a heightened propensity for people to take offence at jokes, we are unlikely to witness a harmonious coming together of the three in the real world. While humour and satire have always been essential to political speech, in the Indian context, comic speech has played a relatively minor part in the development of free speech jurisprudence.

If modern jurisprudence in democratic India is slightly impoverished in its articulation of a comic jurisprudence, we ironically find a relatively rich conception of the same in ancient and medieval literature. The figure of the clown, the court jester, or the buffoon companion can be found in diverse textual and folk traditions ranging from Bharata's Natyashastra, Kautilya's Arthashastra, and in the popular narratives of Tenali Raman and Birbal-Akbar.

Unlike in Western traditions presided over by Plato, who insisted on banishing poets from the ideal republic, the jester in Indian tradition seems to enjoy a much greater licence to laugh truth to power. Whether it is Tenali Raman in the court of Krishnadevaraya or Birbal in Akbar's court, it appears that these jesters were not just tolerated but also rewarded for their comic excesses. Beneath the humorous veneer of these narratives, however, lurk the looming threat of death and punishment (danda): in several of the popular folk tales involving Tenali Raman and Birbal, they are banished or sentenced to death, only to be eventually redeemed on account of the king's often belated, and occasionally begrudging, recognition of their value as a necessary check against the hubris of the king, a hubris fed by a culture of sycophancy amongst other members of the court.

While we have spoken much about comedy, it is sobering to remind ourselves that there is a relatively thin line between comedy and tragedy. Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, for instance, is a tragedy that could easily have been a comedy, but it misses this opportunity by a matter of a few minutes. If only Juliet had woken up from her staged death a few minutes (or more precisely, 27 lines earlier), poor Romeo, instead of killing himself, would have been united with his lady love (of any name), and the audience would have joined in their laughter, delighting at the manner in which they hoodwinked their disapproving parents.

But, alas, that was not to be, and we have since suffered their tragic star-crossed fate. Might it similarly be the case that the failure of the law to develop a sense of humour is the reason why we continue to experience comedy in India as tragedy?

7. How does the passage describe the role of humour in Indian historical and cultural contexts?
- (a) Humour in Indian tradition is strictly regulated and frowned upon.
- (b) The jesters in Indian courts were often punished without any recognition of their value.
- (c) Indian jesters enjoyed a greater freedom to critique power compared to their Western counterparts.
- (d) Humour in Indian tradition is predominantly used for entertaining the masses without any political significance.

- 8.** What does the author imply by the comparison between Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet" and the nature of comedy and tragedy?
- (a) Tragedy and comedy are distinct genres with no overlapping elements.
 - (b) The transition from comedy to tragedy in literature is often a matter of timing and circumstance.
 - (c) Shakespeare's works are primarily tragic with no elements of comedy.
 - (d) "Romeo and Juliet" is an example of a comedy misunderstood as a tragedy.
- 9.** What underlying message about the development of legal humour in India can be inferred from the passage?
- (a) Indian legal system has always been supportive of comic expression.
 - (b) The lack of development in comic jurisprudence in India leads to the perception of comedy as tragedy.
 - (c) Ancient and medieval Indian literature had no influence on modern legal humour.
 - (d) Western legal traditions have a richer history of comic jurisprudence than India.
- 10.** Which perspective does the passage most likely support regarding the role of humour in Indian history and culture?
- (a) Humour in Indian history primarily served as a means to educate the masses about religious and moral values.
 - (b) Indian jesters, unlike their Western counterparts, were strictly controlled and rarely critiqued authority.
- 11.** Based on the passage, which statement would the author most likely disagree with?
- (a) The thin line between comedy and tragedy is exemplified in Shakespeare's works.
 - (b) In the Indian context, the development of free speech jurisprudence has been significantly influenced by comic speech.
 - (c) The role of the jester in Indian tradition was to provide a necessary check against the hubris of the king.
 - (d) The failure of the law to develop a sense of humour contributes to the perception of comedy as tragedy in India.
- 12.** What aspect of the relationship between comedy and law in India does the passage most emphasize?
- (a) The Indian legal system has always been supportive and protective of comedians and their freedom of speech.
 - (b) The historical role of jesters in Indian courts has been a major influence on modern Indian legal attitudes towards humour.
 - (c) The lack of a well-developed comic jurisprudence in modern India leads to a blurred line between comedy and tragedy.
 - (d) Indian law strictly prohibits any form of humour that critiques political power or authority.

Passage (Q.13-Q.18): Days after the Supreme Court of India's volatile judgment on the August 2019 presidential orders, there has been considerable, and excellent, dissection of its validation of the removal of Jammu and Kashmir's autonomy, and its cursory handling of Parliament's demotion and division of the State to two Union Territories.

Much of the commentary has dealt with the judgment's implications for the rest of the country, which are far-reaching. It undermines the rights of States vis-à-vis the Union even on critical issues such as statehood and division, grants the President far larger powers over States than earlier envisaged, and allows long-term political and territorial decisions to be made under limited-term emergency conditions such as President's rule.

There are three other key elements which have, however, been less discussed: what the verdict means on the ground for Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh, what it tells us about how the Court sees peace and security, and what it implies for the fundament of democracy in India. Back in 1953-55, the States Reorganization Commission held widespread public consultations during which villages expressed their preference for which unit to belong. This judgment negates even the right to consultation of the State's elected representatives.

On the ground, the judgment has been met largely with silence that is ambiguous in Jammu, disappointed in Kargil, welcoming in Ladakh (with reservations), and ominous in the Valley. Jammu's ambiguity centres on its experience

of economic dispossession post-2019, when the Lieutenant-Governor's administration awarded trade, retail and mining rights to national rather than local industry. In Ladakh, Kargil's disappointment stems from the fact that its majority Shia wishes to retain ties to the Valley. Leh's welcome of separation from the Valley is tempered by the desire for an elected administration instead of a Lieutenant-Governor.

The most severe impact is undoubtedly in the Valley, where the verdict has reinforced a widespread belief that Kashmiris are resented by the rest of India and their voice is repeatedly silenced. The circumstances in which the President of India, Ram Nath Kovind, passed his August 5 orders were draconian, to say the least. Additional troops were sent in at July end, over 5,500 Kashmiri politicians and activists, including three former Chief Ministers, were put in detention on the day before, Section 144 was applied forbidding gatherings of four or more persons, and a total communications blackout was imposed.

Notably, neither the main nor the concurring judgments mention these events in their summaries of incidents prefiguring the presidential orders. Instead of acknowledging the enormity of the administration's actions, which imposed war-like conditions on the people, the judges accepted the alleged security threat, in August 2019, to the Amarnath Yatra — of which nothing has been heard since, either on what it comprised or how it was averted — as background to the presidential orders and the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019. Security has also been accepted as a reason for the delay in restoring statehood, despite the administration's claim that the situation is much improved.

- 13.** Based on the passage, how does the Supreme Court's judgment address the issue of public consultation in Jammu and Kashmir?
- (a) The judgment mandates extensive public consultation for future decisions.
 - (b) It acknowledges the lack of public consultation but deems it unnecessary.
 - (c) The judgment negates even the right to consultation of the State's elected representatives.
 - (d) The passage suggests that public consultation was thoroughly conducted before the judgment.
- 14.** According to the passage, how does the Supreme Court's judgment impact the autonomy of Jammu and Kashmir?
- (a) The judgment reinforces the autonomy of Jammu and Kashmir by upholding its special status.
 - (b) It has no significant impact on the autonomy of Jammu and Kashmir.
 - (c) The judgment only affects the economic aspects of Jammu and Kashmir's autonomy.
 - (d) The judgment removes Jammu and Kashmir's autonomy and divides the state into two Union Territories.
- 15.** What does the passage imply about the Supreme Court's consideration of state rights in its judgment?
- (a) The judgment respects and upholds the traditional rights of states.
 - (b) It suggests that the judgment grants the President limited powers over states.
 - (c) The judgment is seen as undermining the rights of states vis-à-vis the Union.
 - (d) The Supreme Court's judgment is neutral on the issue of state rights.
- 16.** Based on the passage, how does the Supreme Court's judgment affect the political landscape in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh?
- (a) The judgment has been met with overwhelming support in all regions.
 - (b) It has led to a uniform sense of disappointment across Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.
 - (c) The judgment has elicited mixed reactions, with varying sentiments across different regions.
 - (d) The judgment has had no discernible impact on the political landscape of the regions.
- 17.** According to the passage, how is the Supreme Court's judgment perceived in terms of its handling of democratic principles in India?
- (a) The judgment is viewed as undermining the fundament of democracy in India.
 - (b) It is perceived as having no significant impact on democratic principles.
 - (c) The judgment is seen as a strong affirmation of democratic principles.
 - (d) The passage suggests that the judgment exclusively enhances the democratic process in Jammu and Kashmir.

18. What does the passage suggest about the Supreme Court's approach to security concerns in its judgment?
- (a) The judgment dismisses all security concerns as irrelevant.
 - (b) The judgment accepts alleged security concerns without thorough investigation.
- (c) It acknowledges security concerns but prioritizes democratic consultation.
- (d) The passage indicates that security concerns were the sole focus of the judgment.

