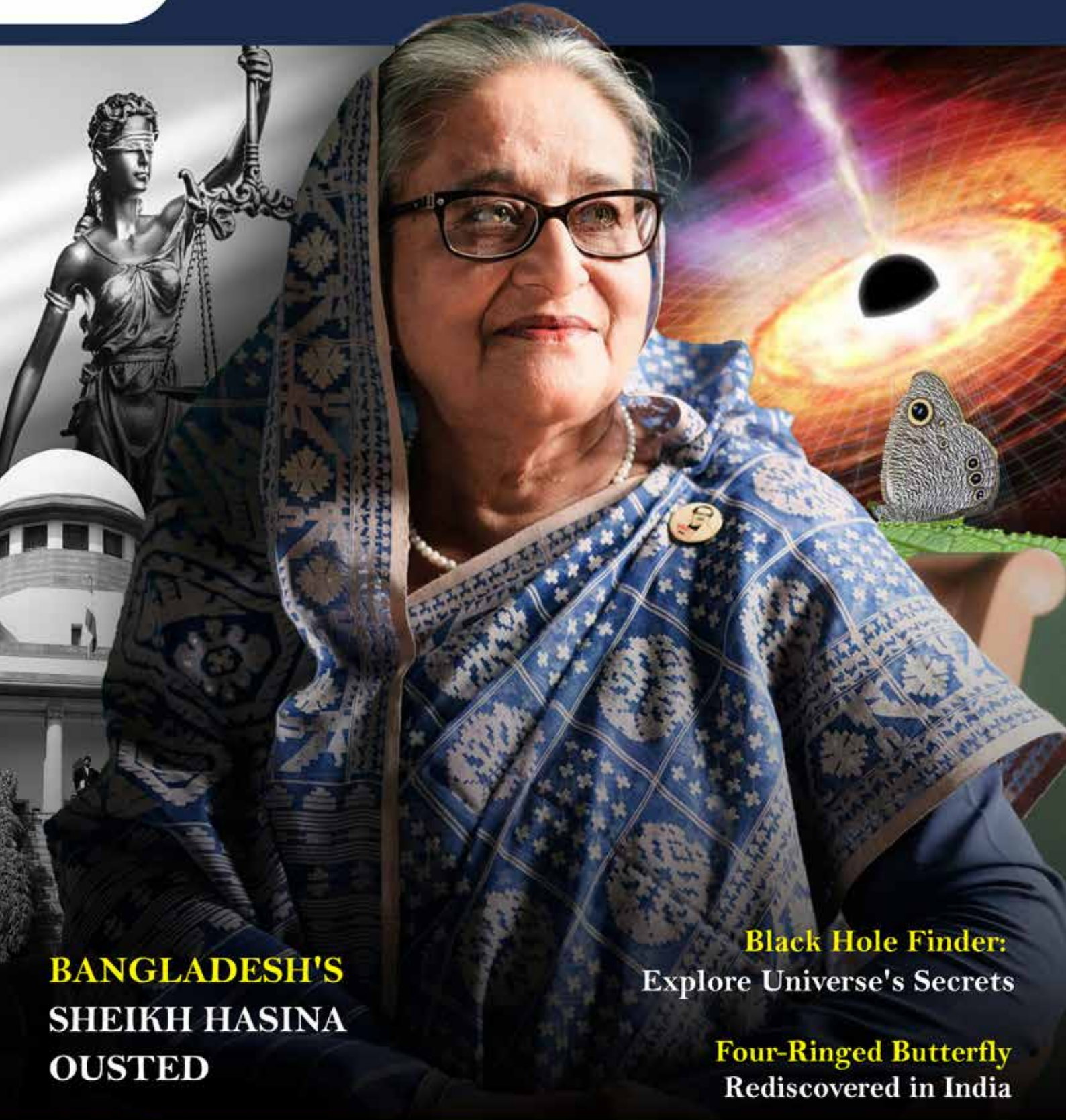


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The New Learning Mantra

A still life composition of historical artifacts. In the foreground, a wooden telescope stands vertically on the left. A rolled-up scroll with a red leather cover lies horizontally in the middle ground. A key and a ring are scattered on a map in the foreground. The background is a textured, brownish-gold surface with a faint, repeating pattern. The text "HISTORY-ARTS AND CULTURE" is overlaid in the center in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

HISTORY- ARTS AND CULTURE



THE NAMDHARI SECT

THE “GREAT CALCUTTA KILLINGS”

THE JEWISH COMMUNITIES OF KERALA





THE NAMDHARI SECT

CONTEXT: The Namdhari sect, a religious offshoot of Sikhism, has been embroiled in a bitter internal dispute for years, which recently escalated into a violent clash in Haryana's Sirsa district. The conflict, involving two rival factions led by brothers Sadguru Uday Singh and Thakur Dalip Singh, has deep roots that go back to a succession battle that began after the deterioration of the sect's spiritual leader Satguru Jagjit Singh's health in the early 2000s. This latest incident, which left eight people injured, is tied to a dispute over 11 acres of agricultural land in Rania.

BACKGROUND: Historical Background of the Namdhari Sect



The Namdhari sect was founded by Satguru Ram Singh on Baisakhi in 1857. He was a reformer who challenged the status quo, advocated for social change, and resisted British rule. His resistance led to severe punishment from the British, who deported him to Rangoon, where he remained until his death. The Namdharis believe that Ram Singh is still alive and will return one day. In his absence, they mourn by

wearing white attire.

Core Beliefs and Practices

Namdhari Sikhs hold the Guru Granth Sahib as the Supreme Gurbani, similar to mainstream Sikhs, and revere all Sikh gurus from Guru Nanak Dev to Guru Gobind Singh. However, they also believe in the continuity of living human gurus, which distinguishes them from other Sikhs. The Namdharis consider the cow sacred, practice strict vegetarianism, and abstain from alcohol, tea, and coffee. Their central headquarters is located at Bhaini Sahib in Ludhiana, with deras spread across Punjab, Haryana, and other countries.

The Kuka Movement and British Repression

The Namdhari sect is historically significant for its role in the Kuka Movement, a civil disobedience campaign against British rule. In 1872, the British executed 66 Namdhari Sikhs by blowing them up with a cannon for their protests, marking a dark chapter in the sect's history.

Succession Dispute and Internal Struggles

The Namdhari sect has been entangled in a fierce succession dispute since the early 2000s, following the decline in health of Satguru Jagjit Singh. The conflict has continued after his death in December 2012, leading to violent clashes between rival factions. The recent incident in Haryana's Rania, which stemmed from a land dispute, is a manifestation of this ongoing power struggle within the sect.

THE "GREAT CALCUTTA KILLINGS"

CONTEXT: The "Great Calcutta Killings" of August 16-19, 1946, stand as one of the most harrowing episodes of communal violence in the lead-up to India's Independence and Partition. This tragic event, sparked by Muhammad Ali Jinnah's call for 'Direct Action,' resulted in the deaths of thousands and foreshadowed the horrors that would soon engulf the subcontinent.



BACKGROUND: The Call for 'Direct Action'

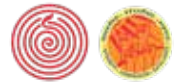
By August 1946, tensions between the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League had reached a breaking point, especially after the failure of the Cabinet Mission Plan. In response, Jinnah called for 'Direct Action' on August 16, 1946, a day meant to demonstrate the League's demand for a separate Muslim state. Although many meetings and processions across

the country remained relatively peaceful, Calcutta became an exception, descending into unprecedented violence.

Political Context in Bengal

Bengal, with its complex demographic composition, was a powder keg of communal tensions. Muslims, who formed the majority in Bengal, were largely concentrated in the eastern countryside (now Bangladesh), while Calcutta was predominantly Hindu. The city's social, economic, and geographic divisions had long fueled tensions between the two communities, setting the stage for the violence that erupted.





Suhrawardy's Role and the Escalation of Violence

Huseyn Suhrawardy, the Chief Minister of Bengal in 1946, played a controversial role in the events. Revered by Muslims and reviled by Hindus, Suhrawardy had a history of making inflammatory statements. In the lead-up to the violence, he reportedly suggested that police forces would be "restrained" on Direct Action Day, effectively leaving the door open for mob violence. Once the violence broke out, Suhrawardy allegedly interfered with police efforts to control the situation, allowing the carnage to spiral out of control. Historians believe Suhrawardy's actions were instrumental in the scale and severity of the massacre.

The Violence and Its Aftermath

The violence in Calcutta was marked by extraordinary

brutality, with estimates of the dead ranging from 5,000 to 10,000 and around 15,000 people wounded. The savagery included grotesque mutilations, a grim aspect of communal killings in India. The violence also marked a dark milestone in communal riots, with reports of rape being used as a political tool, a precursor to the widespread atrocities that would follow during Partition.

A Harbinger of Partition's Horrors

The Great Calcutta Killings served as a grim prelude to the widespread violence that would engulf India during Partition. The scale and ferocity of the killings in Calcutta underscored the deepening communal divide and foreshadowed the mass bloodshed that would accompany the birth of two nations.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITIES OF KERALA

CONTEXT: Queenie Hallegua, aged 89, passed away in Kochi on August 11. As the last surviving woman of Kerala's once-thriving Paradesi Jewish community, her death leaves her nephew, 65-year-old Keith, as the sole remaining Paradesi Jew in Kerala.

Kerala's Jewish communities, once a vibrant and integral part of the state's cultural tapestry, have dwindled significantly over the years. From a thriving population of 20,000-50,000 in the mid-1940s, the Jewish community in India has now reduced to an estimated 4,000-5,000 members, with only a handful remaining in Kerala. The history of Kerala's Jewish communities, including the Malabar and Paradesi Jews, is a fascinating tale of migration, adaptation, and eventual decline.

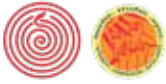


Malabar Jews: The Ancient Settlers

The Malabar Jews, also known as Cochin Jews, are considered the oldest Jewish community in India. Their history is believed to trace back to the days of King Solomon, nearly 3,000 years ago. Initially settling in Cranganore (modern-day Kodungallur in Thrissur district), this community played a significant role in the region's economy. Historical evidence, such as a set of

copper plates from around 1,000 CE, highlights the privileges and status they enjoyed under the local Hindu rulers. However, with the arrival of the Portuguese in the 16th century, the Malabar Jews moved south to Cochin, where they found a more welcoming environment under the local king.





Paradesi Jews: The Newcomers

The Paradesi Jews, meaning “foreign” Jews, migrated to Kerala in the 15th and 16th centuries, fleeing persecution in Spain and Portugal. They settled alongside the Malabar Jews on the Malabar coast and in Madras (now Chennai). In Kerala, they integrated into local society, adopting the Malayalam language and customs. However, they eventually distanced themselves from the older Jewish community, creating a distinct identity. The Paradesi Jews were deeply involved in Kerala’s spice trade and were among the most prominent families in Cochin, such as the Koders, who made significant contributions to the region’s development.

A Dwindling Community

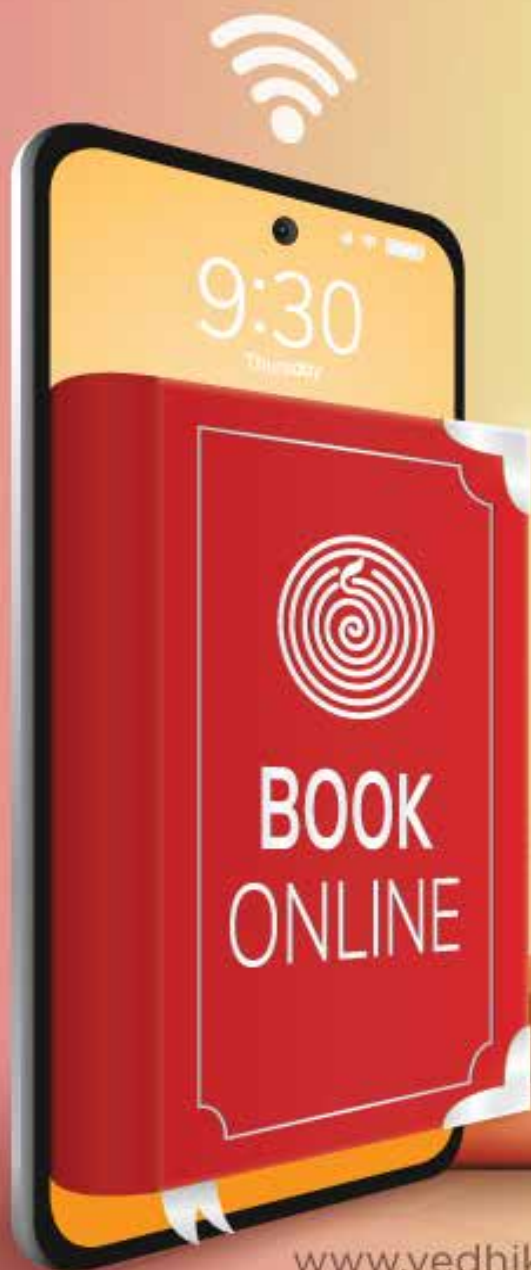
Migration and Decline

Unlike many Jewish communities in Europe and West Asia, Kerala’s Jews seldom faced anti-Semitism or persecution. They prospered under various rulers, including the Dutch, Hindu, and British, serving as merchants, advisors, and professionals. However, the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 led to a steady migration of Kerala Jews to Israel. Today, over 4,000 ‘Cochinim’ are believed to reside in Israel, leaving only a small number of Malabar Jews and one Paradesi Jew in Kerala.

Legacy and Remnants

The once-thriving Jewish community has left behind several relics in Kerala, including the famous “Jew Streets” in Mattancherry and Kochi, and historic synagogues. The Paradesi Synagogue in Mattancherry, built in 1568 CE, is among the oldest in the Commonwealth and remains a protected monument. The other synagogues at Paravur, Chendamangalam, and Mala also stand as reminders of the Paradesi Jews’ presence, though they are no longer active. The last Malabar Jewish synagogue still in use, the Kavumbhagam Ernakulam Synagogue, was taken over by the state government in 2021 for conservation.

The history of Kerala’s Jewish communities is a poignant reminder of the cultural and religious diversity that once flourished in the region. Today, with the passing of community members like Queenie Hallegua, the last woman of the Paradesi Jewish community, these communities are all but gone, leaving behind a rich legacy that continues to be preserved through their remaining historical sites and the memories of those who once called Kerala home.



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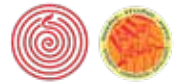
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“Intelligence plus character-that is the goal of true education. — Martin Luther King Jr.



A vintage map with a magnifying glass and a compass. The map is a historical world map, likely from the 17th or 18th century, showing the Americas, Europe, and Africa. The map is drawn on aged, yellowish paper with a grid of latitude and longitude lines. The word "GEOGRAPHY" is written in large, bold, black letters across the center of the map. A magnifying glass with a gold-colored frame is positioned on the right side of the map, focusing on the word "GEOGRAPHY". A compass is also visible in the bottom right corner. The map features various geographical labels in Latin, such as "MARE DEL NORT", "OCEANVS", "ETHIOPIA", "MARE PACIFICVM", and "MARE INDICVM".

GEOGRAPHY



CHINA COMPLETES BRIDGE NEAR PANGONG LAKE

COASTAL EROSION

MIOMBO FOREST

LAKE TURKANA

ANTARCTICA'S DEEP-WINTER HEATWAVE

PYROCUMULONIMBUS CLOUDS

ST MARTIN'S ISLAND

WATERSPOUT



CHINA COMPLETES BRIDGE NEAR PANGONG LAKE

CONTEXT: China has constructed a 400-meter bridge near the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh, facilitating rapid movement of Chinese troops between the North and South banks of Pangong Lake.

This bridge, situated in territory held by China since 1958, reduces travel distance by 50-100 kilometres. The Indian Ministry of External Affairs reiterated that this area has been under illegal occupation by China for about 60 years.

ABOUT PANGONG LAKE:

It is an endorheic lake spanning eastern Ladakh and West Tibet situated at an elevation of 4,225 m. It is 134 km long and divided into five sub lakes, called Pangong Tso, Tso Nyak, Rum Tso and Nyak Tso



COASTAL EROSION

CONTEXT: Coastal erosion in Tamil Nadu is increasingly threatening livelihoods and infrastructure due to both natural processes and human interventions.

WHAT IS COASTAL EROSION?

It refers to the loss of coastal land due to the action of waves, currents, and human activities.

Key Findings of the Study Regarding Tamil Nadu Coast:

1. Sand Movement: For most of the year, sand is carried from south to north by wind and sea currents; during the northeast monsoon, this flow reverses.
2. Impact of Structures: Building ports, breakwaters, or groynes disrupts this natural sand movement.
3. Erosion Effect: Sand accumulates on one side of these structures, leading to increased erosion on the opposite side, with waves encroaching further inland and heightening coastal risks.

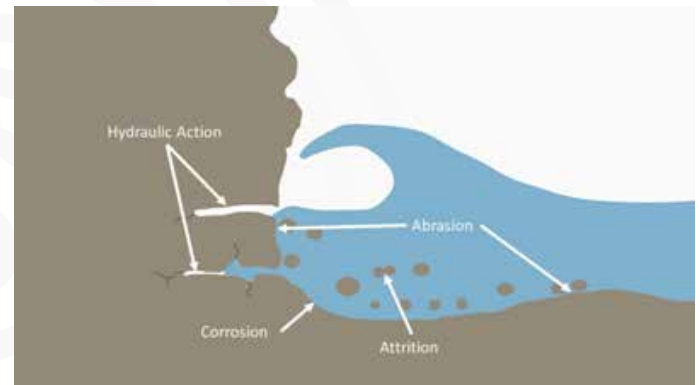
CAUSES OF COASTAL EROSION:

Natural Causes:

- Waves: Powerful waves erode coastlines through abrasion and hydraulic action (e.g., the cliffs of Dover).
- Tides: High and low tides can significantly impact erosion, especially in areas with large tidal ranges (e.g., Bay of Fundy).
- Wind and Sea Currents: Cause long-term erosion by moving sand along the coast; direction reverses during monsoons (e.g., Tamil Nadu coast).

Solution:

1. Green belts and artificial reefs help in the mitigation of coastal erosion.
2. Coastal habitats such as Mangroves, Coral Reefs, and lagoons are recognized as the best defence against sea storms and erosion, deflecting and absorbing much of the energy of sea storms.
3. Hybrid Approach: Combining hard and soft measures like bio-shields and nourishment to better manage erosion.



Government Initiatives to Tackle Coastal Erosion:

1. Shoreline Mapping System: NCCR identifies 33.6% of the coastline as vulnerable to erosion.
2. Hazard Line: Defined by MoEFCC for disaster management and adaptive planning.
3. Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification 2019: Allows erosion control measures and sets up No Development Zones.
4. Coastal Zone Management Plans (CZMP): States must map erosion-prone areas and prepare Shoreline Management Plans.
5. National Strategy for Coastal Protection: Guidelines developed by MoEFCC for coastal states.
6. Flood Management Scheme: State and Union Governments plan anti-sea erosion projects.
7. Coastal Management Information System (CMIS): Collects coastal data for protection planning; and experimental setups in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Puducherry.
8. State Initiatives: Tamil Nadu's response includes building groynes and seawalls, though their effectiveness is debated.



**INDIA'S LARGEST ONLINE IAS
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MIOMBO FOREST

CONTEXT: The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) have launched two significant projects to protect the Miombo forest and enhance food security in Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

- **Miombo Forest Project:** This project focuses on sustainable management, biodiversity conservation, and community-based practices in the Miombo forest, benefiting 5,000 families.
- **Zim-Moza Agriculture Value Chain & Trade Development Project (Zim-Moza ATDP):** This project aims to improve agricultural value chains and trade between Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

Both projects align with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and aim to promote resilience against environmental and economic challenges.

Miombo Biome:

- **Type:** Tropical and subtropical grasslands, bushlands, and savannahs.
- **Distribution:** Found in Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.



LAKE TURKANA

CONTEXT: A comprehensive survey of Lake Turkana, Africa's fourth-largest lake, has been conducted for the first time in 50 years, revealing high fish potential.

- Led by UNESCO and the World Food Programme, and funded by the Dutch Government, the 10-year project aims to enhance the economic well-being and food security of the region's population.

Lake Turkana is the largest desert lake in the world and is known for its unique greenish-blue colour. It is part of the Omo-Turkana basin, which stretches into four countries: Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan and Uganda.



ANTARCTICA'S DEEP-WINTER HEATWAVE

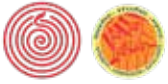
CONTEXT: Antarctica is experiencing a record-breaking deep-winter heatwave, with temperatures up to 28°C higher than normal.

- This unusual event is mainly due to the weakening of the polar vortex, which typically traps cold air over the continent.
- The weakened vortex has allowed warmer air to enter, raising temperatures.
- Reduced Antarctic Sea ice, which usually helps maintain lower temperatures, may also be contributing to this heatwave.
- The potential fallout includes further loss of the Antarctic Ice Sheet, which could significantly raise global sea levels, potentially submerging coastal cities.
- The heatwave might also disrupt the global ocean circulation system, which regulates climate by transporting heat and carbon.



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PYROCUMULONIMBUS CLOUDS

CONTEXT: Pyrocumulonimbus clouds, formed during extremely hot wildfires or volcanic eruptions, are becoming more common due to rising global temperatures.

- These clouds develop when intense heat from a fire causes surrounding air, carrying water vapor, smoke, and ash, to rise rapidly into the atmosphere.
- As the air cools and condenses, a pyrocumulus cloud forms, which can evolve into a pyrocumulonimbus cloud if conditions are right.
- These towering clouds, which can reach heights of 50,000 feet, generate thunderstorms but little rain, potentially sparking new wildfires and spreading existing ones.

ST MARTIN'S ISLAND

CONTEXT: St. Martin's Island, Bangladesh's only coral island, recently gained attention amid political turmoil in the country.

- Former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was rumoured to have claimed in an undelivered speech that the U.S. sought her ouster because she refused to hand over the island for a military base.
- The island, located in the Bay of Bengal near Myanmar, is geopolitically significant due to its proximity to the maritime boundary and international interest from powers like the U.S. and China.
- It has a history of territorial disputes, particularly with Myanmar, and concerns about sovereignty persist.
- The island has also been affected by the Rohingya refugee crisis, with reports of military tensions in the area



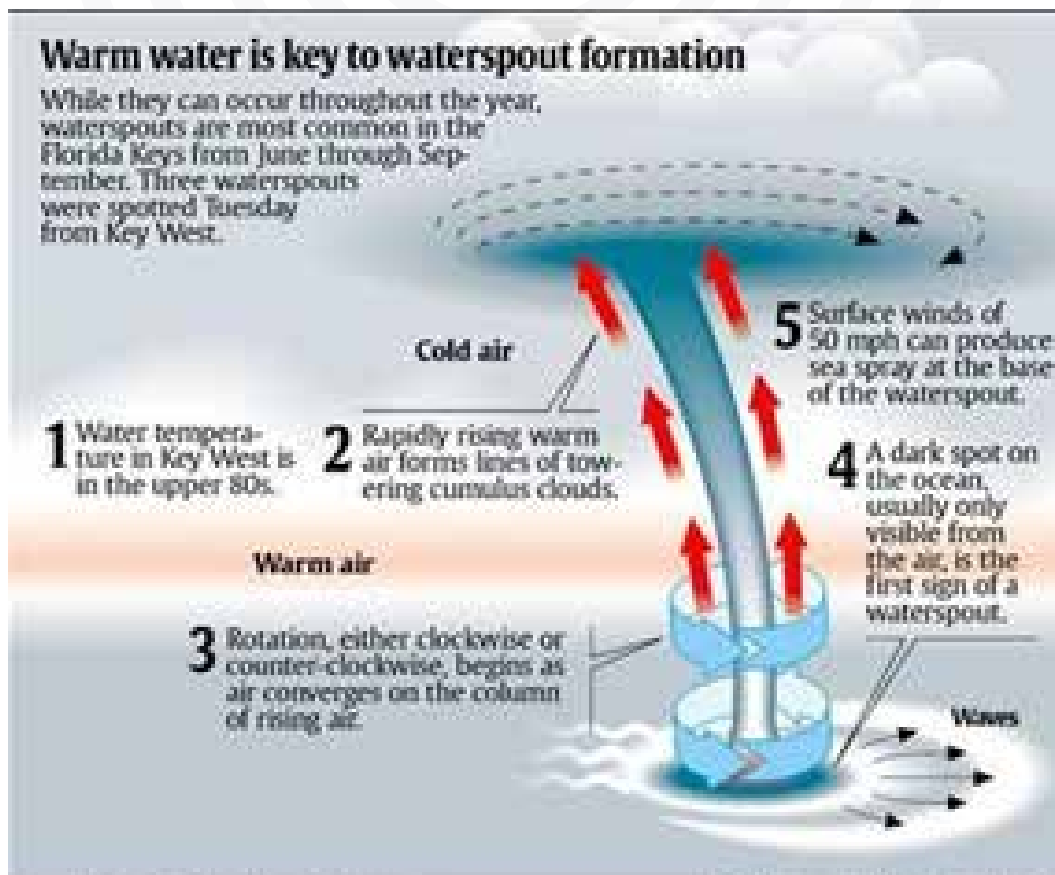
WATERSPOUT

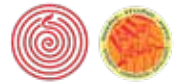
CONTEXT: Recently a tragic incident where a luxury yacht off the coast of Sicily, Italy, sank during a violent storm, is possibly caused by a waterspout.

A waterspout is a rotating column of air and mist over water, similar to a tornado but generally weaker.

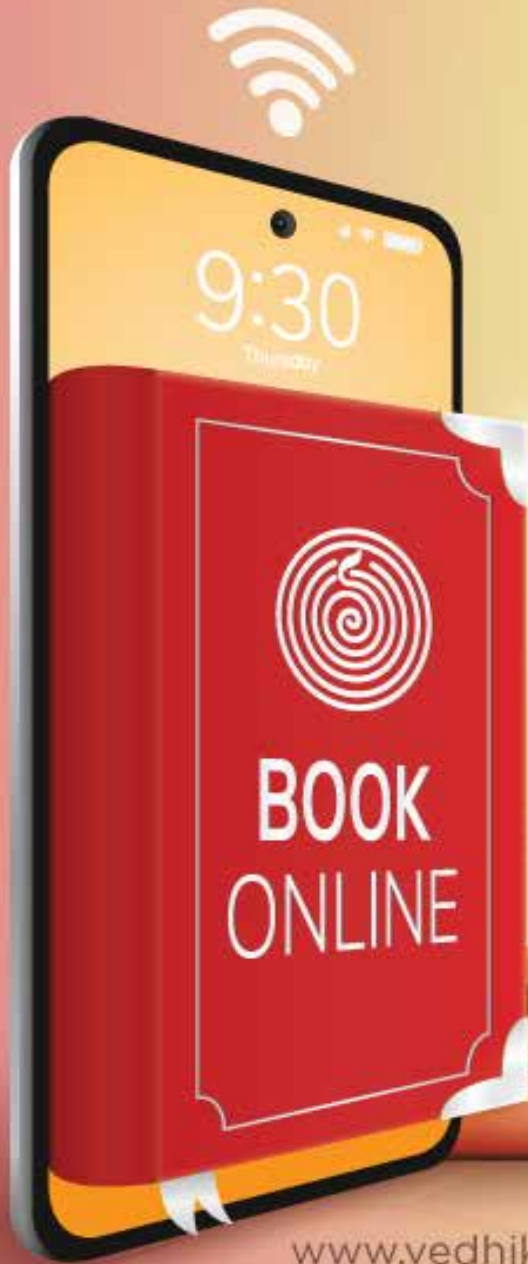
Waterspouts can be either tornadic, associated with severe thunderstorms, or fair-weather, forming during calm conditions.

The waterspout that likely caused the sinking is believed to be a tornadic type, which can cause significant destruction.





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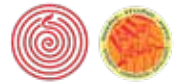

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POLITY AND GOVERNANCE





CENTRE SEEKS PUBLIC COMMENTS ON DRAFT GUIDELINES FOR THE PREVENTION AND REGULATION OF DARK PATTERNS

GOVERNMENT SUSPENDS LATERAL ENTRY SCHEME FOR UPSC, PLANS TO REVIEW AND ADD QUOTAS

GOVT ALLOCATES ₹7,212 CRORE TO NIRBHAYA FUND FOR FY 2023-24

SUPREME COURT DESIGNATES 39 NEW SENIOR ADVOCATES UNDER REVISED GUIDELINES

SUPREME COURT ESTABLISHES NATIONAL TASK FORCE TO PROTECT HEALTHCARE WORKERS' SAFETY

WHY IS SANCTION FOR PROSECUTION NEEDED?

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAM (WEP)

WOMEN, NON-MUSLIMS ON BOARDS, COUNCIL CAN'T CLAIM LAND: WAQF ACT CHANGES



CENTRE SEEKS PUBLIC COMMENTS ON DRAFT GUIDELINES FOR THE PREVENTION AND REGULATION OF DARK PATTERNS

CONTEXT: The Department of Consumer Affairs, Government of India, has sought public comments on the Draft Guidelines for Prevention and Regulation of Dark Patterns.

BACKGROUND: The Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI), in partnership with Parallel, a product design firm, recently published a report examining the prevalence of deceptive design patterns in popular Indian mobile applications. The study revealed that many of these apps employ one or more of 12 deceptive or dark patterns.

WHAT ARE DARK PATTERNS?

DARK PATTERNS: A DECEPTIVE DESIGN PRACTICE

Dark patterns are deceptive design elements or techniques used in user interfaces to manipulate users into making unintended actions or purchases. They often exploit cognitive biases and emotional vulnerabilities to drive users toward specific outcomes.

- These deceptive design patterns make it difficult for users to navigate the internet and can even take advantage of them.
 - They use psychological tricks to manipulate users into doing things they don't want to, often to benefit the company behind the website or app.
 - These tricks can make users feel pressured to act quickly, guilty for not doing something, or forced to take certain actions.
 - They can also trap users into subscriptions or keep bothering them with unwanted messages
1. **Bait and Switch:** This pattern lures users in with a seemingly attractive offer or deal, only to switch the terms or conditions once the user is committed. For instance, an e-commerce website might advertise a product at a low price, but then add hidden fees or charges during checkout.
 2. **Forced Completion:** This pattern forces users to complete a series of steps before they can exit or cancel an action. For example, a mobile app might make it difficult to close an account without going through a lengthy process.
 3. **Hidden Costs:** This pattern conceals additional fees or charges until the user reaches a later stage in the purchase process. For instance, a subscription service might advertise a low monthly fee but then reveal hidden charges for optional features or services.
 4. **Confirm Shaming:** This pattern uses guilt or fear to manipulate users into completing an action. For example, a checkout page might display a message like "Are you sure you want to cancel your order?" to discourage users from abandoning their purchase.
 5. **Door-in-the-Face:** This pattern presents a large, unreasonable request first, followed by a smaller, more reasonable request that the user is more likely to agree to. For example, a charity might ask for a large donation but then suggest a smaller, more manageable amount.

Dark patterns can have significant negative

consequences for users, including financial losses, privacy breaches, and emotional distress.

FAMOUS MNCS ACCUSED OF USING DARK PATTERNS

While many companies have been criticized for potentially using dark patterns, it's important to note that these allegations often involve legal disputes or public outcry, and not all accusations are proven. Here are a few examples of well-known companies that have faced such allegations:

- **Amazon:** Amazon has been accused of using dark patterns to encourage impulse purchases, such as the "Limited Time Offer" or "Only a Few Left" messages.
- Amazon faced criticism in the European Union for its complex and time-consuming process for cancelling Amazon Prime subscriptions.
- **Netflix:** The streaming giant has faced criticism for making it difficult to cancel subscriptions or for using auto-play features to encourage users to watch more content.
- **Booking.com:** The online travel agency has been accused of using confusing cancellation policies and hidden fees to increase revenue.
- **Uber:** The ride-sharing app has been criticized for using surge pricing and for making it difficult for riders to dispute charges.
- **Facebook (Meta):** Facebook has faced allegations of using dark patterns to manipulate users' emotions and to keep them engaged with the platform.
- **LinkedIn** LinkedIn users frequently receive unwanted promotional messages from influencers. Turning off these messages can be a complex process that involves several steps and requires users to be knowledgeable about the platform's settings.

WHAT IS THE ADVERTISING STANDARDS COUNCIL OF INDIA (ASCI)?

The Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) is a self-regulatory organization that oversees the advertising industry in India. It was established in 1985 and is a non-profit organization.

The Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) is a non-profit organization that regulates the advertising industry in India. ASCI ensures that advertisements adhere to ethical standards, protects consumers from misleading ads, and sets industry standards. It investigates complaints, conducts educational programs, and has a code of self-regulation that requires ads to be legal, decent, honest, truthful, not harmful, and fair in competition.

Overall, ASCI plays a vital role in maintaining ethical advertising practices in India.

WHAT DO YOU UNDERSTAND BY COGNITIVE BIASES?

Cognitive biases are mental shortcuts or thinking patterns that can lead to errors in judgment or decision-making. These biases often occur unconsciously and can influence our perception of reality, decision-making processes, and interactions with others.



BIAS NAME	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE
Confirmation Bias	The tendency to seek out and interpret information that confirms one's pre-existing beliefs.	A person who believes climate change is a hoax might ignore evidence supporting it.
Anchoring Bias	The tendency to rely heavily on the first piece of information encountered.	A salesperson suggests a high price first to make lower prices seem like a good deal.
Availability Heuristic	The tendency to judge the likelihood of an event based on how easily examples come to mind.	Overestimating the risk of shark attacks due to frequent news coverage.
Hindsight Bias	The tendency to believe one could have predicted an outcome after it has occurred.	Claiming to have known the result of a surprising event beforehand.
Sunk Cost Fallacy	The tendency to continue investing in a failing endeavour due to prior investment.	Pursuing an unhappy career path because of time and money already invested.
Overconfidence Bias	The tendency to overestimate one's abilities or knowledge.	Investors believe they can outperform the market despite historical evidence.

DARK PATTERNS AND DIGITALLY CONSCIOUS PRODUCT DESIGN

The ASCI study sheds light on the prevalence of deceptive design patterns in leading Indian apps. These patterns, often referred to as “dark patterns,” manipulate user behaviour through subtle and often unethical tactics.

Common Dark Patterns:

- **Interface Interference:** Apps use contrasting colors and layouts to subtly guide users towards specific choices.
- **Confirm Shaming:** Apps use guilt or social pressure to influence user decisions.
- **Basket Sneaking:** Apps add unwanted items to a user's shopping cart without explicit consent.

Other Notable Dark Patterns:

- **Privacy Deception:** Tricking users into sharing more personal data than intended.
- **Drip Pricing:** Gradually revealing additional fees during the purchase process.
- **Subscription Trap:** Leading users into recurring subscriptions without full understanding.

Significance and Implications:

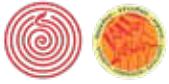
- **Marketers' Awareness:** The study raises awareness among marketers of these deceptive practices.

- **Ethical Design:** Brands need to review ASCI guidelines and prioritize ethical design practices.
- **User Protection:** Using resources like Conscious Patterns can help brands assess and improve their app interfaces.
- **Designer Responsibility:** Both marketers and designers should be involved in ethical design, as designers often have a significant influence on app interfaces.

CONCLUSION: BUILDING TRUST THROUGH ETHICAL DESIGN

The Indian government's call for public comments on dark patterns signifies a growing recognition of the negative impact these deceptive practices have on consumers. By understanding these manipulative tactics and embracing ethical design principles, companies can build trust with their users and foster a more positive digital experience.

Consumers deserve transparency and control over their online interactions. The combined efforts of government regulations, industry self-regulation, and user awareness can create a digital landscape where ethical design reigns supreme. As technology continues to evolve, prioritizing ethical design will be crucial for companies to maintain a competitive edge and ensure long-term user loyalty.



GOVERNMENT SUSPENDS LATERAL ENTRY SCHEME FOR UPSC, PLANS TO REVIEW AND ADD QUOTAS

CONTEXT: The Indian government has paused the UPSC lateral entry scheme to review and improve its inclusivity, aiming to attract candidates from diverse backgrounds. Earlier UPSC had invited applications for 45 senior positions in 24 central ministries from private, state, and public sector employees.



BACKGROUND:

Lateral Entry in Civil Services: A New Approach

Lateral entry represents a significant shift in the Indian administrative landscape, allowing for the appointment of experienced professionals from the private sector into government roles. This concept was initially proposed by the NITI Aayog and the Group of Secretaries on Governance, aiming to address the shortage of Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officers at the central level and introduce specialized expertise into government departments.

The primary objectives of lateral entry are twofold:

- 1. Bringing in Domain Expertise:** By recruiting individuals with deep knowledge and experience in specific sectors, the government seeks to enhance its decision-making capabilities and policy implementation.
- 2. Addressing the Shortage of IAS Officers:** Lateral entry offers a solution to the shortage of IAS officers, particularly at the middle and senior management levels, ensuring a steady supply of talent to drive administrative reforms.

Through lateral entry, the government aims to attract outstanding individuals with expertise in a wide range of fields, including revenue, finance, economics, agriculture, transportation, and commerce. These specialists can contribute significantly to the country's development and progress.

LATERAL EXPERTS: CATALYSTS FOR INDIA'S PROGRESS?

- 1. Economic Reforms:** Economists like Dr. Manmohan Singh and Montek Singh Ahluwalia guided India's liberalization, transitioning the economy towards market orientation.
- 2. Financial Stability:** Raghuram Rajan contributed significantly to maintaining financial stability and economic growth during his tenure as RBI Governor.
- 3. Technological Innovations:** Nandan Nilekani's Aadhaar project and Sam Pitroda's advancements in telecommunications have transformed India's digital landscape.
- 4. Policy and Planning:** Arvind Subramanian, Vijay Kelkar, and Parameswaran Iyer provided crucial insights into

economic policy, fiscal reforms, and urban planning.

- 5. Overall Impact:** Lateral experts have been essential in advancing India's economic, technological, and social progress through their specialized knowledge and innovative solutions.



The government on August 17 advertised 45 openings for lateral entry into the central bureaucracy.

PROCESS OF LATERAL ENTRY RECRUITMENT

The recruitment process for lateral entry into the Indian administrative system involves several key steps:

- 1. Initiation by DoPT:** The Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) requests the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) to conduct the selection process for various lateral entry positions in government departments and ministries.
- 2. Application Process:** UPSC then invites online applications from eligible candidates for these positions.
- 3. Shortlisting and Interviews:** After receiving applications, the UPSC shortlists candidates based on their qualifications and experience. The shortlisted candidates are then interviewed.
- 4. Recommendation and Appointment:** Following the interviews, UPSC recommends a list of selected candidates to the DoPT. The final appointments are made by the Government, typically for a tenure of 3 to 5 years.

NEED FOR LATERAL ENTRY

- 1. Addressing Officer Shortages:** There is a significant shortage of officers in the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and Indian Police Service (IPS). According to the DoPT, the IAS cadre is short by approximately 22.48%, or 1,510 officers, while the combined shortage in IAS and IPS stands at 2,418 officers.
- 2. Domain Expertise:** Lateral entry enables the recruitment of domain experts from the private sector, enriching the central administration with specialized knowledge and skills that can enhance governance efficiency and create a more competitive environment.

PROS OF LATERAL ENTRY IN CIVIL SERVICES

- 1. Expertise and Specialization:** Lateral entry allows for the inclusion of professionals with specialized expertise, thereby improving policymaking and implementation.
- 2. Innovation and Fresh Perspectives:** Professionals from diverse backgrounds introduce new ideas and innovative approaches, potentially increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of public administration.
- 3. Merit-Based Selection:** The process emphasizes merit, skills, and experience rather than traditional seniority,



fostering a performance-oriented culture within civil services.

- 4. **Reduced Learning Curve:** Experienced professionals from outside can quickly adapt and contribute without the need for extensive training, which career bureaucrats might require.

WHY LATERAL ENTRY ISN'T SUBJECT TO RESERVATION?

- Lateral entry in the Indian civil services is a mechanism designed to bring in experienced professionals from outside the traditional bureaucratic structure. This process involves appointing individuals to specific, single-cadre positions within government departments.
- The primary reason why reservations don't apply to lateral entry is that these appointments are not part of the regular recruitment process. Unlike the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) or Indian Police Service (IPS), where reservations are mandated, lateral entry positions are filled based on specific needs and qualifications.
- Additionally, the pool of lateral entry officers is relatively small and temporary. These appointments are typically for a limited duration, often around 3 to 5 years. Given the short nature of these positions and the specialized expertise required, applying reservations might not be practical or efficient.
- In essence, lateral entry is a targeted approach to fill specific vacancies with individuals who possess the necessary domain knowledge and experience. This focus on specialized skills and qualifications, rather than a

broader recruitment process, makes it exempt from the usual reservation norms.

CONS OF LATERAL ENTRY IN CIVIL SERVICES

1. **Cultural and Bureaucratic Resistance:** The integration of lateral entrants may face resistance from traditional civil services, leading to potential friction and challenges in collaboration.
2. **Lack of Public Sector Experience:** Lateral entrants may be unfamiliar with government procedures, protocols, and the complexities of public administration, which could impact their effectiveness.
3. **Potential for Bias:** The selection process might be perceived as biased or politically influenced, raising concerns about transparency and fairness.
4. **Short-Term Focus:** There is a risk that lateral entrants may prioritize short-term goals over long-term public service commitments, potentially affecting the sustainability of policies.

GLOBAL CONTEXT OF LATERAL ENTRY

Several countries have institutionalized lateral entry as a part of their administrative systems:

- **United States:** Known for the "Spoils System," where political parties appoint allies and supporters to key governmental positions, often with limited regard for merit.
- **United Kingdom and Ireland:** Selection processes often consider work experience in both civil and private sectors, facilitating a blend of expertise from various backgrounds.
- **Other Countries:** Belgium, Australia, and New Zealand also incorporate lateral entry practices to bring in specialized skills and perspectives into their public administration systems.

CONCLUSION: Lateral entry into the Indian civil services offers a promising avenue for bringing in specialized expertise and fostering a more competitive and innovative public administration. While challenges such as cultural resistance and potential for bias need to be addressed, the overall benefits of lateral entry in enhancing governance and public service delivery make it a valuable strategy for India's development.



GOVT ALLOCATES ₹7,212 CRORE TO NIRBHAYA FUND FOR FY 2023-24

CONTEXT: The government has allocated a total amount of 7212 crore and 85 lakh rupees in the financial year 2023-24 under the Nirbhaya Fund.

BACKGROUND: The Nirbhaya Fund was established in 2013 as a non-lapsable corpus fund by the Government of India in the aftermath of the horrific 2012 Delhi gang rape. Named after the victim, the fund was created to support initiatives aimed at improving the safety and security of women across the country.

To date, approximately ₹5,000 crore, constituting nearly 76% of the total allocation, has been disbursed and utilized by various government departments for implementing women's safety projects.

PURPOSE, ESTABLISHMENT, AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE NIRBHAYA FUND

PURPOSE

The Nirbhaya Fund was established with the primary objective of bolstering initiatives designed to safeguard and enhance the security of women across India. It aims to create

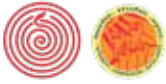
a safer environment for women by addressing vulnerabilities and providing comprehensive support to survivors of violence.

ESTABLISHMENT

Following the deeply disturbing 2012 Delhi gang rape incident, the Government of India announced the creation of the Nirbhaya Fund in the 2013 Union Budget. Initially capitalized with ₹1,000 crore, it was designated as a non-lapsable corpus fund, ensuring its continuous availability for women's safety projects.

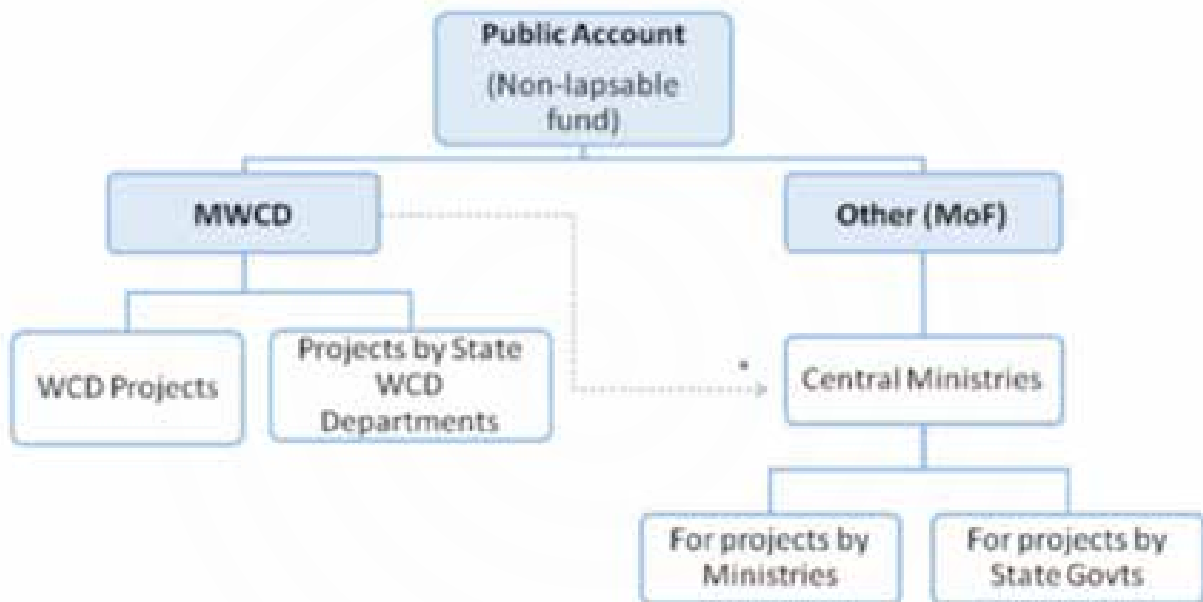
ADMINISTRATION

The fund is managed by the Department of Economic Affairs under the Ministry of Finance. However, the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) plays a pivotal role in overseeing its implementation. An empowered committee within the MWCD is responsible for evaluating and recommending proposals for funding, while the ministry also monitors the progress of approved projects in collaboration with relevant government departments.



Chairperson	Convenor & Others	Members (co-opted as required)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secretary, MWCD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint Secretary, MWCD • Secretary, MHA • Secretary, MoRTH • Secretary, MeITY 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairman, Railway Board • Joint Secretary, DEA • Secretary (Project sponsoring Dept) • Secretary (concerned State Dept) • Secretary (State WCD)

FUND FLOW UNDER NIRBHAYA:



* With approval of MoF, MWCD also transfers funds to Ministries for further disbursement to reduce time-lag of allocations through annual budgets.

KEY INITIATIVES

- **One Stop Centres (OSCs):** Commonly known as “Sakhi Centres,” these comprehensive facilities offer a range of services to women affected by violence, including medical care, police assistance, legal aid, and counseling.
- **Safe City Projects:** Implemented in various urban areas, these projects focus on improving public infrastructure, increasing police visibility, and utilizing technology, such as CCTV surveillance, to enhance women’s safety.
- **Emergency Response Support System (ERSS):** The establishment of a nationwide single emergency number (112) provides immediate assistance for all emergencies, including those related to women’s safety.

KEY AREAS OF EXPENDITURE

While OSCs, Safe City Projects, and ERSS are prominent initiatives, the Nirbhaya Fund also supports other crucial areas:

- **Victim Compensation:** Financial assistance to victims of sexual violence.
- **Fast-Track Special Courts:** Expediting trials in cases related to sexual offenses.
- **Awareness and Prevention Programs:** Initiatives to change societal attitudes and prevent sexual violence.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- **Implementation Gaps:** Despite significant allocations, challenges in implementation, such as bureaucratic hurdles and lack of coordination, have been identified.
- **Focus on Prevention:** There’s a growing emphasis on preventive measures, beyond immediate response to violence, to create a long-term impact on women’s safety.
- **Data-Driven Approach:** Utilizing data to identify high-risk areas and target interventions effectively is becoming increasingly important.



FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- **Expanding Coverage:** Increasing the reach of women's safety initiatives to rural and underserved areas.
- **Technology Integration:** Leveraging technology for better surveillance, emergency response, and victim support services.
- **Community Involvement:** Fostering community

participation in preventing sexual violence.

CONCLUSION: The Nirbhaya Fund represents a significant step towards ensuring women's safety in India. While substantial progress has been made, challenges in implementation persist. Effective utilization of allocated funds, focusing on prevention, and leveraging technology are crucial for creating a safer environment for women.

SUPREME COURT DESIGNATES 39 NEW SENIOR ADVOCATES UNDER REVISED GUIDELINES

CONTEXT: The Supreme Court recently elevated 39 lawyers, including 10 women, to the rank of senior advocate, following new guidelines that were introduced last year. Among the notable appointees are Indra Sawhney, known for her involvement in the 1992 case that capped reservations at 50%, and Anindita Pujari, the Vice-President of the Bar Association of India.

BACKGROUND: The designation of senior advocates in India, introduced during the colonial era and formalized by the Advocates Act, 1961,

- The Advocates Act recognizes distinguished lawyers based on their expertise, standing, or special knowledge.
- Under Section 16 of the **Advocates Act 1961** two classes of advocates are classified;

1. **Senior Advocate** and
 2. **Junior** or those who are not designated as seniors.
- The Senior advocates play the role of legal experts in India who have significant knowledge in the field of law.
 - They are associated with many prominent cases as they are good contributors to the principle of **Rule of Law**.

The Act allows the Supreme Court and High Courts to confer this title, which grants privileges like priority in court appearances. While prestigious, being a senior advocate is not mandatory for practicing law in India. The criteria and guidelines for designation have evolved over time, with the most recent update in 2023 refining the eligibility requirements.



PROVISION	REQUIREMENT
Section 16(2) of the Advocates Act, 1961	Chief Justice and other judges believe the advocate is fit for the position.
Rule 2(a) of Order IV of the Supreme Court Rules, 1966	Advocate has exceptional legal expertise and knowledge.
Rule 2(a) of Order IV of the Supreme Court Rules, 1966	Advocate's consent is obtained.
Section 16(2) of the Advocates Act, 1961	Selection is solely based on knowledge and expertise.

RESTRICTION	EXPLANATION
Appearance	Cannot appear without an Advocate-on-record or junior.
Pleadings and Affidavits	Cannot draft pleadings or affidavits for courts or authorities mentioned in Section 30.
Briefs and instructions	Cannot accept briefs or instructions directly from clients.
Pleadings and Applications	Cannot file pleadings or applications in their own handwriting.
Code of Conduct	Must maintain a different code of conduct compared to other advocates.



WHAT IS THE INDIRA JAISING CASE?

The **Indira Jaising case** refers to a petition filed by **Indira Jaising**, India's first woman Senior Advocate, challenging the existing process for designating senior advocates in India. She criticized the process as opaque, arbitrary, and susceptible to nepotism, calling for increased transparency.

In response, the Supreme Court of India ruled to improve the designation process. The Apex Court decided to lay down guidelines for itself and all High Courts on the process of designating senior advocates.

This is done by establishing

1. a permanent committee and
2. a permanent secretariat.

This secretariat is responsible for receiving and compiling applications for designation, along with relevant data and judgments.

The verdict also established procedures and criteria for the designation process to ensure greater transparency and fairness.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2023 GUIDELINES FOR SENIOR ADVOCATE DESIGNATION

BACKGROUND

In February 2023, the Central government proposed changes to the guidelines for the designation of senior advocates, which were established by the Supreme Court following the 2017 ruling in the Indira Jaising case.

The existing guidelines utilized a point-based system, with significant weight given to publications, personality, and suitability as assessed through interviews. The government argued that this system was subjective, ineffective, and compromised the dignity of the honour. Concerns were raised about the proliferation of dubious journals and the preference for secret ballot voting to avoid potential biases.

New Guidelines

The Supreme Court released updated guidelines in May 2023, addressing these concerns and revising the criteria for designating senior advocates.

1. Minimum Age Requirement

- **New Minimum Age:** The new guidelines set the minimum age for applying for the senior advocate designation at 45 years.
- **Flexibility:** This age limit can be relaxed if recommended by the Committee, the Chief Justice of India (CJI), or a Supreme Court judge.

2. Marks for Publications

- **Reduced Weightage:** Marks allocated for publications have been reduced from 15 to 5.
- **Criteria for Marks:** The 5 marks are now assigned for academic articles, teaching assignments in law, and guest lectures delivered at law schools or professional institutions.

3. Weightage for Judgments

- **Increased Weightage:** The points awarded for reported and unreported judgments have been increased from 40 to 50, excluding orders that do not establish legal principles.

These revisions aim to streamline the designation process and enhance its transparency and objectivity.

CONCLUSION : The recent elevation of 39 lawyers, including notable figures such as Indra Sawhney and Anindita Pujari, to the rank of senior advocate, reflects the Supreme Court's commitment to adhering to the revised guidelines established in 2023. These new guidelines, which emerged from a critical review prompted by the Indira Jaising case, address longstanding concerns about the transparency and fairness of the designation process. By implementing a minimum age requirement, reducing the weightage for publications, and increasing the emphasis on judgments, the guidelines aim to ensure a more objective and equitable system. The establishment of a permanent committee and secretariat further underscores the Court's dedication to upholding the integrity of the senior advocate designation, reinforcing its significance while maintaining the honour and prestige associated with this esteemed title.

SUPREME COURT ESTABLISHES NATIONAL TASK FORCE TO PROTECT HEALTHCARE WORKERS' SAFETY

CONTEXT: In response to the tragic death of a trainee doctor in Kolkata, the Supreme Court has formed a national task force of senior medical professionals to develop comprehensive safety protocols for healthcare workers throughout India. The formation was prompted by the rape and murder of a trainee doctor at RG Kar Medical College, leading to widespread protests and highlighting the need for better safety protocols. The court, acting on its initiative, recognizes the urgent need for standardized safety measures to protect medical professionals across the country.



CURRENT SAFETY PROTOCOLS FOR HEALTH CARE WORKERS IN INDIA

Legal Framework

India's constitutional framework assigns health and law and order as state subjects, placing the primary responsibility for healthcare workers' safety on individual state governments and Union Territory administrations.

This decentralized approach results in varying safety protocols across the country.

Unfortunately, the central government does not maintain detailed records of fatalities or injuries among medical professionals due to violence, highlighting a significant gap in nationwide data collection and response.

The Urgent Need for a Safe Work Environment

Experts have highlighted the inadequacies in the physical infrastructure of many medical colleges and healthcare facilities in India.

- Common issues include
- poorly lit corridors,



- inadequately secured wards, and
- significant distances between critical departments such as emergency rooms and operation theatres.

These deficiencies make healthcare workers particularly vulnerable to violence, especially in high-stress situations involving patients and their families.

Simple yet effective measures, such as

- improved lighting,
- the presence of security personnel,
- surveillance cameras, and
- well-guarded pathways between departments, could significantly enhance safety. These interventions not only provide physical protection but also foster a sense of security among healthcare workers, enabling them to perform their duties without fear of assault.

Lessons from Developed Countries

Globally, violence against healthcare workers is a recognized issue, and several countries have implemented robust measures to address it.

- **United Kingdom:** The National Health Service (NHS) enforces a strict zero-tolerance policy on violence, supported by a dedicated security team and a comprehensive incident reporting system. This ensures that any act of violence is promptly addressed and recorded.
- **United States:** Several states classify assaults on healthcare workers as felonies, acting as a strong deterrent. This legal approach underscores the seriousness with which such offenses are treated and provides a robust legal framework for protecting medical professionals.
- **Australia:** Hospitals have introduced a range of safety measures, including the deployment of security personnel, the installation of panic buttons in vulnerable areas, and mandatory de-escalation training for staff. These initiatives help prevent violent incidents and ensure that healthcare workers are well-equipped to handle potentially volatile situations.

India must urgently consider the implementation of a central protection law specifically designed to safeguard healthcare workers. Such legislation could standardize safety protocols across the country, ensuring that all healthcare facilities, regardless of location, adhere to a minimum standard of safety measures.

Additionally, adopting practices from countries like the U.K., U.S., and Australia – such as zero-tolerance policies, the classification of violence against healthcare workers as a serious crime, and the introduction of panic buttons and de-escalation training – could greatly enhance the protection of medical professionals in India.

SUPREME COURT ESTABLISHES NATIONAL TASK FORCE FOR HEALTHCARE WORKER SAFETY

The Supreme Court has constituted a 10-member National Task Force (NTF) to develop a comprehensive blueprint focused on enhancing the safety and well-being of healthcare workers across India. This initiative aims to address the growing concerns surrounding the security and working conditions of medical professionals.

Additionally, the task force will include ex officio members who are key government officials:

- Cabinet Secretary to the Government of India
- Home Secretary
- Secretary of the Union Health Ministry
- Chairperson of the National Medical Commission
- President of the National Board of Examiners

Responsibilities of the National Task Force

The NTF has been entrusted with the critical responsibility of formulating an action plan aimed at ensuring the safety, security, and dignified working conditions of healthcare professionals. The task force will place particular emphasis on preventing gender-based violence and improving conditions for interns, resident doctors, and non-resident doctors.

Key Focus Areas

The NTF's action plan will address several critical areas to enhance the safety and working environment for healthcare workers, including:

1. Enhanced Security Measures

- Strengthening security protocols in emergency rooms and other critical hospital areas.
- Implementing baggage screening to prevent the entry of weapons.
- Restricting the number of non-patient visitors to reduce crowding.

2. Infrastructure Improvements

- Installing biometric and facial recognition systems to control access.
- Improving lighting and installing CCTV cameras throughout hospital premises.
- Providing transport for medical professionals during late-night hours (10 pm to 6 am).

3. Workplace Environment

- Creating gender-neutral restrooms and spaces for medical staff.
- Applying the Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) Act to medical establishments and ensuring the establishment of Internal Complaints Committees (ICCs).

4. Crisis Management and Support

- Conducting workshops to help medical staff handle grief and crisis situations.
- Setting up an emergency helpline specifically for medical professionals.

5. Ongoing Monitoring and Auditing

- Performing quarterly audits of institutional safety measures to ensure compliance and effectiveness.
- Establishing a police force proportionate to the hospital footfall to maintain order and safety.

The task force's initiatives will ensure that healthcare workers in India are provided with a safe and dignified work environment, enabling them to perform their duties without fear or intimidation.

CONCLUSION: The Supreme Court has established a National Task Force to ensure the safety and well-being of healthcare workers in India. The task force will address issues such as enhanced security measures, improved infrastructure, and better workplace environments. By implementing these recommendations, the Supreme Court aims to prevent violence against healthcare workers, foster a sense of security within the medical community, and ultimately improve patient care.



WHY IS SANCTION FOR PROSECUTION NEEDED?

CONTEXT: The recent approval by Karnataka Governor Thawar Chand Gehlot to investigate and prosecute Chief Minister Siddaramaiah over alleged irregularities in land allotment has sparked legal and constitutional debates, prompting the Karnataka High Court to intervene and ask a trial court to delay its proceedings on related private complaints.

BACKGROUND:

» PURPOSE

The purpose of requiring sanction to prosecute public servants is twofold:

1. to safeguard them from unwarranted legal proceedings and
2. to ensure that decisions made in the line of duty are not subjected to frivolous challenges.

This protective measure is essential to allow public servants to perform their duties without fear of baseless prosecution.

» PROVISIONS

- The legal framework for sanctioning prosecution is primarily governed by the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) and the Prevention of Corruption Act (PCA).
- Under Section 197 of the CrPC, a court cannot take cognizance of a case against a public servant without prior sanction from a competent authority.
- This provision applies to both current and former public servants. (after 2018 amendment)

» APPLICABILITY

- The requirement for sanction under the PCA has evolved over time.
- Before the 1988 Amendment, sanction was only necessary while the public servant was in office, and no sanction was required once the individual left their position.
- However, the recent Amendments extended this requirement to include all public servants, regardless of their current status.

» SANCTIONING AUTHORITY

The authority responsible for granting sanction varies based on the public servant's affiliation.

- 1) The Central Government is responsible for sanctioning the prosecution of Central government employees, while
- 2) the State Government handles sanction requests for State government employees.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR PROSECUTING PUBLIC SERVANTS

Core Provisions

- **Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC):** Requires prior sanction from a competent authority before a court can take cognizance of a case against a public servant.
- **Prevention of Corruption Act (PCA):** Also mandates government approval before prosecution of public servants.

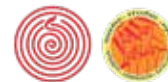
Rationale

- **Protection of Public Servants:** This framework aims to shield public servants from frivolous and malicious prosecutions.
- **Scrutiny of Official Actions:** It ensures that actions undertaken in the line of duty are subjected to proper scrutiny before legal action is initiated.

Recent Developments

- **Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS):** This legislation, which replaced the CrPC, retains the sanction provisions, emphasizing the continued importance of prior approval.
- **2018 PCA Amendments:** To further strengthen protections, the PCA was amended in 2018 to require government approval even before initiating an investigation against a public servant. This underscores the significance of obtaining sanctions prior to prosecuting public servants.

PROVISION	PURPOSE	APPLICABILITY
CODE OF CRIMINAL PROCEDURE (CRPC) (SECTION 197)	Protects public servants from vexatious and malicious prosecution.	Both current and former public servants.
PREVENTION OF CORRUPTION ACT (PCA) (SECTION 6, BEFORE 1988 AMENDMENT)	Protects public servants from vexatious and malicious prosecution.	Limited to the period when the public servant was in office.
PREVENTION OF CORRUPTION ACT (PCA) (SECTION 19, AFTER 1988 AMENDMENT)	Protects public servants from vexatious and malicious prosecution.	Both current and former public servants.
BHARATIYA NAGARIK SURAKSHA SANHITA (BNSS) (SECTION 218)	Protects public servants from vexatious and malicious prosecution.	Both current and former public servants.
PREVENTION OF CORRUPTION ACT (PCA) (2018 AMENDMENT)	Protects public servants from vexatious and malicious prosecution.	Both current and former public servants.



GOVERNOR'S ROLE IN SANCTIONING PROSECUTION AGAINST A CHIEF MINISTER

The Governor's role in granting sanction for prosecuting a Chief Minister (CM) is a matter of significant legal and constitutional importance. The **Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC)** generally designates the State and Central governments as the authorities responsible for granting sanction to prosecute public servants employed by their respective governments. However, the **Prevention of Corruption Act (PCA)**—both its 1947 and 1988 versions—contains a provision specifying that in the case of “any other person,” the sanction must be granted by the authority competent to remove the public servant from office.

GOVERNOR AS THE SANCTIONING AUTHORITY

Given that the Governor holds the constitutional power to dismiss a Chief Minister, the Governor is deemed the competent authority to consider and grant sanction for prosecuting a CM. This authority stems from the Governor's unique position as the representative of the State's highest constitutional office, capable of taking action against the head of the State government.

DISCRETIONARY POWERS OF THE GOVERNOR

A critical question that often arises is whether the Governor, when considering a request for sanction to prosecute a CM, exercises discretion independently or is bound to act on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers. This issue was addressed by the Supreme Court in the case of **A. R. Antulay v. R. S. Nayak (1984)**, where the Court ruled that the Governor should act in his discretion. The Court stated: “We have no doubt in our mind that when there is to be a prosecution of the Chief Minister, the Governor would, while determining whether sanction for such prosecution should be granted or not under Section 6 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, as a matter of propriety, necessarily act in his discretion and not on the advice of the Council of Ministers.”

CONSTITUTIONAL IMPLICATIONS

This interpretation underscores the Governor's responsibility to act independently and impartially when considering a request to sanction the prosecution of a Chief Minister. It ensures that the decision is made without political influence, thereby upholding the principles of justice and accountability in cases involving high-ranking public officials.

JUDICIAL INTERPRETATION ON THE GOVERNOR'S ROLE IN GRANTING SANCTION

The role of the Governor in granting sanction for the prosecution of public officials, particularly in cases involving high-ranking officials like Ministers, has been a subject of judicial scrutiny. Courts have examined the circumstances under which the Governor may act independently of the advice of the Council of Ministers, particularly when there are

allegations of corruption.

THE MADHYA PRADESH CASE: CONFLICT BETWEEN THE GOVERNOR AND THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

One significant case highlighting this issue is the **Madhya Pradesh Special Police Establishment vs. State of MP and others (2004)**. In this case, corruption charges were brought against two Ministers in Madhya Pradesh. The Lok Ayukta's report confirmed the charges, yet the Council of Ministers concluded there was no material evidence against them and advised against granting sanction for prosecution.

GOVERNOR'S DISCRETION IN GRANTING SANCTION

The Governor, disagreeing with the Council's assessment, exercised his discretion and granted the sanction for prosecution, citing sufficient material evidence against the Ministers. The case was subsequently brought before the Supreme Court, which had to determine whether the Governor was justified in acting independently of the Council's advice.

SUPREME COURT'S RULING

The Supreme Court upheld the Governor's decision, emphasizing that there are exceptional circumstances where the Governor is entitled to act in his discretion. The Court found the Council's decision to be “irrational” and based on a “non-consideration of relevant factors.” In its judgment, the Court stated: “On those rare occasions where, on facts, the bias becomes apparent and/or the decision of the Council of Ministers is shown to be irrational and based on non-consideration of relevant factors, the Governor would be right to act in his own discretion and grant sanction.”

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RULING

This ruling underscores the principle that while the Governor generally acts on the advice of the Council of Ministers, there are situations where the Governor must exercise independent judgment to uphold the rule of law. When the Council's decision is marred by bias or irrationality, the Governor's intervention is not only justified but necessary to ensure accountability and integrity in governance.

The Supreme Court's judgment thus affirms the discretionary power of the Governor in cases where the impartiality or rationality of the Council's decision is in question, reinforcing the checks and balances within the framework of India's constitutional governance.

CONCLUSION: The Governor plays a crucial role in sanctioning the prosecution of Chief Ministers, acting as the competent authority. While generally following the advice of the Council of Ministers, the Governor has the discretion to act independently in exceptional cases where the Council's decision is biased or irrational. This ensures accountability and integrity in governance. The Supreme Court has upheld the Governor's decision in such cases, affirming their role in safeguarding the rule of law.

“Intelligence plus character—that is the goal of true education. — Martin Luther King Jr.”





WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAM (WEP)

CONTEXT: The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) has launched a new program to empower women entrepreneurs and drive economic growth.

EMPOWERING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS: NSDC'S NEW INITIATIVE

The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) has launched a comprehensive Women Entrepreneurship Program (WEP) aimed at bolstering women's economic participation. By providing essential skills, mentorship, and market access, the program seeks to create a thriving ecosystem for women entrepreneurs.

KEY FEATURES OF THE WEP INCLUDE:

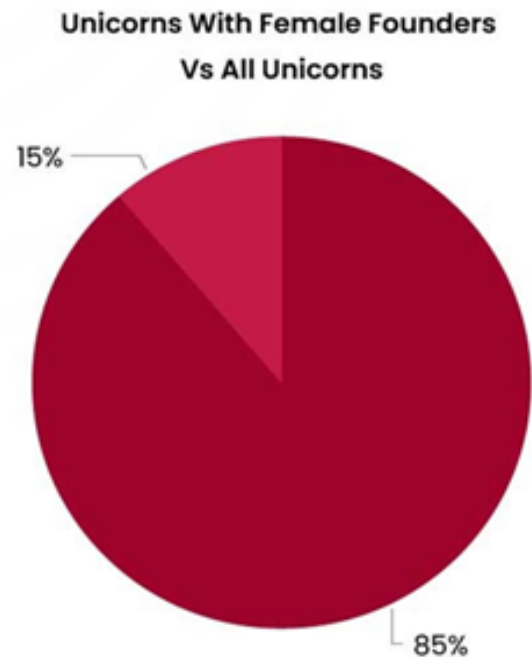
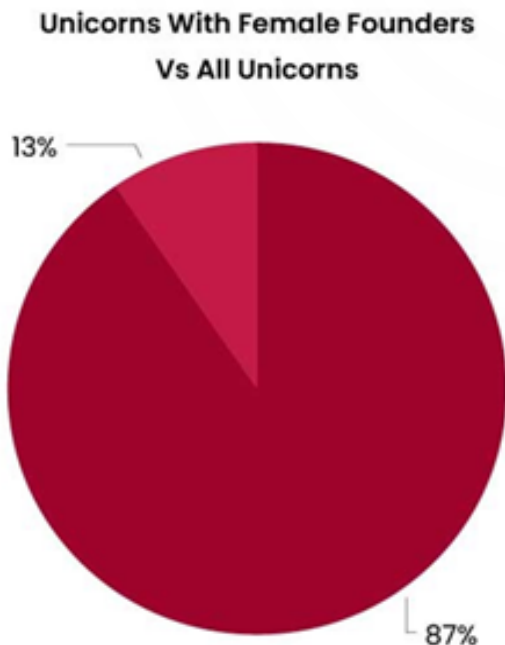
- **Holistic Support:** Offering a two-phase approach

encompassing online training, incubation support, and market linkages.

- **Skill Development:** Providing free online courses in entrepreneurship, finance, digital skills, and market analysis through the Skill India Digital Hub (SIDH).
- **Mentorship and Incubation:** Extending incubation support to 10,000 women entrepreneurs across various business models.
- **Market Access:** Promoting women-led businesses through platforms like Udhyan Kart and Britannia's digital ecosystem.
- **Impact Assessment:** Continuously evaluating program effectiveness to ensure sustainable outcomes.

How India's Largest Startups Fare In Gender Inclusion

Unicorns		Soonicorns	
Unicorns With Female Founders	12	Unicorns With Female Founders	11
Total Number of Female Founders In Unicorns	12	Total Number of Female Founders In Unicorns	13



■ Soonicorns With Female Founders ■ Unicorns With Female Founders



ABOUT NSDC

Established in 2008, NSDC is a public-private partnership under the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship. The organization plays a pivotal role in skill development across India and has been at the forefront of initiatives to empower women.

By investing in women entrepreneurs, NSDC contributes to India's economic growth while promoting gender equality and social empowerment.

NATIONAL SKILL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
Established	2008
Ministry	Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)
Model	Public-Private Partnership (PPP)
Key Roles and Functions	Catalysing Skill Development, Public-Private Partnership, Funding and Incentivizing, Creating Support Systems, Skill Development Initiatives
Impact	Skill Development, Job Creation, Industry Collaboration

TABLE	TITLE	DESCRIPTION
1	Percentage of Women-Owned Businesses in India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NITI Aayog estimates that women entrepreneurs constitute approximately 20% of the MSME sector, whereas FICCI reports that women-led enterprises account for around 17% of India's total enterprises.
2	Growth Rate of Women-Owned Enterprises in India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government sources indicate a growth rate of 10-15% in women-owned enterprises over the past decade.
3	Impact of Women Entrepreneurs on Employment in India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Studies suggest that women entrepreneurs prioritize hiring women, leading to a positive effect on female employment rates. NASSCOM also reported that women-led startups have created many jobs, particularly in the technology sector.
4	Economic Impact of Women Entrepreneurs in India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NITI Aayog estimates that accelerating women's entrepreneurship could create over 30 million women-owned enterprises and potentially 150-170 million jobs. Various studies highlight the significant contribution of women entrepreneurs to GDP growth, especially in sectors like retail, services, and manufacturing.



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GOVERNMENT SUPPORT AND INITIATIVES FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

CATEGORY	INITIATIVE	DESCRIPTION
Financial Support	Mudra Yojana	➤ Provides collateral-free loans to small businesses, with a particular focus on women entrepreneurs.
	Stand-up India	➤ Offers loans to women entrepreneurs for setting up new enterprises.
	Credit Guarantee fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (cgtmse)	➤ Provides credit guarantees to lending institutions for loans to micro and small enterprises, including those owned by women.
Skill Development and Training	Mahila Coir Yojana	➤ Empower women with skills in coir-based activities to promote entrepreneurship.
	Trade-Related Entrepreneurship Assistance and Development (tread)	➤ Provides training and support to women entrepreneurs in the trade sector.
Market Access and Support	Mahila-E-Haat	➤ Offers an online platform for women entrepreneurs to sell their products.
	Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP)	➤ Provides a unified platform for women entrepreneurs to access information, resources, and support.
Recognition and Support	Nari Shakti Puraskars	➤ Recognizes the contributions of women in various fields, including entrepreneurship.
	Women Scientists Scheme	➤ Supports women scientists in pursuing research and development activities.

CONCLUSION

By synergizing government support, robust platforms like NSDC's WEP, and the growing entrepreneurial spirit of Indian women, the nation is poised to witness a transformative shift in economic landscape. Empowering women entrepreneurs not only drives economic growth but also contributes significantly to social development and gender equality. Continued focus on skill development, access to finance, mentorship, and market opportunities will be instrumental in unleashing the full potential of women entrepreneurs in India.

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WOMEN, NON-MUSLIMS ON BOARDS, COUNCIL CAN'T CLAIM LAND: WAQF ACT CHANGES

CONTEXT: A controversial bill proposing amendments to 44 sections of the Waqf Act of 1995 is expected to be introduced in the Lok Sabha. The proposed changes include provisions to ensure representation of non-Muslim individuals and Muslim women on central and state Waqf boards.”

WHAT IS WAQF?

WAQF: A RELIGIOUS AND CHARITABLE ENDOWMENT

- **Definition:** A Waqf is a property dedicated to God for religious and charitable purposes.
- **Establishment:** A Waqf can be established through a deed, instrument, or long-term use for religious or charitable purposes.
- **Endowment:** It's a permanent endowment by a Muslim of any movable or immovable property.
- **Purposes:** Waqf funds educational institutions, graveyards, mosques, and shelter homes.
- **Inalienability:** Once property becomes a Waqf, it's inalienable and held perpetually.
- **Ownership Transfer:** Ownership effectively transfers to the Divine.
- **Types:** Waqfs can be public (serving charitable ends) or private (benefiting descendants).
- **Creator:** The Waqif must have sound mind and valid ownership.
- **Religious Affiliation:** While typically a Muslim, the Waqif can be non-Muslim if they profess belief in Islamic principles.

WAQF GOVERNANCE IN INDIA

Waqf Governance:

- **Waqf Act, 1995:** Waqfs in India are regulated by this comprehensive legislation.
- **Survey Commissioner:** A survey commissioner lists Waqf properties through local investigations, witness testimonies, and public document requisitions.
- **Mutawali:** The Waqf is managed by a mutawali who acts as a supervisor.
- **Perpetuity:** Unlike trusts, Waqfs are specifically for religious and charitable purposes and are intended to be perpetual.

Waqf Boards:

- **Legal Entity:** A Waqf board is a legal entity with property acquisition, holding, and transfer capabilities.
- **State-Level Boards:** Each state has a Waqf Board led by a chairperson, including nominees from the state government, Muslim legislators, parliamentarians, Bar Council members, scholars, and mutawalis.

- **Board Functions:** Waqf boards administer properties, recover lost ones, and sanction property transfers with board member approval.
- **Custodians:** The board appoints custodians to ensure Waqf funds are used for designated purposes.
- **Central Waqf Council (CWC):** Established in 1964, the CWC oversees and advises state-level Waqf Boards.

Waqf Act, 1995:

- **Comprehensive Legislation:** This act aims to improve Waqf administration and management.
- **Key Provisions:** The act mandates Waqf registration, maintains a central register, empowers boards to appoint officers, removes encroachments, prepares budgets, and maintains records and inspections

WHAT IS CENTRAL WAQF COUNCIL?

The Central Waqf Council (CWC) is a statutory body under the Ministry of Minority Affairs. Established in 1964, its primary role was to advise the Central Government on Waqf Boards and Auqaf administration. However, the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2013, significantly expanded its powers.

Key functions of the CWC include:

- Advising the Central Government, State Governments, and State Waqf Boards on matters related to Waqf administration and management.
- Promoting the efficient and equitable administration of Waqf properties across India.
- Coordinating the activities of State Waqf Boards and ensuring uniformity in their policies and procedures.
- Providing technical assistance and training to Waqf Boards and their staff.
- Initiating and promoting research on Waqf issues and their impact on society.
- Representing India at international forums related to Waqf and Islamic endowments.

In essence, the Central Waqf Council serves as a central authority for Waqf-related matters in India, ensuring that Waqf properties are managed effectively and used for their intended charitable and religious purposes.

CONCLUSION:

The Waqf Act, 1995, governs Waqf properties in India. While the proposed amendments aim to improve Waqf administration and representation, they also raise concerns about the potential dilution of Waqf's religious and charitable nature. A balance must be struck between ensuring inclusivity and preserving the core purpose of Waqfs.



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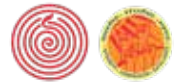
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A CHANGE IN INDIA'S POWER EXPORT RULES | EXPLAINED

HAMAS CHIEF ASSASSINATED IN TEHRAN: IMPLICATIONS FOR MIDDLE EAST AND GLOBAL POLITICS

MALAYSIAN PRIME MINISTER ANWAR IBRAHIM VISITS INDIA

PM MODI'S LANDMARK VISIT TO POLAND: ENHANCING BILATERAL RELATIONS

PM MODI'S LANDMARK UKRAINE VISIT: BOLSTERING

THE KURSK GAMBIT, UKRAINIAN TACTICS AND BATTLE REALITIES

UNITED VOICES, SHARED DESTINY: THE GLOBAL SOUTH SUMMIT

BANGLADESH'S POLITICAL CRISIS AND ITS IMPACT ON INDIA

INS ARIGHAAT COMMISSIONED: WHY A SECOND NUCLEAR SUBMARINE MATTERS FOR INDIA



A CHANGE IN INDIA'S POWER EXPORT RULES | EXPLAINED

CONTEXT: India has recently amended its power export rules to mitigate risks associated with delayed payments from neighboring countries. This amendment allows Indian power exporters to reroute their electricity to domestic grids if payment delays persist. However, Adani Power, which exports all its generated power from its Godda plant to Bangladesh, has reassured its commitment to continued supply despite the new rule, stating that it will not impact their existing contract.

Bangladesh's Growing Reliance on Power Imports Amid Energy Challenges

Increasing Dependence on Power Imports

Bangladesh is becoming increasingly reliant on power imports to meet its growing energy demands. Despite substantial investments aimed at expanding electricity access, particularly in rural areas, the country struggles to fully utilize its existing power generation capacity. These challenges are primarily driven by fuel and gas supply constraints, which have been exacerbated by the global energy crisis triggered by Russia's actions in Ukraine.

Energy Crisis and IMF Assistance

In response to the worsening energy crisis, Bangladesh sought assistance from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in July 2022. The country faced severe power outages, with blackouts lasting up to 13 hours a day due to acute shortages of diesel and gas. This crisis highlighted the vulnerability of Bangladesh's energy sector to global supply disruptions and underscored the need for more sustainable energy solutions.

Concerns Over Power Sector Overcapacity

Activists in Bangladesh have expressed concerns about the issue of overcapacity in the power sector. As of June 30, 2023, the country had a total power generation capacity of 28,098 MW. However, the highest recorded usage was only 16,477 MW, leaving a substantial portion of the capacity underutilized. This imbalance points to inefficiencies in the energy sector and raises questions about the sustainability of current energy policies.

Efforts to Diversify Energy Sources and Improve Efficiency

To address these ongoing challenges, Bangladesh has been working on diversifying its energy sources and improving overall energy efficiency. The country has been investing in renewable energy projects, including solar and wind power, to reduce its heavy reliance on fossil fuels. Additionally, efforts are underway to enhance the efficiency of existing power plants and to minimize transmission and distribution losses. These initiatives are aimed at creating a more resilient and sustainable energy system, capable of meeting the country's growing demands while reducing dependence on imported energy.

THE GODDA POWER PROJECT: INDIA'S FIRST TRANSNATIONAL POWER EXPORT INITIATIVE

Overview

The Godda Power Project is a pioneering initiative by

Adani Power, marking India's first transnational power project dedicated entirely to exporting electricity. Located in the Godda District of Jharkhand, the ultra-supercritical thermal power plant is a significant contributor to Bangladesh's energy needs, supplying 1,496 megawatts (MW) of power.



Key Features

- **Operational Timeline:** The Godda plant commenced operations in 2022 and reached full operational capacity by June 2023.
- **Location:** The plant is situated in Godda District, Jharkhand, and is managed by Adani Power's subsidiary.
- **Power Capacity:** The plant has a net power generation capacity of 1,496 MW, all of which is exported to Bangladesh.
- **Power Purchase Agreement (PPA):** A 25-year Power Purchase Agreement was signed between Adani Power and the Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) in November 2017, facilitating the supply of electricity to Bangladesh.
- **Special Economic Zone (SEZ) Status:** In March 2019, the Godda plant was declared a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) by the Indian government, further bolstering its strategic importance.

Significance to Bangladesh

The Godda plant plays a crucial role in Bangladesh's energy landscape by supplying about 6% of the country's total installed power generation capacity. As of June 2023, Bangladesh's total installed capacity was 24,911 MW, with 2,656 MW (over 10%) being imported from India, including the 1,496 MW from the Godda plant.

Adani Power emphasizes that the electricity supplied from Godda helps Bangladesh by replacing more expensive liquid fuel-based power, thereby reducing the overall cost of electricity in the country.

"Intelligence plus character-that is the goal of true education. — Martin Luther King Jr.





How might the Adani Godda project affect Bangladesh's energy landscape?

Criticisms and Concerns

The project has faced criticism, particularly regarding the use of coal imported from Australia's Carmichael mine. Key concerns include:

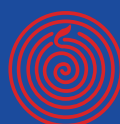
- **High Costs:** The Power Purchase Agreement allows Adani Power to pass on the high costs associated with importing and transporting coal, as well as the transmission of electricity, to Bangladesh. In February 2023, the BPDB requested a revision of the PPA, arguing that the \$400/MT coal price quoted by Adani Power was significantly higher than the less than \$250/MT paid for coal at other thermal plants.
- **Capacity and Maintenance Charges:** Critics have also raised concerns about the high capacity and maintenance charges imposed by Adani Power, which are considered excessive by industry standards, even when no electricity is generated.

CHANGES IN INDIA'S POWER EXPORT REGULATIONS

- India's recent regulatory changes in power export rules have introduced greater flexibility for power exporters by allowing them to access the domestic market. This shift is expected to reduce exporters' reliance on external

markets and help mitigate risks associated with instability or economic challenges in neighbouring countries.

- One of the significant issues that has plagued power exports, particularly to Bangladesh, is the frequent delays in payments. These delays often stem from the internal vetting process within the Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB), which involves thorough evaluations of coal prices and other expenditures before payments are finalized.
- Regarding the potential impact on Bangladesh due to these regulatory changes, experts suggest that even if there were a sudden halt in power supply from India, the effects would likely be temporary. The disruption would last only 2 to 3 days and would not lead to significant long-term consequences for Bangladesh's power sector.
- **CONCLUSION,** while Bangladesh's reliance on power imports and India's evolving regulatory landscape present challenges, both nations are making strides to ensure energy security. Bangladesh's efforts to diversify energy sources and India's commitment to honouring existing agreements like the Godda project underscore a collaborative approach to addressing these complexities.



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HAMAS CHIEF ASSASSINATED IN TEHRAN: IMPLICATIONS FOR MIDDLE EAST AND GLOBAL POLITICS

CONTEXT: Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh was assassinated in Tehran, Iran, in the early hours of July 31. The 62-year-old, who had been directing Hamas's political activities from exile in Qatar, was reportedly killed in what Hamas described as an Israeli "strike" on his residence.

BACKGROUND:

About Hamas

Hamas is the largest Palestinian militant Islamist group and one of the two major political entities in the region. It currently governs over two million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. The organization is widely recognized for its armed resistance against Israel, with Hamas as a whole – or, in some cases, its military wing – being designated as a terrorist group by Israel, the United States, the European Union, the United Kingdom, and several other countries.

Background of HAMAS

Hamas was founded in the late 1980s during the first Palestinian intifada (uprising) against Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The group emerged as an offshoot of the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood, evolving into a distinct and influential force within the Palestinian national movement.

Reasons for its Creation

The creation of Hamas was driven by a profound sense of failure within the Palestinian national movement by the late 1980s. This sentiment grew after the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which had led the armed struggle against Israel since the mid-1960s to "liberate Palestine," made two significant concessions:

1. The PLO recognized Israel and its right to exist, thereby relinquishing its goal of liberating all of Palestine.
2. The PLO also abandoned armed struggle as a strategy in favour of a negotiated settlement.

Hamas gained prominence in the early 1990s after opposing the **Oslo Peace Accords** signed between Israel and the PLO, positioning itself as a staunch opponent of the concessions made by the PLO.

2017 HAMAS CHARTER

The 2017 Hamas charter marks a significant shift from its original 1988 charter. In this updated version, Hamas outlines its vision for a Palestinian state based on the borders of June 4, 1967, with Jerusalem as its capital, and calls for the right of all refugees to return to their homeland. This stands in contrast to the 1988 charter, which advocated for a Palestinian state encompassing all of Mandatory Palestine.

Despite this change, the 2017 charter still does not recognize the state of Israel.

INDIA'S STAND ON HAMAS

- » India has not officially designated Hamas as a terrorist organization.
- » New Delhi neither recognizes Hamas nor labels it as a terrorist group.
- » Instead, India maintains a delicate balance between its support for the Palestinian cause and its opposition to terrorism.

Following the October 7 attack on Israel, Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed deep shock and solidarity with Israel but did not mention Hamas or Palestine directly.

India continues to advocate for a peaceful resolution to the Israel-Palestine conflict through dialogue and supports a two-state solution, recognizing the legitimate aspirations of both Palestinians and Israelis.

ASSASSINATION OF ISMAIL HANIYEH IN IRAN: IMPLICATIONS

A Defining Moment in the Israel-Hamas Conflict

The assassination of Ismail Haniyeh, the Qatar-based public face of Hamas, in Tehran marks a pivotal moment in the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Palestinian militant group. Haniyeh, who had travelled to Iran to attend the inauguration of the newly-elected Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, was targeted in an operation that could significantly alter the dynamics of the conflict.

Repercussions for Iran

The assassination has immediate and severe implications for Iran. Tehran has vowed to avenge Haniyeh's death, signaling that even high-profile Hamas leaders are not safe within Iran's borders. This development could strain Iran's relations with its regional allies and complicate its internal political landscape.

Escalating Hostilities Between Iran and Israel

This event could reignite tensions that had slightly cooled after a round of missile and drone exchanges between Iran and Israel earlier in the year. The assassination could lead to further military confrontations, escalating the already volatile situation in the region.

Wider Conflict in the Middle East

The killing of Haniyeh, shortly after an Israeli strike in Beirut that killed Hezbollah commander Fuad Shukr, raises fears of a broader conflict in the Middle East. The proximity of these incidents suggests a coordinated effort by Israel to weaken its adversaries across the region.

Strategic Success for Israel

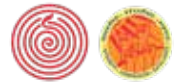
For Israel, Haniyeh's assassination represents a significant victory. After the October 7, 2023, Hamas attacks that resulted in the deaths of at least 1,200 Israeli civilians and military personnel, Israel has been focused on dismantling Hamas leadership. Haniyeh's death is the most high-profile success in this campaign, marking a major milestone in Operation Swords of Iron.

Provocation for Hamas

From Hamas' perspective, Haniyeh's assassination is a severe provocation. As the head of its political bureau, Haniyeh was instrumental in negotiating ceasefire terms and the release of hostages. His death is likely to provoke a strong response from Hamas, potentially escalating the conflict further.

Pressure on Iran's Newly Elected President

The assassination places considerable pressure on Iran's newly elected President Masoud Pezeshkian. Having campaigned on a platform of reopening negotiations with the West to alleviate economic sanctions, Pezeshkian now faces demands from the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and hardliners to respond aggressively to Haniyeh's killing. This internal pressure could derail his diplomatic efforts and push Iran toward a more confrontational stance.



West Asia: A Potential Tinderbox

The assassination is a troubling development for the entire region. If Iran and Hamas decide to escalate in response, the repercussions could destabilize West Asia. Key regional players, including Qatar, Turkey, and the Yemeni Houthis, have already condemned the assassination, while major powers like Saudi Arabia and the UAE are closely monitoring the situation.

India's Calculated Response

India, with its significant expatriate population in West Asia and its dependency on the region for crude oil supplies, must carefully navigate this situation. New Delhi's primary concern is maintaining regional stability, and it is likely to adopt a cautious approach, refraining from taking sides while advocating for peace and diplomatic solutions.

WHAT IS THE TWO-STATE SOLUTION: AN OVERVIEW

The **Two-State Solution** refers to the proposed resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, envisioning **two independent states**—one for Israelis and one for Palestinians—coexisting peacefully. The goal is to establish:

1. **Israel:** A secure Jewish state with internationally recognized borders.
2. **Palestine:** A sovereign state for Palestinians, consisting of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, with East Jerusalem as its capital.



KEY ASPECTS OF THE TWO-STATE SOLUTION:

- » **Borders:** Based on pre-1967 borders, with negotiations on potential land swaps.
- » **Jerusalem:** A critical issue, with claims over the city as the capital of both states.
- » **Security:** Ensuring Israel's security from militant attacks, while giving Palestinians sovereignty.
- » **Refugees:** Addressing the right of return for Palestinian refugees.