Passage (Q.19-Q.24): The decline in crime that began in the early 1990s was accompanied by a blistering national economy and a significant drop in unemployment. It might seem to follow that the economy was a hammer that helped beat down crime. But a closer look at the data destroys this theory. It is true that a stronger job market may make certain crimes relatively less attractive. But that is only the case for crimes with a direct financial motivation—burglary, robbery, and auto theft—as opposed to violent crimes like homicide, assault, and rape. Moreover, studies have shown that an unemployment decline of 1 percentage point accounts for a 1 percent drop in nonviolent crime. During the 1990s, the unemployment rate fell by 2 percentage points; nonviolent crime, meanwhile, fell by roughly 40 percent. But an even bigger flaw in the strong-economy theory concerns violent crime. Homicide fell at a greater rate during the 1990s than any other sort of crime, and a number of reliable studies have shown virtually no link between the economy and violent crime. This weak link is made even weaker by glancing back to a recent decade, the 1960s, when the economy went on a wild growth spurt—as did violent crime. So, while a strong 1990s economy might have seemed, on the surface, a likely explanation for the drop in crime, it almost certainly didn't affect criminal behavior in any significant way. Unless, that is, "the economy" is construed in a broader sense—as a means to build and maintain hundreds of prisons. Let's now consider another crime-drop explanation: increased reliance on prisons. It might help to start by flipping the crime question around. Instead of wondering what made crime fall, think about this: why had it risen so dramatically in the first place?

19. What does the passage suggest about the common perception of the economy's role in crime reduction during the 1990s?
- (a) It was widely accepted that the economy played a major role in reducing both violent and nonviolent crime.
 - (b) The perception that the economy significantly reduced crime is challenged by the data presented.
 - (c) The economy's role in reducing crime was universally acknowledged and supported by all studies.
 - (d) There was no common perception about the economy's impact on crime during the 1990s.
20. Based on the passage, how did the decline in violent crime in the 1990s compare to the decline in nonviolent crime?
- (a) Violent crime declined at a slower rate than nonviolent crime.
 - (b) The rates of decline for violent and nonviolent crime were approximately the same.
 - (c) Homicide declined at a greater rate than any other type of crime.
 - (d) There was no significant decline in violent crime during the 1990s.
21. What alternative explanation for the drop in crime does the passage introduce towards the end?
- (a) Improved law enforcement strategies.
 - (b) Increased reliance on prisons.
 - (c) Enhanced community engagement programs.
 - (d) Better economic opportunities for at-risk populations.
22. In the passage, the phrase "blistering national economy" is used. What does this phrase most likely mean in this context?
- (a) A national economy that is causing harm and discomfort.
 - (b) A rapidly growing and robust national economy.
 - (c) An economy that is unstable and likely to collapse.
 - (d) A national economy that is stagnant and not showing any growth.
23. What does the passage imply about the link between the economy and nonviolent crime in the 1990s?
- (a) The economy barely affected nonviolent crime rates.
 - (b) Better economy meant less nonviolent crime, equally.
 - (c) Nonviolent crime dropped much more than the economy improved.

- (d) Nonviolent crime went up even as the economy got better.
- 24.** What does the passage imply about the common theories regarding the decline in violent crime during the 1990s?
- (a) The decline in violent crime was primarily due to economic growth.
- (b) There is a strong, direct correlation between economic factors and the decrease in violent crime.
- (c) The decline in violent crime cannot be attributed primarily to economic factors.
- (d) Violent crime decreased solely because of increased incarceration rates.

SECTION -B : CURRENT AFFAIRS, INCLUDING GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

Passage (Q.25-Q.30): Proba-3 Mission

Despite its faintness, the solar corona is an important element of our Solar System, larger in expanse than the Sun itself, and the source of space weather and the solar wind, explains Andrei Zhukov of the Royal Observatory of Belgium, Principal Investigator for Proba-3's ASPIICS (Association of Spacecraft for Polarimetry and Imaging Investigation of the Corona of the Sun) coronagraph. At the moment we can image the Sun in extreme ultraviolet to image the solar disc and the low corona, while using Earth and space-based coronagraphs to monitor the high corona. That leaves a significant observing gap, from about three solar radii down to 1.1 solar radii, that Proba-3 will be able to fill. This will make it possible, for example, to follow the evolution of the colossal solar explosions called Coronal Mass Ejections as they rise from the solar surface and the outward acceleration of the solar wind. It is not practical today to fly a single 150-m long spacecraft in orbit, but if Proba-3 can indeed achieve an equivalent performance using two small spacecraft, the mission will open up new ways of working in space for the future. Imagine multiple small platforms working together as one to form far-seeing virtual telescopes or arrays. If Proba-3's initial commissioning phase goes to plan then the spacecraft pair will be separated early in the new year to begin their individual check-outs. The operational phase of the mission, including the first observations of the corona through active formation flying, should begin in about four months.

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Passage (Q.31-Q.36): Income Tax Bill, 2025

The new Income Tax Bill prescribes the existing process for tax authorities to gain access to the digital space or a computer device only during search and survey operations, and it is not aimed to breach the online privacy of common taxpayers even if their case lands into scrutiny. The official rejected claims made in some reports and opinion pieces that the tax authorities have been granted additional powers to breach the passwords of electronic records, including email, social media handles and Cloud storage space of the taxpayers. Such reports are nothing but fear mongering. The tax department is not into snooping on social media accounts or online activities of a taxpayer. These powers are only to be executed during the course of a search or survey operation, and that too when the assessee being searched or surveyed refuses to share the passwords for digital storage drives, emails, clouds and communication platforms such as WhatsApp and Telegram, etc. A Section of the Income Tax Bill, 2025, which is before Parliament at present, prescribes an authorised officer to gain access by over-riding the access code of computer systems or virtual digital space. Under the existing law, Section 132 enables an authorised officer to require any person who is found in possession of books, accounts or other documents in the form of electronic record to afford facility to inspect such documents and also to seize such documents. Gaining access to digital devices and spaces during coercive actions like search and survey is vital to find evidence and these raids are limited when you see the data.

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- 31.** Who among the following is known as the father of income tax in India?
- Dadabhai Naoroji
 - James Wilson
 - R. K. Shanmukham Chetty
 - John Mathai
- 32.** Who led the Task Force on the review of direct tax laws that submitted its report in 2019?
- Nirmala Sitharaman
 - Akhilesh Ranjan
 - R. K. Shanmukham Chetty
 - Subhash Garg
- 33.** Which of the following statements correctly differentiates between Direct Taxes and Indirect Taxes?
- Direct taxes are levied directly on an individual's or entity's income, while indirect taxes are levied on goods and services.
 - Direct taxes are paid by the taxpayer to the government without any intermediary, whereas indirect taxes are collected by an intermediary (such as a retailer) and then paid to the government.
 - Examples of direct taxes include GST and Excise Duty, while examples of indirect taxes include Income Tax and Corporate Tax.
- Only statements 1 and 2 are correct
 - Only statements 2 and 3 are correct
 - Only statement 1 is correct
 - All statements 1, 2, and 3 are correct
- 34.** Which of the following is an example of a Direct Tax?
- Goods and Services Tax
 - Excise Duty
 - Corporate Income Tax
 - Customs Duty
- 35.** Consider the following statements about the evolution of income tax in India:
- The Income-tax Act of 1922 established a structured tax system and formalized income tax authorities.
 - The Central Board of Revenue Act (1924) created a statutory body responsible for administering income tax.
 - The Income Tax Act of 1961 was introduced but its provisions were in effect since 1957.
- Which of the above statements is/are correct?
- I and II only
 - II and III only
 - I and III only
 - I, II, and III
- 36.** According to the proposed tax reforms, which of the following statements is CORRECT?
- The new tax bill continues the use of the Assessment Year (AY) system for filing taxes.
 - Virtual digital assets (cryptocurrencies) will remain untaxed under the new tax framework.
 - The bill introduces the concept of a "Tax Year," replacing the Assessment Year (AY) system for better clarity.
 - The new tax bill will be implemented immediately without any further review or amendments.

Passage (Q.37-Q.42): Neutral Expert appointed by World Bank and the Indus Water Treaty

The IWT was signed by India and Pakistan to determine the distribution of the waters of the Indus and its tributaries. It was signed in Karachi by then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and then Pakistan President Ayub Khan after nine years of negotiations arranged by the World Bank.

In 2015, Pakistan requested the appointment of a Neutral Expert to examine its technical objections to the projects. However, it unilaterally retracted this request a year later, and instead proposed adjudication by the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA). India filed a separate request for the matter to be referred to a Neutral Expert. It refused to engage with the PCA mechanism, which it argues is in contravention of the IWT. Pakistan submitted that the Points of Difference raised by India do not fall within Part I of Annexure F of the Treaty, effectively taking the issue outside the remit of the Neutral Expert. India, on the other hand, had argued that these fell squarely and entirely within the aforementioned part of the Treaty, making the Neutral Expert's duty-bound to render a decision on their merits. Citing Islamabad's continued intransigence in implementing the IWT by raising repeated objections to the two projects, New Delhi in January 2023 issued notice to Pakistan seeking modification of the Treaty. This was the first such notice in the more than six decades of the Treaty's existence. India upped the ante last September, by issuing Islamabad another formal notice, this time seeking the "review and modification" of the IWT.

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- 37.** Who was the Neutral Expert (NE) appointed by the World Bank to adjudicate the Indus Water Treaty (IWT) dispute between India and Pakistan in 2025?
(a) David Malpass
(b) Kristalina Georgieva
(c) Antonio Guterres
(d) Michel Lino

38. Which hydroelectric project on the Chenab River became a subject of dispute between India and Pakistan, later ruled in favour of India by a Neutral Expert in 2007?
(a) Kishanganga Hydroelectric Project
(b) Ratle Hydroelectric Project
(c) Baglihar Hydroelectric Project
(d) Neelum-Jhelum Hydroelectric Project

39. Which article of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) outlines the three-tier mechanism for resolving disputes between India and Pakistan?
(a) Article IX of the IWT
(b) Article VI of the IWT
(c) Article IV of the IWT
(d) Article XII of the IWT

40. The Ratle Hydroelectric Project (850 MW), which India maintains adheres to the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), is constructed on which river?
(a) Indus River (b) Jhelum River
(c) Chenab River (d) Ravi River

41. Consider the following statements regarding the World Bank:
I. The World Bank has 189 member countries, each contributing to its capital and governance.
II. Ajay Banga became the President of the World Bank in June 2023.
III. The World Bank was founded in 1944 during the Bretton Woods Conference, with its primary mission being to reduce poverty.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?
(a) Only I and II
(b) Only II and III
(c) Only I and III
(d) All I, II and III

42. According to the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), which of the following statements is CORRECT?
(a) India has exclusive control over all six rivers of the Indus basin under the treaty.
(b) The treaty was signed in 1965 between India and Pakistan, with the United Nations acting as a mediator.
(c) The Permanent Indus Commission (PIC) was established to oversee treaty implementation and resolve disputes between India and Pakistan.
(d) Pakistan has control over the eastern rivers—Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej—while India controls the western rivers—Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab.

Passage (Q.43-Q.47): World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2025

Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw will head the Indian delegation. Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu will also attend. There will be a detailed discussion in the WEF Annual Meeting World Economic Forum about inclusive growth, investment in social, physical and digital infrastructure and democratising technology. The WEF website states that a company should serve all its stakeholders, not just its shareholders:employees, suppliers, and the community it is part of. As an extension of this, business, government and civil society leaders have made their way to the high Alps to consider the major global issues of the day and to brainstorm on solutions to address these challenges, it adds. Events in 1973, namely the collapse of the Bretton Woods fixed exchange rate mechanism and the Arab-Israeli War, saw the Annual Meeting expand its focus from management to economic and social issues. Two years later, the organisation introduced a system of membership for the 1,000 leading companies of the world. The European Management Forum was the first non-governmental institution to initiate a partnership with China's economic development commissions in 1979 the same year China and the US established diplomatic ties. 3,000 participants (including paying members and selected invitees), among whom are investors, business leaders, political leaders, economists, celebrities and journalists, for up to five days to discuss global issues across 500 sessions. Thus, the WEF has become a forum for various stakeholders to meet and discuss global and regional socio-economic issues.

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43. What is India's rank in the WEF Global Gender Gap Index 2024?

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| (a) 125 th | (b) 127 th |
| (c) 129 th | (d) 128 th |

44. According to the Global Competitiveness Report 2024 by the World Economic Forum (WEF), which country is ranked as the most competitive economy among the 67 global economies?

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| (a) Singapore | (b) United States |
| (c) Switzerland | (d) Germany |

45. At the 2025 World Economic Forum (WEF), which Indian state secured nearly 80% of the total Rs 20 lakh crore investment commitments?

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| (a) Gujarat | (b) Karnataka |
| (c) Maharashtra | (d) Tamil Nadu |

46. Which of the following reports is NOT published by the World Economic Forum (WEF)?

- | |
|-----------------------------------|
| (a) Global Competitiveness Report |
|-----------------------------------|

(b) Global Gender Gap Report

(c) Human Development Report

(d) Global Risk Report

47. Consider the following statements regarding the World Economic Forum (WEF) and its 2025 meeting:

I. The 2025 WEF meeting took place in January, focusing on the theme "Collaboration for the Intelligent Age".

II. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and China's Vice Premier Ding Xuexiang were among the key global figures attending the event.

III. The WEF is chaired by Børge Brende, with Professor Klaus Schwab serving as its President.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| (a) Only I and II | (b) Only II and III |
| (c) Only I and III | (d) All I, II and III |

Passage (Q.48-Q.52): India-France Relations and Modiji's recent visit

French views have traditionally converged with the Indian preference for a multipolar world, making India a reliable partner for France. Additionally, the two countries share a strong commitment to addressing climate change. With Trump having announced the withdrawal of the US from the Paris Agreement, France could look to India for even closer collaboration in this area. According to the joint statement, the two leaders agreed to work together more closely on implementing the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor that was first discussed on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in New Delhi in 2023. It has been planned to include an Eastern Corridor connecting India to the Gulf region, and a Northern Corridor connecting the Gulf region to Europe. It will comprise a railway, a ship-rail transit network, and supplementing road transport routes. The IMEC aims to provide India with an alternative route to Europe. Despite the challenging security situation in the Middle East, several European nations are eager to position themselves as key connectors. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, France

was among the top three global arms exporters between 2019 and 2023. Following the Ukraine war, France also figured in the list of the top three destinations for Indian defence exports in 2023-24. Both leaders stressed that nuclear energy is an essential part of the energy mix to enhance energy security and transition towards a low-carbon economy. With the Indian government now planning amendments to both the 2010 Act and the Atomic Energy Act, 1962, the interest among French nuclear power companies could be renewed.

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- 48.** As part of strengthening bilateral relations during the February 2025 visit, India and France signed a declaration of intent to collaborate on which area of nuclear technology?
(a) Nuclear Fusion Reactors
(b) Advanced and Small Modular Nuclear Reactors
(c) Nuclear Weapons Development
(d) Nuclear Waste Management

49. Which of the following initiatives were launched or agreed upon during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to France in February 2025?
 - Establishment of the Indo-French Center for the Digital Sciences.
 - Launch of the logo for the India-France Year of Innovation 2026.
 - Joint Declaration of Intent on Triangular Development Cooperation.

(a) Only (1) and (2) are correct.
(b) Only (2) and (3) are correct.
(c) Only (1) and (3) are correct.
(d) All (1), (2), and (3) are correct.

50. During the February 2025 visit, Prime Minister Modi and President Macron jointly inaugurated a new Indian Consulate General in which French city?
(a) Lyon
(b) Marseille
(c) Bordeaux
(d) Nice

51. Which treaty, signed in May 1956 and ratified in 1962, formalized the legal transfer of French territories, including Pondicherry, Karaikal, Mahé, and Yanam, to India?
(a) Treaty of Sugauli
(b) Treaty of Versailles
(c) Treaty of Lahore
(d) Treaty of Cession

52. According to recent developments, which of the following statements about India-France strategic relations is CORRECT?
 - France became the first country to sign a civil nuclear agreement with India after the NSG lifted restrictions on nuclear trade with India.
 - India and France signed the 'Horizon 2047' roadmap, which focuses exclusively on trade.
 - In 2024, India and France signed agreements on defence technology transfer, but they do not include joint production under the 'Make in India' initiative.
 - The International Solar Alliance (ISA), launched by India and France, primarily focuses on nuclear energy and climate action.

SECTION - C: LEGAL REASONING

Passage (Q.53-Q.58): Crime is the product of our own choice and our own independent will. The Act should be voluntary. The Act done by a person must be of conscious choice to constitute a voluntary Act for which he is held criminally liable. A conscious person who loaded a gun at others will typically be held liable for any harm that results during accidental discharge because loading the gun is treated as a voluntary activity.

To establish criminal liability, crime can be broken down into elements which a prosecution must prove beyond a reasonable doubt. There are basically four elements of a crime are as follows:

1) Human being: Section 11

Human being must commit wrongful Act to fulfill first element of a crime that means any non living thing or animals are not considered in the category of a person or a human being. Person is inclusive of company, association or body of persons whether incorporated or not.

2) Mens rea or Guilty intention

It comes from a maxim that no person can be punished in a proceeding of criminal nature unless it can be shown he has a guilty mind.

3) Actus Reus

It is the Latin term used to describe a criminal Activity. This describes a physical Activity that harms another person or damages property. In other words, due to guilty or wrongful intention, some overt Act or illegal omission must take place. There are two types of Actus reus first is commission and the second one is an omission. The commission is as a criminal activity that was the result of voluntarily body movement. This describes a physical Activity that harms a person or property.

The omission is another form of Actus reus as an Act of criminal negligence.

4) Injury under Section 44

The fourth requirement of a crime is injury should be caused to another person or to society at large. According to Section 44 of Indian Penal Code, 1860 the injury is defined as any harm illegally caused to any person in body, mind, reputation or property by another person.

53. Decide in which of the following situation a person cannot be held liable for reasons of voluntary act?

- (a) A driver who chooses to drive under the influence of a substance for any harm caused, although he did not intend to crash.
- (b) A shop owner who mops the floor but fails to put up a warning sign for a customer's slip-and-fall accident.
- (c) A person who is forcibly pushed by someone while holding a loaded gun and unintentionally fires it and causes harm.
- (d) A person who throws a heavy object off a rooftop for fun if it hits and injures someone, although he did not intend harm.

54. Detectives are investigating the theft of a priceless diamond necklace from a wealthy businesswoman's mansion. All evidence points to Pooja, a former employee with a criminal record who had a grudge against the businesswoman. Pooja had been fired a month earlier after a heated argument with the businesswoman. Security footage shows her near the mansion on the night of the theft. The DNA found on the broken display case glass does not match Pooja. Instead, it belongs to an unknown individual. However, her fingerprints were found on a display case where the necklace was last seen. A neighbor reported seeing a man resembling her leaving the

mansion late at night. She was seen making large cash purchases the day after the theft. The prosecution argued that the evidence overwhelmingly proves that Pooja stole the priceless diamond necklace from the businesswoman's mansion as she had motive, opportunity, and his actions after the crime show clear intent. However, the defense argued that the Pooja previously worked at the mansion, which explains why her fingerprints were on the display case. Decide whether Pooja can be held liable for committing theft of the priceless diamond necklace from a wealthy businesswoman's mansion or not.