1946



1947
UN plan



1967



Today

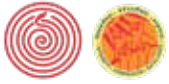
WHY DOES INDIA SUPPORT THE TWO-STATE SOLUTION?

India's support for the Two-State Solution is based on its **long-standing policy of balancing relations** with both Israel and Palestine, while advocating for peace and stability in the Middle East. Here are the main reasons behind India's position:

1. **Support for Palestinian Self-Determination:** India has historically supported the Palestinian cause, rooted in its non-aligned movement (NAM) and anti-colonial stance. India recognizes Palestinians' right to an independent state and opposes occupation or annexation of territories.
2. **Maintaining Diplomatic Relations with Israel:** Since

normalizing relations with Israel in 1992, India has deepened ties with Israel in defense, technology, and agriculture. However, India ensures that this relationship does not diminish its support for Palestinian rights.

3. **Global Peace and Stability:** India emphasizes the importance of **peaceful coexistence** and sees the Two-State Solution as the best way to bring long-term peace to the region. Continued conflict in the Middle East has implications for global security, energy markets, and economic stability—factors that India monitors closely.
4. **Strategic Interests in West Asia:** India has vital interests in the stability of the Middle East, home to **about nine**



million Indian expatriates and a major source of its energy imports. A peaceful resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is critical for maintaining regional stability, which is important for India's economic and energy security.

5. **Commitment to International Law:** India supports a solution that is **consistent with UN resolutions**, including **Security Council Resolution 242**, which calls for Israel to withdraw from territories occupied in the 1967 war, and

the establishment of peaceful relations.

6. **Balanced Diplomacy:** India carefully maintains a neutral stance, recognizing **Israel's right to security** while advocating for **Palestinian sovereignty**. By supporting the Two-State Solution, India promotes a diplomatic approach to resolving the conflict rather than endorsing unilateral actions by either party.

ISSUE	INDIA'S POSITION
Palestinian Self-Determination	Supports the Palestinian right to an independent state,
Relations with Israel	Maintains diplomatic ties, deepening cooperation in various sectors, while ensuring it does not compromise support for Palestinian rights.
Global Peace and Stability	Emphasizes the importance of a peaceful resolution through the Two-State Solution, recognizing the conflict's implications for global security and stability.
Strategic Interests in West Asia	Prioritizes regional stability due to its large Indian diaspora and energy imports, making a peaceful resolution crucial for India's economic and energy security.
Commitment to International Law	Supports a solution consistent with UN resolutions, including Security Council Resolution 242.
Balanced Diplomacy	Maintains a neutral stance, advocating for both Israeli security and Palestinian sovereignty, promoting a diplomatic approach to resolving the conflict.

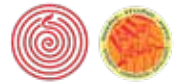
CONCLUSION

India's support for the Two-State Solution reflects its long-standing commitment to balancing diplomatic relations with both Israel and Palestine while promoting peace and stability in the Middle East. As a nation with significant strategic interests in the region, including a large expatriate population and dependency on energy imports, India views the peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as essential for regional and global security. By advocating for the Two-State Solution, India aligns with international law and emphasizes a diplomatic approach, recognizing the legitimate aspirations of both Palestinians and Israelis. This balanced stance allows India to maintain its historical support for Palestinian self-determination while deepening its ties with Israel, ultimately contributing to broader efforts for lasting peace in the region.

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RESTRICTING SPACE IN THE OPT AREA C MAP

DECEMBER 2011

KEY FACTS

- Over 60 percent of the West Bank is considered Area C, where Israel retains control over planning and zoning among other issues.
- An estimated 150,000 Palestinians live in Area C, including 27,500 Bedouins and other herders.
- More than 20% of communities in Area C have extremely limited access to health services.
- Water consumption dips to 20 liters/capita/day (l/c/d) in communities without water infrastructure, one-fifth of the World Health Organisation's recommendation.
- Communities depending on tankered water pay up to 400% more for every liter than those connected to the water network.
- 70% of Area C is off-limits to Palestinian construction; 29% is heavily restricted.
- Less than 1% of Area C has been planned for Palestinian development by the Israeli Civil Administration.
- 560 Palestinian-owned structures were demolished, including 200 residential structures and 46 rainwater cisterns and pools, by the Israeli authorities in Area C in 2011.
- 1,006 people, including 565 children, lost their homes in 2011, over twice as many as in 2010.
- Over 3,000 demolition orders are outstanding, including 18 targeting schools.
- The planned expansion area of the around 135 Israeli settlements in Area C is 9 times larger than their built-up area. (B'Tselem).
- Approximately 300,000 settlers currently live in Area C.

For more information please refer to index on page 22.

Settlement Areas including Local and Regional Councils



Nature Reserves Israel & "Wye River Memorandum"



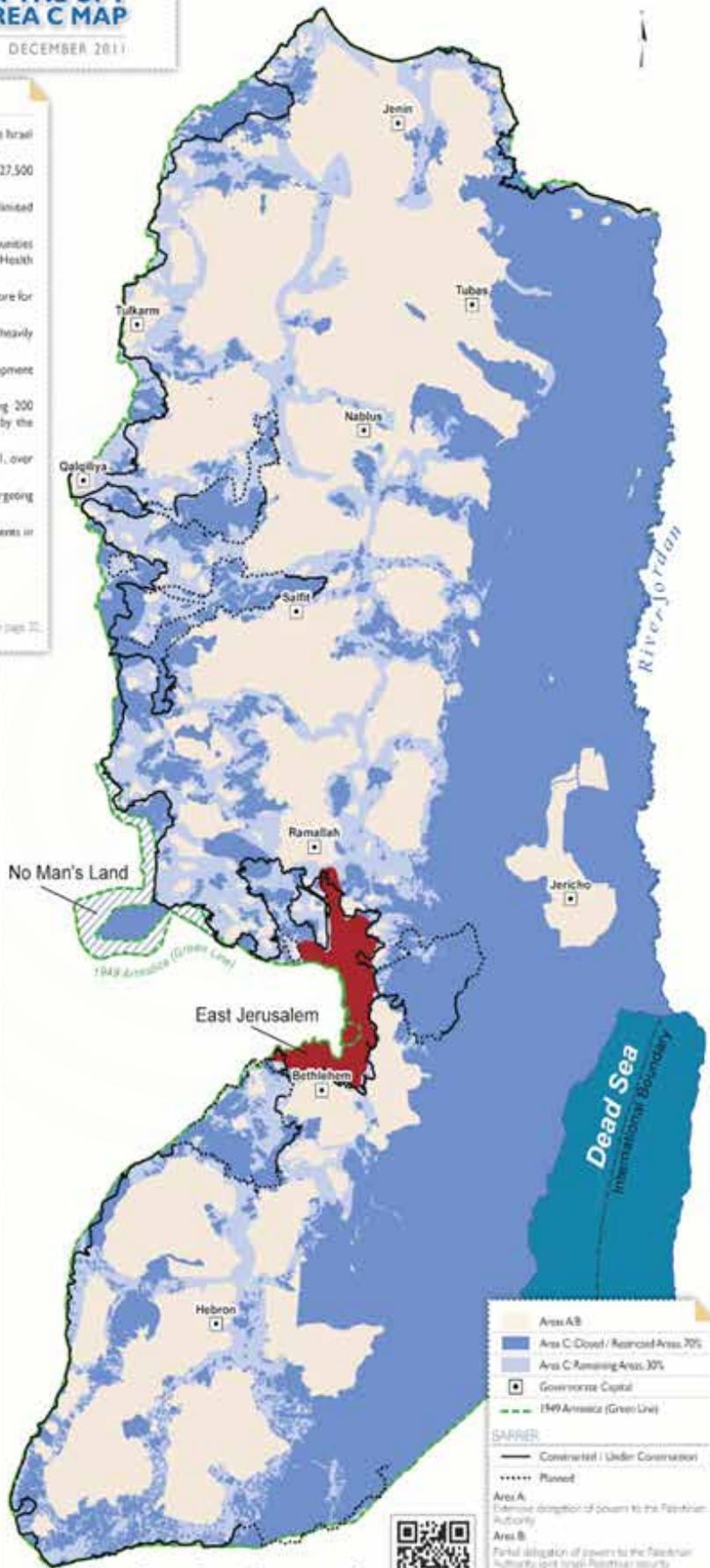
Closed Military Areas including "firing" zones



Zoning in Area C



- 70% Construction Prohibited
- 29% Construction Heavily Restricted
- 1% Planned for Palestinian Development



Area A/B

- Area C-Closed / Restricted Area: 70%
- Area C-Remaining Area: 30%
- Governorate Capital
- 1949 Armistice (Green Line)

SAPPER

- Controlled / Under Construction
- Planned

Area A: Extensive delegation of powers to the Palestinian Authority

Area B: Partial delegation of powers to the Palestinian Authority, joint Israeli-Palestinian security coordination

Area C: Very limited delegation of powers to the Palestinian Authority

* Under the Wye River Memorandum of 2000, land reserved according to approximately three percent of the West Bank, were supposed to be handed over to the PA, to be set aside as a Green-Amphibious Reserve to allow the 70,000 people allowed to stay in Area C.





MALAYSIAN PRIME MINISTER ANWAR IBRAHIM VISITS INDIA

CONTEXT: Malaysian Prime Minister Dato' Seri Anwar bin Ibrahim made his inaugural visit to India from August 19-21. During this visit, India and Malaysia elevated their bilateral relations to a 'Comprehensive Strategic Partnership' following productive talks between the two nations' leaders.

INDIA-MALAYSIA BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP

- » **Historical Ties:** India established diplomatic relations with the Federation of Malaya (the predecessor state of Malaysia) in 1957. The two countries shared a strong relationship in the 1960s, largely due to the personal friendship between Prime Ministers Jawaharlal Nehru and Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra.
- » **Contemporary Relations:** Today, India and Malaysia enjoy close political, economic, and socio-cultural relations. Malaysia is home to a significant Indian diaspora of over 2.95 million people, making it the second largest Person of Indian Origin (PIO) community in the world, after the United States.

ECONOMIC & COMMERCIAL RELATIONS

- » **Trade Relations:** Malaysia has emerged as the 13th largest trading partner for India, while India ranks among Malaysia's top ten trading partners. A bilateral Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) covering goods, services, and investment has been in effect since 2011.
- » **Major Exports from India:** India's major exports to Malaysia include mineral fuels, mineral oils, aluminium and related articles, meat and edible meat offal, iron and steel, copper and related articles, among others.
- » **Major Imports from Malaysia:** India's major imports from Malaysia include palm oil, mineral fuels, mineral oils, electrical machinery and equipment, as well as animal or vegetable fats and oils.
- » **Investments:** As of official figures from the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Malaysia ranks as the 26th largest investor in India, with Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows amounting to USD 1.16 billion between April 2000 and September 2022. The largest presence of Malaysian construction companies outside Malaysia is in India. Indian companies have also invested in approximately 250 manufacturing projects in Malaysia, with a total investment exceeding USD 2.62 billion. Presently, more than 150 Indian companies, including 61 Indian joint ventures and three Indian Public Sector Undertakings, operate in Malaysia.
- » **Trade Settlement in Indian Rupees:** Trade between India and Malaysia can now be settled in Indian Rupees (INR) in addition to existing settlement modes in other currencies.

DEFENSE AND SECURITY COOPERATION

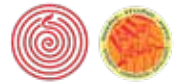
- » **Defense Relations:** India-Malaysia defense relations have steadily developed since the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Defence Cooperation in 1993. Both nations actively participate in each other's biennial defense exhibitions, LIMA (Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace Exhibition) and MILAN.
- » **Cooperative Mechanism on the Straits of Malacca and Singapore (SOMS):** India is also involved in the Cooperative Mechanism on the Straits of Malacca

and Singapore (SOMS), contributing to projects aimed at enhancing navigational safety and environmental protection in this strategic region.



RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

- » **First Visit by a Malaysian Prime Minister Since 2018**
This visit marked the first by a Malaysian Prime Minister to India since 2018. The gap was influenced by tensions over issues such as the Citizenship Amendment Act, the reorganization of Jammu and Kashmir, and the COVID-19 pandemic
- » **Partnership Enhancement** : During the visit, India and Malaysia elevated their bilateral ties to a 'Comprehensive Strategic Partnership,' building upon the 'Enhanced Strategic Partnership' that was established in 2015.
- » **Agreements and MoUs** : Several new agreements and memorandums of understanding (MoUs) were signed between the two nations. These covered a range of areas, including workers' mobility, digital technology, culture, tourism, sports, and education.
- » **BRICS Membership** : India agreed to support Malaysia's bid to join the BRICS grouping, following a request from Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim.
- » **Geopolitical Discussions** : The leaders engaged in discussions on key geopolitical challenges, focusing on tensions in the Indo-Pacific region. They emphasized the importance of freedom of navigation and the peaceful resolution of disputes.
- » **Areas of Cooperation** : The discussions highlighted the need to enhance cooperation in digital technologies, investments, trade, modern agriculture, education, and military collaboration. Both leaders also recognized the potential for joint operations to safeguard their borders.
- » **Special Allocation of White Rice** : In response to Malaysia's concerns over food imports, India agreed to allocate 200,000 metric tons of white rice to Malaysia.
- » **Challenges and Prospects in India-Malaysia Economic Ties** : The economic relationship between India and Malaysia faces challenges such as geopolitical tensions, global demand stagnation, and higher import tariffs, which could potentially slow down economic growth. However, strong trade ties between the two countries are expected to endure despite these obstacles.



- » **Strengthening Strategic Partnership** : India and Malaysia have established a robust strategic partnership, reinforced by their membership in global forums such as the Commonwealth of Nations, NAM, G-15, and G-77. These platforms support their ongoing cooperation and offer numerous opportunities to further strengthen bilateral relations.
- » **Opportunities for Growth** : Efforts to enhance bilateral relations include initiatives such as avoiding double taxation, providing mutual customs assistance, improving air connectivity, and fostering collaborations among airlines. These measures are expected to boost trade and tourism between the two countries.
- » **Promising Factors for Future Trade** : Factors such as a vibrant diaspora, steady GDP growth, a younger population compared to China, anticipated increases in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), and rapid digitization present promising prospects for future trade between India and Malaysia.
- » **Revival of the India-Malaysia Joint Commission Meeting** : The recent revival of the India-Malaysia Joint Commission Meeting after a 12-year hiatus reflects a renewed commitment to cooperation.
- » **Upcoming Amendments to the Malaysia-India Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (MICECA)** : An upcoming amendment to the Malaysia-India Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (MICECA) will include new economic sectors, with the goal of reaching a trade volume of USD 25 billion within the next three years. By exploring new sectors, diversifying trade, and fostering beneficial collaborations, both countries can support India's ambition to become the world's third-largest economy by 2027 while strengthening ties with ASEAN.

STRENGTHENING INDIA-MALAYSIA RELATIONS: A STRATEGIC OUTLOOK INDIAN PERSPECTIVE

- » **Regional Importance:**
 - The Indian Prime Minister highlighted Malaysia's significance as a crucial partner in ASEAN and the Indo-Pacific region, underscoring the importance of mutual interests and regional stability in their bilateral

relationship.

» **Voice of the Global South Summit (VOGSS):**

- India praised Malaysia for its active participation in all three editions of the Voice of the Global South Summit (VOGSS), recognizing Malaysia's valuable contribution to fostering dialogue among Global South nations.

» **MALAYSIAN PERSPECTIVE**

» **Appreciation for VOGSS:**

- Malaysia expressed gratitude for India's initiative in hosting the VOGSS, acknowledging the summit as an essential platform for Global South countries to address shared concerns, exchange ideas, and seek collaborative solutions.

» **International Initiatives:**

- Malaysia welcomed India's leadership in establishing international initiatives such as the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI). Additionally, Malaysia's decision to join the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) as a founding member was well-received by India.

» **INDIA-MALAYSIA RELATIONS: A STRATEGIC PILLAR**

» **Geopolitical Significance:**

- Located along vital sea lines of communication like the Strait of Malacca and the South China Sea, Malaysia serves as a key pillar of India's Act East policy and is critical to India's maritime connectivity strategies.

» **Diplomatic Relations:**

- India established diplomatic relations with the Federation of Malaya, the predecessor state of Malaysia, in 1957, immediately following Malaysia's independence.

» **Diaspora Connections:**

- Malaysia is home to the second-largest Person of Indian Origin (PIO) community in the world, after the United States, further strengthening the cultural and social ties between the two nations.

» **Defense Cooperation:**

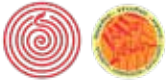
- The India-Malaysia Defense Cooperation Meeting (MIDCOM) and joint military exercises, such as Exercise Harimau Shakti, between the Indian and Malaysian Armies, highlight the strong defense ties and mutual commitment to regional security.



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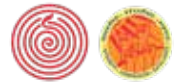
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CONCLUSION: The elevation of India-Malaysia relations to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership marks a significant milestone in their bilateral ties. The strong historical and contemporary bonds, coupled with the recent agreements and MoUs, pave the way for enhanced cooperation in diverse areas. The partnership offers immense potential for mutual growth, regional stability, and addressing global challenges. As India and Malaysia continue to deepen their engagement, they are poised to play a pivotal role in shaping the future of the Indo-Pacific region.

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PM MODI'S LANDMARK VISIT TO POLAND: ENHANCING BILATERAL RELATIONS

CONTEXT: Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Warsaw for the first leg of his two-nation tour of Poland and Ukraine. This visit to Poland is also historic, marking the first time in 45 years that an Indian Prime Minister has travelled to the country.



PM MODI'S HISTORIC VISIT TO POLAND

WHY NARENDRA MODI VISITED POLAND AND UKRAINE?

Elevating Central Europe in India's Foreign Policy

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Poland and Ukraine underscores India's increasing focus on Central Europe within its foreign policy framework.

This engagement reflects India's intention to deepen ties with Europe, particularly given the evolving geopolitical landscape influenced by the ongoing Ukraine conflict.

As the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister to Poland since 1979 and to Ukraine since its independence, Modi's tour signals a strategic shift towards establishing a robust and sustainable relationship with Central Europe.

Poland and Ukraine as Key Future Partners

The conflict in Ukraine highlights the transformation of the European order, driven by the collapse of post-Cold War agreements between Russia and the West.

Both Poland and Ukraine are set to play pivotal roles in this new order.

Strengthening ties with these nations aligns with India's broader strategy of enhancing its European connections while maintaining its established relationship with Russia.

This approach emphasizes that India views its engagements with Moscow and Central Europe as complementary rather than conflicting.

Broadening Europe Engagement

Historically, India's European relations were centered on major powers such as Russia, Germany, France, and Britain.

However, India has progressively expanded its European outreach over the past decade. Prime Minister Modi's frequent travels across Europe and External Affairs

Minister S. Jaishankar's extensive European engagements reflect this shift.

Modi's recent visits to Austria, Poland, and Ukraine are part of a strategic effort to connect with Central Europe, diversifying India's diplomatic relationships beyond the traditional powerhouses.

Strategic Importance of Poland and Ukraine

Poland and Ukraine hold significant geopolitical weight in Europe.

Poland, as the largest economy in Central Europe, boasts rapid economic growth, a substantial population, and a strategic location.

Its economic and military spending positions it as a key regional player.

Meanwhile, despite the challenges posed by ongoing conflict, Ukraine's post-war reconstruction prospects and its status as a major agricultural producer enhance its strategic relevance.

Ukraine's defense industry modernization and its role as a major grain supplier further add to its importance on the global stage.

INDIA-POLAND RELATIONS: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

A Bond Forged in Adversity

- The relationship between India and Poland is a testament to the enduring power of human connection, forged amidst the crucible of World War II.
- When Poland was overrun by Nazi Germany, thousands of Polish women and children sought refuge in India, finding sanctuary in the princely states of Jamnagar and Kolhapur.



- The generosity and compassion shown by the Indian rulers, particularly Jam Saheb Digvijaysinhji Ranjitsinhji Jadeja of Nawanagar, who sheltered over a thousand Polish children, left an indelible mark on the Polish people.

A Growing Economic Partnership

- Beyond the historical ties, India and Poland have cultivated a strong economic partnership.
- Poland has emerged as India's largest trading and investment partner in Central and Eastern Europe.
- Bilateral trade has witnessed significant growth, driven by India's exports of textiles, chemicals, and machinery, while Poland contributes expertise in clean coal technologies and mining.
- The establishment of a monument honouring Jam Saheb Digvijaysinhji Ranjitsinhji Jadeja in Warsaw serves as a poignant reminder of the enduring friendship between the two nations.

Key Areas of Cooperation:

- **Trade and Investment:** Bilateral trade has witnessed a substantial increase, with India maintaining a favourable trade balance. Indian investments in Poland have been on the rise, particularly in sectors like manufacturing and technology.
- **Energy:** Poland's expertise in clean coal technologies has been valuable for India's efforts to modernize its energy

sector.

- **Education and Culture:** The historical connection between the two nations has fostered cultural exchange and cooperation in education.

Future Prospects:

As India and Poland continue to strengthen their economic and diplomatic ties, there is ample potential for further collaboration in areas such as defense, technology, and sustainable development.

The enduring friendship forged during World War II provides a strong foundation for a prosperous and mutually beneficial partnership.

Additional Information:

- **Polish Community in India:** There is a small but vibrant Polish community in India, preserving their cultural heritage and contributing to the bilateral relationship.
- **India's Role in Polish Reconstruction:** After World War II, India played a role in assisting Poland's reconstruction efforts, providing humanitarian aid and support.

SUMMARY: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Poland and Ukraine represents a significant diplomatic move, marking the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister to these nations in decades. This tour underscores India's strategic shift towards enhancing its ties with Central Europe amid evolving geopolitical dynamics, including the ongoing Ukraine conflict.

PM MODI'S LANDMARK UKRAINE VISIT: BOLSTERING INDIA-UKRAINE TIES AMID GLOBAL SHIFTS

CONTEXT: PM Modi met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Kyiv, marking a pivotal diplomatic milestone during the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war. This visit was especially historic, as it was the first time an Indian Prime Minister had visited Ukraine since its independence in 1991.



BACKGROUND: Post-Soviet Independence: India was one of the first countries to recognize Ukraine's independence in 1991, reflecting its early engagement with the newly formed nation.

Growing Ties: Over the years, the relationship has evolved, expanding beyond traditional diplomatic ties to encompass economic, defense, and cultural cooperation.

ECONOMIC RELATIONS

In the first half of 2024, bilateral trade between India and Ukraine reached a significant volume of \$1.07 billion. Ukraine exported goods worth \$0.41 billion to India, while imports from India amounted to \$0.66 billion, resulting in a trade deficit of \$0.25 billion for Ukraine. Key Ukrainian exports to India included vegetable oils, maize, hard coal,

and anthracite. Conversely, India's major exports to Ukraine were pharmaceutical products, mineral fuels, petroleum and distillation products, flat-rolled steel, and electrical machinery.

Defense Relations

Ukraine has been a crucial source of military technology and equipment for India since its independence. A notable example is Ukraine's manufacturing of R-27 air-to-air missiles, which are currently used by the Indian Air Force on its SU-30MKI fighters. This defense collaboration underscores the strategic depth of the India-Ukraine partnership in the military domain.

Cultural Relations

Indian culture enjoys significant popularity in Ukraine, with a wide public interest spanning various fields, including dance, yoga, philosophy, Ayurveda, and spirituality. Additionally, Ukraine has been a preferred destination for Indian students, particularly in the field of medicine, with approximately 18,000 Indian students studying in the country.

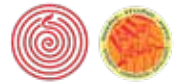
KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF THE VISIT

Reaffirming India's Commitment to Peace

During his visit, PM Modi reiterated India's unwavering support for peace, emphasizing that India is not merely neutral but actively advocates for peace. He underscored India's deep-rooted tradition of non-violence, drawing inspiration from figures like Buddha and Gandhi.

Expressing Condolences Over the Loss of Innocent Lives

PM Modi paid his respects at the Martyrologist Exposition at the National Museum of History of Ukraine, where he expressed deep sorrow over the tragic loss of innocent children in the ongoing conflict. This gesture highlighted India's humanitarian concern for the consequences of the war.



INDIA'S HUMANITARIAN AID: THE BHISHM CUBES INITIATIVE

As part of India's humanitarian assistance to Ukraine, PM Modi presented four BHISHM Cubes, which are equipped with medical supplies and emergency treatment tools. BHISHM stands for Bharat Health Initiative for Sahyog Hita & Maitri, a mobile hospital system designed to provide critical medical care in conflict zones and disaster-stricken areas. The initiative is part of Project Aarogya Maitri, aimed at delivering essential medical supplies to developing nations.

The BHISHM Cubes are compact, organized medical units that include all necessary medicines and equipment for emergency care. Each cube, weighing up to 20 kg, is capable of addressing around 200 emergency situations, including trauma, burns, fractures, and shock. The cubes are designed for multi-modal transportation, including air, sea, land, and drone delivery, and can also support basic surgeries while generating power and oxygen in limited amounts.

FOUR LANDMARK AGREEMENTS

India and Ukraine reached four landmark agreements during PM Modi's visit, focusing on cooperation in agriculture, medicine, culture, and humanitarian assistance. These agreements further cemented the multifaceted partnership between the two nations, reflecting their shared commitment to mutual growth and collaboration in critical sectors.

SIGNIFICANCE OF PM MODI'S VISIT TO KYIV

PM Modi's visit to Kyiv represents a pivotal moment in India's diplomatic strategy, signalling a significant shift as India re-engages with Ukraine and asserts its influence in the global geopolitical landscape amidst the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict.

1. India's Role in European Peace Efforts

Modi's meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy underscores India's commitment to understanding Ukraine's concerns and actively contributing to global peace initiatives. This engagement positions India as a key player in the resolution of the conflict, particularly within the Global South, enhancing its role as a mediator and peace advocate in international affairs.

2. Expanding Diplomatic and Strategic Influence

The visit also marks India's intent to take on a more proactive role in shaping global power dynamics, especially in Europe. Modi's visit contrasts with China's expanding influence in the region and the U.S.'s shifting approach to European security. This underscores that the conflict in Ukraine is not just about the renewed contest between Russia and the West, but also about the strategic roles of Delhi and Beijing in the

European theatre.

3. Revitalizing India-Ukraine Relations

Furthermore, Modi's visit aims to rejuvenate and strengthen India's ties with Ukraine, which had waned after the Soviet Union's dissolution. The renewed commitment to a strategic partnership, encompassing economic, defense, and cultural cooperation, signifies a substantial reinvigoration of the bilateral relationship, paving the way for deeper collaboration between the two nations in the years to come.

PM MODI'S VISIT TO UKRAINE: STRATEGIC SHIFT AND DIPLOMATIC BALANCE

Purpose of the Visit

- **Reinforcing Strategic Autonomy:** Modi's visit to Kyiv aims to bolster India's foreign policy of strategic autonomy and address perceptions of over-reliance on Russia, particularly following backlash from Modi's earlier visit to Moscow amidst rising tensions in Ukraine.
- **Supporting Ukraine's Sovereignty:** The visit serves as a gesture of support for Ukraine's sovereignty, aligning with Ukraine's Independence Day and reflecting India's balanced stance in global conflicts.
- **Mediating Role:** India's unique position, seen as equidistant from major powers, positions it as a potential mediator in the Ukraine conflict, with Kyiv seeking effective negotiators amid limited support from key global regions.

Departure from Traditional Foreign Policy

- **Historical Shift:** Modi's visit represents a departure from India's historical foreign policy alignment with Russia, signifying a new engagement with central and eastern Europe, including Ukraine and Poland, previously less emphasized.
- **Current Dynamics:** Despite a drop in trade volume and historical ties with Russia, the visit opens opportunities for India in post-war reconstruction, defense cooperation, and leveraging Ukraine's agricultural resources.

Impact on India-Russia Relations

- **Not Weakening Ties:** The visit does not indicate a weakening of India-Russia relations. India's actions are driven by its independent foreign policy objectives, balancing engagement with both Russia and Ukraine based on common interests and strategic needs.

CONCLUSION: PM Modi's historic visit to Kyiv marks a transformative chapter in India-Ukraine relations, reinforcing India's commitment to peace, strategic engagement, and renewed partnerships. This visit not only strengthens bilateral ties but also positions India as a key player in the evolving global geopolitical landscape.



THE KURSK GAMBIT, UKRAINIAN TACTICS AND BATTLE REALITIES

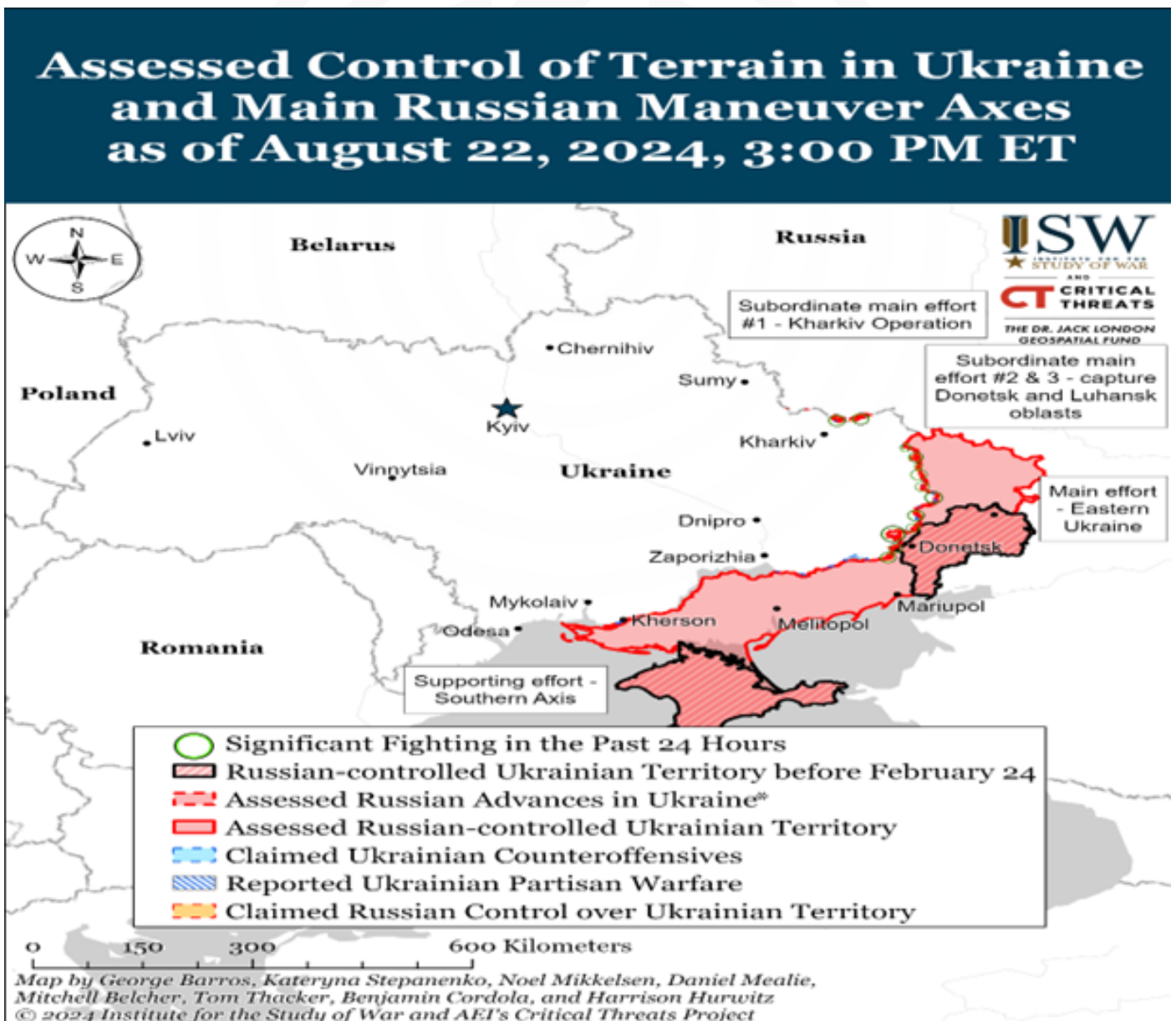
CONTEXT: The strategic and tactical significance of Ukraine's daring incursion into Russia's Kursk region, examining how this bold move might impact the ongoing conflict with Russia, its implications for Western support for Ukraine, and the potential risks and benefits for Kyiv amidst the broader geopolitical dynamics.



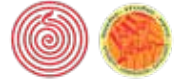
The Kursk Gambit: Ukraine's Bold Move

Surprising Offensive: Ukraine's audacious attack into Russia's Kursk region, resulting in the capture of several hundred Russian soldiers, showcases Kyiv's bold strategy under President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. This move is aimed at impressing Western allies and creating leverage in the conflict with Russia.

Strategic Importance of Pokrovsk: Amidst Ukraine's offensive, the city of Pokrovsk in Eastern Donetsk is under siege by Russian forces. Pokrovsk is a crucial logistics hub for Ukraine, and its capture by Russia could significantly impact the balance of power in the region. Ukrainian forces are being ordered to withdraw, which could facilitate further Russian advances in Donetsk.



* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.



Strategic Deception and Tactical Choices: Kyiv had planned the Kursk offensive for months while disguising it as a defensive measure against a potential Russian attack on Sumy. The incursion into Kursk, where Russian defenses were weak, aims to force a Russian redeployment and reduce pressure on Ukrainian-held areas. However, Ukraine faces the risk of a significant Russian counter-attack due to Russia's superior firepower and resources.

Russian Response and Tactical Realities: Despite Ukraine's gains in Kursk, Russia remains focused on its offensive in Eastern Ukraine. Moscow's potential capture of Pokrovsk could lead to further operations in Ukraine, but the full impact of Ukraine's Kursk incursion on Russian strategy is yet to be seen. Russia's response may involve strategic counterattacks to reclaim control and consolidate gains.

Kyiv's Messaging and Risks: The offensive serves both as a

strategic maneuver to demonstrate Ukrainian capability and a message to Western allies about the need for continued support. Kyiv risks overstretching its forces and facing significant losses if Russia successfully counters the incursion. The long-term value of the Kursk gambit will depend on its impact on the broader conflict and potential negotiations for a settlement.

CONCLUSION: Ukraine's bold incursion into Kursk, while strategically significant, carries risks. It demonstrates Kyiv's determination and has potential implications for the balance of power. However, the capture of Pokrovsk by Russia could significantly impact the conflict. The offensive also exposes Ukraine to counterattacks and may delay progress towards a negotiated settlement. Ultimately, the success or failure of the Kursk gambit will depend on its impact on the broader conflict and Ukraine's strategic objectives.

UNITED VOICES, SHARED DESTINY: THE GLOBAL SOUTH SUMMIT

CONTEXT: India took the lead in hosting the third Voice of the Global South Summit (VOGSS) in a virtual format. The summit, held under the theme "An Empowered Global South for a Sustainable Future," brought together leaders from developing nations to discuss pressing global challenges and explore collaborative solutions.

This gathering, following the successful first two editions held in January and November 2023, respectively, reinforced India's commitment to fostering unity and cooperation among the Global South countries.

BACKGROUND:

Understanding the Global South

» Geographical Concept:

- The Global South isn't strictly defined by geography but by socio-economic and political characteristics. It includes countries, mainly in Africa, Latin America, Asia, and Oceania, that share experiences of colonialism and underdevelopment.

» Geopolitical Concept:

- The Global South acts as a geopolitical bloc challenging

the dominance of the Global North. Countries in this group collaborate through mechanisms like South-South Cooperation (SSC) to promote mutual economic growth and cultural exchange.

» Historical Context:

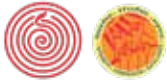
- Historically, many Global South countries were European colonies, facing economic exploitation and political domination, which left lasting developmental challenges.

» Developmental Perspective:

- These nations are at various stages of industrialization and often face higher poverty levels and lower access to technology. However, some, like China and India, are emerging as global players, altering the dynamics within the Global South.

Overall, the Global South is a dynamic concept uniting countries through shared historical experiences and developmental challenges, not merely geographical location.





The Brandt Line: A Visual Divide

The Brandt Line, a concept introduced by former German Chancellor Willy Brandt in the 1980s, serves as a visual representation of the global economic disparity. This imaginary line, roughly dividing the world into northern and southern hemispheres, is based on per capita GDP.

Starting in North America, the Brandt Line traverses Africa, the Middle East, and much of Asia, excluding countries like Japan, Australia, and New Zealand. The countries south of this line are often collectively referred to as the Global South.

The Global South: A Multifaceted Concept

The Global South is not merely a geographical designation but a multifaceted concept encompassing historical, geopolitical, and developmental aspects. It is a region characterized by shared experiences of colonialism, economic dependence, and social inequalities. While the Brandt Line offers a simplified visual, it's important to recognize that the Global South is a complex and dynamic entity with diverse experiences and challenges.

INDIA EMERGES AS THE VOICE OF THE GLOBAL SOUTH **G20 Presidency and Vision**

When India assumed the G20 presidency on December 1, 2022, it prioritized several visions, including a focus on the Global South. India organized eight ministerial-level thematic segments to address key concerns of the developing world, showcasing its commitment to these nations.

Advocacy on International Platforms

India has consistently raised issues concerning the Global South at international forums, including the United Nations. During the COVID-19 pandemic, India demonstrated its leadership by supplying Made-in-India vaccines to about 100 countries and exporting medicines to around 150 nations.

Voice of Global South Summit (VOGSS)

India regularly hosts the Voice of Global South Summit, ensuring the region remains a focal point on the global stage. At the 15th BRICS Summit in South Africa, PM Modi emphasized that the Global South represents the shared history of countries against colonialism and apartheid, shaping modern relations.

African Union's G20 Membership

Under India's G20 presidency, the African Union was admitted as a full member, further solidifying India's role in advocating for the Global South.

International Taxation Event

India held a two-day event on International Taxation, focusing on the Global South's perspective. This initiative aimed to strengthen capacity building for Indian tax officials and bolster the voices of Global South nations on key international issues.

India-UN Capacity Building Initiative

In September 2023, India launched the "India-UN

Capacity Building Initiative," aiming to share its best practices with Global South partner countries. This initiative underscores India's commitment to supporting development in the Global South.

DAKSHIN Initiative

During the second Voice of Global South Summit, PM Modi inaugurated DAKSHIN, a global center of excellence for Global South countries. This initiative is part of India's broader efforts to empower the Global South.

Satellite Proposal for Climate Monitoring

At the G20 Summit, India proposed launching a satellite dedicated to weather and climate monitoring for the Global South, highlighting its commitment to addressing global challenges.

Third Voice of Global South Summit (VOGSS)

The third VOGSS, held virtually, featured sessions at both the Leaders' and Ministerial levels. The theme, "An Empowered Global South for a Sustainable Future," was the focus of the inaugural session hosted by PM Modi.

PM Modi's Key Proposals

PM Modi proposed the creation of a human-centric Global Development Compact to ensure that developing countries are not burdened with debt in the name of development finance. He also highlighted the global challenges faced by countries, including health, food, and energy security, and stressed the need for inclusive global governance.

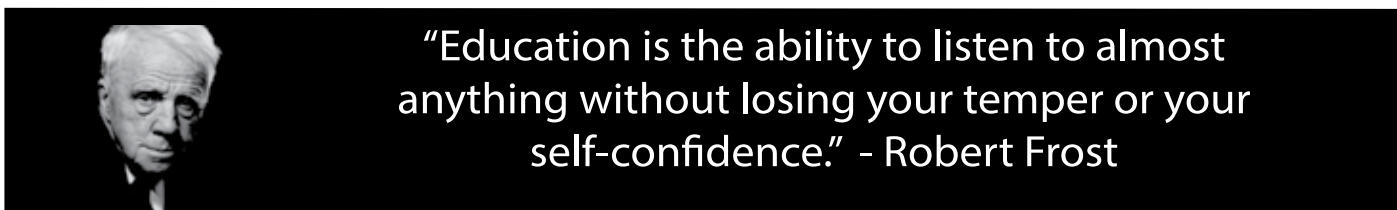
Addressing Global Challenges and Governance

PM Modi underscored the failure of global institutions formed in the last century to address contemporary challenges. He called for unity among Global South nations, urging them to stand together, learn from each other, and bridge the gap with the Global North.

India's Contribution to Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)

India's leadership in creating the Global DPI Repository during its G20 presidency marked a significant milestone. Agreements have been signed to share the 'India Stack' with 12 Global South partners, and India has established a Social Impact Fund with an initial contribution of USD 25 million to further accelerate DPI development in the Global South.

CONCLUSION: India's leadership in hosting the third Voice of the Global South Summit (VOGSS) reinforces its commitment to empowering developing nations and fostering global cooperation. By addressing critical challenges like health, food, and energy security, and advocating for inclusive governance, India is positioning itself as a unifying force for the Global South. The initiatives launched, including the Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) Repository and the proposed Global Development Compact, highlight India's proactive approach to driving sustainable development and bridging the gap between the Global South and North. This summit marks a significant step toward a more equitable and collaborative global future.





BANGLADESH'S POLITICAL CRISIS AND ITS IMPACT ON INDIA

CONTEXT: Sheikh Hasina's resignation as Prime Minister of Bangladesh represents a pivotal moment in South Asian geopolitics. Fleeing the country amid widespread protests and seeking refuge in India, her departure raises concerns about the stability of Bangladesh and its future relationship with India.

This upheaval may have profound implications, not only for the region's dynamics but also for India's national security.



TURMOIL IN BANGLADESH

Protests and Unrest: Bangladesh was engulfed in widespread demonstrations, sparked by discontent over job quota policies and exacerbated by the government's authoritarian measures and suppression of opposition. This unrest was the most significant since Sheikh Hasina's tenure began in 2008. Finally an interim government under has taken over in Bangladesh.

Economic Challenges: Sheikh Hasina's abrupt departure raises serious concerns about Bangladesh's economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The economy, already burdened by rising inflation and currency depreciation, now faces additional uncertainty.

Political Landscape: The Bangladesh Army is poised to establish an interim government, highlighting the volatility of the current situation. The potential resurgence of radical Islamist forces poses a substantial threat to the country's secular governance.

Disruption in Export Flow: Bangladesh's crucial textile sector, a cornerstone of its export economy, is experiencing severe disruptions. The ongoing unrest has disrupted supply chains, hampered the movement of goods, and interrupted production schedules.

Global Textile Industry Impact: As a major player in the global clothing industry, Bangladesh accounts for 7.9% of global apparel trade. Its USD 45 billion garment sector, employing over four million workers, represents more than 85% of the country's merchandise exports. Bangladesh holds a significant market share in the European Union, the UK, and the US, with a 10% share in the US market.

International Market Reactions: The uncertainty in Bangladesh is prompting international buyers to reconsider their supply sources. This situation could lead to a shift in orders to alternative markets, including India.

Opportunities for India: India stands to gain significantly if it can capture a portion of the redirected orders from Bangladesh. Industry experts estimate that India could secure an additional USD 300-400 million in monthly business if 10-

11% of Bangladesh's textile exports are rerouted to Indian hubs such as Tirupur.

HOW INDIA IS AFFECTED?

Loss of a Strategic Partner: India has lost a vital ally in Sheikh Hasina, whose leadership played a key role in combating terrorism and strengthening bilateral ties. Her departure casts uncertainty over the robust security cooperation between India and Bangladesh as the political dynamics in the region shift.

Potential Disruption in Bilateral Relations: Under Hasina's administration, India-Bangladesh trade flourished, reaching USD 13 billion in FY 2023-24, with Bangladesh emerging as India's largest trade partner in the subcontinent. The duty-free access granted on most tariff lines under the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) agreement was a significant milestone of her tenure. However, with her exit, these economic gains could be at risk.

India's Support Becomes a Liability: What was once a strategic advantage—India's support for Hasina—has now become a potential liability. Her increasingly controversial governance and declining popularity could undermine India's influence and reputation in the region.

Western Criticism and Diplomatic Challenges: India's backing of Hasina has also strained its relations with Western allies, particularly the United States, which has criticized her undemocratic practices. This situation poses a diplomatic challenge for India as it seeks to balance its international relations while having supported a leader now viewed unfavorably.

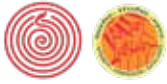
Strain on India-Bangladesh Relations: As Hasina's unpopularity grows, India may face backlash from Bangladeshi citizens who perceive it as complicit in supporting the ousted leader. This could lead to strained ties between India and Bangladesh, complicating future diplomatic and economic cooperation.

CHALLENGES AHEAD FOR INDIA IN ENGAGING WITH A NEW REGIME

Uncertain Political Environment: The character of Bangladesh's new government—whether led by opposition factions or the military—will greatly influence India's strategic interests. A less India-friendly administration could embolden anti-India militant groups, heightening security tensions along the borders. Additionally, the rise of Islamist extremism could endanger the Hindu minority, compelling India to tread carefully in fulfilling citizenship promises for Hindu refugees to avoid exacerbating regional tensions.