- (a) Pooja can be held liable for committing theft of the priceless diamond necklace from a wealthy businesswoman's mansion because all evidence points to Pooja, a former employee with a criminal record who had a grudge against the businesswoman.
- (b) Pooja cannot be held liable for committing theft of the priceless diamond necklace from a wealthy businesswoman's mansion because Pooja previously worked at the mansion, which explains why her fingerprints were on the display case.
- (c) Pooja can be held liable for committing theft of the priceless diamond necklace from a wealthy

- businesswoman's mansion because evidence overwhelmingly proves that she had motive, opportunity, and her actions after the crime show clear intent.
- (d) Pooja cannot be held liable for committing theft of the priceless diamond necklace from a wealthy businesswoman's mansion because the DNA found on the broken display case glass does not match Pooja and instead, it belongs to an unknown individual.
- 55.** In which of the following situations can a crime be prosecuted in accordance with Section 11?
- (a) A company knowingly sells defective medical drugs that harm consumers.
 - (b) A pet dog bites a passerby, causing serious injury.
 - (c) A robot security system malfunctions and causes an injury by mistakenly attacking a person.
 - (d) A strong wind blows a tree branch onto a moving car, causing an accident.
- 56.** Raj, the owner of a chemical factory in Mumbai, accidentally leaks toxic gas due to a minor safety lapse. Even though Raj had no intention to cause harm, the gas spread into nearby homes, causing severe health issues for residents. The prosecution argued that Raj, as the owner of a chemical factory, had a duty to ensure the safety of the surrounding community. However, the defense said that his factory had all required environmental and safety clearances and followed government-mandated protocols. Decide whether Raj can be held liable for accidental leaking of toxic gas and causing severe health issues for residents or not.
- (a) Raj can be held liable for accidental leaking of toxic gas and causing severe health issues for residents because he, as the owner of a chemical factory, had a duty to ensure the safety of the surrounding community.
- (b) Raj cannot be held liable for accidental leaking of toxic gas and causing severe health issues for residents because he had no intention to cause harm.
- (c) Raj can be held liable for accidental leaking of toxic gas and causing severe health issues for residents because his factory had all required environmental and safety clearances and followed government-mandated protocols.
- (d) Raj cannot be held liable for accidental leaking of toxic gas and causing severe health issues for residents because his factory had all required environmental and safety clearances and followed government-mandated protocols.
- 57.** Which of the following is not a correct example of the difference between commission and omission as a crime?
- (a) Amit stabs his business rival Bhola in a fit of rage, causing his death. Later, a security guard sees Amit throwing his body in a well but does nothing and tells no one about it.
 - (b) Rakesh, a school bully, punches a classmate repeatedly, causing serious injuries and while Miss Rekha, the class teacher noticed but ignored the situation.
 - (c) Rajesh, a worker, deliberately sets fire to his employer's warehouse and while the factory guard noticed the small fire breaking out, he failed to alert the workers or call the fire department.
 - (d) None of the above.
- 58.** Which of the following is a correct inference that can be drawn from Section 44 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860?
- (a) Injury can be just Physical Harm.
 - (b) Injury can be the basis for Criminal Liability.
 - (c) Injury can only be against an Individual.
 - (d) A Crime need not result in Injury.

Passage (Q.59-Q.63): The Income Tax Bill 2025 grants tax authorities the power to access personal digital spaces, including emails and social media, to track tax evasion starting in April 2026.

Under the proposed Income Tax Bill 2025, if a tax officer suspects someone of hiding income or assets, they will be able to override access codes and directly enter digital spaces to gather information. If officers' actions fall within the legal framework provided by the bill, and they cannot be held liable for violating his right to privacy under Article 21. Previously, income tax officers could only break into physical spaces, such as lockers or safes, when the keys or access were unavailable. The new bill, however, introduces the concept of "virtual digital spaces" and allows officers to gain access to emails, social media, cloud storage, and even online financial accounts if they suspect tax evasion.

This definition is fairly broad and includes email servers, social media, trading accounts, remote servers and other application or platforms that may hold electronic information. The ability to act upon any available "information" was already there with the tax authorities but now they will be able to access electronic information that may not have been necessarily or easily accessible to them otherwise.

From a privacy perspective, it may be noted that the bill envisages access to platforms which "may be available at such place" meaning therefore that such platforms can and should be accessible only from sites being surveyed and not from other remote locations such as the tax office itself. Further, these virtual digital spaces can be accessed only during a survey action.

Notably, such a search process may be authorised not only for the purposes of Income Tax Bill, 2025 but also for the purposes of Black Money (Undisclosed Foreign Income and Assets) and Imposition of Tax Act, 2015.

[Extracted, with edits and revisions from "Tax officers may soon access your social media a/c, emails: What this means?" by Sunaina Chadha, Business Standard].

59. Dr. Neha Verma, an oncologist, is a well-respected medical professional running her own clinic. One day, her name appears in an "automated risk assessment system" implemented by the Income Tax Department. There was no specific suspicion of tax evasion, but the system's algorithm labeled her as a "high-risk entity" simply due to frequent high-value transactions. One morning, Neha was in the middle of a consultation when a team of Income Tax Officers arrived at her clinic and using their authority, the officers accessed her email and cloud storage – looking for undisclosed financial transactions. Despite her full cooperation, Dr. Neha argued that the officers used override codes to enter her digital spaces without her permission. Assuming that the Bill has been passed, decide whether the tax officers have overridden the powers of search and seizure as provided under the Income Tax Bill, 2025 or not.

- (a) The tax officers have overridden the powers of search and seizure as provided under the Income Tax Bill, 2025 because access to private digital spaces without requiring a judicial warrant is an overreach, violating Dr Neha's fundamental right to privacy
- (b) The tax officers have not overridden the powers of search and seizure as provided under the Income Tax Bill, 2025 because new bill introduces the concept of "virtual digital spaces" and allows officers to gain access to emails and cloud storage.
- (c) The tax officers have overridden the powers of search and seizure as provided under the Income Tax Bill, 2025 because there was no specific suspicion of tax evasion, but the system's algorithm labeled her as a "high-risk entity" simply due to frequent high-value transactions.
- (d) The tax officers have not overridden the powers of search and seizure as provided under the Income Tax Bill, 2025 because this bill simply updates tax enforcement powers to match modern financial practices by accessing digital assets.

60. One morning, Rohan was sipping his coffee when he heard loud knocks at his door. A team of Income Tax Department officers barged in with an official warrant, citing suspicion of unreported assets.

Shocked and confused, Rohan asked what this was about, but the officers only said, "We have reasonable suspicion that you're concealing income and digital assets." The officers demanded access to Rohan's email, cloud storage, and online bank accounts. Not stopping there, the officers visited Rohan's bank and demanded access to his locker. Rohan, however, argued that arbitrary digital access is an unlawful invasion of his personal and financial data and filed a case against the officers for violating his right to privacy provided under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution. Assuming that the Bill has been passed, decide whether the tax officers can be held liable for violating his right to privacy provided under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution or not.

- (a) The tax officers can be held liable for violating his right to privacy provided under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution because arbitrary digital access is an unlawful invasion of his personal and financial data.
- (b) The tax officers cannot be held liable for violating his right to privacy provided under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution because the officers are empowered under the new bill to seek such access.
- (c) The tax officers can be held liable for violating his right to privacy provided under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution because the bill does not grant unlimited power—officers must still justify their actions.
- (d) The tax officers cannot be held liable for violating his right to privacy provided under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution because Digital Search is just an extension of physical search.

61. Decide in which of the following example, the officers cannot gain access to the virtual digital access based on the definition provided under Income Tax Bill, 2025?

- (a) Arjun Mehta, a famous social media influencer, frequently posts pictures of luxury cars, expensive vacations, and designer watches. The Income Tax Department suspects undisclosed income from brand endorsements. Officers override access to his Instagram DMs and

sponsorship agreements in his email to verify if he has hidden payments.

- (b) Sneha Reddy is an active investor using a trading app for high-frequency stock market transactions. The officers suspect she is hiding capital gains by transferring profits to a relative's account. They override access to her Zerodha/Kite trading platform to track suspicious transactions and undisclosed earnings.
 - (c) Priya Sharma is a freelancer earning in USD via PayPal & Upwork but declaring only part of her income. Officers override access to her PayPal and Razorpay accounts to uncover unreported transactions and confirm income diversion.
 - (d) Anil Khanna, a jewellery dealer, is a suspect under the Income Tax Department of hiding unaccounted cash transactions. Acting on this suspicion, officers override access to his bank locker.

62. Sanjay Rao runs a successful e-commerce business and is suspected of underreporting sales revenue. During a survey at his office, tax officers note down his login credentials for his online payment gateway and cloud-based accounting software. Later, they returned to the Income Tax Department office and log in remotely to review his transaction history. Even cooperating, Sanjay argued that his online accounts contain sensitive business data, including supplier agreements, pricing strategies, and customer transactions. However, the tax officers claimed that under the Income Tax Bill 2025, officers are empowered to access virtual digital spaces if they suspect tax evasion. Assuming that the bill is legitimized, decide whether Income Tax Department can remote review Sanjay's transaction history by accessing his online payment gateway and cloud-based accounting software or not.

- (a) Income Tax Department can remote review Sanjay's transaction history by accessing his online payment gateway and cloud-based accounting software because under the Income Tax Bill 2025, officers are empowered to access virtual digital spaces if they suspect tax evasion.

Passage (Q.64-Q.68): The irretrievable breakdown of marriage refers to a situation where a relationship has deteriorated to the extent that reconciliation is impossible. Unlike grounds such as cruelty or adultery, this concept emphasizes the emotional and functional collapse of mutual understanding and affection, aligning with “no-fault” divorce principles. Globally, this approach is recognized for prioritizing the mental well-being of the parties involved. However, the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 (HMA), does not explicitly recognize irretrievable breakdown as a ground for divorce. Indian courts often invoke this principle indirectly through Article 142 of the Constitution, enabling the Supreme Court to ensure “complete justice.”

Courts consider several factors to determine an irretrievable breakdown, including the duration of separation, time since last cohabitation, baseless allegations, failed reconciliation attempts, and the economic and social status of the parties.

- (b) Income Tax Department cannot remote review Sanjay's transaction history by accessing his online payment gateway and cloud-based accounting software because his online accounts contain sensitive business data, including supplier agreements, pricing strategies, and customer transactions.
 - (c) Income Tax Department can remote review Sanjay's transaction history by accessing his online payment gateway and cloud-based accounting software because the definition provided under Income Tax Bill, 2025 is fairly broad and includes other application or platforms that may hold electronic information.
 - (d) Income Tax Department cannot remote review Sanjay's transaction history by accessing his online payment gateway and cloud-based accounting software because they returned to the Income Tax Department office and log in remotely to review his transaction history.

parties. Landmark cases have highlighted the evolution of this principle. In *Naveen Kohli v. Neelu Kohli* (2006), the Supreme Court recommended legislative amendments to include irretrievable breakdown as a ground for divorce. *K. Srinivas Rao v. D.A. Deepa* (2013) recognized prolonged separation and mutual hostility as constituting breakdown, equating forced cohabitation with cruelty. The 2023 *Shilpa Sailesh v. Varun Sreenivasan* judgment detailed specific criteria for determining breakdown. Earlier cases like *V. Bhagat v. D. Bhagat* (1993) and *Ms. Jorden Diengdeh v. S.S. Chopra* (1985) emphasized the need for statutory reforms.

Despite repeated recommendations by the Law Commission of India and the Marriage Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2010, legislative gaps persist, raising concerns about misuse, gender inequity, and societal stigma. While Article 142 provides a discretionary remedy, its reliance creates inconsistency. Balancing equity, procedural efficiency, and safeguards for vulnerable parties remains vital to addressing these challenges.

[Extracted with edits and revisions from, <https://lawbhoomi.com/irretrievable-breakdown-of-marriage/>]

- 64.** Raj and Simran have been living separately for 5 years due to intense disagreements and hostility, leading to mutual allegations. They seek a divorce citing irretrievable breakdown.

Which of the following most accurately aligns with the legal grounds for divorce based on the principle from *K. Srinivas Rao v. D.A. Deepa* (2013)?

- (a) They can file for divorce only if they prove specific incidents of cruelty apart from their mutual hostility.
- (b) They should first attempt a legally mandated period of cohabitation before the court can grant a divorce based on irretrievable breakdown.
- (c) The court should deny the divorce since they have not undergone family mediation recently.
- (d) They can file for divorce citing irretrievable breakdown due to prolonged separation and mutual hostility equating to cruelty.

- 65.** Vikram and Meera, married for 12 years, are both high-profile lawyers in New Delhi. Over the years, they have drifted apart due to their competitive careers and lack of shared interests. Despite multiple attempts at reconciliation, including therapy and mediation, they find their differences irreconcilable. They agree that the marriage cannot be salvaged and decide to file for divorce on the grounds of irretrievable breakdown.

Assertion (A): Vikram and Meera can file for divorce based on the irretrievable breakdown of marriage as the Supreme Court will invoke Article 142 of the Constitution.

Reason (R): "However, the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 (HMA), does not explicitly recognize irretrievable breakdown as a ground for divorce. Indian courts often invoke this principle indirectly through Article 142 of the Constitution, enabling the Supreme Court to ensure 'complete justice.'"

Evaluate the above assertion and reason and choose the correct option:

- (a) Both Assertion (A) and Reason (R) are true, and Reason (R) is the correct explanation of Assertion (A).

- (b) Both Assertion (A) and Reason (R) are true, but Reason (R) is not the correct explanation of Assertion (A).

- (c) Assertion (A) is true, but Reason (R) is false.
- (d) Assertion (A) is false, but Reason (R) is true.

- 66.** Aryan and Priya, a couple married for 7 years, have faced numerous challenges in maintaining their marital relationship. Aryan, a successful entrepreneur, and Priya, a dedicated NGO worker, have not lived together for the past 3 years due to Aryan's frequent business travels and Priya's extended project assignments in rural areas. Both parties have repeatedly sought marital counselling without success, citing persistent misunderstandings and emotional disconnect. They have no children, and their economic statuses are independent and stable. Recently, after a heated argument over future commitments, both agreed that their marriage could not be salvaged. They now contemplate divorce based on the irretrievable breakdown of their marriage. Given the circumstances and their mutual agreement on the inability to reconcile, they approach the court for a divorce. Which of the following grounds is most likely to support their divorce petition under the principle of irretrievable breakdown of marriage?

- (a) Aryan's frequent business travels represent a form of abandonment.
- (b) Their mutual agreement on the inability to reconcile acknowledges the collapse of mutual understanding and affection.
- (c) Their different career paths have led to incompatible lifestyles, eventually it effects their relationship and hence, the marriage cannot be retrieved.
- (d) They have not yet attempted legal separation before filing for divorce.

- 67.** Surya and Nila, both well-known actors, have been married for 8 years but have been living separately for the past 4 years due to constant disagreements and incompatible lifestyles. They have tried numerous times to reconcile, including attending

couple's therapy and mediation sessions, but all attempts have failed. Recently, Nila made public accusations against Surya, claiming he was unfaithful during their marriage, which Surya vehemently denies and counters with accusations of financial mismanagement against Nila. Both are prominent figures in society, leading to significant media attention around their marital issues. Considering the prolonged separation, failed reconciliation efforts, and public disputes, they decide to approach the court for a divorce on the grounds of an irretrievable breakdown of marriage. What should be the legal course of action for the court based on the factors influencing the determination of an irretrievable breakdown of marriage?

- (a) The court should grant the divorce based on the duration of separation and failed reconciliation attempts, as these indicate an irretrievable breakdown of the marriage.

Passage (Q.69-Q.73): A Special Court of Economic Offences in Bengaluru Friday (March 14) rejected the bail plea of Kannada actor Harshavardhini Ranya alias Ranya Rao, who was arrested for allegedly smuggling over 14 kilograms of gold on a flight from Dubai to Bengaluru earlier this month.

Until its repeal in 1990, the Gold (Control) Act, 1968, curbed gold imports and placed heavy restrictions on the acquisition, possession, and disposal of gold in India.

Now, gold imports are largely governed under the Customs Act, 1962, and by the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC). The customs duty for gold may differ depending on the amount of gold carried by a passenger and the duration spent abroad before traveling back to India, as per the Baggage Rules, 2016 (issued under the Customs Act).

Under these rules, a man residing abroad for over a year may carry up to 20 grams of jewellery duty free (with a value cap of Rs 50,000) and a woman may similarly carry up to 40 grams (with a cap of Rs 1 lakh). The CBIC also has specific guidelines for Indian passengers returning from Dubai after residing there for over six months, allowing them to carry up to 1 kg of gold as long as the applicable customs duty is paid.

In 2003, the Supreme Court held that any article imported without complying with the relevant conditions or restrictions must be considered a "prohibited good". Such goods are liable to be confiscated under Section 111 and punished under Section 112 of the Customs Act. The punishment may include a fine of up to the value of the goods. Section 135 provides a punishment of up to 7 years imprisonment if the market price of the smuggled goods exceeds Rs. 1 lakh.

Smuggling is also punishable under Section 111 (Organised Crime) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, which punishes "trafficking in...illicit goods" with imprisonment of at least five years, extendable to life imprisonment. The UAPA also carries the same punishment for smuggling as a "terrorist act" under Section 15 if it causes "damage to the monetary stability of India".

Source-

- 69.** An Indian passenger, X, arrives in India from Dubai after living there for two years. He carries 1.5 kg of gold without declaring it to customs and is caught at the airport. The market price of the gold is Rs. 90 lakhs. Based on the legal provisions mentioned in the passage, which of the following is the most accurate legal consequence for X?

- (b) The court should dismiss the divorce petition because public accusations do not necessarily prove the marriage has irretrievably broken down.
- (c) The court should deny the divorce until the accusations of infidelity and financial mismanagement are legally resolved.
- (d) The court should require further mediation since the economic and social status of the parties demands greater attempts at reconciliation.

- 68.** The passage discusses the discretionary nature of Article 142 and its role in addressing legal challenges. Article 142 of the Indian Constitution is used by the Supreme Court to:
- (a) Enforce fundamental duties
 - (b) Guarantee equal protection under the law
 - (c) Provide complete justice
 - (d) Regulate interstate commerce

- (a) X will be punished under Section 135 of the Customs Act with imprisonment up to 7 years.
- (b) X's gold will be confiscated under Section 111 of the Customs Act, but he will not face any punishment.
- (c) Since X resided in Dubai for over six months, he is allowed to bring any amount of gold without paying duty.