Regional Geopolitics: Political instability in Bangladesh presents an opportunity for China to expand its influence in the region. India must remain vigilant, as Beijing may offer lucrative incentives to the new regime, replicating its strategies in Sri Lanka and the Maldives. To counter this, India will need to forge strategic partnerships, ensuring that extremist elements do not gain a foothold and that Bangladesh's economic stability is preserved. This challenge comes amid broader regional tensions, including ongoing issues with Pakistan, instability in Myanmar, strained relations with Nepal, the Taliban's takeover in Afghanistan, and recent diplomatic strains with the Maldives.

Impact on Indian Investments: Political turmoil in Bangladesh could create uncertainties for Indian businesses and



investments. Disruptions in trade and payment delays could undermine the profitability and stability of these ventures. The unrest could also affect Indian-owned textile manufacturing units in Bangladesh, which make up around 25% of the sector. Given the instability, there is a possibility that these operations may relocate back to India. Furthermore, discussions on a potential free trade agreement (FTA) initiated in October 2023, which held the promise of significantly boosting exports on both sides, are now clouded by uncertainty due to the political instability.

Infrastructure and Connectivity Concerns: Infrastructure and connectivity have been critical in strengthening Indo-Bangladesh relations. Since 2016, India has extended USD 8 billion in credit for vital road, rail, and port projects, including the Akhaura-Agartala rail link and the Khulna-Mongla Port rail line. However, the current unrest threatens these essential connections, potentially disrupting trade and access to India's Northeast region and putting earlier agreements at risk.

Balancing Act: India faces the challenge of maintaining a delicate balance between supporting democratic forces and managing relationships with regional powers. It must avoid becoming entangled in Bangladesh's internal disputes while sustaining a strong diplomatic presence. This balance is crucial to safeguarding India's interests and ensuring continued stability in its neighbourhood.

STRATEGIC APPROACH FOR INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY MOVING FORWARD

Building New Alliances: India should adopt a cautious yet proactive approach, carefully monitoring developments in Bangladesh while employing a "wait-and-watch" strategy to assess potential impacts on regional stability. Engaging with various political factions in Bangladesh will be essential to fostering a more inclusive relationship. India must craft a flexible strategy that adapts to the evolving political landscape, ensuring it remains a key player in the region.

Expanding engagement with a broader spectrum of Bangladeshi society will be crucial in countering any negative

perceptions of India. It is imperative that India moves beyond the historical narrative of the 1971 liberation and focuses on building contemporary ties rooted in mutual respect and cooperation.

Enhancing Security Measures: To safeguard its interests, India should strengthen security measures along its borders and in regions with significant Bangladeshi expatriate populations. This will help manage potential spillover effects from any unrest in Bangladesh, ensuring that stability is maintained.

Digital Connectivity Corridor: Developing a digital connectivity corridor between India and Bangladesh could significantly enhance trade, technological exchange, and e-commerce. India should also re-evaluate the feasibility of a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Bangladesh, considering the new political climate and its implications for bilateral trade.

Geopolitical Maneuvering: India must anticipate that regional adversaries, particularly Pakistan and China, will attempt to exploit the situation in Bangladesh to their advantage. To mitigate these risks, India should collaborate closely with international partners, including the US, UK, and European nations. Additionally, India should seek to strengthen ties with Gulf nations such as the UAE and Saudi Arabia, working together to support Bangladesh's economic stabilization and counter extremist influences. This cooperation is vital to maintaining regional stability and preventing Bangladesh from drifting away from its traditional allies.

CONCLUSION: India's approach to the evolving political crisis in Bangladesh must be both strategic and adaptable. By fostering new alliances, enhancing security measures, and carefully navigating geopolitical dynamics, India can safeguard its interests while supporting regional stability. Collaboration with international and regional partners will be key in managing the complexities of this situation, ensuring that India remains a pivotal player in South Asian geopolitics amidst the shifting landscape in Bangladesh.

INS ARIGHAAT COMMISSIONED: WHY A SECOND NUCLEAR SUBMARINE MATTERS FOR INDIA

CONTEXT: The induction of INS Arighaat into the Indian Navy marks a significant enhancement of India's nuclear deterrence capabilities, solidifying its position within the elite group of nations possessing a nuclear triad. This strategic advancement underscores India's commitment to strengthening its defence posture and ensuring regional stability amidst evolving security challenges.

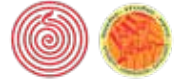


Enhancing India's Nuclear Triad

INS Arighaat, a 6,000-tonne nuclear-powered submarine, will complement its predecessor, INS Arihant, as a crucial component of India's nuclear triad. This triad capability – enabling nuclear missile launches from air, land,

and sea platforms – places India among a select group of countries that includes the United States, Russia, China, and France.

The commissioning of INS Arighaat will bolster the Navy's nuclear strike capabilities, adding to the maritime



strike capability first provided by the induction of INS Arihant in 2016. India's nuclear arsenal includes land-based missiles such as Agni 2, Agni 4, and Agni 5, and air-based platforms like the Rafale, Su-30MKI, and Mirage 2000 fighter aircraft, all capable of delivering nuclear warheads.

Advanced Capabilities of INS Arighaat

The nuclear-powered INS Arighaat is equipped with indigenously developed K-15 missiles, boasting a range of over 700 km. Like INS Arihant, Arighaat is powered by 83 MW pressurized light-water nuclear reactors, allowing it to remain submerged and undetected for extended periods, far exceeding the capabilities of conventional diesel-electric submarines.

India adheres to a "No First Use" nuclear policy, using nuclear weapons solely for deterrence and retaliation. The presence of nuclear submarines like Arighaat, with the ability to survive a nuclear attack and execute a retaliatory strike, significantly strengthens India's deterrence posture.

According to the Ministry of Defence, INS Arighaat represents a technological advancement over its predecessor, INS Arihant. The construction of Arighaat involved cutting-edge design and manufacturing technology, detailed research and development, the utilization of special materials, complex engineering, and highly skilled workmanship. The Ministry highlighted the indigenous systems and equipment conceptualized, designed, manufactured, and integrated by Indian scientists, industry, and naval personnel.

The Genesis: INS Arihant and India's Nuclear Submarine Program

India's nuclear-powered submarine project was initiated more than three decades ago, involving collaboration with private firms, the Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO), and support from Russia. INS Arihant, the first of its class, was launched in 2009 and commissioned into the Navy in 2016.

INS Arihant made history in 2018 by conducting its first deterrence patrol, thereby establishing India's nuclear triad. In October 2022, the Ministry of Defence announced the successful launch of a submarine-launched ballistic

missile (SLBM) by INS Arihant in the Bay of Bengal.

Future Nuclear Submarines and Comparisons with Global Powers

Two larger nuclear ballistic submarines (SSBNs) are currently under construction, each with a displacement of approximately 7,000 tonnes. The first of these was reportedly launched in 2021 and is awaiting commissioning, while the second is in development as part of a classified project.

In comparison, the United States operates 14 Ohio-class SSBNs and 53 fast-attack submarines, while China has 12 nuclear submarines, including six nuclear-powered attack submarines.

India's Conventional Submarine Fleet

The Indian Navy's current submarine fleet includes 16 conventional submarines: seven Kilo-class (Sindhughosh), four Shishumar-class, and five French Scorpène-class (Kalvari) attack submarines.

India began procuring diesel-electric Kilo-class submarines from the USSR in the mid-1980s. These submarines, with a lifespan of approximately 30 years, have been retrofitted with modern devices to extend their operational life.

The Shishumar-class submarines were developed by the German firm Howaldtswerke-Deutsche Werft (HDW) and subsequently built in India, with commissioning starting in the 1980s. The Kalvari-class submarines were built at India's Mazagon Dock in partnership with France's Naval Group, with INS Kalvari being the first to be commissioned in 2017.

Fleet Expansion and Maintenance

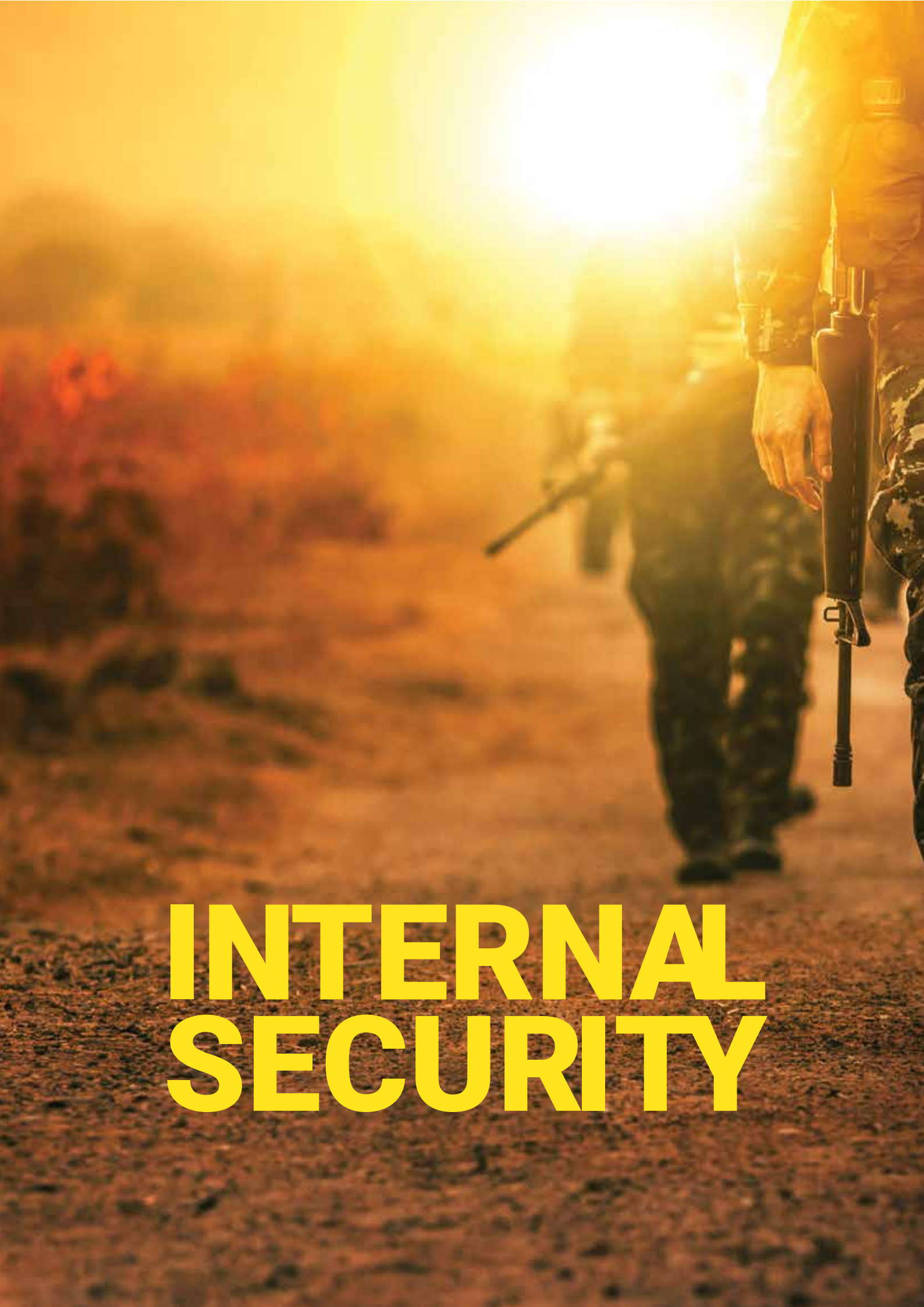
To perform its full spectrum of operations, the Indian Navy is authorized to have 18 submarines. This milestone has been achieved with the commissioning of INS Arighaat. However, it's important to note that around 30 percent of the fleet is typically under refit (repair and renovation), reducing the number of operational submarines at any given time. To extend the service life of aging submarines until new ones are commissioned, the Navy has undertaken medium refit and life certification, which includes major repairs and replacements on these vessels.



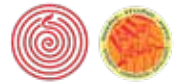
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INTERNAL SECURITY



METACRIMES

INDIA AND CHINA HOLD XXX ROUND OF BORDER ISSUES

CYBER CRIME PREVENTION AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN (CCPWC) INITIATIVE

NIT-CALICUT LAUNCHES INNOVATIVE WEB PORTAL 'NIVAHIKA'

TARANG SHAKTI-2024

IAF APPROVES PRODUCTION OF ASTRA MK 1 MISSILES

INDIAN ARMY CONDUCTS 'PARVAT PRAHAAR' MILITARY EXERCISE

EXERCISE UDARA SHAKTI 2024

DRDO SUCCESSFULLY TESTS LONG-RANGE GLIDE BOMB 'GAURAV'

INDIA-AUSTRALIA HOLD MARITIME SECURITY DIALOGUE

INDIA, SRI LANKA DEPLOY K9S IN EXERCISE MITRA SHAKTI

CHINA EQUIPS AMPHIBIOUS ASSAULT SHIP WITH LASER WEAPON

INDIA, EU PREPARE FOR CONFERENCE ON ONLINE RADICALIZATION

US APPROVES \$ 52.8 MILLION SONOBUOY SALE TO INDIA



METACRIMES



The metaverse is made up of three-dimensional virtual worlds that you access with VR headsets. In these worlds, users can interact in realistic settings. Movies like Ready Player One show what these interactive universes can be like bringing new types of online behaviours and crimes.

DEFINING METACRIMES

Metacrimes are crimes that happen within the metaverse. These crimes are similar to cybercrimes but have unique features that require new ways of reporting and investigating. One important aspect of meta-crimes is the immersive VR experience, which makes negative interactions like harassment more impactful. If there are no recording tools, it can be hard to gather evidence. Current user controls in VR may not stop these incidents effectively.

RISKS FOR VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

Children are a large group of metaverse users and are at higher risk, facing dangers like grooming and exposure to abusive behaviour. Studies show that such negative

interactions happen often, raising serious concerns about online safety. Cases like the first reported rape in the UK's metaverse highlight the urgent need for legal frameworks. Victims report experiencing psychological trauma similar to physical assaults, showing the seriousness of metacrimes.

CHALLENGES IN LAW ENFORCEMENT

Metacrimes complicate accountability and responsibility because traditional laws don't cover crimes involving virtual avatars well. New methods of harm, like manipulating VR technologies, make enforcement even more difficult. With big tech companies investing heavily in the metaverse, it is expected to grow quickly. Predictions from Gartner suggest more people will join the metaverse, making it necessary to create legal and regulatory measures to ensure safety.

ABOUT METAVERSE

- **INTEGRATION OF TECHNOLOGIES:** The metaverse combines virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and block chain technology to create immersive digital environments where users can interact and transact.
- **POPULARITY AND ORIGINS:** The concept originated from Neal Stephenson's 1992 novel "Snow Crash" and gained widespread attention when Facebook rebranded to Meta in 2021.
- **ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL IMPACT:** The metaverse is significantly influencing various sectors such as gaming, remote work, and education. Virtual real estate is becoming highly valuable, with sales reaching millions, and cryptocurrencies are commonly used for transactions within this digital space.

INDIA AND CHINA HOLD XXX ROUND OF BORDER ISSUES

On October 25, 2023, India and China held their 30th meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC) in New Delhi. They described their discussions as "in-depth, constructive, and forward-looking." The main focus was on the ongoing stand-off along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh.

BACKGROUND OF THE STAND-OFF

The stand-off between India and China started in 2020 and has included both military and diplomatic efforts to manage the tensions. The WMCC is important for discussions about border issues, alongside higher-level military talks.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MEETING

This recent WMCC meeting is part of larger efforts to resolve outstanding issues and bring back peace. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) stressed the importance of respecting the LAC to normalize relations between the two countries.

ONGOING DIPLOMATIC ENGAGEMENTS

Diplomatic efforts, including talks between Foreign Ministers and previous meetings, aim to keep the momentum in resolving border tensions. Recent meetings in Astana and Vientiane helped show a united approach in negotiations.

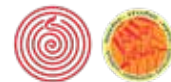
MILITARY COORDINATION EFFORTS

Regular Corps Commander talks also support the

WMCC meetings, with the 21st round held in February 2023. However, there have been no major breakthroughs in reducing tensions in key areas. There is speculation that India might consider easing some economic restrictions on Chinese companies. This is based on recent economic surveys suggesting more Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) from China could be beneficial.

WORKING MECHANISM FOR CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION (WMCC)

- **ESTABLISHMENT AND PURPOSE:** The Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC) was set up by India and China in 2017 to work together on border issues and keep the peace. This group provides a way for both countries to talk and solve problems, showing their growing relationship and need for stability.
- **FUNCTION AND FOCUS:** The WMCC holds regular meetings between military and diplomatic officials from both countries, focusing on regional security, counterterrorism, and trade to help manage conflicts.
- **SIGNIFICANCE:** The WMCC helps solve problems and manage relations between India and China, showing their growing connection and need for stability.



CYBER CRIME PREVENTION AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN (CCPWC) INITIATIVE

Safe City Projects are organized efforts by local police and city authorities to make cities safer, especially for women, and to fix problems with infrastructure. These projects are part of national plans to prevent cyber-crimes against women and children, supported by the Nirbhaya Fund.

The CCPWC initiative, under the Nirbhaya Fund, focuses on tackling cybercrimes. A key part of this initiative is the National Cybercrime Reporting Portal (NCRP), where people can report various cybercrimes, especially those targeting women and children.

NCRP AND REPORTING MECHANISMS

The NCRP has been visited over 16.18 crore times and has reported 1.94 lakh incidents of child pornography and related crimes. Additionally, a partnership between India and the USA improves cooperation in addressing online child exploitation. To help investigate cybercrimes, Cyber Forensic cum Training Labs have been set up in 33 States and Union Territories, with a financial investment of more than ₹ 131.60 crore. These labs help handle and analyze cybercrime data effectively.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE SUPPORT SYSTEMS

The Emergency Response Support System (ERSS)

is available in all States and Union Territories, managing over 36.29 crore calls. It works with the Women Helpline (181) to provide better support for women in distress.

SAFE CITY PROJECTS IMPLEMENTATION

The Safe City Projects aim to use advanced technologies for smarter policing in eight cities: Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Lucknow, and Mumbai. These projects focus on addressing safety concerns raised by women and improving public safety infrastructure.

NATIONAL CYBERCRIME REPORTING PORTAL (NCRP)

- **LAUNCH AND PURPOSE:** The National Cybercrime Reporting Portal (NCRP) was launched in 2020 in India to make reporting cybercrimes such as hacking, identity theft, and financial fraud easier.
- **FEATURES:** The NCRP is available 24/7, offers anonymity for reporters, and includes online resources to raise awareness about cyber safety. It also helps law enforcement track cybercrime trends.
- **BROADER INITIATIVE:** The portal is part of India's Digital India campaign, aiming to boost public involvement in fighting cybercrime.

NIT-CALICUT LAUNCHES INNOVATIVE WEB PORTAL 'NIVAHIKA'

The National Institute of Technology-Calicut (NIT-C) has launched a new web portal called 'Nivahika'. This portal is designed to change how the institute handles and reports data. According to the director, Prasad Krishna, Nivahika will improve the accuracy and consistency of the institute's data submissions and help with national rankings.

OVERVIEW OF NIVAHIKA

Nivahika is a tool that helps collect, organize, and report data more effectively across different departments and research centers at NIT-C. The Dean's (Planning & Development) office led the development of the portal, with help from several other departments like the Centre for Information Technology, Research and Automation, Computer Networking Centre, and the Central Computer Centre. The portal helps keep track of important activities and provides timely access to crucial data. This makes it easier to run operations smoothly and make better decisions.

SECURITY AND ACCESS

Nivahika is designed to be secure. Only authorized people like the Director, Registrar, deans, department heads, and center chairpersons can access it through personalized accounts. One of the key features of Nivahika is that it can automatically generate reports. This is a big improvement in how NIT-C manages its data and boosts overall efficiency.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY-CALICUT

- Established in 1961, the National Institute of Technology-Calicut (NITC) is a leading engineering school in India, originally set up as a Regional Engineering College.
- The campus spans 300 acres and features a large 6000-seat auditorium. NITC offers undergraduate and postgraduate programs in various engineering disciplines.
- The institute is renowned for its successful alumni, notable research in renewable energy and materials science, and strong international collaborations.

TARANG SHAKTI-2024

The Indian Air Force (IAF) is getting ready to host its largest-ever multilateral military exercise called 'Tarang Shakti,' planned for August and September 2024. This exercise shows India's commitment to building strong international defense relationships and military partnerships.

OBJECTIVE OF 'TARANG SHAKTI'

The main goal of 'Tarang Shakti' is to improve cooperation and teamwork among the participating countries through complex aerial drills and missions. This event is a big step in India's military diplomacy, helping nations understand each other better and work together more effectively.

PHASES OF THE EXERCISE

The exercise will take place in two phases:

PHASE ONE (AUGUST 6-14, 2024) – SULUR, TAMIL NADU

- **FOCUS:** Joint operations such as air combat manoeuvres, air-to-air refuelling, and strategic airlift.

- **PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES:** Germany, France, Spain, and the UK.

PHASE TWO (AUGUST 29-SEPTEMBER 14, 2024) – JODHPUR, RAJASTHAN

- **FOCUS:** Advanced scenarios like simulated combat missions and electronic warfare exercises.
- **PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES:** Australia, Bangladesh, Greece, Singapore, the UAE, and the US.

PARTICIPATION AND SIGNIFICANCE

Nearly 30 countries will participate out of the 51 invited, including major countries like the US, UK, and Germany. However, Russia and Israel will not be taking part, despite being traditional defense partners.

SHOWCASING INDIA'S DEFENCE CAPABILITIES

'Tarang Shakti' will also showcase India's military equipment, including the LCA Tejas and Rafale jets. This aligns



with India's goal of 'Atmanirbharta' (self-reliance) in defense. Alongside the exercise, there will be a defense industrial expo to promote Indian defense innovations and create partnerships between established companies and startups.

ABOUT TARANG SHAKTI

Tarang Shakti is an annual naval exercise by India to improve naval strength and security at sea. It started in 2019 and includes various naval forces from both India and other countries.

The exercise involves activities like:

- ANTI-SUBMARINE WARFARE: Finding and combating

enemy submarines.

- SURVEILLANCE AND RECONNAISSANCE: Monitoring sea areas and gathering information.
- HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE: Providing help during emergencies.

The goal is to ensure different naval fleets can work well together. This exercise shows India's commitment to protecting regional waters and using modern naval tactics and advanced technology. It includes both Indian and foreign naval ships, highlighting teamwork in maritime operations.

IAF APPROVES PRODUCTION OF ASTRA MK 1 MISSILES

The Indian Air Force (IAF) has recently given Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) the go-ahead to manufacture 200 Astra Mark 1 air-to-air missiles. This is a big step forward for India's home-grown missile production abilities. The decision was made when Air Marshal Ashutosh Dixit, the IAF Deputy Chief, visited the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) in Hyderabad.

DEVELOPMENT BACKGROUND

The Astra Mark 1 missiles were developed by DRDO, and BDL is the main company chosen to produce them. The project received funding approval from the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) of over ₹2,900 crore during the 2022-23 fiscal year, after the missiles successfully passed all required tests.

PRODUCTION CLEARANCE

BDL got the green light to start production after a detailed review of the missile's development and testing phases. This is an important step for the Astra missile system, which will boost India's aerial combat capabilities.

INTEGRATION WITH AIRCRAFT

The Astra missiles are designed to be used with various fighter aircraft, including the Russian Su-30 and the

Indian-made LCA Tejas. This compatibility allows the IAF to deploy the missiles more flexibly in different operations.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

DRDO is also working on the Astra programme's future, with plans for the Mark 2 variant, which is expected to have a range of 130 kilometers. There are also plans to develop a long-range version of the Astra missile with a range of up to 300 kilometers. This initiative highlights India's commitment to improving its home-grown defence manufacturing capabilities. Several other missile projects, including air-to-ground systems, are nearing completion. Focusing on self-reliance in defence technology strengthens national security and readiness.

ABOUT ASTRA MARK 1 MISSILES

- ADVANCED MISSILE: The Astra Mark 1 is India's first air-to-air missile that can hit targets beyond visual range, up to 110 kilometers away and at altitudes up to 20 kilometers.
- HOME-GROWN TECHNOLOGY: Developed by DRDO, it uses an Indian-made radar seeker and advanced guidance systems, showcasing India's technological progress.
- VERSATILE AND TESTED: The missile works with various aircraft, including the Su-30MKI. Its first successful test flight was in May 2014, boosting India's defense strength.

INDIAN ARMY CONDUCTS 'PARVAT PRAHAAR' MILITARY EXERCISE

The Indian Army recently conducted a military exercise called 'Parvat Prahaar' in the Ladakh region, which is located near the India-China border. This exercise focuses on preparing soldiers for high-altitude warfare, which involves fighting in the difficult and mountainous terrains of Eastern Ladakh. The exercise is a key part of India's military strategy, especially given the ongoing tensions with China.

OVERVIEW OF 'PARVAT PRAHAAR'

The name 'Parvat Prahaar' translates to "Mountain Strike." The exercise is designed to train soldiers to deal with the unique challenges they might face in mountainous areas. During the exercise, which lasts for two weeks, soldiers practice real-world combat scenarios, helping them to be better prepared for any potential conflicts.

PARTICIPATING FORCES

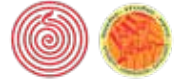
A variety of military branches and equipment are involved in this exercise, including:

- INFANTRY: Foot soldiers who are trained for ground combat.
- ARMoured UNITS: Tanks and other heavily protected vehicles.
- ARTILLERY: Large guns and missile systems that can hit distant targets.

- LOGISTICAL SUPPORT: Supplies and services needed to support the troops.
- Some of the advanced military assets displayed during the exercise include:
- TANKS AND ARMoured FIGHTING VEHICLES: Used for ground combat and protection.
- ARTILLERY GUNS: Including the K-9 Vajra, a powerful, mobile gun.
- AIR DEFENCE SYSTEMS: Protect against aerial attacks.
- UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLES (UAVs): Drones used for surveillance and attacks.

BACKGROUND OF TENSIONS

Since the Galwan Valley clash between Indian and Chinese forces in 2020, tensions between the two countries have increased. Despite multiple rounds of negotiations, a resolution has not been reached. In response, India has strengthened its military presence in the region by deploying over 500 tanks, and 50,000 troops, and building significant infrastructure. The Mountain Strike Corps, a specialized unit within the Northern Command of the Indian Army, plays a key role in this exercise. They are responsible for operations along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), the disputed border between India and China.



ABOUT PARVAT PRAHAAR

'Parvat Prahaar' is an Indian military operation initiated in 1987 to combat militancy in the Himalayan regions. This operation focused on high-altitude warfare, which requires specialized training for soldiers. It emphasized intelligence gathering and working with local communities to reduce the

recruitment of locals into militant groups. The Indian Army used both active measures (like direct military action) and passive measures (like building trust with the local population) in this region. This operation was part of a broader effort to counter terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir, to achieve long-term peace.

EXERCISE UDARA SHAKTI 2024

On August 10, 2024, the Indian Air Force (IAF) team came back to India after taking part in Exercise Udara Shakti 2024 in Malaysia. This exercise happened from August 5 to 9, 2024, in Kuantan and involved working together with the Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF).

OVERVIEW OF THE EXERCISE

Exercise Udara Shakti 2024 was a joint air exercise aimed at improving teamwork between the IAF and the RMAF. The main goal was to boost how well the two air forces work together by sharing their experiences and learning from each other. The IAF brought their Su-30MKI fighter jets, while

the RMAF used Su-30MKM fighters. These jets are similar in design, which made it easier for them to work together effectively during the exercise.

During the exercise, pilots practiced air combat missions. This helped them understand each other's methods and procedures better, which improved how they could work together in future operations. Technical experts from both air forces also took part in discussions about aircraft maintenance. They worked together to find ways to keep their planes in the best condition and improve overall readiness for future missions.

DRDO SUCCESSFULLY TESTS LONG-RANGE GLIDE BOMB 'GAURAV'

On August 13, 2024, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) of India successfully carried out the first flight test of a long-range glide bomb named Gaurav. This test, conducted using a Su-30 MK-I fighter jet from the Indian Air Force, is a significant step forward in India's efforts to develop its own advanced defence technologies.

GAURAV

Gaurav is a cutting-edge air-launched glide bomb that weighs 1,000 kg. It is designed to hit targets from a long distance and is equipped with a sophisticated navigation system that uses multiple guidance methods to ensure it strikes with high accuracy.

DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN

The Gaurav bomb was developed by the Research Centre Imarat in Hyderabad. This project is a key example of India's focus on achieving self-reliance in defence technology, reducing the need to rely on military equipment from other countries.

FLIGHT TEST DETAILS

The first test flight took place off the coast of Odisha, where the glide bomb successfully hit a target on Long Wheeler's Island. To gather detailed information during the test, advanced telemetry and electro-optical tracking systems were used.

INVOLVEMENT OF KEY PARTNERS

The project saw collaboration from private companies, including Adani Defence and Bharat Forge, which acted as Development cum Production Partners. Their involvement highlights the growing role of the private sector in India's defence industry. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh praised this successful test, calling it a crucial milestone in enhancing India's self-sufficiency in defence technologies. The success of this test boosts the capabilities of the Indian Armed Forces and demonstrates the country's progress in military technology.

LONG-RANGE GLIDE BOMB

Long-range glide bombs like Gaurav can travel over 110 kilometers without needing propulsion. They are guided by GPS to ensure they hit their targets accurately and are designed to avoid detection by radar. Other similar bombs include the GBU-39/B, which has similar long-range capabilities, and the UK's Paveway IV, which can be adapted for different missions. The JDAM (Joint Direct Attack Munition) is another example, turning regular free-fall bombs into precision-guided weapons. Such technologies were first developed by Israel in the 1980s. These bombs are typically launched from strategic bombers or fighter jets and are designed to be hard to detect, increasing their effectiveness in military operations.

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INDIA-AUSTRALIA HOLD MARITIME SECURITY DIALOGUE

On August 13, 2024, the 6th India-Australia Maritime Security Dialogue was held in Canberra, focusing on strengthening maritime security cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region. This meeting reflects the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between India and Australia and addresses crucial maritime issues.

KEY DISCUSSIONS

During the dialogue, senior officials from both countries discussed ways to maintain a safe maritime environment that supports inclusive growth and global well-being. Key topics included:

- **MARITIME SECURITY IN THE INDO-PACIFIC:** Enhancing security in the region.
- **MARITIME DOMAIN AWARENESS:** Improving knowledge and monitoring of maritime activities.
- **HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND DISASTER RELIEF (HADR):** Coordinating responses to emergencies and disasters at sea.

MARITIME COOPERATION AREAS

The discussions also covered:

- **SEARCH AND RESCUE (SAR):** Improving joint efforts for effective search and rescue operations.
- **POLLUTION RESPONSE:** Addressing maritime pollution, particularly concerning plastic waste.
- **BLUE ECONOMY:** Promoting sustainable economic activities that utilize marine resources responsibly.
- **PORT STATE CONTROL:** Enhancing the enforcement of international maritime regulations.

INDO-PACIFIC OCEAN INITIATIVE (IPOI)

Both nations reviewed progress and future plans under the Indo-Pacific Ocean Initiative (IPOI), which focuses

on preserving maritime ecology and was established by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2019.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In June 2020, India and Australia formalized a Shared Vision for Maritime Cooperation, reinforcing their commitment to peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific. This agreement aims to improve navy-to-navy cooperation and enhance maritime domain awareness through information sharing.

INDIA-AUSTRALIA MARITIME SECURITY DIALOGUE

- **STARTED IN 2015:** The dialogue began to improve cooperation between India and Australia in the Indo-Pacific region.
- **JOINT NAVAL EXERCISES:** Both countries conduct exercises like AUSINDEX to strengthen their military partnership.
- **ADDRESSING MARITIME CHALLENGES:** The dialogue works on issues such as:
 - **PIRACY:** Fighting against pirate activities.
 - **ILLEGAL FISHING:** Preventing unauthorized fishing.
 - **CYBERSECURITY AND INFORMATION SHARING:** Focuses on protecting maritime data and sharing important information.
- **REGIONAL COLLABORATION:** India and Australia work together in groups like the Quad (which also includes the US and Japan).
- **CAPACITY-BUILDING:** They help neighbouring countries improve their maritime security and abilities.
- **PROMOTING A FREE AND OPEN INDO-PACIFIC:** Supports a region where maritime routes are open and international laws are followed.

INDIA, SRI LANKA DEPLOY K9S IN EXERCISE MITRA SHAKTI

The 10th edition of Exercise Mitra Shakti, a joint military training exercise between India and Sri Lanka, is happening from August 12 to 25, 2024, at the Army Training School in Maduru Oya, Sri Lanka. This year, military dogs, also called "K9s," are playing a key role, showing how important they are in modern military operations.

K9 DEPLOYMENT

The Indian Army has brought Zac, a two-and-a-half-year-old Belgian Malinois, who is skilled in various tactical operations like searching in jungles and conducting cordon-and-search missions. Trained military dogs like Zac make military operations more effective, proving to be valuable assets on the battlefield.

ZAC'S ABILITIES

Zac has been trained in specialized skills like laser-guided attacks, retrieving weapons, and detecting explosives. His training at the Remount Veterinary Corps Centre has prepared him to handle complex tasks that support infantry soldiers in their missions.

PURPOSE OF EXERCISE MITRA SHAKTI

Exercise Mitra Shakti aims to strengthen the joint military capabilities of India and Sri Lanka, especially in counter-insurgency operations that focus on semi-urban areas. The exercise includes practical drills that simulate responses to terrorism, setting up joint command centers, and

using advanced surveillance techniques.

TACTICAL DRILLS

During the exercise, participants will practice different tactical drills, including:

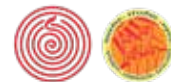
- Responding to terrorist actions
- Setting up intelligence and surveillance centers
- Securing landing sites
- Carrying out special helicopter and ground operations
- These drills help improve teamwork and the ability of the two armies to work together effectively.

JOINT OPERATIONS AND SHARING BEST PRACTICES

By taking part in Exercise Mitra Shakti, both armies can share their best practices for tactics, techniques, and procedures in joint operations. This helps build camaraderie and mutual understanding, strengthening the military relationship between India and Sri Lanka.

ABOUT K9 DOGS

K9s have been used since World War I for various roles. German Shepherds are the most common breed for military work due to their strong sense of smell, which is about 40 times greater than that of humans. Belgian Malinois, like Zac, are often chosen for their agility. During World War II, dogs were used to carry messages. Today, military dogs can perform search and rescue missions and have saved many lives. When they retire, they are often adopted, highlighting



their important service.

ABOUT EXERCISE MITRA SHAKTI

Exercise Mitra Shakti is a joint military training exercise between India and Sri Lanka that began in 2012. It focuses on improving the ability of both armies to work together, especially in counter-terrorism operations and providing humanitarian aid. The exercise usually lasts about

two weeks and includes tactical drills, cultural exchanges, and opportunities to learn about each country's military equipment. It strengthens the relationship between the two nations and enhances their ability to respond to challenges in the Indian Ocean region, symbolizing their commitment to peace and stability.

CHINA EQUIPS AMPHIBIOUS ASSAULT SHIP WITH LASER WEAPON



China has recently added a laser weapon to one of its Type 071 amphibious assault ships. This move is part of a broader global trend where many countries, including the US, are integrating advanced laser weapons into their naval forces.

ABOUT THE WEAPON

The ship shows a laser system that seems to be newly installed on the Chinese Navy's (People's Liberation Army Navy, PLAN) vessel. When not in use, the weapon is covered by a dome, likely to protect it and keep it hidden until needed. This shows that China is focusing on making sure the weapon is always ready for action while keeping it stealthy.

CHINA'S PREVIOUS USE OF LASER WEAPONS

China has mostly used laser weapons on land in the past. For example, they've used lasers to target drones, especially during conflicts in places like the Red Sea. These experiences have pushed China to start putting laser weapons on their ships.

HOW THE LASER MIGHT BE USED AT SEA

The Type 071 ship is being used to test this new laser weapon, and China might add similar weapons to more ships in their navy. This testing approach is similar to what the US Navy has done. The US has tested laser systems on their ships that can shoot down small drones.

COMPARING CHINA'S LASER WITH US TECHNOLOGY

The US Navy has a laser weapon called the Laser Weapon System Demonstrator (LWSD) Mk 2 Mod 0, developed by Northrop Grumman. This system is designed to protect ships by shooting down small boats and drones and can also disrupt enemy sensors by "dazzling" them with light. The Chinese laser weapon might have similar capabilities, though the exact details aren't clear yet.

HOW CHINA MIGHT USE THIS WEAPON

The Chinese Navy has already used lower-powered laser dazzlers, which can temporarily blind or permanently damage the eyes of aircraft crews. These dazzlers have been used in confrontations with US and Australian aircraft, showing that China is using lasers to assert its power and deter other countries.

IMPACT OF LASER WEAPONS IN NAVAL WARFARE

Laser dazzlers at sea can give significant advantages in military situations. They can temporarily blind aircraft crews or cause lasting damage, affecting the outcome of engagements. The deployment of such technology shows that China is serious about improving its navy's capabilities. This could change the way naval warfare is conducted, especially in the Asia-Pacific region, as China continues to advance its military technology.



INDIA, EU PREPARE FOR CONFERENCE ON ONLINE RADICALIZATION

India and the European Union (EU) are coming together for an important meeting called the EU-India Track 1.5 Conference on August 21-22 in New Delhi. The main focus of this conference is to address the serious issue of online radicalization, which is when extremist groups use the internet to spread their harmful ideas and recruit people. The conference aims to create strategies for working together to stop these groups from misusing digital platforms, showing how concerned the world is about this problem.

PURPOSE OF THE CONFERENCE

The conference is designed to bring together experts, policymakers, and law enforcement officials from both South Asia and Europe. Their main goal is to discuss and find solutions for the current and new threats posed by online radicalization. By working together, they hope to stop extremist activities in the online world. This meeting is part of a bigger plan called the EU's Indo-Pacific Strategy, which focuses on building strong partnerships with countries that face similar challenges. The conference also aims to improve discussions on counter-terrorism, particularly how technology and terrorism are connected.

PARTICIPANTS AND REPRESENTATION

The conference will include high-ranking officials from important Indian security and strategic institutions, like the Ministry of External Affairs and the Indian Army. The participation of these key figures shows India's strong commitment to working with others to fight terrorism. Herve

Delphin, the EU Ambassador to India, has highlighted the importance of sharing knowledge and expertise to effectively tackle online radicalization. He supports the idea of working together to create strategies that ensure security while also respecting citizens' rights, acknowledging that terrorism knows no borders.

INDIA'S STANCE ON TERRORISM

KD Dewal, the Joint Secretary for Counter-Terrorism at India's Ministry of External Affairs, reaffirmed India's strict stance against terrorism, especially when it comes to threats from across its borders. He emphasized that India is ready to cooperate with others and believes in the importance of united efforts to fight terrorism in all its forms. This conference builds on existing partnerships, like the India-EU Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism. This group has previously condemned terrorism and stressed the need for international cooperation. Past workshops that focused on the dangers of the internet have set the stage for more in-depth discussions at this conference.

FOCUS ON ONLINE RADICALIZATION

A major goal of the conference is to advance regulatory improvements that can better manage terrorist content online. There is a strong recognition of the urgent need to address the fast-changing threats associated with online radicalization. The EU-India Track 1.5 Conference is a significant step toward strengthening international collaboration and developing effective strategies

US APPROVES \$ 52.8 MILLION SONOBUOY SALE TO INDIA

Antony Blinken, United States Secretary of State has agreed for a possible sale of anti-submarine warfare equipment to India, worth around USD 52.8 million. This move highlights the strong commitment between the US and India to strengthen their relationship, especially in the areas of defence and security.

The US Department of Defence, through its Defence Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA), has announced that India has asked to buy various sonobuoys, which are special devices used to detect submarines underwater. The specific types include:

- AN/SSQ-53G High Altitude Anti-Submarine Warfare (HAASW) sonobuoys
- AN/SSQ-62F HAASW sonobuoys
- AN/SSQ-36 sonobuoys

Along with the sonobuoys, the sale will also include technical documents, engineering support, and logistical services to help India use and maintain this equipment.

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE

This sale is part of the US's broader foreign policy and national security goals. It is meant to:

- Strengthen the strategic partnership between the US and India.

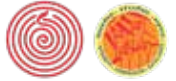
- Improve India's defence capabilities, especially in the Indo-Pacific and South Asia regions, which are very important for maintaining political stability and economic growth.

OPERATIONAL IMPACT

With this new equipment, India will be better equipped to carry out anti-submarine warfare, especially using its MH-60R helicopters. The DSCA is confident that India will be able to smoothly integrate this advanced equipment into its current military systems without any issues.

REGIONAL STABILITY CONCERNS

The purpose of this sale is to support stability in the region rather than disrupt it. It is designed to maintain the current military balance, ensuring that the region remains peaceful. The companies expected to be the main contractors for this sale are Sparton Corporation and Undersea Sensor Systems Inc. There haven't been any reports about additional agreements, known as "offset agreements," related to this deal. This proposed sale of anti-submarine warfare equipment to India is a significant step in boosting defence relations between the US and India. It reflects the shared interests of both countries in security and strategic cooperation, especially in a world where the geopolitical landscape is rapidly changing.



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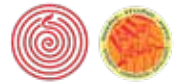
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ECONOMICS





INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMISTS

INDIA RETAINS EIGHTH POSITION IN GLOBAL AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS

INDIA'S FIRST GRAIN ATM LAUNCHED IN ODISHA

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AIM INVITES APPLICATIONS FOR AUSTRALIA-INDIA AGRITECH PROGRAM

FSSAI BANS MISLEADING A1 AND A2 LABELS ON DAIRY PRODUCTS

INDIA AIMS FOR \$ 30 TRILLION ECONOMY BY 2047

INDIA ELECTED VICE-CHAIR OF IPEF SUPPLY CHAIN COUNCIL

NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP AND TRAINING SCHEME 2.0 PORTAL

NSDC LAUNCHES WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAM

CABINET APPROVES EIGHT HIGH-SPEED ROAD CORRIDOR PROJECTS

B-READY INDEX

CITIES SET TO LAUNCH ₹ 5,000 CR. AMRUT 2.0 PROJECTS

INDIA'S DISTRICTS FACING EXTREME WEATHER CRISIS

UNION CABINET APPROVES ₹ 24,657 CR. FOR RAILWAY PROJECT

CABINET APPROVES PRADHAN MANTRI AWAS YOJANA-URBAN 2.0

LOK SABHA PASSES APPROPRIATION BILL FOR FY 2024-25

YEN CARRY TRADE

UNION CABINET APPROVES THREE MAJOR METRO PROJECTS IN INDIA

KARNATAKA LEADS NATION WITH 5,765 PUBLIC EV CHARGING STATIONS

GREEN AMMONIA SCHEME

MAHARASHTRA LAUNCHES FIRST SOLAR VILLAGE

CCI RAISES CONCERNS OVER \$ 8.5 BN. RELIANCE-DISNEY MERGER

INDIA-US HIGH-LEVEL MEETING IN ENERGY COOPERATION



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMISTS

CONTEXT: On October 25, 2023, Prof. Ramesh Chand, a member of NITI Aayog, announced that the 32nd International Conference of Agricultural Economists will be held from August 2-7, 2024, at the Pusa Institute in New Delhi. This is the first time in 66 years that India will host this important conference, showing how the country's role in global agricultural discussions has grown. The first conference took place in 1958 when India was dealing with poverty and hunger. The 2024 event highlights how far India has come in terms of sustainable development and food security.

KEY DETAILS OF THE CONFERENCE

- **THEME:** Transformation Towards Sustainable Agri-Food Systems"
- **INAUGURATION:** By Prime Minister Narendra Modi
- **PARTICIPANTS:** Approximately 1,000 attendees, including 740 international representatives from 75 countries
- **GENDER REPRESENTATION:** 45% female participation among attendees

OBJECTIVES AND FOCUS AREAS

The conference aims to address complex agriculture

issues and provide young researchers a chance to connect. It will include lectures, discussions, and exhibitions led by top agricultural economists, linking economic ideas with sustainable farming practices. The conference focuses on improving food systems to meet global sustainability goals and encourages international collaboration in agriculture, establishing India as a leader in the field.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMISTS

The International Conference of Agricultural Economists (IAAE) was founded in 1960 and is held every three years. It deals with problems in agriculture and rural development. The first conference took place in Ljubljana, Slovenia. Topics covered include food security, sustainability, and economic policies. The IAAE has members from over 100 countries and promotes collaboration across different fields. It highlights the importance of technology in agriculture and publishes proceedings that contribute to global agricultural research. Recent conferences have looked at how climate change affects agriculture.