- (d) X's act is punishable under UAPA for causing "damage to the monetary stability of India."
- 70.** The Supreme Court in 2003 held that any article imported without complying with conditions is considered a "prohibited good." Based on this, what is the legal implication for gold smuggling under the Customs Act?
- (a) Any smuggled gold automatically falls under the category of "prohibited goods" and is liable for confiscation.
 - (b) Only gold exceeding 1 kg is considered "prohibited goods" under Indian law.
 - (c) Gold smuggling is punishable only if the individual has been previously convicted of a similar offense.
 - (d) The court's ruling applies only to commercial imports and not to individuals bringing gold in their baggage.
- 71.** Y, a woman, residing in Dubai is travelling to India after a year and carries 50 grams of gold jewellery worth Rs. 1.2 lakh. Which of the following is the most accurate consequence for Y?
- (a) Y is liable for smuggling under Section 135 of the Customs Act.
- 72.** If a person is caught smuggling gold worth Rs. 5 crores through an organized network, which law would provide the most severe punishment?
- (a) Section 135 of the Customs Act
 - (b) Section 111 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023
 - (c) Baggage Rules, 2016
 - (d) Both (a) and (b)
- 73.** If a person smuggles gold and the authorities seek to charge them under the UAPA, which of the following conditions must be met?
- (a) The smuggling must exceed Rs. 1 lakh in market value.
 - (b) The smuggling must be linked to damaging the monetary stability of India.
 - (c) The person must be part of an international smuggling syndicate.
 - (d) The gold must be imported from a country that is on India's restricted trade list.
- Passage (Q.74-Q.79):** Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow in light of the same:
- According to Section 441 of The Indian Penal Code, whoever enters into property in the possession of another with the intent to commit an offence or to intimidate, insult or annoy any person in possession of such property, or having lawfully entered into such property, but remains there with intent thereby to intimidate, insult or annoy any such person, or with an intent to commit an offence, is said to commit 'criminal trespass'. Criminal trespass has two limbs, firstly, entering into the property of another with criminal intent and secondly, entering lawfully but remaining in the property with a criminal intent to harm or cause annoyance. The possession of the property should be in the possession of the victim and not the trespasser. Having the ownership of the property is not necessary, mere possession is sufficient to claim criminal trespass against the trespasser. However, it is not necessary for the person having possession or the owner of the property to be present at the time when the trespassing occurred, no presence of owner or possessor would also amount to trespassing as long as the premises are entered into by the trespasser to annoy. Intention is important to prove the case of criminal trespass, if it is proved that the intention of the accused was not to insult, harm, or annoy the owners or the possessors, then it does not amount to criminal trespass.
- 74.** Kalash was a wealthy jeweller, known for his affluence. One day, a thief broke into his house and forced open a locker filled with expensive jewellery. Upon realizing the theft, Kalash immediately started chasing the thief, determined to recover his stolen gold and diamond jewellery. In the course of the chase, Kalash unknowingly entered a large field, which belonged to Mr. Sharma, as he followed the fleeing thief. Mr. Sharma, unaware of the situation, caught Kalash and reported him to the police for criminal trespass. Will Kalash be held liable?
- (a) No, because he did not have any ill intention when he entered Sharma's property.
 - (b) Yes, because he entered Mr. Sharma's property without permission.
 - (c) No, because he was merely chasing the thief, and his entry would qualify as an act of necessity, exempting him from trespass liability.
 - (d) Yes, because he entered someone else's property while attempting to catch a criminal.
- 75.** Sakshi invited her friends, Jay Pritchett and her wife Gloria, to her house for a fancy dinner party to celebrate her engagement. The guests were expected to arrive at 7 PM, and the dinner was scheduled to conclude by 10 PM, after which they were to leave, as

Sakshi had an urgent doctor's appointment. After dinner, Gloria left, but Jay secretly hid in the bathroom, intending to surprise Aaron, Sakshi's fiancé, with a bachelor party. When Sakshi returned home at 12 AM, she was startled to find Jay inside her house and subsequently sued him for criminal trespass. Will Jay be held liable?

- (a) No, because Jay did not have any ill intention when he stayed back.
- (b) No, because Sakshi had invited him, so she cannot claim trespass as he had a legal right to be there.
- (c) Yes, because he overstayed beyond the permitted time, making his continued presence unauthorized and amounting to trespass.
- (d) Yes, because although he had no ill intention, his presence frightened Sakshi, making him liable.

76. Sritarun owned a large house with a spacious garden and a small outhouse that he used for storage. Since he lived alone—his parents had passed away, and he was unmarried—he decided to lease out the outhouse so someone else could reside on his property. A man named Karan approached Sritarun to take possession of the outhouse, and Sritarun happily handed him the keys. Shortly after, Sritarun had to travel out of town. During his absence, a thief named Gangu broke into the outhouse. Karan caught him and turned him over to the police. In his defense, Gangu claimed that Karan was not the owner of the property and therefore had no right to sue him. Choose an appropriate legal statement for Gangu's claims.

- (a) Gangu will still be liable, as he unlawfully entered someone else's property.
- (b) Gangu will still be liable, as he did not have permission to enter the property.
- (c) Gangu would not be liable because Karan was not the owner.
- (d) Gangu will be liable because Karan was in legal possession of the property.

77. Kamala was a beautiful young woman who lived with her parents. She was an arts student at one of the most prestigious universities in the country. Rahul, her classmate, had a crush on her and wanted to talk to her, befriend her, and confess his feelings. Rahul regularly texted Kamala, but she was not interested in talking to him and barely responded. She also found his behavior annoying. One day, Rahul decided to send flowers along with a letter confessing his feelings. He purchased them and went to Kamala's house. Since no one was there at the time, he entered her lawn and placed the items at her front door,

despite knowing that his actions would likely annoy her. As a result, he was held responsible for criminal trespass. Which of the following is the most appropriate legal consequence for Rahul?

- (a) He will not be liable because he did not intend any harm.
- (b) He will be held liable as he repeatedly annoyed Kamala.
- (c) He will be held liable even though no one was there, as he entered the property unlawfully.
- (d) He cannot be held liable because no one was present when he entered the property.

78.

Shaka was a notorious criminal known for regularly robbing houses. One day, he planned to steal valuables from the Mishra household. Under the cover of darkness, he climbed over the boundary and tiptoed across the lawn, intending to break into the house. Before he could proceed, he noticed a large, ferocious dog sleeping on the porch. Terrified, he decided to flee. However, before he could escape, Mrs. Mishra saw him and alerted the police, leading to his arrest for criminal trespass. Can Shankar be held liable for criminal trespass?

- (a) No, because he was running away from the house.
- (b) No, because he got scared after seeing the dog.
- (c) No, because he did not commit the intended offence.
- (d) Yes, because he entered the property with the intention of robbing.

79.

Kamlesh was a family friend of Mr. Kumar. One day, Mr. Kumar invited him over to discuss important financial matters. Kamlesh arrived as planned and was expected to leave after a few hours. While at the house, Kamlesh noticed a beautiful and expensive vase. He decided to steal it and sell it for a profit. To execute his plan, he deliberately stayed longer, pretending it was normal for him to do so. Since he often stayed back during visits, Mr. Kumar did not suspect anything and allowed him to remain. Later, Kamlesh began searching the house for more valuables. Can Kamlesh be held liable for criminal trespass?

- (a) No, because he entered with Mr. Kumar's permission, so his presence was legally justified and does not constitute trespass.
- (b) No, because Mr. Kumar willingly allowed him to stay, and therefore cannot later claim trespass.
- (c) Yes, because he remained in the house with the intent to steal.
- (d) Yes, because he misused Mr. Kumar's trust by staying with a dishonest intention.

Passage (Q.80-Q.84): Under Section 11 of the Hindu Marriage Act, certain marriages are deemed null and void. However, as per Section 16 of the Act, children born from such marriages are considered legitimate if they would have been legitimate had the marriage been valid. Section 16 of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, addresses the legitimacy of children born from void or voidable marriages, ensuring they are deemed legitimate regardless of the marriage's validity. This provision applies regardless of whether a decree of nullity has been granted or whether the marriage is declared void through other legal means. The objective is to ensure that children do not suffer consequences due to the invalidity of their parents' marriage.

The Supreme Court, in a case concerning compassionate appointments in the railway sector, addressed the validity of a rule that excluded children born from a second marriage of a deceased employee from availing such benefits. The court held that this rule violated Article 14 of the Constitution, which guarantees the right to equality. It observed that once Section 16 of the Hindu Marriage Act confers legitimacy upon such children, any policy that discriminates against them would be unconstitutional. The exclusion created two categories within a single class—legitimate children—without a rational nexus to the objective of compassionate appointments. The court emphasized that denying employment benefits based on descent is also prohibited under Article 16(2) of the Constitution. Article 16(2) of the Indian Constitution prohibits discrimination in matters of public employment based on religion, race, caste, sex, descent, place of birth, or residence. Referring to the Delhi High Court's ruling in *Union of India v. Pankaj Kumar Sharma*, the court reiterated that descent cannot be a ground for denying employment under compassionate appointment schemes.

This ruling reinforces the principle that once the law grants legitimacy to children born from void marriages, they cannot be discriminated against in government policies or employment benefits.

- 80.** Section 16 of Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 confers legitimacy on the children of:
- A Void marriage
 - A voidable marriage
 - A valid marriage
 - Both void and voidable marriages
- 81.** Raghav filed a petition in the High Court stating he has been denied compassionate appointment on the grounds of descent. What is meant by the term "descent"?
- Raghav has been denied compassionate appointment on grounds of lineage.
 - Raghav has been denied compassionate appointment based on his place of birth.
 - Raghav has been denied compassionate appointment based on his social status.
 - Raghav has been denied compassionate appointment based on his educational background.
- 82.** Nandan is the son of an army officer who had two wives. Nandan is son born out of second marriage while first marriage subsists. After the death of his father Nandan was refused compassionate appointment on grounds of his gender. Decide
- Rules of compassionate appointment violate mandate of article 14 hence invalid.
 - Compassionate appointment was denied on grounds of discrimination which is expressly prohibited under article 16 (2).
- 83.** Continuing with the same situation as above, assume Nandan was denied a compassionate appointment on the grounds that only the deceased's legitimate spouse i.e., spouse of valid marriage is qualified for the appointment. Decide
- Compassionate appointment rules are valid.
 - Compassionate appointment rules violate mandate of article 14 hence invalid.
 - Compassionate appointment rules violate mandate of article 16(2) hence invalid.
 - None of the above.
- 84.** Assertion: Object of Rules of compassionate appointment is to defeat the purpose of ensuring the dignity of the family of the deceased employee.
Reason: Rules of compassionate appointment cannot violate the mandate of Article 14 of the Constitution.
- Both A and R are true and R is not correct explanation of A.
 - Both A and R are true and R is correct explanation of A.
 - A is true but R is false.
 - A is false but R is true.