INDIA RETAINS EIGHTH POSITION IN GLOBAL AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS

In 2023, India continued to be the eighth-largest exporter of agricultural products worldwide. However, India's agricultural exports dropped from \$ 55 billion in 2022 to \$ 51 billion. This decline happened during a time when many other leading countries also saw a decrease in their agricultural exports.

GLOBAL EXPORT TRENDS

Out of the top ten agricultural exporting countries, only three saw growth in their exports in 2023:

- **BRAZIL:** Agricultural exports increased by 6% to \$157 billion.
- **EUROPEAN UNION (EU):** Agricultural exports grew by 5% to \$836 billion.
- **THAILAND:** Agricultural exports increased slightly by 0.2%, though it is not among the top three exporters.

FACTORS IMPACTING INDIAN EXPORTS

India's reduction in agricultural exports can be attributed to several geopolitical factors, such as The Red Sea crisis and the Russia-Ukraine war.

EXPORT BANS AND THEIR EFFECTS

These events have disrupted global trade. Additionally, India's export bans on key agricultural products also contributed to the decline. These bans included:

- Wheat in May 2022
- Non-basmati rice in July 2023
- Sugar in October 2023

COMPARISON WITH OTHER MAJOR EXPORTERS

Despite a decrease in exports to \$ 198 billion, the United States remains the second-largest agricultural exporter. China is the fourth-largest, with a slight decrease to \$ 95 billion. Other significant countries in the top ten include Canada, Mexico, and Indonesia. Australia.

NEW WTO TRADE STATISTICS TOOL

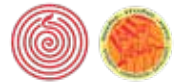
The World Trade Organization (WTO) introduced an interactive platform in its 2023 report for analysing international trade data. This tool allows users to explore trends in world trade by value and volume, with options to filter by economy, region, and product group.



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INDIA'S FIRST GRAIN ATM LAUNCHED IN ODISHA

Odisha government introduced the state's first Grain ATM, a new technology designed to improve food distribution under the National Food Security Programme on August 08, 2024. This machine is part of the central government's Annapurta programme and was developed with help from the World Food Programme (WFP) to enhance food security in the region.

GRAIN ATM

Grain ATMs are automated machines that provide food grains directly to people, aiming to reduce hunger. They are used in several countries, including India, and help people get essential food supplies more efficiently. The machines minimize the need for human intervention, which helps cut down on corruption and ensures that food is distributed fairly. Grain ATMs were first introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic and use technology to make food distribution smoother. Some even use biometric authentication for security and offer fortified grains to improve nutrition. The goal is to reduce food waste and improve the efficiency of the food supply chain.

KEY FEATURES

- **24/7 ACCESS:** The ATMs are available all day, every day, for people across Odisha to get food grains.
- **UNIVERSAL ACCESS:** Any person with a valid ration card from anywhere in India can use the ATM, no matter where they live.
- **FAST DISPENSING:** The machine can give out up to 50 kilograms of grains in just five minutes and operates with a high accuracy of 99.99%.
- **MODULAR DESIGN:** The machine is designed to be

easily assembled and set up in different locations.

- **ENERGY EFFICIENCY:** The ATMs use energy efficiently and can be powered by solar panels for automatic refilling.

PARTNERSHIP WITH WFP

The launch of this Grain ATM is a significant step in using technology to improve food distribution, aiming to provide better nutritional security. The successful trial of the Grain ATM in Mancheswar is expected to lead to more machines being set up across Odisha. This effort supports global goals for fair and effective food distribution and strengthens the state's food security system.

NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY ACT

The National Food Security Act (NFSA), passed in India in 2013, aims to provide affordable food grains to about two-thirds of the population. The Act covers 75% of rural people and 50% of urban people, offering 5 kilograms of food grains per person each month. It also includes provisions for nutritional support for pregnant women and children, recognizing the right to food as a basic human right.

ANNAPURTI INITIATIVE?

The Annapurta initiative is an important program started by the Government of India in 2021 to help people get healthy food. It aims to improve access to nutritious food for those in need. The program uses technology to make food distribution more efficient and focuses on growing food locally to lessen reliance on outside sources. It works with local farmers to help them grow more crops and includes education about good nutrition. The initiative also supports eco-friendly farming practices and aims to tackle hunger and malnutrition.

HARYANA BECOMES FIRST STATE TO PROCURE ALL CROPS AT MSP

On August 4, 2024, Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini announced that the state would buy all crops at the Minimum Support Price (MSP), making Haryana the first state in India to do this on such a wide scale. This move is seen as a strategic effort before the upcoming Assembly elections, especially after the ruling party's poor performance in the recent Lok Sabha elections.

KEY ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **ALL-CROPS MSP PROCUREMENT:** Saini promised that the Haryana government would buy all crops at MSP. This is a significant expansion from the current practice, where only 14 crops were covered. Now, nine additional crops will also be included.
- **WAIVING IRRIGATION CHARGES:** The Chief Minister announced that ₹ 133 Cr. in outstanding canal water irrigation charges would be waived. This is expected to save farmers about ₹ 54 Cr. each year.
- **PENDING COMPENSATION PAYMENTS:** He committed to paying ₹ 137 Cr. in pending compensation to farmers

who have been affected by natural disasters. The payments will be made quickly, within a week.

- **EXPANDED MOTOR PURCHASE OPTIONS:** Farmers will now be able to buy three-star motors for their tube-wells from any registered company in India. This provides them with more options and better access to necessary equipment.

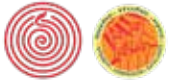
ABOUT MINIMUM SUPPORT PRICE

Minimum Support Price (MSP) is a price set by the government at which it buys certain crops directly from farmers. It was established in India in 1966 to protect farmers from price drops. MSP is announced for 23 crops, including cereals, pulses, and oilseeds. It is a crucial tool for agricultural stability because it encourages production and helps with food security. However, how it's implemented can vary by region, and some critics say it may lead to overproduction. MSP affects market prices and farmer incomes, shaping agricultural policies.



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AIM INVITES APPLICATIONS FOR AUSTRALIA-INDIA AGRITECH PROGRAM

The Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) has opened applications for Indian and Australian start-ups and small businesses to join the climate-smart Agritech group of the India Australia Rapid Innovation and Startup Expansion (RISE) accelerator. This program is designed to help businesses grow internationally and collaborate between India and Australia, especially in the Agritech field.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The RISE Accelerator supports start-ups and small businesses in testing and adapting their technologies for international markets. The focus is on improving farming methods and resilience in the face of climate change, limited resources, and food shortages. The goal of this group is to support businesses that create technologies to help farmers and improve farming practices. The aim is to strengthen farming operations in both India and Australia.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

The program lasts for nine months and includes both online learning and in-person activities in India and Australia. Participants will get deep insights into the market, personalized coaching, and mentorship from industry experts to help them grow and fit better into the market. Participants will have the

chance to conduct field trials and test their technologies in real-world situations. They will also have opportunities to network with potential partners and customers, which is crucial for business success.

APPLICATIONS AND SUPPORT

The application deadline is September 15, 2024. There are no fees to join, and selected businesses might receive non-equity grants of up to Rs 45 lakhs. They will also have opportunities to travel between Australia and India, promoting further collaboration. This accelerator program aims to tackle important agricultural challenges and make innovative, effective farming practices available to farmers. It supports the goal of sustainable development in agriculture.

ATAL INNOVATION MISSION (AIM)

The Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) is a major program started by NITI Aayog in 2016. Its main goal is to encourage new ideas and support people starting their businesses all over India. AIM aims to build a supportive environment for innovation and entrepreneurship at every level, including schools, universities, research centers, small and medium-sized businesses (MSMEs), and large industries.

FSSAI BANS MISLEADING A1 AND A2 LABELS ON DAIRY PRODUCTS

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has decided that dairy products like milk, ghee, butter, and curd should no longer be labelled as "A1" or "A2." These labels, according to FSSAI, can be misleading for consumers. Companies that currently have products with these labels are given six months to sell off their existing stock before the labels must be removed.

UNDERSTANDING A1 AND A2

A1 and A2 are types of proteins found in cow's milk, specifically a protein called beta-casein. The difference between A1 and A2 depends on the breed of the cow:

- **A1 BETA-CASEIN:** Mostly found in milk from cows of Northern European breeds, like Holsteins.
- **A2 BETA-CASEIN:** Found in milk from breeds native to areas like the Channel Islands and Southern France, such as Guernsey cows.

Most regular milk contains both A1 and A2 proteins, but "A2 milk" is marketed as having only the A2 protein.

HEALTH CONCERNS

Ongoing research is about whether A1 or A2 milk is better for health. Some studies suggest that A2 milk might cause fewer digestive problems for some people, while others find no clear evidence that A1 milk is harmful. Because the scientific evidence isn't conclusive, the FSSAI wants to prevent any misleading health claims about these types of milk.

WHAT FSSAI IS DOING

The FSSAI has decided that food businesses can no

longer label products as A1 or A2. This rule applies to all dairy products; even online stores must follow it immediately. The goal is to protect consumers from unverified claims.

WHAT SCIENTISTS SAY

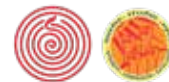
In the past, studies like a 2009 review by the European Food Safety Authority concluded that there was no need to distinguish between A1 and A2 milk. Scientists believe more research is needed to better understand these proteins' potential health effects. The FSSAI's directive aims to clear up confusion and prevent misleading marketing in India's dairy industry. As the debate over A1 and A2 milk continues, consumers need to have accurate information based on sound science.

ABOUT FSSAI

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) was created in 2006 under the Food Safety and Standards Act. Its main goal is to ensure that the food in India is safe and of high quality. FSSAI has introduced a unique five-digit license number for food businesses to promote transparency. The authority also conducts research and raises awareness about food safety. The FSSAI logo, featuring a fork and a wheat sheaf, symbolizes the organization's focus on food quality. FSSAI also tracks food safety practices across the country with its Food Safety and Nutrition Index.



"Education is the ability to listen to almost anything without losing your temper or your self-confidence." - Robert Frost



INDIA AIMS FOR \$ 30 TRILLION ECONOMY BY 2047



India aims to become a USD 30 trillion economy by 2047, while celebrating the centenary of its independence. According to a plan by NITI AAYOG, called 'Vision for Viksit Bharat @ 2047', the goal is to raise the average per capita income to USD 18,000. This plan is designed to help India avoid getting stuck at a middle-income level.

ECONOMIC ASPIRATIONS

India needs to grow its economy nine times bigger from the current USD 3.36 trillion to USD 30 trillion in the next couple of decades. The average per capita income also needs to increase from USD 2,392 to USD 18,000. The report says moving from a middle-income to a high-income country requires a steady annual growth rate of 7% - 10% for 20-30 years.

VIKSIT BHARAT

The idea of Vikshit Bharat means creating a country with high income and advanced social, cultural, technological,

and institutional attributes. According to the World Bank, a high-income country has an average annual income per person of more than USD 14,005 (as of 2023). The plan identifies several key challenges, such as improving manufacturing and logistics capabilities and reducing the income gap between rural and urban areas. These improvements are essential for turning the agricultural workforce into a strong industrial workforce.

- **VISION FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH:** 'Viksit Bharat,' or 'Developed India,' embodies India's goal for sustainable development by 2047, focusing on reducing poverty, achieving gender equity, and ensuring environmental sustainability.
- **URBANIZATION AND SMART PLANNING:** With India's urban population expected to reach 600 million by 2031, smart urban planning is crucial. Key areas of focus include digital innovation and renewable energy.
- **SKILL DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC SELF-RELIANCE:** The government prioritizes skill development through initiatives like 'Skill India' and promotes local industries via 'Make in India' to foster economic independence and growth.

ROADMAP

NITI AAYOG stresses that achieving this vision requires the participation of the entire nation, not just a few individuals or the government. The document highlights that this is a crucial moment for India, suggesting that the 21st century could be India's century. Success depends on balancing energy security, accessibility, affordability, and sustainability.

INDIA ELECTED VICE-CHAIR OF IPEF SUPPLY CHAIN COUNCIL

India has been elected as the vice-chair of the Supply Chain Council (SCC) under the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF). This council is focused on making supply chains stronger and more reliable for its 14 member countries.

INDO-PACIFIC ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK (IPEF)

The IPEF, launched on May 23, 2022, in Tokyo, includes 14 member countries: Australia, Brunei, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, and the United States. The framework is organized around four key pillars:

- Trade
- Supply Chain Resilience
- Clean Economy
- Fair Economy

STRUCTURE - SUPPLY CHAIN INITIATIVE

- The IPEF has created three councils to deal with different supply chain issues:
- Supply Chain Council (SCC) – Works on improving supply chain security and economic health.
- Crisis Response Network (CRN) – Helps countries respond together in emergencies that disrupt supply chains.
- Labour Rights Advisory Board (LRAB) – Addresses issues related to workers' rights.

SUPPLY CHAIN COUNCIL

The SCC was started in 2003 to make supply chains

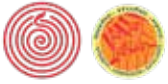
more efficient. It developed the Supply Chain Operations Reference (SCOR) model, which is a standard framework for managing supply chains. Initially, SCC was run by its members and focused on collaboration between companies. In 2014, it merged with APICS to become APICS Supply Chain Council, gaining more resources. The SCOR model includes performance measures, best practices, and processes. The SCC also offered training and certifications in supply chain management, focusing on continuous improvement and operational excellence.

OBJECTIVES OF THE COUNCIL

- **SUPPLY CHAIN COUNCIL (SCC):** Focuses on national security, public health, and economic stability by improving supply chain efficiency.
- **CRISIS RESPONSE NETWORK (CRN):** Aims for coordinated emergency responses during supply chain crises.
- **LABOUR RIGHTS ADVISORY BOARD (LRAB):** Bring workers, employers, and governments together to enhance labour rights across regional supply chains.

FUTURE MEETINGS AND PLANS

The first meetings have set the stage for future cooperation, including plans for face-to-face meetings. The SCC's first in-person meeting is planned for September 2024 in Washington, alongside the Supply Chain Summit.



NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP AND TRAINING SCHEME 2.0 PORTAL

On July 30, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan launched the National Apprenticeship Training Scheme (NATS) 2.0 Portal and announced ₹ 100 Cr. in stipends for apprentices. This money will be given directly to apprentices through the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) system. This new initiative is part of the government's effort to improve the skills and job prospects of young people in fields like IT, manufacturing, and automobiles.

NATS 2.0 PORTAL OVERVIEW

The NATS 2.0 Portal is designed to make the apprenticeship process easier. It allows people looking for apprenticeships to register and apply for opportunities, and it helps industries manage job openings and contracts more effectively.

BENEFITS OF THE NATS 2.0 PORTAL

The portal is expected to attract more users and help young graduates and diploma holders gain practical job skills. It also ensures that apprentices receive a monthly stipend to support them financially during their training.

PANEL DISCUSSIONS ON APPRENTICESHIPS

There were two-panel discussions about the future of apprenticeships. They covered topics such as:

- Degree programs that include apprenticeships

- Credits for apprenticeship training
- Working together between industries and higher education
- Using technology to improve the DBT system and e-Governance

GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Minister Pradhan emphasized the need for education to go beyond traditional degrees. He encouraged educational institutions to focus on making students more employable by offering relevant courses, as highlighted in this year's budget. To ensure that stipends are distributed fairly and efficiently, the DBT system was introduced in 2024. This system allows stipends to be sent directly to apprentices' bank accounts, making sure they get their benefits quickly.

SUPPORTING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

The NATS 2.0 Portal supports the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which aims to make vocational education a key part of the education system. It promotes combining vocational training with general education and supports student mobility through new guidelines for Apprenticeship Embedded Degree Programmes (AEDP) introduced by the UGC and AICTE.

NSDC LAUNCHES WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAM

On July 31, 2024, Shri Atul Kumar Tiwari, the Secretary of the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, announced big steps forward for women's entrepreneurship. This is mainly through new projects like the Women Entrepreneurship Program, launched by the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) in partnership with Britannia Industries.

COLLABORATION

Shri Tiwari highlighted the importance of working together with other ministries, such as Tribal Affairs and Rural Development, to help women entrepreneurs grow. This collaboration aims to give targeted skill training to Women's Self-Help Groups, helping them start strong businesses.

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAM

The Women Entrepreneurship Program focuses on the unique challenges women entrepreneurs face. It offers free self-learning courses in many languages through the Skill India Digital Hub (SIDH). These courses teach important entrepreneurial skills and knowledge. Participants will receive

certificates from NSDC, Britannia, and NIESBUD, showing they have gained new skills. The program aims to empower about 2.5 million women, giving them the tools they need for business success.

FINANCIAL GRANTS AND COMPETITIONS

The program will also feature a finale where the top 50 business ideas will be showcased. Britannia will give ₹10 lakh each to ten standout contestants, encouraging innovation and excellence. The program has two phases:

- **PHASE 1:** The first phase offers self-learning courses.
- **PHASE 2:** The second phase provides support to 10,000 selected candidates, helping them with business model selection, registration, and funding guidance.

NSDC will regularly check how well the program is working to ensure the businesses are sustainable in the long run. This initiative aims to increase the visibility and reach of women-led businesses, creating a supportive environment for their growth.

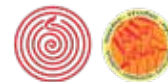
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CABINET APPROVES EIGHT HIGH-SPEED ROAD CORRIDOR PROJECTS

- Recently, the Union Cabinet approved a large plan for eight high-speed road corridor projects totalling 936 kilometers, with a total investment of ₹ 50,000 Cr. These projects are designed to improve connectivity for both pilgrims and freight transport across various regions.

KEY PROJECTS OVERVIEW

The approved projects include a four-lane ring road in Ayodhya, this road is designed to make it easier for pilgrims to visit the Ram Mandir. A bypass in Guwahati, this road will help improve travel and connectivity in the region.

AYODHYA RING ROAD

- Length: 68 km
- Cost: ₹ 3,935 Cr.
- Purpose: This four-lane road will help pilgrims visiting the Ram Mandir by providing easy access from Lucknow airport and major railway stations. It aims to enhance the pilgrimage experience for both national and international tourists.

GUWAHATI BYPASS

- Length: 121 km
- Cost: ₹ 5,729 Cr.
- Features: Includes a major bridge over the Brahmaputra River.

- Connectivity: It will connect long-distance traffic on National Highway 27, linking cities like Siliguri, Silchar, Shillong, and Tezpur, improving regional connectivity.

THARAD - AHMEDABAD CORRIDOR

- Length: 214 km
- Lane Configuration: Six-lane
- Connectivity: This road will connect key national corridors between Amritsar and Jamnagar and the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway.
- Freight Advantage: It will enhance transport routes for industrial regions in Punjab, Haryana, and Rajasthan to major ports in Maharashtra, aiding in freight transport.

AGRA - GWALIOR CORRIDOR

- Length: 88 km
- Cost: ₹ 4,613 Cr.
- Significance: This project will provide better travel connectivity between Agra and Gwalior, boosting economic interactions and regional integration.
- These projects mark a significant advancement in India's road infrastructure. They are aimed at supporting both tourism and freight transport, ultimately fostering economic growth and regional integration.

B-READY INDEX

India is preparing for the World Bank's new Business-Ready (B-Ready) index, which will evaluate the global business environment and investment climate. This new index replaces the Doing Business index and focuses on key factors that affect how businesses operate.

TRANSITION FROM DOING BUSINESS INDEX

The B-Ready index aims to give a more complete picture than the Doing Business index. It will compare countries based on ten important topics that cover the entire life cycle of businesses. The B-Ready report will focus on crucial areas such as:

- BUSINESS ENTRY:** How easy it is to start a business
- LABOUR:** Employment regulations and workforce conditions
- FINANCIAL SERVICES:** Access to banking and financial products
- INTERNATIONAL TRADE:** How efficiently goods are imported and exported
- TAXATION:** Tax policies and their impact on businesses

These topics will provide insights into the rules and conditions that businesses operate under.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE ASSESSMENT

One of the key areas is international trade, which looks at how efficiently goods are imported and exported. This includes customs procedures and the role of digital

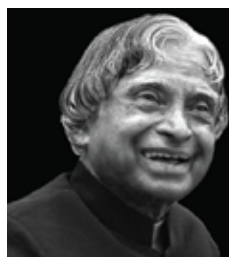
trade, which makes it easier to access global markets. Digital trade helps increase transactions across borders, making international markets more accessible. Simplifying processes and lowering compliance costs are essential for maximizing the benefits of international trade.

TARGET FOR E-COMMERCE EXPORTS

India aims to reach \$200-300 billion in e-commerce exports by 2030. Currently, e-commerce exports make up only a small part (0.9-1.1%) of the country's total merchandise exports, so there is a need to become more efficient and increase capacity.

ABOUT B-READY INDEX

The B-Ready index also evaluates how prepared businesses are for economic shocks and crises. Created by the Global Business Network, it looks at resilience and adaptability, considering factors like supply chain stability, workforce flexibility, and technology use. Countries with higher B-Ready scores often recover faster from crises. The index encourages proactive risk management strategies and has been useful during the COVID-19 pandemic in helping businesses identify weaknesses. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) often score lower due to limited resources. The index highlights the importance of sustainable practices for long-term resilience.



You have to dream before your dreams can come true..

- A. P. J. ABDUL KALAM



CITIES SET TO LAUNCH ₹ 5,000 CR. AMRUT 2.0 PROJECTS

The Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) 2.0 is an important project started in 2021 by the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government. Its goal is to improve city infrastructure in India with a big investment.

FUNDING AND SCOPE

AMRUT 2.0 has been given ₹66,750 Cr. by the central government to use from 2021 to 2026. The main aim is to provide tap water to all homes in about 4,800 towns across the country, with a total cost of ₹2.99 lakh Cr.

PROJECT PROGRESS

So far, the tendering processes are finished, and the selected contractors are ready to start the projects. Out of 8,205 planned projects, 4,065 have been awarded. These projects will improve water supply, sewage treatment, and the overall management of city environments. Around 50% of these projects focus on water supply and sewage management. The rest aim to rejuvenate water bodies and develop parks. The plan includes building sewage treatment plants (STPs) and water treatment plants to help local households.

COMPLETION TIMELINE

As part of the government's 100-day agenda, many

big projects are expected to be up and running soon, focusing on immediate improvements in city infrastructure before the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. Plans include approving long-pending proposals, such as a detailed Delhi Master Plan 2041, and creating new greenfield cities. These are important for sustainable urban development and managing resources effectively.

ATAL MISSION FOR REJUVENATION AND URBAN TRANSFORMATION (AMRUT 2.0)

- **BASIC SERVICES:** AMRUT 2.0, launched in 2021, aims to improve essential services like water supply and sewage management in cities.
- **GREEN AND SMART CITIES:** The mission focuses on creating green spaces and implementing smart city projects, promoting a cleaner and more efficient urban environment.
- **CITIZEN PARTICIPATION:** It encourages people to take part in planning their cities, aiming to improve the quality of life and sustainability in 500 cities with a budget of ₹2.77 lakh Cr.

INDIA'S DISTRICTS FACING EXTREME WEATHER CRISIS

A study titled *Managing Monsoons in a Warming Climate* has highlighted concerning trends in extreme weather across India. According to the study, nearly 84% of districts in the country are experiencing severe heatwaves, and 70% are seeing an increase in heavy rainfall, especially during the monsoon season. The study predicts that by 2036, 8 out of every 10 Indians will be affected by extreme weather. This report, created by IPE Global and ESRI India, examined temperature and rainfall data from 1993 to 2022, showing a significant increase in both the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events over the past 30 years.

HEATWAVES AND RAINFALL TRENDS

Here are some key findings from the study:

- The number of days with heatwaves from March to September has increased fifteen fold from 1993 to 2022.
- In the last decade, the number of extreme heatwave days has increased nineteen fold.
- More than 62% of districts that experienced heatwaves between October and December are now also experiencing irregular and excessive rainfall.

IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

As the atmosphere gets warmer and more humid, the likelihood of heatwaves, especially in tropical regions like India, is increasing. Recent events, such as landslides in Kerala caused by heavy monsoon rains and the shutdown of cities due to extreme weather, are clear examples of the growing climate crisis.

AFFECTED REGIONS

The impact of extreme weather is felt differently across various regions in India:

- **COASTAL AREAS:** States like Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Andhra

Pradesh, Odisha, and Maharashtra are affected.

- **PLAINS:** States such as Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Punjab, Telangana, Bihar, and Delhi are experiencing these changes.
- **HILLY AREAS:** Regions including Tripura, Mizoram, Jammu and Kashmir, Uttarakhand, Meghalaya, and Himachal Pradesh are also seeing the effects.

EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS

The report also discusses how climate change is making extreme weather events like heat waves, floods, and hurricanes more common. For example, the deadliest heatwave ever recorded occurred in 2003, causing over 70,000 deaths in Europe. In 1991, the eruption of Mount Pinatubo led to a temporary global temperature drop of 0.5°C. Tornadoes can produce some of the strongest winds on Earth, exceeding 300 mph. The Great Flood of 1936 affected over 1 million people in the United States. Deforestation is making flood risks worse, and El Niño events are making storms more intense.

HEAT RISK OBSERVATORY

The Heat Risk Observatory monitors extreme heat events globally. This organization uses satellite data to analyze temperature patterns and predict heatwaves. It was established in collaboration with various climate organizations and focuses on the public health impacts, particularly in vulnerable populations. The observatory uses predictive modelling to warn local governments about potential heat risks and has a database of historical heat events to help with research. It also runs campaigns to raise awareness about heat safety and takes an interdisciplinary approach, combining meteorology, public health, and environmental science.



UNION CABINET APPROVES ₹ 24,657 CR. FOR RAILWAY PROJECT

On August 9, 2024, the Union Cabinet in India approved eight new railway projects, with a total investment of ₹ 24,657 Cr. These projects aim to improve connectivity, make travel more efficient, and be environmentally friendly by reducing logistics costs and cutting down on carbon emissions.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The new projects will add 900 kilometers to the railway network, covering 14 districts in Odisha, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar, Telangana, and West Bengal. The projects are expected to be finished by 2030-31.

KEY RAILWAY LINE ROUTES

The Railway routes include:

- Gunupur – Therbubali: 73.62 km
- Junagarh – Nabrangpur: 116.21 km
- Badampahar – Kandujhargarh: 82.06 km
- Bangriposi – Gorumahisani: 85.60 km
- Malkangiri – Pandurangapuram: 173.61 km
- Buramara – Chakulia: 59.96 km
- Jalna – Jalgaon: 174 km
- Bikramshila – Katareah: 26.23 km

LOGISTICAL EFFICIENCY AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

These new routes will connect areas that were

previously not linked by rail, improving the efficiency of transportation. This will help create a smoother supply chain and boost economic growth. The construction phase of these projects is expected to generate around three Cr. man-days of direct employment, which will benefit local economies. The projects will help reduce oil imports by 32.20 Cr. litters and cut CO2 emissions by 0.87 million tonnes. This is roughly equivalent to planting 3.5 Cr. trees. The expansion supports the PM-Gati Shakti National Master Plan, which focuses on integrated planning for better multi-modal connectivity.

PM-GATI SHAKTI NATIONAL MASTER PLAN

The PM-Gati Shakti National Master Plan started in October 2021 to improve how infrastructure is planned and built in India. It brings together 16 ministries and focuses on connecting different types of transport. The plan has a huge budget of 100 lakh Cr. and aims for sustainable development. It uses Geographic Information System (GIS) technology for smooth coordination. By making logistics better, it helps the economy grow and cuts time and costs. Gati Shakti also works with the National Infrastructure Pipeline and aims to support local industries by improving supply chains.

CABINET APPROVES PRADHAN MANTRI AWAS YOJANA-URBAN 2.0

On August 9, 2024, the Union Cabinet approved a new version of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U) program. This program is designed to help one Cr. (10 million) urban poor and middle-class families find housing. PMAY-U, also known as the Prime Minister's Housing Scheme, is a major government effort to provide strong, weather-resistant homes to eligible people living in cities, especially those with low incomes.

OVERVIEW OF PMAY-U

The Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) was first launched in 2015 to ensure affordable housing for everyone by 2022. The scheme provides financial help to both urban and rural poor for building homes. It has two parts: PMAY-U for cities and PMAY-G for villages. People who qualify can get interest subsidies on home loans of up to ₹ 2.67 lakh. The scheme aims to build more than 20 million homes and focuses on using sustainable and innovative construction methods.

CURRENT ACHIEVEMENTS

So far, PMAY-U has approved 1.18 Cr. houses, with over 85.5 lakh already built and given to those who need them. The new PMAY-U 2.0 will offer financial support for the next five years, backed by a ₹ 2.30 lakh Cr. government subsidy within a total investment of ₹ 10 lakh Cr. The amount available in the Credit Risk Guarantee Fund has increased from ₹ 1,000 Cr. to ₹ 3,000 Cr., allowing for better loan guarantees for affordable housing aimed at economically weaker sections (EWS) and Low-Income Groups (LIG).

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To be eligible for PMAY-U 2.0, families must belong to EWS, LIG, or middle-income groups, and they should not own a solid, permanent house anywhere in the country. The program covers all towns listed in the 2011 Census, as well as planning areas and regions under urban planning authorities.

CREDIT RISK GUARANTEE FUND

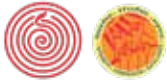
The Credit Risk Guarantee Fund (CRGF) is a tool to help small and medium-sized businesses get loans. It offers guarantees to lenders, which lowers their risk when providing loans. This fund is meant to improve access to finance for businesses that might otherwise struggle to get loans. It often works with financial institutions and government agencies and can even cover loan defaults due to natural disasters. CRGF initiatives can operate at a national or regional level and aim to boost economic growth and job creation.

ECONOMICALLY WEAKER SECTION

In India, the Economically Weaker Section (EWS) refers to people who earn less than ₹ 8 lakh per year. Introduced in 2019, EWS reservations provide 10 % benefits in jobs and education. This status is based on family income, not caste, and is intended to help those who are financially disadvantaged without considering caste. Other countries also have similar classifications, though they might use different terms. EWS beneficiaries in India can access various government programs to improve their economic conditions.



**INDIA'S LARGEST ONLINE IAS
COACHING ACADEMY**



LOK SABHA PASSES APPROPRIATION BILL FOR FY 2024-25

On 26th February 2024, the Lok Sabha passed the Appropriation (No. 2) Bill, 2024, allowing the Indian government to withdraw funds from the Consolidated Fund of India for the 2024-25 financial year. This followed discussions on budget allocations for several ministries, especially the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, and Dairying.

UNDERSTANDING THE APPROPRIATION BILL

The Appropriation Bill is an important legislative measure that enables the government to spend money allocated for various expenses within a financial year. This Bill makes it legally possible to transfer the necessary funds for government operations.

PROCEDURE IN LOK SABHA

During the session, Speaker Om Birla shortened the discussions and moved the Bill forward at 6 PM after addressing cut motions proposed by members, which were then rejected. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman proposed the Bill for approval, and it was passed shortly after.

KEY MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTS

During the discussions, Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh talked about the government's funding initiatives, especially in fisheries and animal husbandry. He highlighted the Modi government's non-discriminatory approach to state funding, mentioning specific projects in West Bengal, Kerala, and Andhra Pradesh.

INVESTMENT IN FISHERIES PROJECTS

Singh pointed out significant financial allocations, including ₹41.44 Cr. for West Bengal under the Blue Revolution Project. He also noted that India is the second-largest fishery producer in the world and the top dairy producer.

FISHERMEN'S SUPPORT INITIATIVES

The government has started various welfare measures for fishermen, including the installation of a transponder by ISRO. This device helps with communication and ensures the safety of fishermen who might cross maritime boundaries.

YEN CARRY TRADE

Global equity markets experienced a severe downturn starting on Aug 05, causing significant declines in major markets from Tokyo to London. Japan's Nikkei had its largest single-day drop since 1987, indicating a major systemic issue.

WHAT HAPPENED ON AUGUST 05, 2024?

On August 05, 2024, markets took a sharp dive. The Nikkei index dropped by 12.40% and the Topix index by 12.48%, leading to trading halts. European and Indian markets also fell, with India's Sensex losing over 2,200 points, wiping out around ₹15 trillion in wealth.

WHAT CAUSED THE MELTDOWN?

The main reason for this market collapse was the unwinding of the yen carry trade. This trading strategy involves borrowing money in Japan, where interest rates are low, and investing it in other countries with higher returns. As Japan started raising interest rates, this trade became less profitable.

WHY THE YEN IS CARRY TRADE UNRAVELLING NOW?

The Bank of Japan increased interest rates to 0.25% and announced plans to reduce its bond-buying program,

strengthening the yen against the US dollar. This change made the yen carry trade less attractive, causing investors to sell off their positions quickly.

ARE THERE OTHER CONTRIBUTING FACTORS?

Other factors adding to the market instability included fears of a potential US recession, marked by rising unemployment to 4.3 %, and geopolitical tensions, particularly concerns about a possible conflict involving Iran.

ABOUT YEN CARRY TRADE

The yen carry trade involves borrowing the Japanese yen at low interest rates to invest in assets that offer higher returns. It became popular after the 1990s due to Japan's slow economic growth. Traders make money by taking advantage of currency fluctuations.

However, this strategy is risky, especially during times of market volatility, as changes in currency value can lead to significant losses. The Bank of Japan's monetary policies greatly affect the success of the yen carry trade. It works best when global investors are willing to take risks, often leading to large capital flows into emerging markets.

YEN CARRY TRADE

The PM-KUSUM scheme, started in 2019 to introduce solar energy in Indian agriculture, is facing difficulties. According to a report by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), only 30 % of the scheme's targets have been met. With the 2026 deadline approaching, improvements are urgently needed.

OVERVIEW OF THE PM-KUSUM SCHEME

The scheme has three main parts:

- COMPONENT A: Installing mini-grids on barren lands.
- COMPONENT B: Replacing diesel water pumps with off-grid solar water pumps.
- COMPONENT C: Replacing electric water pumps with on-grid solar pumps and creating mini-grids for agricultural solarisation.

PROGRESS AND SUCCESSES

Component B has made good progress in states

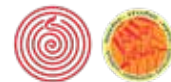
like Haryana, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, and Uttar Pradesh. By replacing diesel pumps with solar-powered ones, farmers are saving up to ₹ 55,000 annually. This also helps them avoid power cuts, making irrigation more reliable.

CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTATION

- CHEAP ELECTRICITY: The availability of inexpensive electricity makes farmers less interested in switching to solar pumps.
- PRESSURE TO BUY LARGER PUMPS: Farmers are often pressured to buy bigger pumps than they need, which increases their costs.
- CENTRALISATION: The centralized implementation process is inefficient and varies by state.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The CSE report suggests several strategies to improve the scheme's success:



- **DECENTRALISATION:** Allow local agencies with expertise to manage implementations more effectively.
- **FINANCIAL VIABILITY:** Offer instalment payment options for upfront costs to make solar pumps more accessible to farmers.
- **INCREASED CENTRAL ASSISTANCE:** Provide more

financial support tailored to state-specific needs and solar module prices to reduce the financial burden on farmers. These steps aim to make the PM-KUSUM scheme more effective and help meet its goals by the 2026 deadline.

UNION CABINET APPROVES THREE MAJOR METRO PROJECTS IN INDIA

The Union Cabinet approved three new Metro projects in India to improve city transportation. These are the Bengaluru Metro Phase-3, Thane Integral Ring Metro, and an extension of the Pune Metro, with a total estimated cost of ₹30,765.5 Cr.

BENGALURU METRO PHASE-3

This expansion will add 42.3 km to the existing Metro network and introduce 14 new stations. It will connect key areas such as Kempegowda International Airport and the IT corridor. A notable feature is a 22.8 km underground section, which will help reduce traffic congestion on the surface. The project, utilizing advanced tunnelling technology, is set to be completed by 2025. It is expected to improve public transportation significantly and cut travel times. The estimated cost is around ₹15,000 Cr., with partial funding from the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

THANE INTEGRAL RING METRO

The extension will include two lines: Line 1, running from PCMC to Swargate, and Line 2, from Bhosari to Swargate. It covers about 32 kilometers and aims to reduce urban congestion. Started in 2019, the project features a combination of elevated and underground tracks and uses modern, energy-efficient trains. The first section opened

in 2022, and the full extension is expected by 2025. This extension is designed to improve travel time and connectivity while promoting sustainable urban transport.

PUNE METRO EXTENSION

Part of Mumbai's metro network, this project will span around 30.5 kilometers and include 27 stations. It is intended to ease congestion and integrate different transport modes. Construction began in 2016, with the first phase expected to be completed by 2023. The metro will significantly cut travel time between Thane and Cuffe Parade. It incorporates eco-friendly measures, including reduced land use, and aims to serve about 500,000 passengers daily, thereby enhancing urban connectivity.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT

These Metro projects will significantly increase the number of daily passengers, potentially reaching millions by 2045. They will enhance urban mobility, stimulate economic growth, and reduce reliance on private vehicles, contributing to a cleaner environment. The Pune and Thane Metro projects will be managed by Maha Metro. Funding will come from the Government of India, the Government of Maharashtra, and international agencies, highlighting a strong commitment to modernizing urban infrastructure.

KARNATAKA LEADS NATION WITH 5,765 PUBLIC EV CHARGING STATIONS

Karnataka is leading India in the number of public Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations, with a total of 5,765 stations, according to the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE). Most of these stations (about 85%) are in the Bengaluru Urban district, showing Karnataka's strong commitment to supporting electric vehicles.

COMPARISON WITH OTHER STATES

After Karnataka, Maharashtra has 3,728 EV charging stations, Uttar Pradesh has 1,989, and Delhi has 1,941. This shows that Karnataka has made significant investments in EV infrastructure compared to other states. Energy Minister K.J. George has highlighted the importance of a strong EV infrastructure, crediting the success to strategic efforts and policies aimed at promoting eco-friendly transportation.

FUNDING SOURCES

The development of these charging stations has been supported by various funding sources, including:

India's FAME scheme (Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and Electric Vehicles).

Investments from the Bangalore Electricity Supply Company (Bescom).

Green cess funds from the State Transport Department.

Public-private partnerships (PPP).

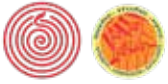
Karnataka was the first state in India to introduce an electric vehicle policy back in 2017, setting the stage for future growth in electric mobility.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

To further increase EV adoption and create a sustainable transport system, the state government plans to develop model EV cities. The 2024 State Budget includes plans for an additional 2,500 EV charging stations through the PPP model. Additionally, ₹35 Cr. will be invested to set up 100 new charging stations in partnership with Electricity Supply Companies.

ABOUT INDIA'S FAME SCHEME

India's Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles (FAME) scheme, aims to make electric and hybrid vehicles more affordable and encourage their purchase. The scheme was introduced in April 2015 by the Department of Heavy Industry. The scheme's goals are to promote the manufacturing of electric and hybrid vehicle technology, reduce liquid fuel consumption, and create a self-sufficient economy of scale.



GREEN AMMONIA SCHEME

The Indian government is starting a major auction process to encourage the production of green ammonia as part of its Strategic Interventions for Green Hydrogen Transition (SIGHT) Scheme. This effort is aimed at helping India move towards cleaner and more sustainable energy sources by supporting the creation of green hydrogen and its related products.

PURPOSE OF COMPANY VISITS

To help companies interested in producing green ammonia, the government is arranging visits to fertilizer production facilities. These visits will take place from August 27 to September 10 and are meant to give companies a better understanding of the logistics and supply chains involved. By seeing the operations first-hand, companies can gather important information that will help them make accurate bids based on the cost of delivering green ammonia.

TIMELINE FOR BIDS

Companies that want to visit the sites must submit their requests to the Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) by August 22. The deadline for submitting bids to produce green ammonia is September 3, though it is likely that this deadline will be extended.

SIGHT SCHEME

The SIGHT Scheme is a key part of India's National Green Hydrogen Mission and has a budget of ₹ 17,490 Cr. It

focuses on supporting the manufacturing of electrolyzers (devices that split water into hydrogen and oxygen using electricity) and the production of green hydrogen. This scheme is designed to promote the use of renewable energy across India.

ROLE OF SECI

SECI, the Solar Energy Corporation of India, will play a central role in managing the auction process. They will handle the purchase agreements between the companies bidding to produce green ammonia and the buyers who will purchase it, ensuring that the production and distribution processes are well-organized.

DEMAND FROM THE FERTILISER INDUSTRY

The fertilizer industry is one of the main users of hydrogen, which is crucial for making ammonia—a key ingredient in nitrogen-based fertilizers. Major fertilizer companies like IFFCO, Madras Fertilisers, and Coromandel International, with a combined production capacity of 739,000 tonnes per year, are expected to be the primary buyers in this auction. This initiative marks India's first nationally coordinated effort to promote the production of green ammonia. It represents a significant step toward a future of sustainable energy and aims to improve the efficiency of fertilizer production in the country.

MAHARASHTRA LAUNCHES FIRST SOLAR VILLAGE

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde has launched the Solar Village Scheme. This program aims to power 100 villages with 100% solar energy. Manyachiwadi in Satara district is the first village to benefit from this scheme, making it the first fully solar-powered village in the state.

What is the Solar Village Scheme?

This is a government initiative to promote renewable energy, specifically solar power, in Maharashtra. The plan is to provide complete solar power to two villages in each district.

MAIN GOALS

- No Electricity Bills: Households will not need to pay for their electricity under the PM Suryagarh Muft Bijali Yojana.
- Free Power for Farmers: Farmers will receive free electricity.
- RECENT PROGRESS
- First Success: Manyachiwadi has become the first village in Maharashtra to be entirely powered by solar energy.
- Future Projects: The scheme will soon extend to Shivirth

Nagar in Kothrud and Sector 25 in Nigdi.

GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and other officials support the project, showing their commitment to renewable energy. Residents of Manyachiwadi will enjoy reduced electricity costs thanks to solar power, and the plan is to expand this success to more villages in Maharashtra.

PM SURYAGARH MUFT BIJALI YOJANA

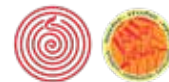
The PM Suryagarh Muft Bijali Yojana provides free electricity to families in rural areas who have low incomes. The scheme focuses on using solar power to promote clean energy. It aims to help local economies and improve people's lives. To make it work, the program collaborates with state governments and energy departments. It supports India's goals for renewable energy. Families need to meet certain requirements to qualify, and there are awareness campaigns to inform eligible households. The scheme also promotes including women in energy access efforts.

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CCI RAISES CONCERNS OVER \$ 8.5 BN. RELIANCE-DISNEY MERGER

The \$ 8.5 billion merger between Reliance and Disney is under the spotlight as India's antitrust body, the Competition Commission of India (CCI), examines its impact on competition in the media sector.

MARKET DOMINANCE AND COMPETITION

This merger will create the largest entertainment company in India, bringing together 120 TV channels and two streaming services. The CCI is worried that this might reduce competition, as it could limit the number of significant players in the market, potentially making it harder for smaller companies to compete.

IMPACT ON ADVERTISING RATES

One major concern is how this merger could affect advertising costs. With the new company controlling about 40% of the TV and streaming ad market, there is a fear that they could raise ad prices, especially during popular events like cricket matches, where advertising space is highly sought after.

CRICKET BROADCASTING RIGHTS

The merger will also give the company control over

valuable cricket broadcasting rights, including those for the Indian Premier League (IPL). The CCI is concerned that holding these rights could give the company too much power, allowing it to increase advertising costs and limit consumer choices.

PREVIOUS CONCESSIONS AND COMPLICATIONS

Reliance and Disney have suggested selling off fewer than 10 TV channels to ease these concerns. However, they are reluctant to sell their cricket broadcasting rights due to existing contracts. This resistance adds complexity to the approval process and might cause delays. The CCI's scrutiny is similar to what happened in a previous case involving a proposed merger between Zee and Sony in 2022. Despite offering solutions to ease competition concerns, that merger ultimately failed to go through. The CCI has asked Reliance and Disney to respond within 30 days, stressing the importance of addressing these competition concerns to move forward with the merger.

INDIA-US HIGH-LEVEL MEETING IN ENERGY COOPERATION

Union Power Minister Manohar Lal held an important discussion with John Podesta, a senior adviser to the US President on International Climate Policy. This meeting marked a key moment in strengthening the cooperation between India and the United States in the energy sector, with a strong focus on clean energy projects.

BILATERAL COOPERATION

The talks were described as "productive," meaning both sides felt the meeting was successful and positive. Minister Lal and Podesta both agreed on the importance of working together to address energy challenges and move towards a future that relies more on clean energy.

KEY AREAS OF DISCUSSION

- **GRID MODERNIZATION:** They discussed the importance of improving India's electricity grid and transmission systems. This is crucial for handling future energy needs, especially as India shifts more towards renewable energy sources.
- **MANUFACTURING CAPACITY:** Another topic was how to strengthen India's ability to produce energy-related technologies, such as solar panels and wind turbines. Increasing manufacturing capacity would help India become more self-sufficient in clean energy technology.
- **ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEMS:** They explored the idea of partnerships between Indian states and the US for research and development of advanced energy storage

solutions. This includes long-term battery systems that can store large amounts of energy, which is important for maintaining a stable power supply from renewable sources like solar and wind.

- **ENERGY EFFICIENCY:** Improving energy efficiency was another major point. They talked about high-efficiency cooling systems, which use less energy and could be part of broader efforts to make India's energy use more efficient.

STRATEGIC CLEAN ENERGY PARTNERSHIP (SCEP)

The meeting also highlighted the significance of the 'Power & Energy Efficiency Pillar' under the Strategic Clean Energy Partnership (SCEP). This partnership shows a shared commitment between India and the US to work together on creating a sustainable energy future.

FUTURE COLLABORATIONS

Both countries showed interest in continuing technical exchanges, policy discussions, and exploring funding options to support these initiatives. They emphasized the need to build strong supply chains and create partnerships driven by investment. Overall, the dialogue between India and the US represents an important step towards their shared goal of a clean energy transition. Both sides are dedicated to deepening their cooperation in critical energy areas, making this meeting a significant milestone in their ongoing partnership.

"Be not afraid of greatness. Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and others have greatness thrust upon them."

- WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE



ECOLOGY





**THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S
MANGROVES REPORT**

FOUR-RINGED BUTTERFLY

**ARUNACHAL PRADESH DISCOVERS
NEW HORNED FROG**

**CLIMATE CHANGE HARMS GREAT
BARRIER REEF**

**CSIR-NPL INTRODUCES
CERTIFICATION FOR EMISSION
SYSTEMS**

**NEELAKURINJI OFFICIALLY
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**GALATHEA BAY ON GREAT
NICOBAR ISLAND**

GASTRODIA INDICA

**GREEN TUG TRANSITION
PROGRAM (GTTP)**

**INDIA ADDS 3 NEW RAMSAR SITES
HIGH SEAS BIODIVERSITY TREATY**



THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S MANGROVES REPORT

CONTEXT: The Global Mangrove Alliance released “The State of the World’s Mangroves 2024” report on World Mangrove Day, highlighting the current status and challenges of global mangrove ecosystems.

BACKGROUND: The latest Global Mangrove Watch map (GMW v4.0) offers enhanced resolution, mapping 147,256 km² of mangroves in 2020, and reveals that aquaculture, agriculture, and climate change are key drivers of mangrove loss. Conservation efforts must integrate adjacent ecosystems to preserve coastal resilience.

Report Highlights

Advancements in Global Mangrove Watch (GMW) Mapping

- Global Mangrove Mapping: GMW provides a time series of global mangrove extent maps from 1996 to 2020, with

the latest in 2024.

- Improved Resolution: GMW v4.0, released in 2024, offers a higher spatial resolution of 10 x 10 meters using Sentinel-2 imagery.
- Local Relevance: The GMW v4.0 aims to create globally consistent yet locally relevant mangrove maps by refining earlier versions.
- Expert Feedback Integration: Feedback from experts and users helped refine the mangrove habitat mask, improving map accuracy.
- Advanced Classification: Over 30,000 machine learning models were trained using 5 million reference points to classify mangroves.



Region	Sum of area km ²	Sum of % global
East & Southern Africa	7,749	5.3%
Middle East	358	0.2%
South Asia	9,749	6.6%
Southeast Asia	49,500	33.6%
East Asia	221	0.2%
Australia & New Zealand	10,348	7.0%
Pacific Islands	5,790	3.9%
North & Central America & Caribbean	21,270	14.4%
South America	19,469	13.2%
West & Central Africa	22,802	15.5%
Grand Total	147,256	100%

Figure 4. Distribution of mangroves within different regions of the globe.

Challenges in Defining Mangrove Species and Integrating Local Ecological Knowledge (LEK)

- **Lack of Clear Criteria:** There are no definitive criteria for defining a plant as a mangrove, leading to subjectivity.
- **Habitat-Specificity Issues:** Debate exists on whether a plant is exclusive to the mangrove niche or also found elsewhere.
- **Tidal Marsh Overlap:** Distinguishing between mangroves

and co-existing tidal marsh plants, especially in temperate regions, is challenging.

- **New Species:** Newly described mangrove species highlight gaps in our current phytobiogeographical knowledge.
- **LEK Integration:** The Global Mangrove Alliance promotes the ethical inclusion of Local Ecological Knowledge in mangrove conservation efforts.

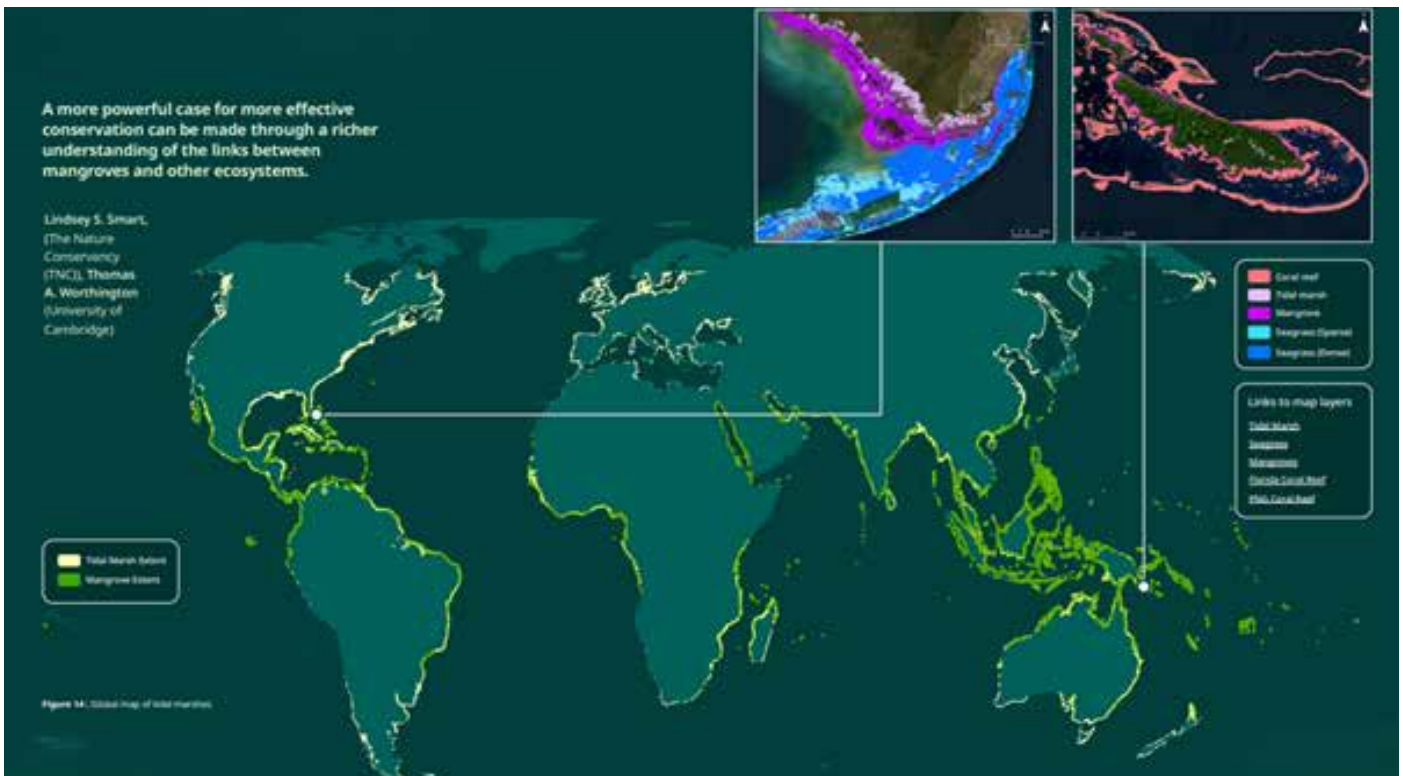
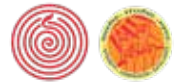


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The Global Mangrove Alliance (GMA), with over 100 member organizations in 30+ countries, plays a crucial role in mangrove conservation through partnerships, knowledge-sharing, and innovative tools. GMA's global efforts focus on restoration, policy development, and empowering communities to safeguard mangroves on a large scale.

Global Mangrove Alliance (GMA): Collaborative Goals for Mangrove Conservation

- **GMA Collaboration:** GMA unites NGOs, governments, scientists, and communities to conserve and restore mangrove ecosystems globally.
- **Revised 2030 Goal:** In 2022, GMA set ambitious targets: halt mangrove loss, restore half of recent losses, and double protection.
- **Halt Loss:** Aim to reduce net human-driven mangrove loss to zero by 2030, preventing 168 km² of loss.
- **Restore Half:** Target to restore 50% of the 8,183 km² of restorable mangroves lost since 1996 by 2030.
- **Double Protection:** Increase protected mangroves from 40% to 80% by 2030, securing an additional 61,000 km².

FOUR-RINGED BUTTERFLY

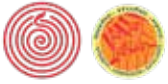
CONTEXT: The great four-ring butterfly, last seen in India 61 years ago, has resurfaced, with a new study by the Bombay Natural History Society documenting its reappearance.

BACKGROUND: In 2018, researchers recorded the great four-ring butterfly in Namdapha National Park, Arunachal Pradesh, India's easternmost tiger reserve. The park's diverse elevation supports rich Ypthima butterfly diversity, also found in China, Nepal, Bhutan, and Myanmar. This species is notable for its distinct wing patterns and larger size.



Namdapha National Park

- **Location:** Namdapha National Park is situated in Arunachal Pradesh, flanked by the Patkai Hills and the Himalayas.
- **Geographic Position:** It lies between the Daphabum Range of the Mishmi Hills and the Patkai Range, spanning the Palearctic and Indo-Malayan regions.
- **River:** The park is named after the Namdapha River, which flows north-south through the park, originating from the Daphabum Range and joining the Noa-Dehing River.
- **Unique Fauna:** Namdapha is the only park globally with all four big cat species: Tiger, Leopard, Snow Leopard, and Clouded Leopard.
- **Diverse Flora:** The park features a range of forest types, including evergreen, moist deciduous, sub-tropical, temperate, and alpine forests.



ARUNACHAL PRADESH DISCOVERS NEW HORNED FROG

CONTEXT: Researchers from the Zoological Survey of India have discovered a new forest-dwelling horned frog species, *Xenophrys apatani*, in Arunachal Pradesh, named after the Apatani community for their conservation efforts.

BACKGROUND: The re-evaluation of the *Xenophrys* species, revealing genetic differences from *X. maasonensis*, led to the identification of *Xenophrys apatani* in India. This discovery highlights India's rich biodiversity and emphasizes the need for detailed taxonomic studies. The findings contribute to our understanding of amphibian evolution and guide future conservation efforts in Eastern Himalayan and Indo-Burma regions.

Xenophrys apatani

New Species:

Xenophrys apatani, a newly discovered horned frog species with small horns.

Resemblance:

Strong resemblance to Maason's horned frog found in Vietnam and China.

Habitat: Lives among tea leaf litter in Tale Wildlife Sanctuary, Arunachal Pradesh.

Identification:

First identified in 2019 but initially confused with Maason's horned frog.

Appearance: Dark brown color with small horns.

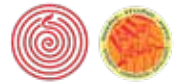
Naming: Named after the Apatani tribe, indigenous to the region around Tale Wildlife Sanctuary.



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CLIMATE CHANGE HARMS GREAT BARRIER REEF

CONTEXT: A new report warns that the Great Barrier Reef will continue to deteriorate due to climate change, with the opportunity to secure its future rapidly diminishing.

BACKGROUND: A recent report from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority confirms that human-induced greenhouse gas emissions are devastating coral reefs globally. Observations of mass coral bleaching and death in the southern Great Barrier Reef highlight the severe impact of global warming, with large areas of coral now dead.



Figure: Landsat 8 Image in Great Barrier Reef (Credit: NASA)

2024 Report on the Great Barrier Reef: Urgent Concerns and Findings

- **Reef Condition:** The Great Barrier Reef is in severe decline, exacerbated by record ocean temperatures and climate change.
- **2024 Outlook Report:** The report highlights worsening threats like warming oceans, cyclones, starfish outbreaks, and poor water quality.
- **Coral Health:** Some coral species have improved slightly, but overall reef resilience is compromised by climate change.
- **Bleaching Impact:** Severe bleaching events, intensified by

heat, threaten coral survival and disrupt their symbiotic algae.

- **Additional Threats:** The reef faces chronic damage from unsustainable fishing, pollution, sediment runoff, and crown-of-thorns starfish outbreaks.

The 2024 report highlights that, despite past denial, the Great Barrier Reef is facing inevitable further degradation due to climate change. Australia's role in global fossil fuel emissions exacerbates the problem. Strong political leadership is crucial to address this issue; without decisive action, the loss of the Great Barrier Reef is imminent.



Great Barrier Reef

- **Location:** The Great Barrier Reef is a vast coral reef complex in the Coral Sea, off northeastern Australia.
- **Size and Structure:** It is the largest living structure on Earth, stretching over 2,300 km with an area of 350,000 sq km.
- **World Heritage:** Declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1981, it is largely managed as a marine protected area.
- **Biodiversity:** The reef hosts around 2,000 fish species, 600 coral species, 4,000 mollusks, and over 250 shrimp species.
- **Marine Life:** It is home to six of seven sea turtle species, numerous sea snakes, and nearly twenty bird species.

CSIR-NPL INTRODUCES CERTIFICATION FOR EMISSION SYSTEMS

CONTEXT: The Central Pollution Control Board Mandated Continuous Emission Monitoring Systems (CEMS) in 2014 for 17 categories of highly polluting industries and common pollution control facilities across India.

BACKGROUND: In 2014, the CPCB mandated Continuous Emission Monitoring Systems (CEMS) for 17 polluting industries, but issues with data reliability have limited its use. To address this, the Union ministry appointed CSIR-NPL as the national verification agency in 2019 to certify emission monitoring instruments and ensure quality assurance.

CSIR-NPL Launches CEMS Certification Scheme

- **Certification Scheme:** CSIR-NPL has developed a certification scheme for Continuous Emission Monitoring Systems (CEMS) after five years of effort.
- **Gaseous CEMS:** Certification for gaseous CEMS is now available, with particulate matter (PM) CEMS certification expected soon.
- **CSE Advocacy:** Nivit Kumar Yadav of CSE highlights the certification as a significant achievement for ensuring quality CEMS data.
- **Ongoing Development:** CSIR-NPL's Rupesh M Das notes that PM-CEMS certification facilities are under

development and will start shortly.

- **Regulatory Importance:** The certification aims to improve data quality and support regulatory and compliance efforts related to emissions monitoring.



National Physical Laboratory (NPL)

- **Establishment:** NPL was established in 1943 by CSIR as India's National Measurement Institute, mandated by Parliament.
- **Custodian Role:** It maintains the Indian Standard Time (IST) and is responsible for national measurement standards.
- **Mission Objectives:** Develop internationally accepted measurement standards and support industry, government, and academia for national prosperity.
- **R&D Focus:** Engage in multidisciplinary research to develop quantum standards and advanced technologies to match global laboratories.
- **Make in India:** Create sophisticated analytical equipment and train scientists under the "Skill India" program to support India's emerging needs.

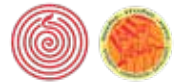


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NEELAKURINJI OFFICIALLY DECLARED THREATENED SPECIES

CONTEXT: The Neelakurinji shrub, which blooms once every 12 years, has been added to the IUCN Red List of threatened species due to conservation concerns.

BACKGROUND: A recent global assessment has confirmed the flower's status as Vulnerable (Criteria A2c) on the IUCN Red List. The flower, which attracts tourists during its blooming season, was recently reported blooming at Peerumade in Idukki. The assessment was conducted by researchers from the Western Ghats Hornbill Foundation and reviewed by the Western Ghats Plant Specialist Group.

Assessment of *Strobilanthes kunthiana*: Neelakurinji's Conservation Status

- **Threatened Status:** *Strobilanthes kunthiana* was considered threatened but lacked a formal evaluation

against IUCN global standards.

- **Assessment Challenges:** Its distribution in Western Ghats' montane landscapes and rare 12-year blooming cycle complicated the assessment.
- **Endemic Species:** The shrub is endemic to high-altitude shola grasslands in southwest India, thriving at 1,340–2,600 meters elevation.
- **Blooming Cycle:** Known for massive, synchronous blooming every 12 years, the species has been observed since 1832.
- **Ecological Importance:** Neelakurinji blooms add purplish blue hues to the mountain grasslands, highlighting its unique ecological role.

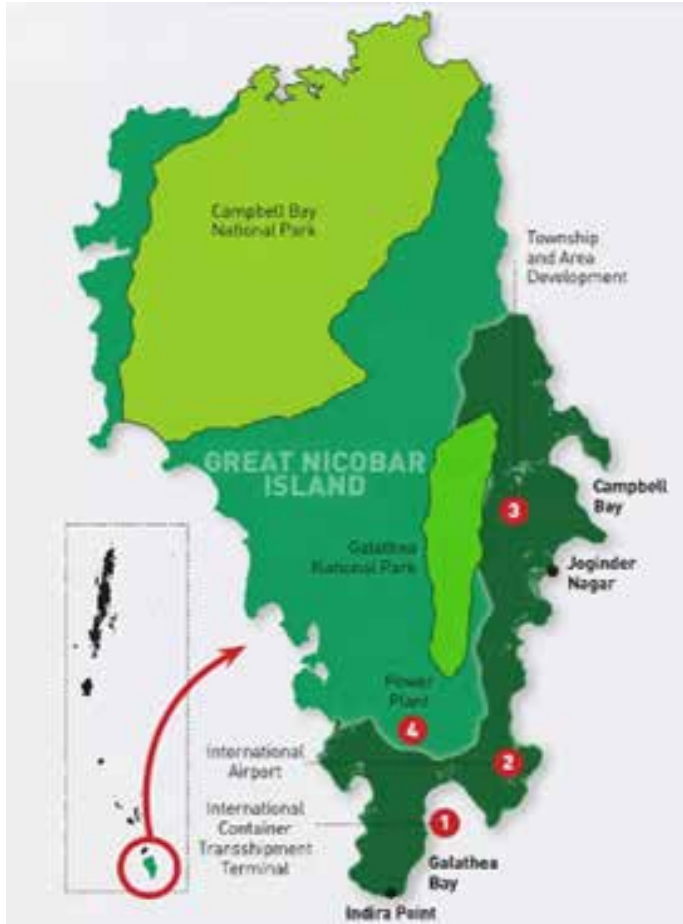




GALATHEA BAY ON GREAT NICOBAR ISLAND

CONTEXT: A wildlife sanctuary in Galathea Bay, Great Nicobar Island, was Denotified to make way for a transshipment port project, impacting conservation efforts.

BACKGROUND: The proposed port site at Galathea Bay, a crucial nesting area for giant leatherback turtles and other species, also includes coral colonies, mangroves, and important nesting sites for the Nicobar megapode.



Credit: Pre- Feasibility Report (Holistic Development of Nicobar Islands March 2021)

Controversy Surrounding Galathea Bay Project

- **Environmental Richness:** Galathea Bay features coral colonies, mangroves, and critical nesting sites for the endemic Nicobar megapode.
- **Wildlife Sanctuary:** Proposed in 1997, the area was designated as a wildlife sanctuary to protect its biodiversity.
- **De-notification Issues:** The sanctuary was de-notified in January 2021, despite ongoing turtle nesting and conservation needs.
- **Regulatory Failures:** The MoEFCC's clearance for the project in November 2022 was deemed inappropriate by the environment appraisal committee.
- **Legal Challenge:** The National Green Tribunal noted violations, including the project's location in a CRZ-IA area where ports are banned.

Issues with Galathea Bay Project and NGT Oversight

- **High-Powered Committee:** NGT appointed an HPC led by MoEFCC Secretary and A&N Chief Secretary to review the project.
- **Conflict of Interest:** The Chief Secretary, also chairman of the project proponent board, and MoEFCC were judging their own actions.
- **CRZ-IA Status:** Despite evidence from NCSCM and other reports, the project site remained classified as CRZ-1A, prohibiting ports.
- **Unresolved Issue:** The project site's CRZ classification remained a problem, conflicting with the proposed port construction.
- **Survey Discrepancy:** NCSCM's report claimed no part of the project is in CRZ-1A, influencing the HPC's conclusions.

GASTRODIA INDICA

CONTEXT: A unique orchid species, *Gastrodia indica*, was recently discovered in Fambonglho Wildlife Sanctuary, Sikkim, adding to the region's biodiversity.

BACKGROUND: *Gastrodia indica*, a newly discovered orchid in Fambonglho Wildlife Sanctuary, Sikkim, is unique as it never opens its flower and is India's first cleistogamous species of the *Gastrodia* genus. This holomycotrophic orchid, depending on fungi for nourishment, grows in high-altitude leaf litter and is now one of ten *Gastrodia* species in India, though it faces habitat-related threats.

About *Gastrodia indica*

- **First Cleistogamous Orchid:** *Gastrodia indica* is India's first orchid that never opens its flower and reproduces without pollinators.
- **Elevation Range:** Found at 1,950–2,100 meters above sea level in the Indian mountains.
- **Holomycotrophic Nature:** Relies on fungal hosts for sustenance, lacking chlorophyll and drawing nutrients from underground fungi.
- **Morphological Differences:** Closely related to *G. exilis* and *G. dyeriana* but differs significantly in floral

morphology.

- **Habitat and Threats:** Thrives in dense leaf litter, associated with specific trees, and faces threats from limited population and habitat specificity.





GREEN TUG TRANSITION PROGRAM (GTTP)

CONTEXT: The Union Minister launched the SOP for the Green Tug Transition Program, aiming to replace conventional fuel-based harbor tugs with greener alternatives, advancing India's environmental and maritime sustainability.

BACKGROUND: The Green Tug Transition Program (GTTP), launched on May 22, 2023, by India's Union Minister of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways, aims to decarbonize maritime operations. The initiative will phase out conventional fuel-based harbour tugs in Indian Major Ports, replacing them with green tugs powered by cleaner, sustainable fuels.



Green Tug Transition Program (GTTP)

- Phase 1 Timeline: GTTP starts October 1, 2024, and ends December 31, 2027, with four Major Ports involved.
- Investment and Technology: INR 1000 Crores investment for at least two green tugs per port, including battery-electric and other green technologies.
- Domestic Innovation: Tugs built in Indian shipyards, promoting 'Make in India' and creating jobs in shipbuilding and design.
- Future Vision: By 2040, all tugs in Indian Major Ports will be green; new tugs must meet ASTDS-GTTP standards from 2033.
- Maritime Sustainability Goals: Aligns with Maritime India Vision 2030 and Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047 to reduce emissions and enhance sustainability.

INDIA ADDS 3 NEW RAMSAR SITES

CONTEXT: Union Environment Minister announced three new Ramsar sites in Tamil Nadu and Madhya Pradesh, raising India's total to 85 Ramsar sites.

BACKGROUND: The Nanjarayan Bird Sanctuary, Kazhuveli Bird Sanctuary in Tamil Nadu, and Tawa Reservoir in Madhya Pradesh have been newly designated Ramsar sites, recognizing their importance as wetlands of international significance. This expansion highlights the Ramsar Convention's role in promoting global awareness of crucial ecosystems.

Nanjarayan Lake Biodiversity and Importance

- **Large Shallow Wetland:** Nanjarayan Lake in Tiruppur, Tamil Nadu, is a significant shallow wetland dependent on rainfall and Nallar drainage.

- **Diverse Species:** Home to 191 bird species, 87 butterflies, seven amphibians, 21 reptiles, 11 small mammals, and 77 plants.
- **Habitat Functions:** Provides feeding and nesting grounds for resident and migratory birds, crucial during migratory seasons.
- **Agricultural Resource:** Serves as a key water source for local agriculture, highlighting its importance for regional farming.
- **MoEFCC Recognition:** Recognized by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change for its ecological and agricultural significance.



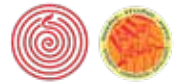
Figure: Nanjarayan Lake

Kazhuveli Bird Sanctuary: Key Highlights

- **Location:** Kazhuveli Bird Sanctuary is a brackish shallow lake in Villupuram district, Tamil Nadu, on the Coromandel Coast.
- **Area:** The sanctuary covers 5,151.6 hectares and is connected to the Bay of Bengal via Uppukalli Creek and Edayanthittu Estuary.
- **Ecological Significance:** It is a significant wetland known for its biodiversity and is on the Central Asian Flyway.
- **Bird Species:** The sanctuary serves as a crucial stopover for migratory birds and a breeding ground for resident bird species.
- **Conservation Importance:** The lake's connectivity and rich biodiversity make it vital for both migratory and resident bird populations.



Figure: Kazhuveli Bird Sanctuary



Tawa Reservoir: Key Points

- Location: Tawa Reservoir is situated at the confluence of the Tawa and Denwa rivers in the Satpura Tiger Reserve.
- River Origin: The Tawa River originates from the Mahadeo Hills in Chhindwara district and joins the Narmada River.
- Boundaries: It forms the western boundary of Satpura National Park and Bori Wildlife Sanctuary.
- Ecological Importance: The reservoir supports diverse aquatic flora and fauna, including rare and endangered species of plants, reptiles, and insects.
- Bird Habitat: It serves as a crucial habitat for many local and migratory bird species.

RAMSAR CONVENTION: SAFEGUARDING WETLAND BIODIVERSITY

- Origin: The Ramsar Convention, initiated in 1971 in Ramsar, Iran, is the first treaty for conserving natural resources.
- Definition of Ramsar Wetlands: Encompasses diverse habitats like swamps, marshes, and coral reefs, crucial for biodiversity conservation.
- Conservation Goals: Aims to halt global wetland loss and promote sustainable management through international cooperation and policy-making.
- Ramsar Sites: Designates wetlands of international importance based on ecological, biological, or hydrological significance for conservation frameworks.
- Management Framework: Countries commit to maintaining the ecological character of Ramsar sites through wise use and oversight.

THE MONTREUX RECORD

- Purpose: Registry within the Ramsar List highlighting wetlands undergoing ecological changes due to human activities.
- Establishment: Formed at COP4 in Montreux, Switzerland in 1990 to focus on wetlands needing conservation efforts.
- Current Status: Includes two Indian wetlands: Keoladeo National Park and Loktak Lake; Chilika Lake was delisted later.

INDIA'S RAMSAR SITES: COMMITMENT TO WETLAND CONSERVATION

- Contracting Party: India signed the Ramsar Convention in 1971 and ratified it on February 1, 1982.
- World Wetlands Day: Celebrated globally on February 2 to mark the adoption of the Ramsar Convention.
- Ramsar Sites Milestone: India increased its Ramsar sites to 80, achieving significant growth with 38 added in the last three years.
- Government Initiative: Policy efforts have driven the increase from 26 to 80 Ramsar sites in the past decade.
- Conservation Impact: Expansion of Ramsar sites enhances India's commitment to wetland conservation and biodiversity protection.

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SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



METACRIMES

**NIT-C UNVEILS 'NIVAHIKA' DATA
MANAGEMENT PORTAL**

RASHTRIYA VIGYAN PURASKAR 2024

TANTALUM

CANINE DISTEMPER VIRUS

PARVOVIRUS B19

**cNARMADA TO EVALUATE RIVER
ECOSYSTEM**

**NATIONAL PEST SURVEILLANCE
SYSTEM**

CALIFORNIUM

MPOX

**ISRO SUCCESSFULLY LAUNCHES EOS-
08 SATELLITE**

ANTIHYPER HYDROGEN-4

NATIONAL MEDICAL REGISTER PORTAL

**INDIA'S FIRST QUANTUM COMPUTER
READY FOR LAUNCH**

BLACK HOLE FINDER

Bio-E3 POLICY

MISSION RHUMI



METACRIMES

CONTEXT: Metacrimes, occurring in the metaverse, challenge traditional crime definitions, complicating reporting and investigation due to their misalignment with existing legal frameworks.

BACKGROUND: The Apple Vision Pro, recently released in Australia, offers users immersive access to the metaverse, enabling virtual experiences like exploring environments or buying homes. However, these advanced online environments also raise concerns about the potential for new types of crimes in the digital space.

Metaverse and Metacrime: Key Insights

- **Metaverse Definition:** The metaverse is a virtual 3D world accessed via VR headsets, resembling the universe depicted in Ready Player One.
- **Visualization Example:** In the 2018 movie Ready Player One, users enter a vast digital universe using special goggles and avatars.
- **Metacrime and Cybercrime:** Crimes in the metaverse share similarities with traditional cybercrime, involving illegal activities in virtual spaces.
- **Global and Anonymous Crimes:** Advancements in technology make metacrime more global and anonymous, complicating the identification of perpetrators.
- **Unique Metacrime Features:** Certain features of metacrime do not overlap with conventional cybercrime, presenting new challenges for law enforcement.
- **Emerging Risks in the Metaverse:** Key Insights
- **Immersive VR Attacks:** Immersive VR attacks feel really due to sensory techniques, leading to real psychological trauma from virtual experiences.
- **Evidence Challenges:** Lack of constant recording in the metaverse hampers the capture of crucial evidence in negative interactions.
- **Safety Controls:** Companies have introduced user controls like safety bubbles, but their effectiveness in preventing harassment is still uncertain.
- **Legal Precedents:** The UK's first metaverse rape case may set legal precedents for avatar liability and minor protection.
- **Physical Risks in VR:** Manipulation of VR tech, including haptic suites, can cause physical harm such as vertigo, motion sickness, and neurological issues.

METAVVERSE WORKING



1 Virtual World:
Metaverse is a shared, persistent 3D virtual space blending physical and digital realities.



2 User Interaction:
Users interact through avatars, enabling communication, collaboration, and immersive experiences.



3 Blockchain Integration:
Blockchain supports decentralized ownership of digital assets, ensuring security and transparency.



4 AR/VR Technology:
Augmented and virtual reality technologies create immersive environments within the Metaverse.



5 Economy:
Digital currencies and NFTs facilitate commerce, allowing real-world value in virtual transactions.



6 Cross-Platform Access:
Accessible across devices like VR headsets, computers, and smartphones, enhancing user engagement.



NIT-C UNVEILS 'NIVAHIKA' DATA MANAGEMENT PORTAL

CONTEXT: NIT-Calicut has launched 'Nivahika,' a cutting-edge web portal designed to revolutionize the institute's data handling and reporting processes.

BACKGROUND: NIT-C Director Prasad Krishna inaugurated Nivahika, a new portal designed to ensure accuracy and consistency in data submissions, which will aid in the Centre's national rankings. He emphasized that Nivahika is a significant achievement for NIT-C and has the potential to become a benchmark for other NITs once fully operational.



NIT Calicut's Nivahika Portal: Advancing Data Management

- **Nivahika Launch:** NIT Calicut introduces the 'Nivahika' web portal, revolutionizing data management and reporting at the Institute.
- **Streamlined Reporting:** The portal ensures accuracy and consistency in data for ministry submissions and national rankings.
- **Collaborative Development:** Developed with support from CITRA, CNC, and CCC, Nivahika records key activities from all departments.
- **Automated Reports:** Nivahika's automated report generation enhances data accessibility and secure access for authorized personnel.
- **Benchmark for NITs:** Nivahika is set to become a model for data management across other National Institutes of Technology.

RASHTRIYA VIGYAN PURASKAR 2024

CONTEXT: President Smt. Droupadi Murmu presented the inaugural Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar to 33 distinguished scientists at Gantantra Mandap, Rashtrapati Bhavan.

BACKGROUND: The Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar (RVP) is a prestigious award in India, recognizing outstanding contributions in science, technology, and innovation. Established to honor scientists, technologists, and innovators for their groundbreaking work, the RVP aims to acknowledge and inspire advancements that have a significant societal impact.

Award: Vigyan Team

Field: Space Science and Technology

Awardees: ISRO - Team Chandrayaan 3

Profile: Indian Space Research Organisation, ISRO Headquarters, Bengaluru: Team Chandrayaan-3 is awarded under Vigyan Team category. The Chandrayaan-3 arguably is the most globally visible and acknowledged scientific achievement for the nation and represents achievements in different areas of technology as a team work of scientists in Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).



Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar 2024

Vigyan Yuva

Final List of Awardees

Dr. Krishna Murthy S L	Dr. Bappi Paul
Dr. Swarup Kumar Parida	Prof. Mahesh Ramesh Kakde
Prof. Radhakrishnan Mahalakshmi	Prof. Jitendra Kumar Sahu
Prof. Aravind Penmatsa	Dr. Pragya Dhruv Yadav
Prof. Vivek Polshettiwar	Prof. Urbasi Sinha
Prof. Vishal Rai	Dr. Digendranath Swain
Dr. Roxy Mathew Koll	Dr. Prashant Kumar
Dr. Abhilash	Prof. Prabhu Rajagopal
Dr. Radha Krishna Ganti	ISRO - Team Chandrayaan 3
Dr. Purabi Saikia	



Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar 2024

Vigyan Shri

Final List of Awardees

Dr. Anandharamakrishnan C	Prof. Rahul Mukherjee
Dr. Avesh Kumar Tyagi	Prof. Dr Sanjay Behari
Prof. Umesh Varshney	Prof. Lakshmanan Muthusamy
Prof. Jayant Bhalchandra Udgaonkar	Prof. Naba Kumar Mondal
Prof. Syed Wajih Ahmad Naqvi	Dr. Annapurni Subramaniam
Prof. Bhim Singh	Prof. Rohit Srivastava
Prof. Adimurthi Adi	

Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar 2024

Vigyan Ratna

Awardee

Prof. Govindarajan Padmanabhan

Biological Sciences
Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru

Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar: Overview and Process

- Objective:** Recognizes exceptional contributions in science, technology, and innovation impacting Indian society and global science.
- Eligibility:** Open to scientists, technologists, and innovators in any sector, including Indian-origin professionals abroad.
- Nomination Period:** Annual nominations are accepted from January 14 to February 28 via the Rashtriya Puraskar Portal.
- Nomination Types:** Both self-nominations and nominations by others are allowed, ensuring inclusivity.
- Award Scope:** Celebrates outstanding work by individuals and teams in science, technology, and innovation fields.

CATEGORIES OF THE AWARD

The Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar is awarded in four distinct categories:

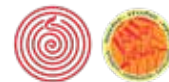
- Vigyan Ratna (VR) Award:** This is the highest honour, awarded for lifetime achievements in any field of science and technology.
- Vigyan Shri (VS) Award:** Recognizes distinguished contributions in any field of science and technology.
- Vigyan Yuva-Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar (VY-SSB) Award:** Honors young scientists who have made exceptional contributions in science and technology.
- Vigyan Team (VT) Award:** Given to a team of three or more scientists/researchers/innovators who have made significant contributions in their field through collaborative work.



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TANTALUM

CONTEXT: The Central Government has designated 24 minerals, including Tantalum, as Critical and Strategic in Part D of the First Schedule of the MMDR Act, 1957.

BACKGROUND: The Geological Survey of India (GSI) has identified a Niobium-Tantalum resource of 16.42 million tonnes in Rajasthan's Rewat Hill block. To support critical minerals supply, the Union Budget 2024-25 has announced the elimination of customs duties on Tantalum ores, concentrates, and unwrought Tantalum.

Tantalum: Key Characteristics and Properties

1. **Element:** Tantalum, symbol Ta, atomic number 73, is a rare metal primarily found in columbite-tantalite ore.

2. **Major Producers:** Significant production occurs in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Brazil, and Nigeria.
3. **Properties:** A transition metal, tantalum is a shiny, silvery, and soft solid at room temperature.
4. **Corrosion Resistance:** Tantalum is almost immune to chemical attacks below 150°C and resistant to corrosion due to an oxide film.
5. **Refractory Metal:** Known for its high melting point and resistance to heat and wear, surpassed only by tungsten and rhenium.

TANTALUM APPLICATIONS: KEY USES AND INDUSTRIES

1. **Electronics:** Tantalum capacitors store more electricity in smaller sizes, making them ideal for smartphones and laptops.
2. **High-Temperature Use:** Due to its high melting point, tantalum substitutes for platinum in various high-temperature applications.
3. **Industrial Components:** Tantalum is used in chemical plants, nuclear power plants, aircraft, and missiles due to its durability.
4. **Medical Uses:** It is non-reactive with bodily fluids, making it suitable for surgical equipment and implants like artificial joints.
5. **Hard Materials:** Tantalum carbide-graphite composites are among the hardest materials, used in cutting edges of high-speed machine tools.

CANINE DISTEMPER VIRUS

CONTEXT: Stray dogs within a two-kilometer radius of Corbett Tiger Reserve in Uttarakhand will be vaccinated against canine distemper to prevent the disease from affecting tigers and elephants.

BACKGROUND: A central government-funded pilot project, will focus on combating canine distemper in wildlife. The initiative aims to enhance forest and wildlife management in Uttarakhand, supporting the conservation of tigers and elephants as part of the National Mission for Himalayan Studies.

Canine Distemper Virus case study in India

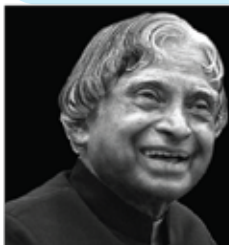
1. **Outbreak:** Canine distemper virus caused an epizootic in

Asiatic lions in India, starting September 2018.

2. **Affected Population:** The outbreak severely impacted the Asiatic lion population in Gir Forest National Park.
3. **Symptoms:** Lions exhibited symptoms like fever, respiratory issues, and neurological signs.
4. **Mortality Rate:** High mortality rate observed, with numerous lions succumbing to the disease.
5. **Control Efforts:** Vaccination and veterinary interventions aimed to control the spread and protect the population.
6. **Conservation Impact:** The outbreak highlighted the vulnerability of endangered species to infectious diseases and habitat pressures.

CANINE DISTEMPER VIRUS (CDV) OVERVIEW

1. **Highly Contagious:** CDV affects dogs and other carnivores; spreads through droplets, direct contact, and bodily fluids.
2. **Clinical Signs:** Symptoms include fever, discharge, coughing, lethargy, vomiting, diarrhea, and in severe cases, neurological signs.
3. **Diagnosis:** PCR and serology tests confirm infection; high antibody levels suggest immunity. Blood work and X-rays may assist diagnosis.
4. **Treatment:** No cure; manage symptoms with antibiotics, IV fluids, and anti-nausea medications. Euthanasia may be considered in severe cases.
5. **Prevention:** Vaccination is key; start at 6-8 weeks, repeat every 3-4 weeks until 16-20 weeks, and continue every 3 years.



You have to dream before your dreams can come true..

- A. P. J. ABDUL KALAM



PARVOVIRUS B19

CONTEXT: CDC officials advise healthcare providers and the public to stay alert for increasing cases of the highly contagious respiratory virus parvovirus B19 across the US.

BACKGROUND: The CDC has issued a warning about the rising cases of the highly contagious respiratory virus parvovirus B19 in the US. Officials are advising healthcare providers and the public to remain vigilant as the number of infections increases.



Symptoms and Management of Parvovirus B19

1. **Asymptomatic Cases:** Many individuals with parvovirus B19 may show no symptoms and remain unaware of infection.
2. **Common Symptoms:** When present, symptoms include fever, headache, cough, sore throat, rash, and joint pain, usually mild.
3. **Symptoms Variation:** Children often display a "slapped cheek" rash, while adults are more likely to experience joint swelling and pain.
4. **Serious Complications:** Higher risk for severe complications in immunocompromised individuals or those with blood disorders; pregnant women face risks to the foetus.
5. **Prevention and Treatment:** No specific vaccine or treatment; focus on symptom relief and standard prevention practices like handwashing and avoiding respiratory droplets.

PARVOVIRUS B19

1. **Infection and Spread:** Parvovirus B19 causes "fifth disease" and spreads easily via respiratory droplets from coughs and sneezes.
2. **Prevalence:** Around 50% of adults have antibodies by age 20, and 70% by age 40.
3. **Higher Risk:** Individuals working with children have a higher risk of infection.
4. **Current Trends:** Recent reports indicate an increase in infections, especially among children aged 5-9 and pregnant individuals.
5. **CDC Advisory:** Despite no routine surveillance, evidence from labs shows rising cases of parvovirus B19 in the US.

CNARMADA TO EVALUATE RIVER ECOSYSTEM

CONTEXT: IIT Gandhinagar has established the Centre for Narmada River Basin Management (cNARMADA) to conduct the Condition Assessment and Management Plan (CAMP) for the Narmada River basin.

BACKGROUND: IIT Gandhinagar (IITGN) and IIT Indore have collaborated on a Ministry of Jalshakti project, cNARMADA. Inaugurated recently, this initiative aims to assess and address current conditions impacting the river ecosystem. It will create a roadmap for the rejuvenation and conservation of riverine ecosystems, focusing on anthropogenic impacts and future actions.

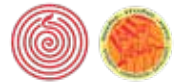
Centre for Narmada River Basin Management

- **Centre Launch:** IIT Gandhinagar inaugurated the Centre for Narmada River Basin Management (cNARMADA) to assess and manage the Narmada River basin.

- **Collaborative Effort:** cNARMADA partners with IIT Indore for the Condition Assessment and Management Plan (CAMP) funded by the Ministry of Jalshakti.
- **Assessment Focus:** The centre will evaluate existing conditions affecting the Narmada River ecosystem and propose a comprehensive rejuvenation and conservation plan.
- **Basin-Wide Study:** The assessment includes studying Narmada and its tributaries, considering impacts from industrialisation, urbanisation, agriculture, deforestation, and flood control measures.
- **Future Actions:** The plan will detail recommendations for addressing anthropogenic impacts and guiding future conservation efforts for the river basin.



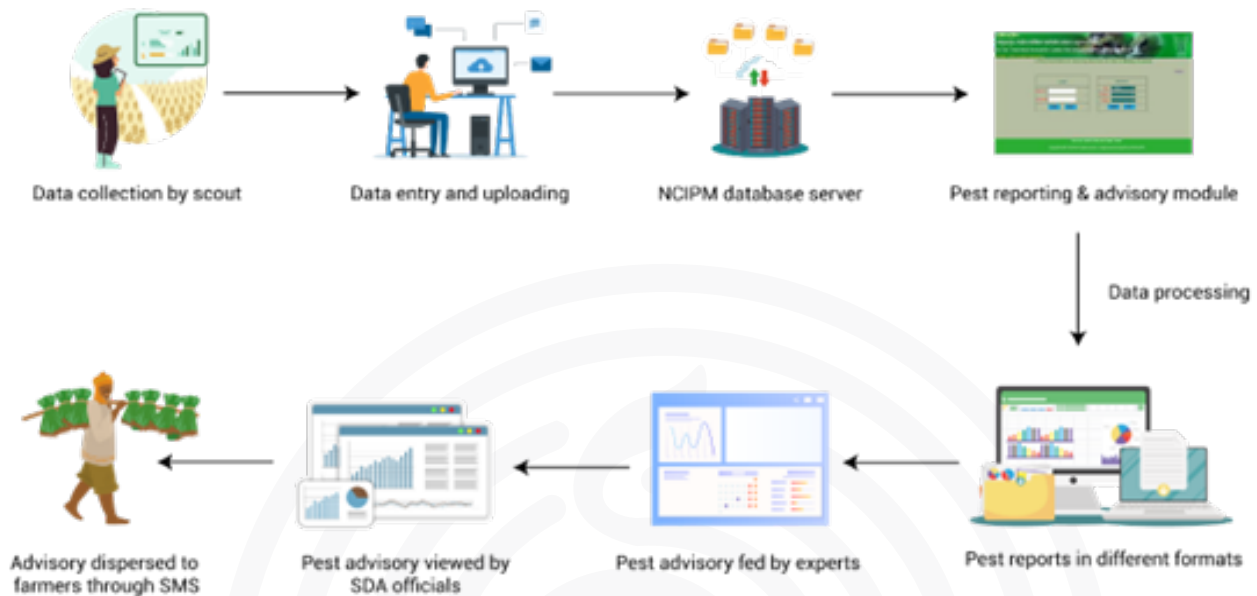
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NATIONAL PEST SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM

CONTEXT: A new AI platform will connect farmers and scientists via phone to assist with pest control, enhancing agricultural support and intervention.