SECTION D: LOGICAL REASONING

Passage (Q.85-Q.90): Air India's deal to buy 470 planes from France's Airbus and the United States' Boeing is important not just because it is the biggest purchase by any carrier but also because it has geo-economic and geopolitical ramifications. Tata group chairman N Chandrasekaran said the \$70-billion deal happened at a time when the airliner plans to become "a world-class proposition." The purchase, which beats the previous record of American Airlines' 460-plane deal in 2011, would modernise Air India's fleet and help it to "dramatically" expand its network, he told the media. Air India has retired most of its older planes; it plans to induct the first new aircraft into service by the end of this calendar year. This is the best piece of news about Air India in the last few years. As a public sector carrier, it was beset with a host of problems, from mounting losses to its marginalisation in the business. Privatisation didn't end its woes; in 2022, it recorded its lowest-ever market share—8.7 per cent. In the last few months too, it hit the headlines for wrong reasons—the so-called peegate. The announcement regarding purchase of hundreds of aircraft has not just given a new profile to the airline but also informed the world that the India Story is vibrant and interesting. Also, this enhances the image of corporate India against the backdrop of the controversies over the Adani Group.

Further, the deal brings India closer to the Western camp. US President Joe Biden, French President Emmanuel Macron, and UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak welcomed Air India's deals. Sunak has pointed out that Airbus will manufacture the wings in the UK and A350 aircraft will be powered by Rolls-Royce's XWB engines. He is happy because his country's aerospace industry employs more than 111,000 people. On his part, President Biden noted that the sale of over 200 Boeing aircraft will support over a million jobs in the US and help Air India meet its transportation demands, according to a White House release. The release also highlighted "the strength of the US-India economic partnership." President Macron emphasized not just the economic aspect of the deal but also said that the Air India-Airbus contract "marks a new stage in India and France's strategic partnership." It may be recalled that India is already buying Rafale fighter aircraft from France. The dominant domestic market place IndiGo is also reportedly in the process of buying 500 jets. In fact, Indian carriers are said to be on a shopping spree, intending to buy almost 1,700 aircraft in the next few years. While an imminent boom in the aviation sector is heartening, there are a few things the authorities must ensure. The first and foremost is infrastructure. Airport expansion must be high on the priority list. Generally, our airports are crowded and badly managed. Also, the Government must expedite reforms so that smaller towns also get access to air travel. And, of course, passenger behaviour has to improve.

- 85.** Which of the following metaphorical titles best represents the passage?
- A New Dawn for Air India: The Story of a Phoenix Rising from the Ashes
 - A Sky Full of Opportunities: The Bright Future of India's Aviation Sector
 - The Flight to Western Dominance: India's Strategic Partnership with the West
 - From Peegate to Profit: The Journey of Air India to Record-Breaking Success
- 86.** What specific feature of the Air India deal with Airbus and Boeing has a positive impact on the UK, as mentioned in the passage?
- The fact that Airbus will manufacture the wings in the UK
 - The number of planes being purchased by Air India
 - The engines that will be used in the A350 aircraft
- 87.** Which of the following, if true, would most weaken the author's arguments?
- Air India's purchase of new aircraft will lead to increased air traffic and congestion at airports.
 - Tata group's profits are negatively impacted by the \$70-billion deal.
 - The purchase of new aircraft will have an impact on Air India's market share or reputation.
 - The purchase of hundreds of aircraft by Air India does not represent a positive sign for India's economy.
- 88.** What is the main infrastructure challenge that the authorities must address to ensure the success of the recent aircraft purchase by Indian carriers?
- Improving passenger behavior
 - Accelerating economic reforms

- (c) Expanding airport facilities
 (d) Enhancing aircraft manufacturing capabilities
- 89.** Which of the following statements would be most relevant to the passage's discussion of Air India's recent aircraft purchase?
 (a) Air India has launched a new customer loyalty program.
 (b) The cost of airline tickets has increased due to rising fuel prices.
 (c) The new aircraft purchased by Air India will modernize its fleet and help it to expand its network.
 (d) The price of Airbus and Boeing stock has risen in response to Air India's purchase.
- 90.** Which of the following is the author of the passage most likely to agree with?
 (a) India's aviation sector is currently in a state of decline and is unlikely to recover.
 (b) The purchase of hundreds of aircraft by Air India is a major boost for India's image and economy.
 (c) The Indian government should focus on developing road and rail infrastructure rather than airports.
 (d) The purchase of Airbus and Boeing aircraft will have no impact on India's relations with the Western world.

Passage (Q.91-Q.96): Anti-Semitism has become an embarrassment to the political left in many countries in recent years—as U.S. Democrats have discovered in their own ranks. It's a relief, then, to see at least one center-left party in the West tackling this problem head-on, as Britain's Labour Party has this week.

Labour Leader Keir Starmer on Wednesday published a column in the Times of London telling activists with anti-Semitic views that they're not welcome in the party.

"Antisemitism is an evil," he wrote. "Its conspiratorial nature attracts those who would have no truck with any other form of prejudice. Indeed, it can be those who call themselves 'anti-racist' who are most blind to it.... That's why my first act as [party] leader was to commit to tearing antisemitism out by the roots, without fear or favor."

Mr. Starmer became Labour leader in 2020 after the party had suffered a humiliating election defeat under former leader Jeremy Corbyn. Mr. Corbyn, his inner circle, and their radical supporters promoted anti-Semitic tropes and turned a blind eye to complaints about abuse directed by their online camp followers at those who objected. Polls suggest this helped cost the party the 2019 election.

Since taking up his position, Mr. Starmer has worked to clean out the stables by replacing top party leaders and sticking to a zero-tolerance message. "The Labour Party I lead today is unrecognizable from 2019," Mr. Starmer wrote in the Times. "There are those who don't like that change, who still refuse to see the reality of what had gone on under the previous leadership. To them I say in all candor: we are never going back. If you don't like it, nobody is forcing you to stay."

To reinforce the point, Mr. Starmer also said this week that Mr. Corbyn will not be allowed to represent Labour as a candidate for Parliament in the next election. Mr. Corbyn remains a lawmaker although he was expelled from Labour's parliamentary caucus in 2020. This will force Mr. Corbyn to run as an independent, which is very difficult in the British system.

Contrast this purge of erstwhile senior party figures with the reluctance that U.S. Democrats have shown about disciplining even junior House members for anti-Semitic comments. Labour's last election defeat is a warning to Democrats that tolerating such prejudice eventually diminishes parties of the left. Mr. Starmer's clean-up job is an example of how to fix it.

- 91.** What was the impact of anti-Semitic views on the Labour Party's 2019 election performance?
 (a) Anti-Semitic views helped the Labour Party win the 2019 election.
 (b) Anti-Semitic views did not have any impact on the Labour Party's 2019 election performance.
 (c) Anti-Semitic views contributed to the Labour Party's defeat in the 2019 election.
 (d) The Labour Party did not have any issues with anti-Semitic views during the 2019 election.

- 92.** Which of the following is supported by the passage?
- (a) Anti-Semitic comments made by junior House members cost the U.S. Democrats the 2019 election.
 - (b) Keir Starmer's leadership has successfully purged all anti-Semitic elements from the British Labour Party.
 - (c) The British Labour Party's last election defeat serves as a warning to Democrats about the dangers of tolerating anti-Semitism.
 - (d) Jeremy Corbyn's supporters are responsible for the British Labour Party's 2020 defeat.
- 93.** Which of the following is the author of the passage most likely to agree with?
- (a) Keir Starmer's approach to addressing anti-Semitism in the Labour Party is a positive step in the right direction.
 - (b) U.S. Democrats have been more successful in tackling anti-Semitism in their ranks than the Labour Party.
 - (c) Keir Starmer's efforts to remove Jeremy Corbyn from the party were unnecessary and divisive.
 - (d) Tolerating anti-Semitism is a necessary sacrifice for the political left to make in order to maintain support.
- 94.** Which of the following, if true, would most strengthen the author's arguments?
- (a) The Democratic Party in the U.S. has publicly acknowledged and taken steps to address instances of anti-Semitism within its ranks.
- 95.** Which of the following has the author used to support their argument in the passage?
- (a) The author's personal beliefs and values.
 - (b) Historical events that are not directly relevant to the topic at hand.
 - (c) Specific actions taken by Keir Starmer to combat anti-Semitism in the Labour Party.
 - (d) Speculation on the potential consequences of not addressing anti-Semitism.
- 96.** Which of the following is a statement of fact from the passage rather than a statement of opinion?
- (a) Keir Starmer is the leader of the British Labour Party.
 - (b) Antisemitism is an evil.
 - (c) Mr. Starmer has worked to clean out the stables by replacing top party leaders.
 - (d) Mr. Corbyn's anti-Semitic views cost Labour the 2019 election.

Passage (Q.97-Q.102): The gulf between legality and political legitimacy can be quite substantial. The Supreme Court verdict upholding the constitution of a Delimitation Commission for Jammu and Kashmir and the subsequent delimitation exercise is indeed in line with the law, especially the constitutional provisions that empower Parliament to form new States, alter existing ones, and change their status and boundaries, as well as the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019. However, it will be wrong to see it as granting judicial imprimatur to the political import of the redrawing of constituencies in the Union Territory. Most political parties in J&K, which was downgraded to Union Territory status in August 2019, have opposed the Commission's report that added six seats in Jammu division and one in Kashmir division to take the total number of seats to 90. The parties see in the exercise an attempt to weaken the Muslim majority region's political and electoral significance and boost the prospects of parties with a base in Jammu. They consider this as an extension of the project to strip J&K of its status and privileges and repurpose its politics to the advantage of the ruling party. This question of legitimacy can be answered by the outcome of an election, if and when one is held, to the territorial legislature. However, the readjustment of boundaries may by itself cast a shadow on that process too.