BACKGROUND: The Union Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister inaugurated the National Pest Surveillance System (NPSS) in New Delhi on Thursday. The NPSS will help farmers identify insecticides and pesticides, protecting their crops from damage. The minister also interacted with approximately 500 farmers benefiting from various central government schemes.



About National Pest Surveillance System (NPSS)

- **Digital Initiative:** NPSS, launched by the Ministry of Agriculture, uses AI and ML to provide timely pest management advisories to farmers.
- **Enhanced Pest Management:** Aims to transform pest control practices, reducing reliance on pesticide retailers and promoting scientific pest management.
- **User Accessibility:** Includes a mobile app and web portal for easy access, ensuring all farmers can benefit from the system.
- **Real-Time Data:** Utilizes real-time data and advanced analytics for accurate pest identification, monitoring, and management to minimize crop losses.
- **Actionable Insights:** Provides automated advisories and pest incidence data to help farmers make informed decisions and improve crop productivity.



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CALIFORNIUM

CONTEXT: Gopalganj police in Bihar seized suspected Californium, a costly radioactive metal, alarming the district and prompting involvement from the Department of Atomic Energy scientists.

BACKGROUND: Bihar, police seized 50 grams of what they believed to be highly radioactive Californium, valued at Rs 850 crore. Atomic scientists in protective gear investigated, only to later determine that the material might not be radioactive after all.

CALIFORNIUM

Element: Californium is a radioactive element with symbol Cf and atomic number 98.

Discovery: Discovered in 1950 at the University of California, Berkeley.

Uses: Used in neutron radiography, cancer treatment, and nuclear reactors.

Isotopes: Californium-252 is a notable isotope used for neutron sources and scientific research.

Properties: Highly radioactive and requires careful handling and containment due to its toxicity.

Production: Produced in nuclear reactors through neutron capture processes.



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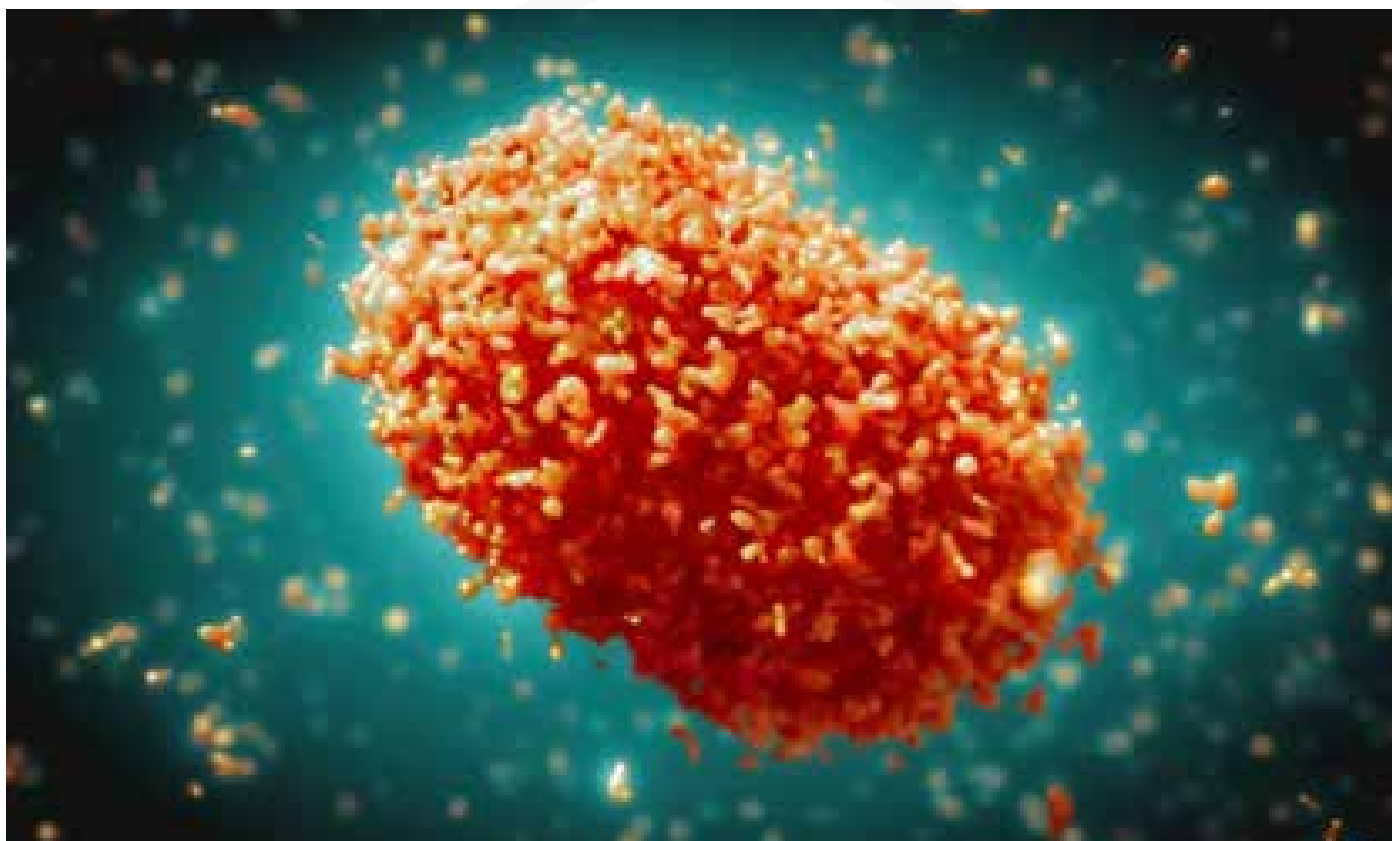
MPOX

CONTEXT: The World Health Organization declared mpox a global public health emergency again after an outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo spread to neighbouring African countries.

BACKGROUND: Africa's top public health body declared mpox (formerly known as monkeypox) an emergency due to its rapid spread. Over 17,000 suspected cases and 517 deaths have been reported across 13 countries this year, marking a 160% increase from the same period last year, according to the Africa CDC.

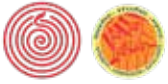
Mpox Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC)

- **PHEIC Declaration:** WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros declares the mpox upsurge in the DRC and Africa a PHEIC due to its rapid spread.
- **New Mpox Clade:** Emergence of a new mpox clade (1b) spreading through sexual networks in DRC, raising international concern.
- **Regional Spread:** Over 100 cases of clade 1b reported in countries neighboring DRC, including Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda.
- **Vaccine Access:** WHO accelerates vaccine access for lower-income countries and triggers Emergency Use Listing for mpox vaccines.
- **Funding Appeal:** WHO anticipates a need for US\$ 15 million for surveillance and response, releasing US\$ 1.45 million from its emergency fund.



COMPREHENSIVE OVERVIEW OF MPOX

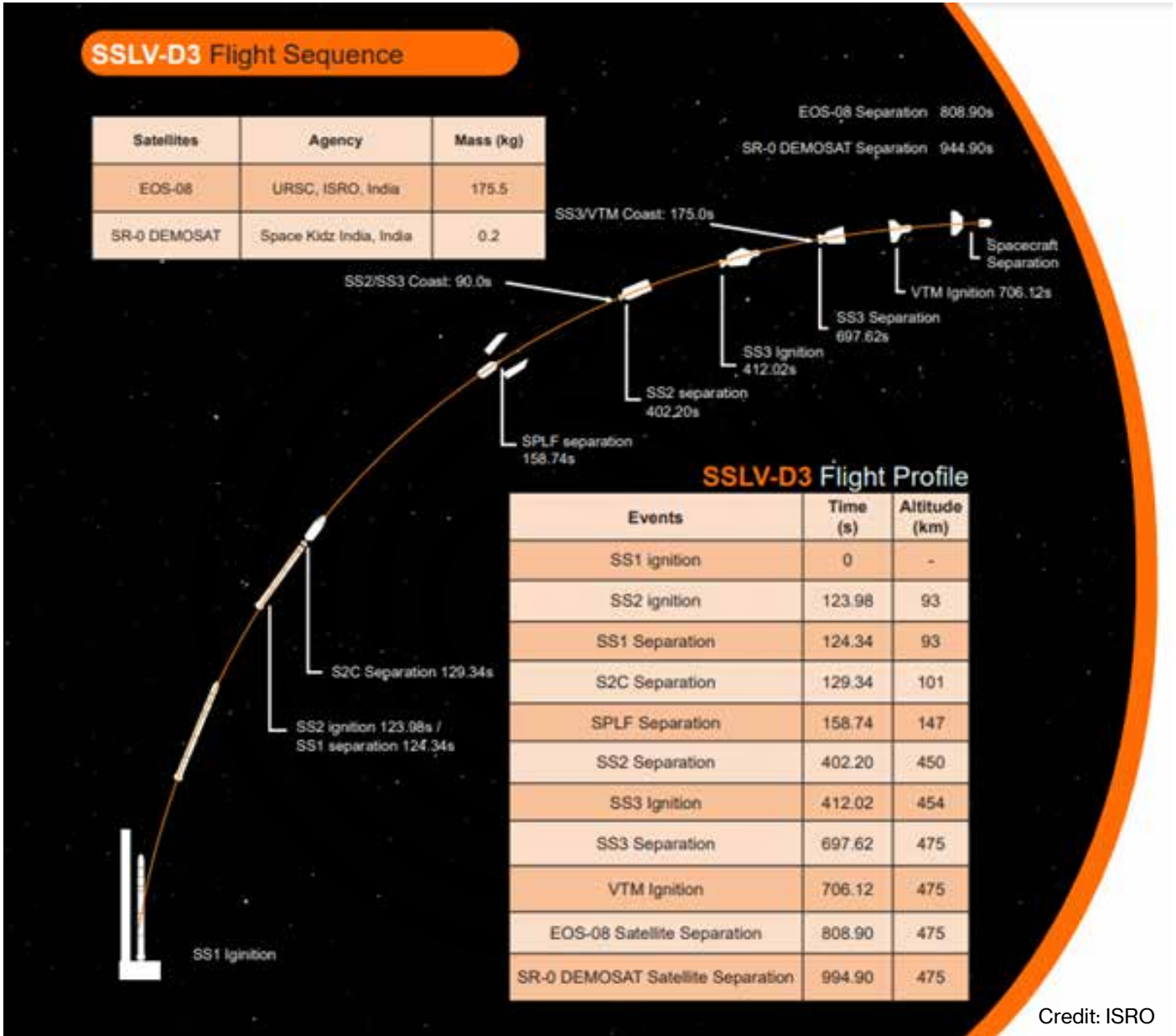
- **Mpox Symptoms:** Mpox causes a painful rash, fever, muscle aches, and swollen lymph nodes; symptoms last 2–4 weeks.
- **Virus Origin and Clades:** Mpox is caused by the monkeypox virus (MPXV), with two clades: clade I (Ia, Ib) and clade II (IIa, IIb).
- **Transmission Methods:** Mpox spreads through close contact, contaminated objects, animal-to-human transmission, and during pregnancy.
- **High-Risk Groups:** Children, pregnant people, immunocompromised individuals, and those with multiple sexual partners face higher risks.
- **Diagnosis and Testing:** Mpox diagnosis involves PCR testing of skin lesions, with differentiation from similar infections like chickenpox.
- **Treatment and Vaccination:** Supportive care is essential; vaccination is recommended for high-risk groups, including health workers.
- **Global Spread and Stigma:** Mpox has spread to over 120 countries since 2022; stigma, especially against certain communities, hampers public health efforts.



ISRO SUCCESSFULLY LAUNCHES EOS-08 SATELLITE

CONTEXT: ISRO successfully launched the EOS-08 Earth Observation Satellite on August 16 using the SSLV-D3 from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota.

BACKGROUND: The SSLV-D3 successfully completed its third and final developmental flight, launching from Satish Dhawan Space Centre and precisely placing the EOS-08 satellite into orbit. The mission achieved its objectives without any deviations, marking a successful milestone for the rocket's development.



Key Highlights of SSLV-D3 Mission and EOS-08 Satellite

- **SSLV Capabilities:** The Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV) can launch satellites weighing 10 to 500 kg into a 500 km orbit.
- **Vehicle Characteristics:** SSLV-D3 is a three-stage solid propulsion vehicle with a liquid-based Velocity Trimming Module, weighing ~119 tons.
- **Mission Objectives:** SSLV-D3 aims to demonstrate repeatable flight performance and successfully inject EOS-08 and SR-0 DEMOSAT into a 475 km orbit.
- **EOS-08 Satellite:** Built on ISRO's Microsat/IMS-1 bus, EOS-08 includes advanced payloads for IR observation, GNSS-R, and UV dosimetry.
- **Innovative Technologies:** EOS-08 features integrated avionics, embedded PCB/battery, flexible solar panels, and advanced antennas for technology demonstration.
- **EOIR Payload:** The Electro Optical Infrared Payload (EOIR) enables day/night imaging in MIR and LWIR bands for surveillance, disaster monitoring, and environmental applications.
- **GNSS-R and SiC UV Payloads:** GNSS-R supports ocean wind, soil moisture, and flood detection, while SiC UV Dosimeter monitors UV radiation for Gaganyaan Mission.



ANTIHYPER HYDROGEN-4

CONTEXT: The discovery of the antiparticle antihyper hydrogen-4 may reveal an imbalance with its matter counterpart, offering insights into the origins of our universe.

BACKGROUND: Physicists at Brookhaven National Laboratory's Relativistic Heavy Ion Collider discovered traces of Antihyper Hydrogen-4, an antimatter particle consisting of an antiproton, two antineutrons, and one antihyperon, among particle tracks from 6 billion collisions. This discovery adds to the understanding of antimatter in high-energy physics.

Discovery of Antihyper Hydrogen-4 and Its Cosmic Implications

- **Antihyper Hydrogen-4:** Physicists identified antihyper hydrogen-4, consisting of an antiproton, two antineutrons,

and one antihyperon, at RHIC.

- **RHIC Collisions:** The discovery occurred after analyzing debris from 6 billion collisions at the Relativistic Heavy Ion Collider (RHIC).
- **Cosmic Imbalance:** The findings may help explain why our universe is dominated by matter despite equal amounts of matter and antimatter.
- **Simulating the Big Bang:** Researchers simulated a mini-Big Bang by smashing heavy ions, creating a plasma where primordial elements emerged and decayed.
- **Published in Nature:** The study, published on August 21 in Nature, provides insights into the matter-antimatter imbalance in the universe.

NATIONAL MEDICAL REGISTER PORTAL

CONTEXT: The union Health minister inaugurated the National Medical Register (NMR) Portal, enabling the registration of all eligible MBBS doctors in India under the National Medical Commission (NMC).

BACKGROUND: The National Medical Register (NMR), mandated by the NMC Act, 2019, will be a comprehensive electronic database of all registered allopathic (MBBS) doctors in India. Managed by the Ethics & Medical Registration Board (EMRB), it uniquely links doctors' details with their Aadhaar ID, ensuring authenticity and up-to-date records.

National Medical Register (NMR) Overview

- **Comprehensive Database:** NMR will maintain a dynamic, Aadhaar-linked database of all registered allopathic doctors in India, ensuring authenticity.

- **Simple Registration Process:** The registration is an easy online process, interlinking medical colleges, State Medical Councils (SMCs), and the National Medical Commission (NMC).
- **Verification and ID Issuance:** After multiple levels of verification by SMCs and NMC, a unique NMR ID is issued to doctors.
- **Stakeholder Access:** NMR allows SMCs, educational institutions, and doctors to manage applications, track credentials, and issue digital certificates.
- **Integration and Support:** The NHA supports NMR's development, including features like continuing medical education and integration with future healthcare software.

INDIA'S FIRST QUANTUM COMPUTER READY FOR LAUNCH

CONTEXT: The National Quantum Mission will launch after a four-year delay, with initiatives including a grant for start-ups, India's first quantum computer with 6 qubits, and four new companies for the mission.

BACKGROUND: In an exclusive interview, HCL Co-founder and Chairman of the National Quantum Mission's Governing Board detailed a plan to utilize nearly ₹6,000 crore for the mission. The initiative will involve premier institutes like IITs and IISc, focusing on advancing quantum technology.

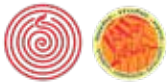
India's Quantum Computing and Communication Mission

- **Quantum Computing Goals:** Develop quantum computers with 20-50 qubits in 3 years, 50-100 in 5 years, and up to 1000 in 10 years.

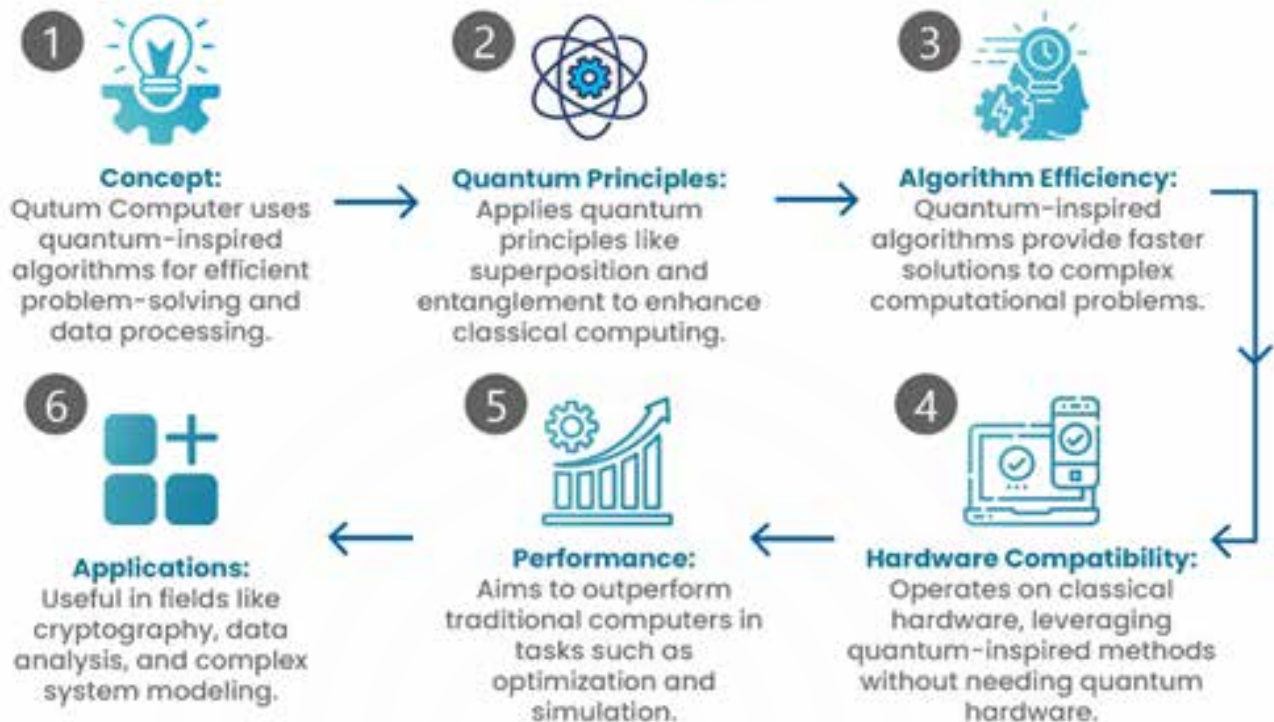
- **National Security Concerns:** Emphasizes the need for India's own quantum computing to counter potential threats from global competitors like China.
- **Quantum Communication Focus:** The mission includes advancements in quantum communication, leveraging existing Indian start-ups in the field.
- **Large-Scale Grants:** Plans to offer substantial grants of ₹10-25 crore to deep tech start-ups, exceeding typical government support.
- **Private Sector Support:** Encourages private sector involvement and aims to strengthen the quantum technology ecosystem through significant funding and collaboration.

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Quantum Working Mechanism



BLACK HOLE FINDER

CONTEXT: The Dutch Black Hole Consortium launched the Black Hole Finder app, allowing users to assist astronomers in identifying new black holes.

BACKGROUND: The Black Hole Finder app invites users to assist scientists in discovering potential black holes across the universe. This innovative app allows individuals to contribute to exploring and understanding some of the universe's most enigmatic phenomena.



Black Hole Finder App Overview

- **Free-to-Use Access:** Available on Android, iOS, and web browsers, allowing global access to its features.
- **Real Data Utilization:** Uses actual data from telescopes and astronomical sources to aid in black hole identification.
- **Chile Telescope Images:** Displays images from BlackGEM, which searches for cosmic events like kilonovas.
- **Multilingual Support:** Recently added languages including Spanish, German, Chinese, Italian, Polish, and Bengali for wider accessibility.
- **Educational Features:** Offers a tutorial to differentiate between real and bogus transients, showing telescope images within 15 minutes.

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Bio-E3 POLICY

CONTEXT: The government's new Bioeconomy policy aims to position India as a global leader in the bioeconomy sector in the coming years.

BACKGROUND: Union Minister announced that the government's new Bioeconomy policy, part of the BioE3 (Biotechnology for Economy, Employment, and Environment) Policy, aims to establish India as a global leader. The policy is set to transform India's manufacturing sector by integrating biotechnology into economic and environmental strategies.

BioE3 Policy Key Features

- **Sustainable Transition:** Facilitates shift from chemical-based industries to sustainable bio-based models for climate and resource challenges.
- **Circular Bio Economy:** Promotes recycling and waste utilization from biomass, landfills, and greenhouse gases to achieve net-zero carbon emissions.
- **Bio-Based Innovation:** Encourages development in sectors like bio-based chemicals, smart proteins, and climate-resilient agriculture, with support for entrepreneurship.
- **Bio Manufacturing Hubs:** Establishes facilities and clusters to bridge laboratory and commercial-scale production, vital for mRNA vaccines and proteins.
- **Employment and Economic Growth:** Aims to generate jobs in tier-II and tier-III cities, enhancing local economic development through bio manufacturing hubs.

MISSION RHUMI

CONTEXT: India launched its first reusable hybrid rocket, 'RHUMI-1,' developed by Tamil Nadu-based start-up Space Zone India.

BACKGROUND: India launched its first reusable hybrid rocket, 'RHUMI-1', from Thiruvudandai, Chennai. The rocket was developed by Tamil Nadu-based start-up Space Zone India in collaboration with Martin Group, under the leadership of Anand Megalingam and the mentorship of Dr. Mylswamy Annadurai, former ISAC Director.



Space Zone India's RHUMI-1: Revolutionizing Student Satellite Launches

- **Successful Launch:** The RHUMI-1 rocket launched 3 Cube Satellites and 50 PICO Satellites to study global warming and climate change.
- **Innovative Rocket Design:** RHUMI-1 uses a hybrid propellant system, combining liquid and solid fuels for improved efficiency and cost reduction.
- **Space Zone India:** Chennai-based Space Zone India (SZI) offers low-cost, long-term aero-technology solutions and hands-on training in various aerospace technologies.
- **Educational Outreach:** SZI collaborates with schools and colleges, providing training and creating awareness about aerospace career opportunities.
- **Mission Dr. A.P.J Abdul Kalam 2023:** Over 2,500 students from diverse backgrounds participated in designing and constructing a satellite launch vehicle for 150 PICO Satellites.

A close-up photograph of a person wearing a blue, textured sweater or jacket. Their hands are clasped together in front of them, with the fingers interlaced. The background is a solid, light blue color. The text 'CSAT' is overlaid in the center of the image.

CSAT



READING COMPREHENSION



READING COMPREHENSION

INTRODUCTION

In reading comprehension, it is one's capacity to understand and reasoning ability that is being assessed. The skills to hone are one's ability to grasp the main ideas from a passage, linking the various ideas in a given passage and being able to infer and draw conclusions. For this one requires an extensive vocabulary and advanced reading skills. Since there is no syllabus to fall back on, aspirants have to rely on their skills to be able to tackle passages they have never seen.

There needs to be a focus on grammar, at least in the initial stages of preparation as it is the first step to understanding any language. A strong grammatical basis provides a foundation to build advanced skills on. Once the candidates have a strong hold on their grammar, the focus should shift to reading comprehension. For this the more one reads, the more their confidence will increase.

One thing aspirant must remember even before reading a passage is recognising the difference between an author's opinion and their own thoughts about a subject. Unless the passage asks for it, it is the author's opinion the aspirants must stick to. What is being assessed here is the ability to comprehend and assimilate information presented in front of the reader. This might take some practice as students are often hardwired to stick to their preconceived thoughts. Since too much time cannot be spent on a single passage to differentiate between author's opinion and student's thoughts, the passages should be approached in a blank manner, only taking in what the passage is giving.

STEPS TO APPROACH A PASSAGE:

1. Read the questions carefully: In the questions, the aspirant will get instructions regarding what to look for in the passage.
2. Read the passage with the questions in mind: reading the passage after having read the questions streamlines the process. The passage should be approached according to the demand in the question.
3. Consider the Options: the aspirant should look at the options next and correspond them with their answer to find the closest match.

TERMINOLOGY TO REMEMBER

Assume: to accept something as true without proof

Assumption: a thing that is accepted as true without proof

Conclude: to arrive at an end

4. **Conclusion:** the final outcome or result
5. **Crux:** the most important point of an issue
6. **Imply:** indicating/ pointing towards something that is not explicitly stated
7. **Implication:** to draw a conclusion from something although it is not explicitly stated
8. **Inference:** to draw a conclusion based on evidence.

Read the following passages and answer the questions given below:

1. Though top leaders of the nationalist movement were the policy makers, the immediate day-to-day leadership was provided by the middle-class intellectuals. The rural origin of the industrial labour force together with rampant illiteracy and their simplistic docility attracted social workers, mainly

drawn from the middle-class intellectuals. They had an obvious advantage. Not being employees, the leaders were free from fear of victimisation and immune towards the risks of leadership. Being generally well educated, they had a better perspective and sense of organisation. They could see the issue in a broader context. They belonged to a higher social plane than the workers and with good education and intellectual development comparable to the best among the employers they could meet the employers on their own plane and carry on negotiations on an equal footing. According to the Royal Commission on Labour in India, 'the effect of this surge was enhanced by the political turmoil which added to the prevailing feelings of unrest and assured to provide willing leaders of a trade union movement'. But outside leadership had led to the politicisation of the movement.

What conclusion can be drawn based on the passage given above?

I. The middle class intellectuals were active participants in the Nationalistic movement because the workers did not want to choose a leader among themselves.

II. The integration of middle class intellectuals as political leaders caused the movement to become politicised.

- a. Only (I)
- b. Only (II)
- c. Both (I) and (II)
- d. Neither (I) and (II)

2. Inequality is visible, even statistically measurable in many instances, but the economic power that drives it is invisible and not measurable. Like the force of gravity, power is the organising principle of inequality, be it of income, or wealth, gender, race, religion and region. Its effects are seen in a pervasive manner in all spheres, but the ways in which economic power pulls and tilts visible economic variables remain invisibly obscure.

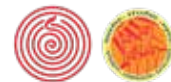
On the basis of the above passage, which of the following best articulates the crux of the passage?

- a. Economic power can be analysed more through its effects than by direct empirical methods
- b. Inequality of different kinds, income, wealth, etc. reinforces power.
- c. The nature of economic power, the driving force behind all kinds of inequality, is obscurity.
- d. Economics power is the only reason for the existence of inequality in a society.

3. A majority of the TB infected in India are poor and lack sufficient nutrition, suitable housing and have little understanding of prevention. TB then devastates families, makes the poor poorer, particularly affects women and children, and leads to ostracization and loss of employment. The truth is that even if TB does not kill them, hunger and poverty will. Another truth is that deep-sealed stigma, lack of counselling, expensive treatment and lack of adequate support from providers and family, couples with torturous side-effects demotivate patients to continue treatment- with disastrous health consequences.

On the basis of the passage above, which one of the following assumptions can be made?

- a. The circumstances in India makes TB an incurable disease



in India.

b. Basic amenities like proper nutrition, housing can alleviate the current TB situation in India.

c. The stigma caused by TB is worse than the disease itself.

d. The poverty stricken people of India are unwilling to seek medical help to cure TB because of the harmful side effects and high cost of treatment.

4. The plunder of Latin America left 70 million indigenous people dead in its wake. In India, 30 million died of famine under British rule. Average living standards in India and China, which had been on par with Britain before the colonial period, collapsed. So too did their share of world GDP, falling from 65 percent to 10 percent, while Europe's share tripled. And mass poverty became an issue for the first time in history, as European capitalism - driven by the imperatives of growth and profit - priced people off their land and destroyed their capacity for self-sufficient subsistence. Development for some meant underdevelopment of others.

Consider the following statements

A. European capitalism is the root cause of mass poverty

B. Colonialism caused displacement of indigenous population.

C. Europe's status as a wealthy nation is based on the destruction of third world countries.

Which of these statements can be inferred to be true based on the passage above?

a. A and B only

b. B only

c. A and C only

d. A, B, and C only

5. The world map of inequalities reveals that national average income levels are poor predictors of inequality – among high-income countries, some are very unequal (such as the US), while others are relatively equal (Sweden). “The same is true among low- and middle-income countries, with some exhibiting extreme inequality (Brazil and India), somewhat high levels (China) and moderate to relatively low levels (Malaysia, Uruguay),” stated the World Inequality Report. The report noted that income and wealth inequalities have been on the rise nearly everywhere since the 1980s, following a series of deregulation and liberalisation programmes which took different forms in different countries. “The rise has not been uniform: certain countries have experienced spectacular increases in inequality (including the US, Russia and India) while others (European countries and China) have experienced relatively smaller rises,” it said.

The report pointed out that in 2021, after three decades of trade and financial globalisation, global inequalities remain extremely pronounced. “They are about as great today as they were at the peak of Western imperialism in the early 20th century,” it said. Lucas Chancel, lead author of the report, said the COVID crisis has exacerbated inequalities between the very wealthy and the rest of the population. “Yet, in rich countries, government intervention prevented a massive rise in poverty, this was not the case in poor countries. This shows the importance of social states in the fight against poverty,” he said.

What is the most logical inference that can be drawn from the above passage?

a. The involvement of the state is essential to the alleviation of the poor.

b. The COVID crisis has caused the rich to become richer and poor to become poorer.

c. High income countries are more unequal than low income countries

d. The World Inequality Report states that income levels are not good indicators of inequality.

6. Scientists have warned that global warming will keep getting worse until humanity reaches “net zero” emissions globally – that is, the point at which we are no longer pumping any additional greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. So in recent years a growing number of countries and businesses have been pledging to “go net zero” by various dates. But the concept can easily be abused. It's one example of climate terminology that can be hard to decipher.

What are the most appropriate implications according to the passage given above?

I. The solution to global warming is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

II. The language surrounding climate change leaves room for loopholes that are misused.

III. Businesses and countries pledging environmental goals will help making lasting impact on climate change issues

IV. Climate change policies require cooperation on a global scale.

V. Businesses pledging “go net zero” are contributing to rising temperatures globally.

a. Only (IV)

b. (II), (IV) Only

c. (I),(II),(III),(V) Only

d. (II),(III),(V) Only

7. No superhuman brain is required to avoid the various foolish opinions that many of us hold. A few simple rules will keep you away not from all errors, but from silly errors. If the matter is one which can be settled by observation, make the observation yourself. Aristotle could have avoided the mistake of thinking that women have fewer teeth than men, by the simple method of counting the teeth of Mrs. Aristotle. Thinking that you know, when in fact, you do not know, is a bad mistake to which many of us are prone.

Based on the passage above, which of the following assumptions has been made by the author?

a. Even great people like Aristotle can make a mistake

b. Silly mistakes can be avoided by resorting to thinking.

c. One does not have to be exceptionally clever to avoid making silly mistakes.

d. We are prone to making avoidable mistakes since we do not care to think for ourselves.

8. Those who pay attention to the Olympics tend to view them from one end of a telescope or the other. Most who tune in for the sporting event every couple of years love the suspense. They may know, in the recesses of their minds, that the spectacle disguises a rusty and corrupt system, prone to vote buying in the selection of host cities, appeasement of dictators and unkept promises. To the fans of the Olympics, the positives outweigh the negatives.

Those who analyse the Olympics more broadly see the balance in reverse. They may appreciate the athletic achievements, but not enough to outweigh concerns about damage inflicted by the Olympics.

Which of the following options best reflects the central



message of the passage given above?

- The Olympic games are a testament to the world's athletic talent
- Analyses of the Olympic games reveals a lot of corruption in the host cities
- Despite the athletic marvels showcased in the Olympics, its many drawbacks cannot be ignored
- The Olympics are a polarising event in today's society

9. Books today have become mere adjuncts to the world of the mass media, offering light entertainment and reassurances that all is for the best in this, the best of all possible worlds. The resulting control on the spread of ideas is stricter than anyone would have thought possible in a free society. The need for public debate and open discussion, inherent in the democratic idea, conflicts with the ever-stricter demand for total profit.

Which of the following implications is correct based on the passage above?

- The false sense of security provided by conformist literature can be detrimental to free thought
- Light entertainment can be harmful to the democratic idea of a free society in the long run
- The most important idea in democracy is dissent
- Books published earlier used to be more critical of society as opposed to the light entertainment we get today

10. Cause and effect assumes history marches forward, but history is not an army. It is a crab scuttling sideways, a drip of soft water wearing away stone, an earthquake breaking centuries of tension. Sometimes one person inspires a movement, or her words do decades later, sometimes a few passionate people change the world; sometimes they start a mass movement and millions of others; sometimes those millions are stirred by the same outrage or same ideal, and change comes upon us like a change of weather. What all these transformations have in common is that they begin in the imagination, in the hope.

What is the crux of the passage given above?

- Imagination is the breeding ground for ideas that change the world
- History is not a linear movement
- Mass movements can be sparked by a single person
- History should be approached in a holistic manner instead of a cause and effect manner

11. The concept of sustainability has often been distorted, co-opted, and even trivialised by being used without the ecological context that gives it its proper meaning. What is sustained in a sustainable community is not economic growth, competitive advantage, or any other measure used by economists, but the entire web of life on which our long-term survival depends. The first step toward a sustainable community, naturally, must be to understand how nature sustains life. This involves a new ecological understanding of life, or "ecoliteracy", as well as a new kind of systemic thinking - thinking in terms of relationships, patterns and context.

What is the most plausible, logical inference drawn from this passage?

- Ecoliteracy is essential to the understanding of climate change policies
- Nature and naturalistic living needs to be given more importance over a demand for total profit
- Separating sustainability from its ecological context has led

to the reduction of its importance.

d. Ecological understanding of life is essential for a sustainable future.

12. Education plays a transformatory role in life, particularly so in this rapidly changing and globalising world. Universities are the custodians of the intellectual capital and promoters of culture and specialised knowledge. Culture is an activity of thought, and receptiveness to beauty and human feelings. A merely well informed man is only a bore on God's earth. What we should aim at is producing men who possess both culture and expert knowledge. Their expert knowledge will give them a firm ground to start from and their culture will lead them as deep as philosophy and as high as art. Together it will impart meaning to human existence.

On the basis of the above passage the following can be said to be true

- Without acquiring culture, a person's education is not complete
- A society of well educated people cannot be transformed into a modern society
- It is essential that a society has cultured as well as intellectual people.

Which is/are valid?

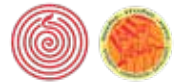
- I only
- II only
- I and II only
- I and III only

13. Global population was around 1.6 billion in 1990- today it is around 7.2 billion and growing. Recent estimates on population growth predict a global population of 9.6 billion in 2050 and 10.9 billion in 2100. Unlike Europe and North America, where only three to four percent of the population is engaged in agriculture, around 47 percent of India's population is dependent upon agriculture. Even if India continues to do well in the service sector and the manufacturing sector picks up, it is expected that around 2030 when India overtakes China as the world's most populous country, nearly 42 percent of India's population will still be predominantly dependent on agriculture.

Which of the following reflects the most logical inference based on the passage above?

- Indian economy greatly depends on its agriculture
- Prosperity of agriculture sector is of critical importance to India
- India's farming communities should switch over to other occupations to improve their economic conditions
- India should take strict measures to control its rapid population growth.

14. All political systems need to mediate the relationship between private wealth and public power. Those that fail risk a dysfunctional government captured by wealthy interests. Corruption is one symptom of such failure with private willingness-to-pay trumping public goals. Private individuals and business firms pay to get routine services and to get to the head of the bureaucratic queue. They pay to limit their taxes, avoid costly regulations, obtain contracts at inflated prices. If corruption is endemic, public officials - both bureaucrats and elected officials- may redesign programmes and propose public projects with few public benefits and many opportunities for private profit. Of course, corruption is



only one type of government failure. Efforts to promote good governance must be broader than anti corruption campaigns. Governments may be honest but inefficient because no one has an incentive to work productively, and narrow elites may capture the state and exert excess influence on policy. Bribery may induce the lazy to work hard and permit those not in the inner circle of cronies to obtain benefits. However, even in such cases, corruption cannot be confined to 'functional' areas. It will be a reasonable response to a harsh reality but, over time, it can facilitate a spiral into an even worse situation. Consider the following statements

I. Productivity linked incentives to public/private officials is one of the initiatives of an efficient government.

II. The governments which fail to focus on the relationship between private wealth and public power are likely to become dysfunctional

Which of the statements given above is/are valid?

- a. Only (I)
- b. Only (II)

- c. Both (I) and (II)
- d. Neither (I) nor (II)

15. All actions to address climate change ultimately involve costs. Funding is vital in order for countries like India to design and implement adaptation and mitigation plans and projects. The problem is more severe for developing countries like India, which would be one of the hardest hit by climate change, given its need to finance development. Most countries do indeed treat climate change as a real threat and are striving to address it in a more comprehensive and integrated manner with the limited resources at their disposal.

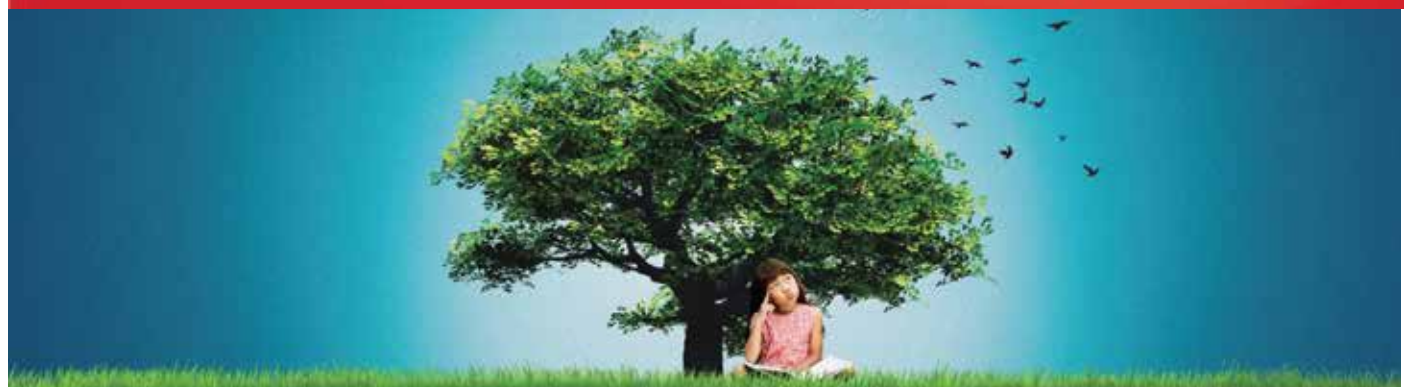
What implications can be drawn from the passage above?

- a. Climate change is a complex issue that requires developing countries to adapt their financial policies
- b. Climate change does not affect developed countries
- c. Climate change will affect India more than other countries because of its tropical climate
- d. Climate change is not taken seriously by most countries



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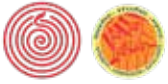
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ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS



ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

In a time when the effects of human activities on the planet are only too obvious, the principles of environmental ethics provide a deep framework guiding our relationship with nature. It invites us to consider the immediate benefits as well as the long-term effects of our actions on the ecosystems that sustain life. In the face of struggling with climate change, resource depletion, and biodiversity loss, we are called upon to reflect on our responsibilities to interact otherwise with the natural world. As the great voice of environmental ethics, Aldo Leopold, once put it, “The land is one organism, and we are a part of it.” This helps to remind us that our well-being is intrinsically related to the health of the environment. Recognizing this deep connectivity, we are called upon to embrace ways of living that respect and maintain the balance of our shared earth.

A subfield of philosophy known as environmental ethics studies the moral obligations that humans have to the natural world. It broadens the focus of ethical issues beyond interactions between people by addressing concerns about our duties to the environment, animals, and future generations. This area of study looks at how ethical concepts might be used to address environmental problems, promoting a change in viewpoint that acknowledges the intrinsic worth of the natural world and the significance of maintaining ecological equilibrium. By incorporating ecological problems into our moral considerations, environmental ethics pushes us to reconsider conventional ethical frameworks.

IMPORTANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

It is important to study environmental ethics for a number of reasons. Primarily, it offers a structure for comprehending and tackling the intricate ethical dilemmas associated with preservation and longevity of the environment. The demand for moral principles that can assist people deal with the effects of their behaviour is developing as long as human activity continues to have a significant negative influence on the environment. Environmental ethics provides insightful guidance on how to better coexist peacefully by balancing our needs with those of the natural world.

The influence that environmental ethics has on behaviors and policies is one important facet of environmental ethics. Policymakers can create more equitable and sustainable methods of resource management, conservation, and environmental protection by incorporating ethical considerations into environmental decision-making. Through this integration, environmental policies are made more equitable and successful by taking into account the rights and needs of all parties involved, particularly marginalized groups and future generations.

Furthermore, environmental ethics promotes a closer bond between people and the environment. It encourages a sense of stewardship and a personal commitment to environmental conservation by getting people to think about their ethical obligations toward the natural world. In order to promote long-term behavioral changes that can result in more sustainable behaviors and lifestyles, this mentality shift is crucial.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS AND ACTIONS

Environmental ethics covers a broad spectrum of topics, each of which presents particular ethical difficulties

and calls for careful resolution. Pollution, resource depletion, biodiversity loss, and climate change are a few of the most urgent environmental problems. Each one of these problems poses significant queries regarding our moral duties and the actions we ought to do to resolve them.

CLIMATE CHANGE: Ecosystems, weather patterns, and human societies are all impacted by this worldwide crisis. It calls into doubt our moral obligations to invest in renewable energy sources, assist marginalized populations, and lower greenhouse gas emissions. Promoting energy efficiency, backing global accords like the Paris Agreement, and encouraging personal initiatives like cutting carbon footprints and fighting for climate justice are some ethical ways to combat climate change.

BIODIVERSITY LOSS: There are many ethical issues raised by the quick extinction of species and their habitats as a result of human activity. The intrinsic worth of biodiversity is reduced when a species goes extinct, which also has an impact on the equilibrium of ecosystems. Protecting natural ecosystems, upholding anti-poaching laws, and aiding conservation initiatives that place a high priority on the preservation of endangered species are ethical ways to stop the loss of biodiversity.

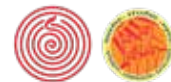
POLLUTION: Contamination of the air, water, or soil can have a negative impact on the environment and human health. Recognizing communities' rights to a healthy environment and industries' obligations to reduce their environmental impact are key components of ethical pollution management strategies. Stricter emission restrictions, the promotion of sustainable waste management techniques, and the encouragement of the adoption of clean technologies are some of the steps being taken to reduce pollution.

RESOURCE DEPLETION: Concerns regarding sustainability and intergenerational fairness are brought up by the over use of natural resources, such as water, minerals, and fossil fuels. Investing in alternative resources, upholding the values of conservation and responsible consumption, and making sure that resource usage does not jeopardize the ability of future generations to satisfy their requirements are all components of ethical approaches to resource management.

INCLUDING MORAL VALUES IN ENVIRONMENTAL MEASURES

To effectively incorporate moral values into environmental policies, a multifaceted strategy comprising community involvement, policy formation, and education is needed. By ensuring that environmental decisions are made with care for their ethical consequences, environmental ethics can direct the creation of policies that advance social justice and sustainability. Campaigns for public education can increase people's knowledge of the moral implications of environmental problems and motivate them to make more responsible and knowledgeable decisions.

In order to promote moral environmental behaviors, community involvement is also essential. We can guarantee that local populations' viewpoints and needs are taken into account by incorporating them in decision-making processes, which will result in more equitable and practical environmental solutions. Additionally, this participatory method promotes



a sense of accountability and ownership for environmental preservation.