The petition that challenged the formation of the Delimitation Commission was a belated one, as it was filed after the panel published its draft order. The Court brushed aside its key contention that the delimitation has been frozen throughout the country until after the first Census held after 2026, noting that Article 170, which deals with this, applies only to States, and not Union Territories. It has also noted that J&K will be governed by its own reorganisation law, which allows the 2011 Census to be the basis for its delimitation, unlike the rest of the country, where the 2001

census was the basis for the last redrawing of constituency boundaries. It also rejected arguments rooted in the idea that some provisions of the Reorganisation Act were not consistent with the Constitution, noting that these provisions had not been specifically challenged. While the Court may be right in upholding the formation of the delimitation panel, the extensions given to it, and its decision based on laws currently assumed to be valid, the impression is inescapable that the people of J&K are being presented with a fait accompli on matters concerning their political destiny, as long as the core question — the validity of the withdrawal of its statehood and special status in 2019 — remains undecided.

- 97.** Which among the following best represents the central message of the author in penning this passage?
- (a) The Supreme Court's verdict on the Delimitation Commission in J&K is a landmark judgement for the political future of the region.
 - (b) The people of J&K are likely to face a challenging political situation due to the delimitation exercise and the redrawing of constituencies in the Union Territory.
 - (c) The formation of the Delimitation Commission for J&K has been met with strong opposition from most political parties in the region.
 - (d) The legal and political legitimacy of the Delimitation Commission's exercise in J&K is subject to debate.
- 98.** What can be inferred from the given passage about the political parties in Jammu and Kashmir?
- (a) They fully support the formation of the Delimitation Commission and the subsequent delimitation exercise.
 - (b) They see the delimitation exercise as a means to empower the Muslim majority region.
 - (c) They believe that the delimitation exercise is an attempt to weaken the political and electoral significance of the Muslim majority region and favor parties with a base in Jammu.
 - (d) They have not expressed any opinion on the Delimitation Commission and the subsequent delimitation exercise.
- 99.** Which of the following could weaken the arguments presented in the given passage?
- (a) A survey indicating that the majority of people in Jammu and Kashmir support the Delimitation Commission's report.
 - (b) A court ruling invalidating the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019.
 - (c) A statement from the ruling party indicating that the delimitation exercise was carried out with the intention of empowering the Muslim majority region.
- 100.** Which of the following is the author most likely to disagree with?
- (a) The Supreme Court's verdict upholding the formation of the Delimitation Commission for Jammu and Kashmir is necessary to maintain law and order in the Union Territory.
 - (b) Most political parties in J&K are wrong to see the delimitation exercise as an attempt to weaken the Muslim majority region's political and electoral significance.
 - (c) The outcome of an election can provide a definitive answer to the question of legitimacy arising from the readjustment of boundaries.
 - (d) The people of J&K are being presented with a fait accompli on matters concerning their political destiny.
- 101.** In the context of the passage, what role does public opinion play in determining the political legitimacy of the redrawing of constituencies in J&K?
- (a) Public opinion is irrelevant in determining the political legitimacy of the redrawing of constituencies in J&K.
 - (b) Public opinion is the sole determinant of the political legitimacy of the redrawing of constituencies in J&K.
 - (c) Public opinion is a factor in determining the political legitimacy of the redrawing of constituencies in J&K, but not the only factor.
 - (d) The passage does not discuss the role of public opinion in determining the political legitimacy of the redrawing of constituencies in J&K.
- 102.** Which among the following best represents a flaw in the author's arguments?
- (a) The author fails to consider the impact of social media on political discourse in J&K.

- (b) The author's arguments are too focused on legal technicalities, and fail to take into account the human impact of the redrawing of constituencies in J&K.

(c) The author's arguments rely too heavily on anecdotal evidence, and fail to provide sufficient statistical data to support their claims.

(d) The passage does not contain any flaws in the author's arguments.

Directions(Q.103-Q.108): P, Q, R, S, T, and V live on different floors in the same building having six floors numbered one to six (the ground floor is numbered 1, the floor above it, number 2 and so on and the topmost floor is numbered 6).

T lives on an even numbered floor. Only one person lives between T and P. P lives on the floor below T's floor. V does not live on a floor immediately above or immediately below the floor on which P lives. V does not live on an even numbered floor. R lives on a floor immediately above the floor on which S lives.

SECTION - E : QUANTITATIVE TECHNIQUES

Passage (Q.109-Q.114): Tasty Bites, a restaurant chain operating in Pune, Hyderabad, Jaipur, and Lucknow, sells three types of meals: Veg, Non-Veg, and Combo Meals. The total meals sold in a month are 7980, distributed among the four cities in the ratio 5:3:4:2. Within each city, the meals are sold in the ratio 2:3:5 for Veg, Non-Veg, and Combo Meals, respectively. The price per meal is ₹150 for Veg, ₹250 for Non-Veg, and ₹350 for Combo Meals.

Based on the above information, answer the following questions:

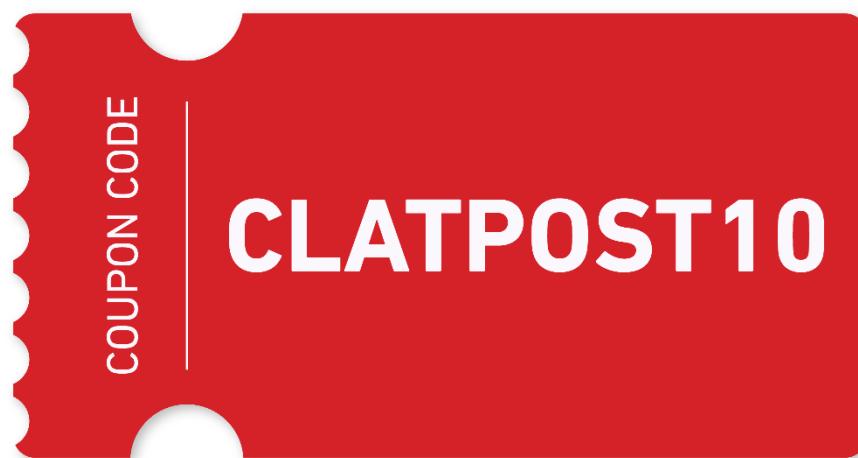
Done Solving the Mock?

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.



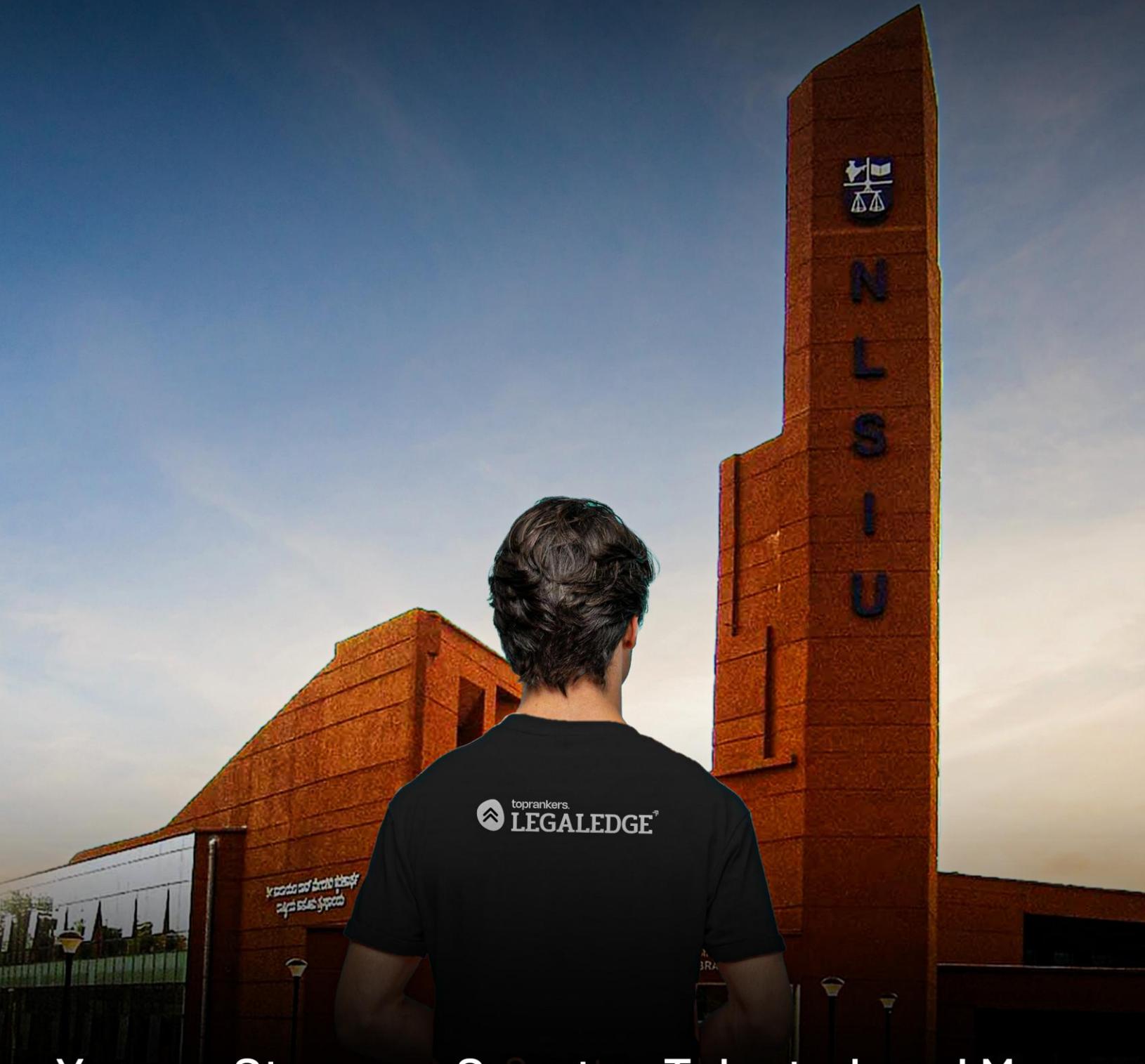
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