Environmental ethics plays a significant and diverse role in helping individuals adopt a more sustainable way of thinking. Environmental ethics promotes a more deliberate and responsible approach to environmental challenges by offering a moral framework for comprehending our relationship with the environment. It pushes people and communities to think about the bigger picture and give sustainability a higher priority than immediate profits.

Adopting an ethical viewpoint on environmental concerns has the potential to significantly alter practice, policy, and behavior. The principles of environmental ethics provide direction on how to negotiate the extraordinary environmental difficulties we confront in a way that upholds the intrinsic value of nature and guarantees a fair and sustainable future for all. Environmental ethics can be a key factor in accelerating the transition to a more just and sustainable world by encouraging a closer relationship with nature and ethical concerns in environmental decision-making.

ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS- ANALYSIS THROUGH EXAMPLES

THE CHIPKO MOVEMENT:

An iconic example of environmental ethics in action is the Chipko Movement, which had its start in the Indian state of Uttarakhand in the 1970s. The goal of this grassroots movement was to save forests from industrial logging and was spearheaded by environmental activists and local people. Since “Chipko” means “to hug” in Hindi, it refers to the action taken by activists to hug trees in order to stop them from being cut down.

The ethical cornerstone of the Chipko Movement is its acknowledgment of the inherent worth of forests and the rights of local populations that rely on them for subsistence. The movement promoted sustainable forest management techniques that take into account social and environmental factors, emphasizing the relationship between ecological health and human well-being. The Forest Conservation Act of 1980, which attempted to stop deforestation and encourage sustainable forest management, was one of the policy measures pertaining to forest conservation in India that resulted from the success of the Chipko Movement.

THE GANGA REJUVENATION EFFORTS:

One of India’s most revered and important waterways, the Ganges River, also known as the Ganga, has great religious and cultural significance. However, untreated sewage, industrial discharges, and religious gifts have all contributed to significant contamination of the river. A number of projects have been launched in response to this situation to address the moral implications of river conservation and water pollution.

A prominent instance is the “Clean Ganga Mission,” which was initiated by the Indian government in 1985 and subsequently resurrected in 2014 under the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) with increased emphasis and funding. Millions of people who rely on the Ganga for their water quality hope that this mission would lower pollution levels, improve the ecological health of the river, and enhance water quality. The mission is guided by ethical values that acknowledge the river’s sacred significance, uphold communities’ rights to

clean water, and underscore the need to save a crucial natural resource for upcoming generations.

Furthermore, community-led programs like the “Ganga Action Plan” and “Ganga Vihar Manch” highlight the importance of local involvement in river conservation projects. These programs, which demonstrate a larger dedication to environmental ethics, promote moral behavior in the areas of waste management, water purification, and sustainable use of river resources.

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PRACTICES:

Sustainable agricultural techniques are greatly aided by ethical considerations in rural India, where agriculture provides a major source of income for millions of people. High-yielding crop types and intensive farming methods were brought about by the Green Revolution, which greatly enhanced agricultural output but also had a negative impact on the environment by causing soil erosion, water depletion, and pesticide contamination.

Various projects have evolved to promote sustainable and ethical agriculture in response to these difficulties. One such example is the “Organic Farming Movement,” which promotes agricultural methods that put an emphasis on ecological balance, biodiversity, and healthy soil rather than artificial chemicals. Food sovereignty, seed saving, and the preservation of traditional farming expertise are ethical concepts that are emphasized by organizations such as “Navdanya,” which was established by Dr. Vandana Shiva.

By addressing the long-term health of the soil, minimizing the impact of chemical inputs on ecosystems, and promoting local farmers’ rights to sustainable livelihoods, organic farming practices in India demonstrate a commitment to environmental ethics. By preserving agricultural resources and ecosystems for future generations, these methods draw attention to the moral concept of intergenerational justice.

In India, where solid waste management is becoming increasingly difficult due to growing urbanization and population expansion, trash management is a critical environmental concern. Addressing the effects of trash on the environment, encouraging recycling and reduction strategies, and guaranteeing social equality in waste disposal and management are all ethical aspects in waste management.

Programs like the “Zero Waste” and “Swachh Bharat Abhiyan” (Clean India Mission) involve communities in waste management, promote environmental pollution reduction, and advance hygiene, all of which are ethically sound. For instance, the “Zero Waste” movement, spearheaded by groups like “The Waste Warriors,” promotes the ideas of “reduce, reuse, and recycle,” motivating people and companies to cut waste and switch to sustainable methods.

Initiatives for trash management driven by the community, such as composting and garbage segregation programs, demonstrate a dedication to moral behavior by tackling the social and environmental aspects of waste management. In order to solve waste-related concerns, these efforts emphasize the significance of social fairness, environmental stewardship, and communal responsibility.

Numerous efforts and movements that uphold ethical values and address urgent environmental challenges are examples of environmental ethics in India. The importance of incorporating ethical issues into environmental practices and



policies is illustrated by these examples, which range from grassroots movements like the Chipko Movement to legislative measures like the Forest Rights Act.

These programs support a more equitable and long-lasting interaction between people and the environment by valuing nature for its own sake, upholding community rights, and encouraging sustainable activities. The use of environmental ethics will be vital in directing policies, practices, and community actions towards a more peaceful and sustainable future as India continues to face environmental issues.

In other words, taking up environmental ethics is not an act of duty but a trait of our common humanity. It is

by the appreciation of our solidarity with nature that respect is created for the delicate balance that sustains life. May our quest, as we sail through our times, be guided by the wisdom of environmental stewardship in order that our actions today mean a thriving and not dying planet for generations yet to come.

A conservationist, John Muir, once said, "When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe." May this kind of interlinked awareness spur us on to actions of compassion and care toward the earth as we would treat our own home.

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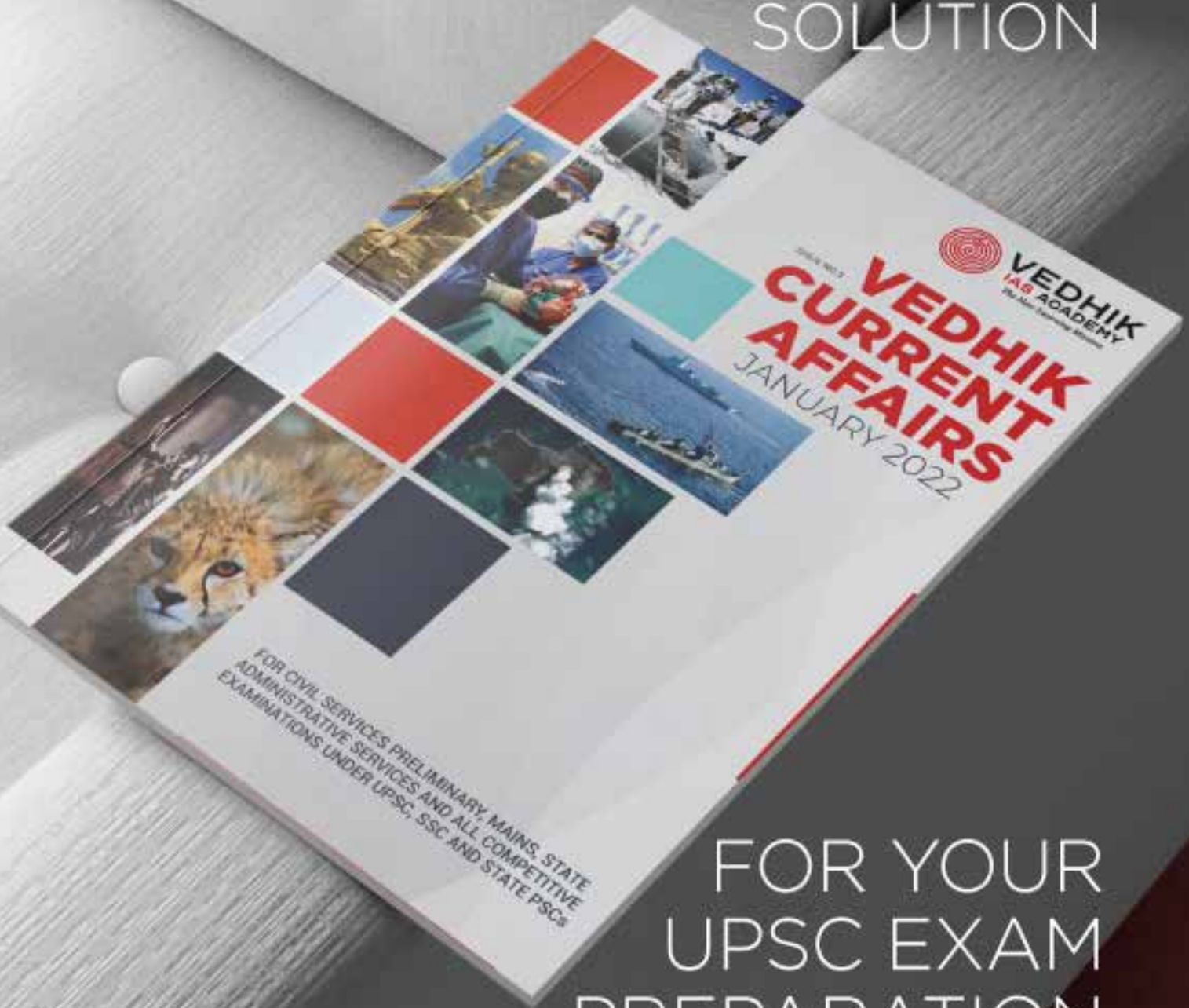
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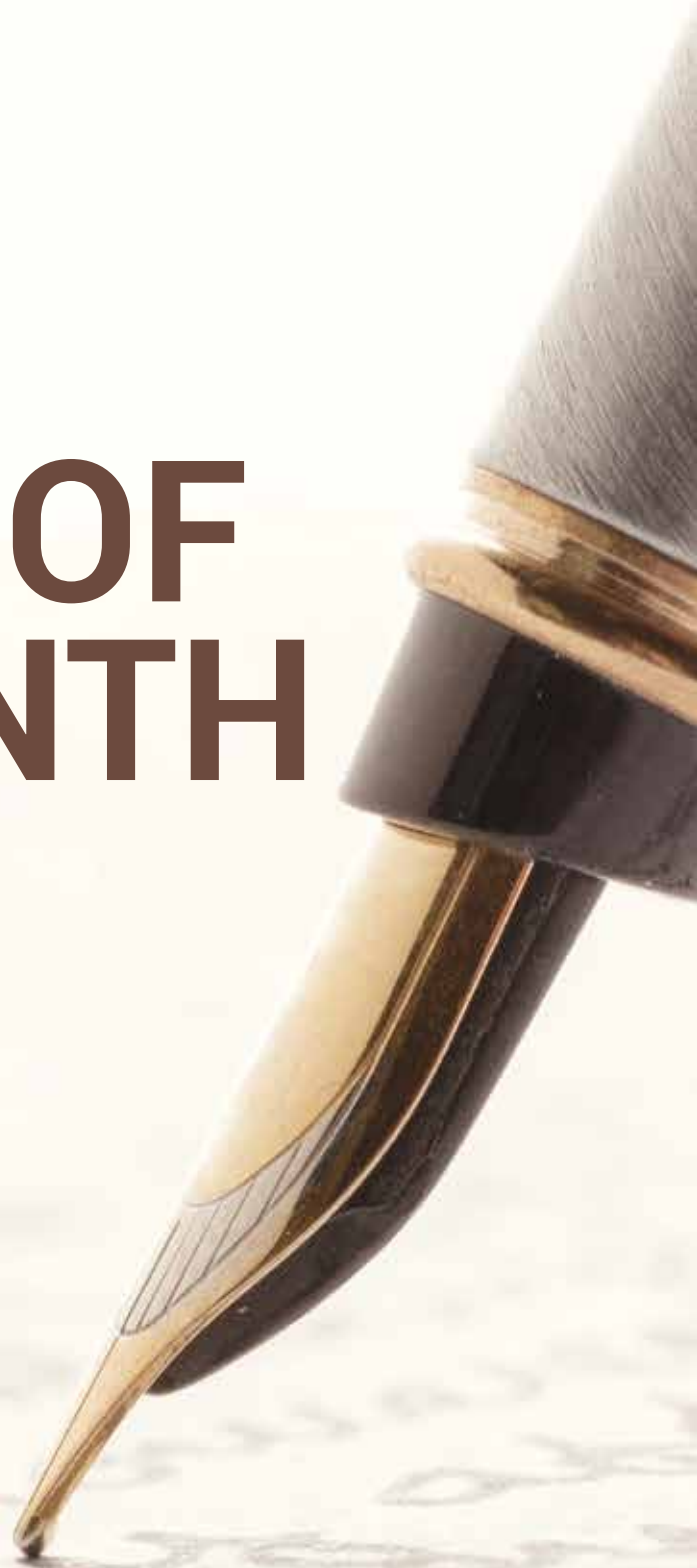
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TOPICS OF THE MONTH





NOT ALL WHO WANDER ARE LOST

- DR. Alexander Jacob IPS

PATIENCE IS BITTER, BUT ITS FRUIT IS SWEET

-DR. Babu Sebastian

AGRICULTURE AS A CATALYST FOR GROWTH

-DR. G. Prasanna Kumar IAS

**EFFECT OF GLOBALISATION ON INDIAN
WOMEN**

- DR. Muhammed Basheer



NOT ALL WHO WANDER ARE LOST

The phrase “Not all who wander are lost” captures a profound truth that resonates through the corridors of history, particularly in the context of India. Consider the journey of the great Mughal emperor Akbar, who, despite traversing vast regions of his empire, was far from aimless.

During his reign in the late 16th century, Akbar’s extensive travels across the Indian subcontinent were not mere acts of wandering but were strategic and purposeful. His excursions were integral to understanding the diverse cultures, languages, and geographies of his vast empire, which spanned from the arid deserts of Rajasthan to the lush landscapes of Bengal.

Akbar’s journeys enabled him to forge alliances, assess the administration’s effectiveness, and gain firsthand insights into the challenges faced by his subjects. This proactive approach helped in consolidating his empire and fostering a sense of unity among the diverse populations. Thus, his wandering was a manifestation of visionary leadership and a commitment to a cohesive and well-governed empire. Akbar’s example illustrates that exploration and movement, when guided by purpose and curiosity, can lead to profound understanding and impactful governance, proving that not all who wander are indeed lost.

DEFINING WANDERING VS. LOSING ONE’S WAY

Wandering and losing one’s way are often confused, but they embody distinct concepts. Wandering typically implies a deliberate or explorative journey, often leading to personal or intellectual growth. It is an active quest for discovery, where the journey itself holds significance, as seen in the travels of

HISTORICAL FIGURES OR EXPLORERS.

For instance, the ancient Greek philosopher Pyrrho of Elis wandered extensively across the Eastern world, seeking to experience and understand diverse philosophies and cultures, enriching his own understanding of life. In contrast, losing one’s way suggests a lack of direction or purpose, often resulting in confusion or aimlessness. It denotes a state of being lost without a clear goal or destination, as illustrated by individuals who, due to poor planning or misjudgement, find themselves stranded or disoriented.

As we transition to exploring historical perspectives on wandering, we will see how purposeful journeys through history, such as those undertaken by explorers or leaders, embody the essence of “wandering” in a constructive manner, leading to significant outcomes and insights.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON WANDERING

Throughout history, wandering has often been a precursor to profound discovery and transformation. The journeys of renowned historical figures illustrate how purposeful wandering can lead to significant advancements. For example, the travels of Marco Polo in the late 13th century were not mere excursions but were driven by curiosity and a quest for knowledge. His explorations across Asia provided Europeans with invaluable insights into distant cultures and trade routes, fundamentally altering their understanding of the world.

Similarly, the expeditions of Alexander the Great, though primarily military, involved extensive wandering through uncharted territories. These ventures expanded his

empire and facilitated cultural exchanges that shaped the course of history. The purposeful nature of their wandering enabled these figures to overcome obstacles, forge alliances, and leave lasting legacies.

As we delve into wandering in literature and mythology, we will uncover how these narratives reflect the human experience of exploration and its broader significance, often mirroring the historical journey of discovery and growth.

WANDERING IN LITERATURE AND MYTHOLOGY

In literature and mythology, wandering often serves as a powerful motif symbolizing a journey of self-discovery and transformation. One of the most iconic examples is Homer’s “Odyssey,” where Odysseus’s decade-long journey home is not merely a physical traversal but a profound exploration of his identity and values. His wandering, filled with encounters with mythical beings and trials, ultimately leads to a deeper understanding of himself and his role as a leader.

Similarly, in J.R.R. Tolkien’s “The Lord of the Rings,” Frodo Baggins’s journey through Middle-earth represents more than a quest to destroy a ring; it is a voyage of personal growth and courage. His wandering through treacherous lands and his interactions with diverse characters reflect an inner transformation and resilience.

These literary and mythological wanderings are rich with symbolism, representing the trials and lessons that lead to personal evolution. As we move to explore “Wandering as a Metaphor for Personal Growth,” we will delve into how these journeys exemplify the transformative power of exploration and self-discovery.

WANDERING AS A METAPHOR FOR PERSONAL GROWTH

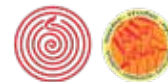
Wandering often serves as a profound metaphor for personal growth, symbolizing the transformative journey towards self-discovery and enlightenment. In literature and real life, these explorations highlight the evolution of the individual through trials and new experiences. For instance, in Herman Melville’s “Moby-Dick,” Captain Ahab’s obsessive quest for the white whale mirrors his inner struggle and quest for meaning, illustrating how the journey itself fosters deep introspection and personal change.

Similarly, real-life figures like Steve Jobs, whose unconventional paths led him to explore diverse fields, demonstrated how wandering—whether through career changes or global travels—can ignite creativity and lead to groundbreaking achievements. Jobs’s varied experiences contributed significantly to his innovative vision, underscoring how exploration fuels growth.

As we transition to the “Psychological Aspects of Wandering,” we will examine how this metaphorical wandering impacts the psyche, influencing mental health and personal development, and further unravel the psychological dimensions of exploring both internally and externally.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF WANDERING

The psychological aspects of wandering reveal its profound impact on mental well-being and personal development. Wandering, whether literal or metaphorical, often facilitates self-exploration and emotional healing. For instance, research indicates that physical wandering, such as hiking or traveling, can alleviate stress and improve mental



health by providing a break from routine and fostering a sense of freedom.

Metaphorically, wandering through new experiences or introspection can lead to significant personal growth. The concept of “identity exploration” in psychology suggests that individuals who embrace diverse experiences and challenge their preconceptions often develop a stronger sense of self. For example, people who undertake career changes or adopt new hobbies frequently report increased life satisfaction and self-awareness.

As we delve into “Wandering in Modern Society,” we will explore how contemporary contexts and societal structures influence and shape our experiences of wandering, and how these experiences contribute to personal and collective evolution in today’s fast-paced world.

WANDERING IN MODERN SOCIETY

In modern society, wandering has evolved with technological advancements and cultural shifts, reflecting new forms of exploration and self-discovery. Urban wandering, for instance, has become a metaphor for navigating the complexities of contemporary life. The rise of digital nomadism exemplifies this trend, where individuals leverage technology to work from various locations, blending travel with professional growth. This lifestyle allows people to explore diverse cultures and environments, enriching their personal and professional lives.

Similarly, the trend of “digital wandering” through social media platforms illustrates a form of virtual exploration. Users traverse an endless stream of content and connections, seeking inspiration and identity in an increasingly interconnected world. This digital journey often leads to new opportunities and perspectives, highlighting the role of wandering in modern identity formation.

As we transition to “The Role of Uncertainty in Wandering,” we will examine how navigating uncertainty and unpredictability is an intrinsic part of the wandering experience, shaping personal growth and the pursuit of meaning in today’s dynamic landscape.

THE ROLE OF UNCERTAINTY IN WANDERING

Uncertainty is a fundamental aspect of wandering, both physically and metaphorically, shaping the journey and its outcomes. Embracing uncertainty can lead to significant personal growth and unexpected opportunities. For example, the concept of “embracing the unknown” is central to the experience of entrepreneurs who venture into new markets or innovative projects. Steve Jobs, for instance, famously navigated uncertain territories with his ventures into new technology fields, leading to groundbreaking advancements in personal computing and mobile technology.

Similarly, travellers often find that the unpredictability of their journeys – such as encountering unplanned detours or cultural surprises – can lead to enriching experiences and deeper self-discovery. This uncertainty challenges individuals to adapt, innovate, and grow in ways they might not have anticipated.

As we explore “Cultural Attitudes Towards Wandering,” we will investigate how different societies view and value wandering, and how cultural perceptions of uncertainty influence the experiences and outcomes of those who embrace it.

CULTURAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS WANDERING

Cultural attitudes towards wandering vary widely, shaping how individuals approach exploration and self-discovery. In many Indigenous cultures, wandering is deeply valued as a rite of passage or a spiritual journey. For instance, the Australian Aboriginal practice of “The Walkabout” is a profound cultural tradition where young people undertake a journey through the wilderness to connect with their ancestors and heritage, reflecting a deep respect for exploration and personal growth.

In contrast, modern Western cultures often view wandering through the lens of productivity and purpose. The notion of “finding oneself” through travel or career changes is celebrated, but often with an emphasis on achieving specific outcomes. For example, the rise of the “gap year” phenomenon, where young people travel or work abroad before university, is encouraged as a way to gain experience and clarity.

As we move to explore “The Impact of Wandering on Creativity and Innovation,” we will examine how these cultural attitudes influence the role of wandering in fostering creativity and driving innovative thinking across different contexts.

THE IMPACT OF WANDERING ON CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION

Wandering, whether through physical exploration or intellectual curiosity, significantly impacts creativity and innovation. The freedom to explore unstructured paths often leads to novel ideas and breakthroughs. For instance, Steve Jobs credited his creative inspiration to his experiences with calligraphy and Eastern philosophy during a period of wandering in his youth. This diverse exposure contributed to the aesthetic design of Apple products and his innovative approach to technology.

Similarly, artists and scientists often find that stepping outside conventional boundaries stimulates creativity. The famous physicist Richard Feynman was known for his unorthodox approach to problem-solving, which included exploring diverse interests and unconventional methods. His wandering through different fields of study led to groundbreaking insights in quantum mechanics.

As we transition to “Balancing Wandering and Purpose,” we will explore how individuals can harness the benefits of wandering while maintaining a sense of direction, ensuring that exploration contributes effectively to achieving goals and fostering continuous growth.

BALANCING WANDERING AND PURPOSE

Striking a balance between wandering and purpose is crucial for maximizing the benefits of exploration while ensuring productive outcomes. Wandering offers valuable insights and creativity, but without purpose, it can lead to aimlessness. Successful individuals often blend exploratory behaviour with clear objectives. For example, Elon Musk’s ventures into space exploration and electric vehicles were driven by a vision of sustainable technology, but his willingness to explore uncharted territories in these fields fuelled significant innovation.

Similarly, creative professionals like writers and artists often use periods of unstructured exploration to spark new ideas, yet they do so with overarching goals in mind. J.K. Rowling’s journey through various writing styles and genres, while focused on her ultimate goal of crafting compelling



stories, exemplifies this balance.

In conclusion, wandering is a powerful tool for personal and professional growth when integrated with a sense of purpose. By navigating the delicate balance between

exploration and goal-setting, individuals can unlock their full potential, demonstrating that not all who wander are lost; rather, they are on a path to discovery and achievement.

PATIENCE IS BITTER, BUT ITS FRUIT IS SWEET

An old proverb that has endured the test of time is “Patience is bitter, but its fruit is sweet.” The Greek philosopher Aristotle is credited with stating this proverb, which captures a basic truth about the human experience: patience is a route that is frequently tough and challenging, but the benefits of persevering through trials and delays are ultimately satisfying. The benefit of patience is sometimes undervalued in a time when quick pleasure has become the standard. Still, patience is essential for success, mental health, and personal development. The various aspects of patience, the difficulties it presents, and the final benefits it provides will all be discussed in this essay.

THE NATURE OF PATIENCE

Many times, patience is mistaken for nothing more than passivity or idle waiting, but it is much more than that. Being patient is an active, dynamic activity that calls for resilience, self-control, and a profound appreciation of timing. It is the capacity to bear pain, inconvenience, or misfortune without losing patience or heart. This endurance is about controlling emotions in a way that is consistent with ideals and long-term objectives, not about repressing them.

Fundamentally, knowledge takes the form of patience. It acknowledges that not everything worthwhile happens quickly or easily and that some of the most worthwhile goals in life take time and work to accomplish. The process of developing a meaningful relationship, learning a new skill, or recovering from an emotional trauma frequently entails difficulty, discomfort, and even skepticism. However, it is via these experiences that people mature and become resilient.

THE CHALLENGES OF PATIENCE

Patience is bitter because of the obstacles it faces. Waiting can seem like a waste of time or a sign of weakness in a society where efficiency and quickness are valued highly. Patience is not highly valued in society because quick fixes and instant results are frequently celebrated. Due to social pressure, people may feel alone or unworthy when their growth isn't as rapid as they had hoped. This can make the practice of patience even more challenging.

Furthermore, tolerance for uncertainty is a prerequisite for patience. It can be stressful to wait for something significant, like a career opportunity, a medical prognosis, or the end of a personal dispute. Feelings of powerlessness or dissatisfaction might result from not having control over the outcome. Patience is put to the test in these situations, and there may be a strong desire to give up or act rashly.

The emotional toll that patience can have is another difficulty. Managing a complicated mixture of emotions, such as hope, fear, disappointment, and anticipation, is often necessary during waiting. These feelings can be draining, and it takes strong emotional intelligence to stay patient. It entails acknowledging and embracing these emotions without allowing them control one's behavior.

THE ROLE OF PATIENCE IN PERSONAL GROWTH

Patience, in spite of the difficulties, is necessary for personal development. It imparts important life lessons like tenacity, self-control, and empathy. People who are patient learn how to deal with disappointments and setbacks, becoming more resilient and having a better understanding of others and themselves.

In the pursuit of long-term objectives, patience is one of the most important factors. These pursuits – finishing school, advancing in a career, or starting a family – call for consistent work and dedication over an extended period of time. Even in situations where things go slowly or there are challenges, patience can help people keep focused on their objectives. Even when the path is challenging, it enables them to keep going and to stay motivated.

Patience not only encourages persistence but also improves self-control. Self-discipline is characterized by the capacity to postpone gratification and to give priority to long-term benefits above instant satisfaction. This ability is crucial for many aspects of life, such as budgeting and keeping a healthy lifestyle. Having patience enables people to cultivate the self-control necessary to withstand transient temptations and remain focused on their long-term objectives.

Empathy and compassion are also fostered by patience. People who are patient are more likely to pay attention to what other people have to say, comprehend their viewpoints, and reply in a polite and considerate manner. This is especially crucial in relationships, as emotional ties, trust, and dispute resolution can all be strengthened via patience.

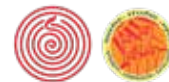
THE SWEETNESS OF PATIENCE'S FRUIT

Although practicing patience might be difficult, the benefits are frequently well worth the effort. The benefits of waiting include not just achieving the intended result but also growing personally and experiencing emotional fulfillment.

A sense of success is one of the biggest benefits of patience. People feel a great sense of pride and satisfaction when they overcome obstacles and succeed in their aims. Because it acknowledges the effort, commitment, and resiliency that went into the process, this feeling of achievement frequently has greater significance than the actual result.

The growth of inner strength is another benefit of patience. People develop their emotional fortitude and endurance by having to wait and endure. They pick up skills including managing their emotions, adjusting to uncertainty, and maintaining goal focus. They can accomplish their present objectives and become ready for new ones thanks to this inner power.

Patience also brings about a sense of peace and contentment. When individuals are patient, they are less likely to be frustrated or anxious about the future. They are able to live in the present moment, to appreciate what they have, and to trust that good things will come in time. This sense of contentment is a key component of emotional well-being and happiness.



THE IMPACT OF PATIENCE ON RELATIONSHIPS

Being patient is a societal as well as a personal virtue. It is essential to establishing and preserving wholesome connections. There will inevitably be miscommunication, conflict, and disillusionment in any relationship. People who possess patience are able to overcome these obstacles without turning to rage or bitterness.

In order to develop intimacy and trust in love relationships, patience is necessary. It entails realizing that relationships take time to grow and that each partner will have imperfections. Couples that possess patience are able to resolve their conflicts, develop their relationship, and create a solid, enduring bond.

Patience is equally crucial in family connections as it is in friendships. It makes people more empathetic, forgiving, and capable of supporting one another during trying times. People can develop stronger, more meaningful relationships with others by exercising patience.

PATIENCE IN PROFESSIONAL LIFE

Patience is a crucial trait that can lead to long-term success in the working world. To accomplish career goals, patience is frequently needed, whether it be when working on a long-term project, learning a new skill, or waiting for a promotion. Setbacks are unavoidable and the road to achievement is frequently not straight. People with patience are able to maintain their commitment and attention even in the face of slow progress.

Furthermore, a crucial quality of leadership is patience. Successful leaders are aware that change takes time and that persistence and consistent effort are frequently the keys to success. Even in the face of adversity, they are able to inspire their troops and uphold their goal. Having patience enables leaders to act strategically and thoughtfully instead of rashly or impatiently.

AGRICULTURE AS A CATALYST FOR GROWTH

Agriculture has long been the backbone of many economies, particularly in developing countries like India. However, despite its historical significance, the agricultural sector often finds itself marginalized in discussions about economic growth and development. Traditional economic theories, such as those proposed by Arthur Lewis in the 1950s, have suggested that the path to development lies in moving labor away from agriculture into manufacturing and services. While this transition has been integral to the development of many economies, it would be a mistake to dismiss agriculture's potential as a dynamic driver of growth and job creation, especially in a country like India, where the sector still employs a significant portion of the population. By reimagining the agricultural sector through technological advancements, environmental sustainability, and institutional innovation, agriculture can indeed become a powerful engine for growth.

THE ECOLOGICAL CHALLENGE: REGENERATING WATER AND SOIL

One of the primary challenges facing Indian agriculture today is its environmental impact. The degradation of natural resources, particularly water and soil, has significantly hindered agricultural productivity. Currently, only half of India's

THE ROLE OF PATIENCE IN SOCIETY

Another essential quality for society's overall functioning is patience. Patience is a virtue that can help create understanding and bridge gaps in a world that is becoming more and more politicized and divided. It enables people to collaborate on shared objectives, have meaningful conversations, and listen to various points of view.

In the field of social change, persistence is frequently required to make meaningful progress. Whether they are centered on economic fairness, environmental preservation, or civil rights, social movements can demand years or even decades of consistent work. When setbacks or slow development occur, activists can remain steadfast in their commitment to their cause by exercising patience.

Furthermore, the smooth operation of democratic institutions depends on patience. Change in a democracy usually happens gradually and incrementally, requiring the involvement and collaboration of numerous stakeholders. People with patience may reach consensus, strive for compromise, and participate in the democratic process.

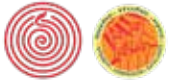
The proverb "Patience is bitter, but its fruit is sweet" is a timeless lesson that holds true in the hectic world of today. Although exercising patience might be difficult, the benefits are well worth the effort. Healthy relationships, emotional stability, and personal development are all facilitated by patience. It is necessary for society as a whole to function and is a crucial element of success in both personal and professional life.

It's critical to keep in mind the wisdom of this age-old proverb in a society that frequently prioritizes efficiency and speed over endurance and patience. People can accomplish their goals, forge closer bonds with others, and lead more satisfying lives by learning to be patient. In the end, patience bears fruit not only in the form of the intended result but also in the form of inner strength, peace, and personal development that result from persevering through difficult times.

gross cropped area is irrigated, with groundwater being the predominant source. This over-reliance on groundwater has led to alarming declines in water tables, exacerbated by policies such as free electricity for irrigation, which encourages over-extraction. For instance, in Punjab, the introduction of free power in the late 1990s led to a 40% decline in canal irrigation and a sharp rise in groundwater usage, primarily for water-intensive crops like rice.

To address this, a combination of groundwater regulation, rainwater harvesting, and micro-irrigation techniques must be employed. Gujarat provides a successful model, where mass-based rainwater harvesting through micro-structures such as check dams and ponds significantly boosted agricultural growth. By investing in such infrastructure, surface irrigation can be enhanced, and groundwater can be replenished, leading to substantial productivity gains. Moreover, promoting water-efficient irrigation methods, such as drip irrigation, can significantly reduce water usage while increasing crop yields and farmers' incomes.

Equally important is the need to rejuvenate the soil. India's soil is increasingly degraded due to waterlogging, salinity, chemical contamination, and nutrient depletion. Shifting from monocultures of cereals to more diverse cropping patterns,



including fruits, vegetables, and legumes, can help restore soil health. Agro-ecological farming practices, which emphasize crop diversity and organic inputs, can also play a crucial role in soil regeneration. Such practices not only improve soil fertility but also reduce costs, increase yields, and create employment opportunities in rural areas.

TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS: FROM CEREAL MONOCULTURES TO DIVERSIFIED FARMING

Technological innovation is central to transforming agriculture into a growth engine. One critical area is the shift from cereal monocultures, which have dominated Indian agriculture for decades, to a more diversified farming system. Diversification can enhance farm incomes, improve nutritional outcomes, and cater to the changing dietary preferences of a growing and increasingly urbanized population.

Crop diversification also has the potential to make agriculture more resilient to climate change. Developing and adopting heat-resistant crop varieties and efficient farming techniques are crucial in this regard. Technology can aid in this transition. For instance, mobile phones have become powerful tools for disseminating agricultural information. Research has shown that providing farmers with information via cell phones can increase yields and encourage the adoption of new inputs and practices. Similarly, drones are emerging as valuable tools for pest control and crop monitoring, enabling farmers to make more informed decisions about crop management.

Another area where technology can make a significant impact is in precision agriculture, where data-driven insights guide farming practices. By leveraging data from sensors, satellites, and other sources, farmers can optimize their use of inputs such as water, fertilizers, and pesticides, thereby increasing efficiency and reducing environmental impact. Precision agriculture can also help farmers adapt to the effects of climate change by providing real-time information on weather conditions and crop health.

INSTITUTIONAL INNOVATION: THE POWER OF GROUP FARMING

India's agricultural landscape is dominated by smallholder farmers, with 86% of farmers cultivating plots of two hectares or less. These small farms face numerous challenges, including limited access to credit, markets, and technology. As a result, farm incomes are often low and unstable, making agriculture an unattractive option for many, especially the youth.

One way to overcome these challenges is through institutional innovation, particularly by promoting group farming. Group farming involves smallholders coming together to pool resources, share costs, and collectively manage their farms. This approach allows farmers to achieve economies of scale, access better technology, and improve their bargaining power in the market.

The experience of Kerala provides a compelling example of the potential of group farming. In the early 2000s, the state launched a program under its Kudumbashree mission, encouraging women to form group farms. These groups, often consisting of women from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, lease land, pool labor, and share the costs and benefits of farming. The results have been impressive, with group farms achieving significantly higher yields and incomes compared to individual farms. Moreover, the social benefits

of group farming are equally important, as it has empowered women and built stronger community ties.

Similar success stories are emerging from other states like Bihar, West Bengal, Telangana, and Gujarat, where group farming is gaining traction. Youth groups, in particular, are finding group farming to be a viable alternative to migration in search of jobs. By working together and adopting modern farming techniques, these groups are not only improving their livelihoods but also contributing to the broader goal of agricultural development.

THE ROLE OF ALLIED SECTORS: LIVESTOCK, FISHERIES, AND RURAL NON-FARM ACTIVITIES

Agriculture does not exist in isolation; it is intricately linked with other sectors such as livestock, fisheries, and rural non-farm activities. These allied sectors have tremendous potential for growth and job creation. For instance, India's fisheries sector grew at an impressive 10% in 2022-23, providing employment to 28 million people, nearly half of whom are women.

Livestock farming, too, offers significant opportunities for income diversification and poverty alleviation. By integrating livestock with crop farming, farmers can improve their resilience to income shocks and enhance the sustainability of their farming systems. For example, livestock can provide manure for crops, reducing the need for chemical fertilizers, while crop residues can be used as feed for animals.

Moreover, the rural non-farm sector, which accounts for 61% of rural incomes, presents a significant opportunity to synergize with agriculture. Agro-processing, machine tools, eco-tourism, and other non-farm activities can create jobs and add value to agricultural products. By promoting linkages between agriculture and the rural non-farm sector, policymakers can help raise rural incomes and reduce the vulnerability of rural households to economic shocks.

CONCLUSION: REIMAGINING AGRICULTURE AS A GROWTH ENGINE

India stands at a crossroads in its agricultural development. On one hand, traditional economic theories and current trends suggest that agriculture should play a diminishing role in the country's economic future. On the other hand, with the right policies and innovations, agriculture can be reimagined as a vibrant and dynamic sector that drives growth, creates jobs, and contributes to environmental sustainability.

To achieve this, India must address the ecological challenges facing its agricultural sector, particularly the degradation of water and soil resources. Technological advancements, from precision agriculture to mobile-based information dissemination, can help farmers increase productivity and adapt to climate change. Institutional innovations, such as group farming, can empower smallholders and make agriculture a more attractive option for the youth. Finally, by strengthening linkages between agriculture and allied sectors, India can create a more resilient and diversified rural economy.

Agriculture's potential to be an engine for growth should not be underestimated. With concerted efforts to shed old economic theories and embrace new ways of farming, India can unlock the full potential of its agricultural sector and pave the way for a more prosperous and sustainable future.



EFFECT OF GLOBALISATION ON INDIAN WOMEN

Globalisation, a multi-faceted process of increasing interconnectedness across the world, has affected various spheres of life in different ways. Since the early 1990s, India has experienced accelerated integration into the global economy, marked by liberalization, privatisation, and foreign investments. While globalisation has transformed India's economic, political, and socio-cultural landscape, it has also had a profound impact on gender roles and the lives of Indian women.

In this essay, we explore the impact of globalisation on Indian women by examining how it has influenced their economic participation, education, health, social status, and rights. While globalisation has opened up new opportunities for women, it has also introduced new challenges, particularly for those belonging to marginalized sections of society.

Economic Impact

One of the most significant impacts of globalisation on Indian women has been their increasing participation in the workforce, particularly in sectors such as information technology, services, and manufacturing. The opening of the economy and increased foreign investment have created job opportunities for women, especially in urban areas. Several multinational companies have established operations in India, providing employment in sectors like Business Process Outsourcing (BPO), IT-enabled services (ITES), retail, and hospitality.

1. **Rise of Female Workforce in Urban Areas:** With the growth of industries in urban centers, there has been a noticeable rise in women entering the formal workforce. In industries like IT and BPO, women have emerged as a significant part of the workforce. This influx of female workers has been instrumental in creating a shift in societal attitudes toward women's employment.
2. **Informal Sector and Vulnerabilities:** However, while some women have benefited from the rise of formal sector jobs, a significant number of women remain employed in the informal sector, which is characterised by low wages, job insecurity, and lack of social protection. In rural areas, women often work as agricultural laborers or in cottage industries, where globalisation has sometimes led to further exploitation, as global market demands lead to more intense workloads but without a corresponding increase in wages or working conditions.
3. **Women Entrepreneurs:** Globalisation has also created opportunities for women entrepreneurs, especially in areas like e-commerce, fashion, and handicrafts. Through the increased availability of technology and global platforms, many women have been able to establish small businesses that cater to global markets. This has empowered women economically and enhanced their independence.

IMPACT ON EDUCATION

Globalisation has positively influenced the education of women in India. The opening up of the economy has resulted in the increased availability of resources for education, and with more job opportunities requiring higher education, there has been a greater emphasis on educating girls.

1. **Improved Access to Education:** As globalisation fosters economic growth, it has encouraged both governmental

and non-governmental initiatives aimed at improving literacy rates among women. Programmes such as Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (Save the Girl Child, Educate the Girl Child) are examples of efforts that aim to address the gender disparity in education. These programmes, partly driven by international advocacy, have led to higher enrolment rates for girls in schools, especially in urban areas.

2. **Challenges of Rural Education:** Despite the progress, rural areas face challenges where access to quality education for girls remains low. Globalisation has widened the gap between urban and rural areas in terms of educational infrastructure and opportunities. While urban girls may benefit from access to global knowledge and resources, girls in rural India may still face barriers such as poverty, traditional attitudes, and inadequate school facilities.
3. **Higher Education and Professional Training:** Globalisation has created opportunities for women to pursue higher education and professional training, both in India and abroad. More women are now enrolling in universities, technical institutes, and vocational training centers, enabling them to take on leadership roles in industries like technology, healthcare, law, and business.

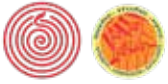
IMPACT ON HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Globalisation has had a mixed impact on the health and well-being of Indian women. On one hand, the increased exchange of ideas and resources has led to improved healthcare services, but on the other hand, economic liberalisation has also exacerbated certain inequalities.

1. **Access to Modern Healthcare:** The globalisation of healthcare has brought about better access to modern medical technologies and treatments. Urban women, in particular, have benefited from advancements in reproductive healthcare, maternal health, and access to contraceptives, which have led to improvements in life expectancy and reduced maternal mortality rates.
2. **Disparities in Healthcare Access:** However, the rural-urban divide remains a significant challenge. Women in rural areas often lack access to quality healthcare facilities, and globalisation has sometimes reinforced this divide by concentrating healthcare services in urban centers. The privatisation of healthcare services, a by-product of economic liberalisation, has made healthcare unaffordable for many low-income women, further exacerbating inequalities.
3. **Changing Lifestyles and Health Challenges:** Globalisation has led to the adoption of new lifestyles, particularly in urban areas. The increased consumption of fast food, sedentary lifestyles, and stress associated with work-life imbalances have led to rising cases of lifestyle diseases among women, such as diabetes, obesity, and heart disease. While these health challenges were once considered primarily male issues, they are now increasingly affecting women.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL IMPACT

Globalisation has influenced the social and cultural roles of women in Indian society. While it has led to greater awareness of gender equality and women's rights, it has also



posed challenges to traditional values.

1. **Empowerment and Awareness of Rights:** The global women's rights movement has had a considerable impact on Indian society. There is now greater awareness about issues such as gender equality, domestic violence, and reproductive rights. Women's empowerment has been further promoted by global campaigns, international organisations, and social media, leading to increased activism around women's rights in India.
2. **Erosion of Traditional Roles:** Globalisation has led to a shift in traditional gender roles, particularly in urban India. Women are increasingly challenging patriarchal norms by participating in decision-making processes, seeking education and employment, and asserting their autonomy in personal and professional lives. However, this shift has also resulted in a backlash in some areas, where the erosion of traditional gender roles is perceived as a threat to cultural values.
3. **Impact of Western Culture:** The exposure to global media and Western cultural influences has had a mixed impact on Indian women. While on one hand, it has promoted ideals of independence and individualism, it has also brought in unrealistic beauty standards and consumerist ideals that can negatively impact women's self-esteem and well-being. This has led to a dichotomy where women are encouraged to be empowered and independent but also face pressure to conform to global beauty standards.

IMPACT ON FAMILY DYNAMICS

Globalisation has also affected the structure and dynamics of Indian families, particularly in urban areas. The traditional joint family system, where women often played subordinate roles, is increasingly giving way to nuclear families.

1. **Changes in Family Structure:** In urban areas, the rise of nuclear families has given women more freedom to make decisions regarding their careers, finances, and personal lives. This has allowed women to balance work and family responsibilities more effectively, though it has also led to increased stress, as women often juggle multiple roles as workers, caregivers, and homemakers.
2. **Work-Life Balance:** The pressures of globalised economies, particularly the demand for longer working hours, have led to challenges in maintaining a work-life balance for women. The double burden of managing household responsibilities and professional duties is particularly acute for working women in urban areas, where the support structures of extended families are often absent.

CHALLENGES OF MARGINALISED WOMEN

The benefits of globalisation have not been equally distributed, and marginalized women, particularly those belonging to Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and other backward classes, have not always been able to reap the same benefits as their urban counterparts.

1. **Exclusion from Economic Opportunities:** For women in rural areas or from marginalized communities, the promises of globalisation have often remained unfulfilled. Many of these women continue to be employed in low-paid, insecure jobs or remain outside the formal labour market altogether. Globalisation has sometimes worsened their economic marginalization by increasing competition and reducing wages in sectors like agriculture, where many rural women work.
2. **Increased Vulnerability:** Globalisation has also led to the exploitation of women in sectors such as garment manufacturing, where global brands have been accused of violating labour laws, paying low wages, and subjecting workers to unsafe working conditions. Women employed in these sectors often face job insecurity, long working hours, and a lack of social protections.
3. **Displacement and Migration:** The global demand for resources and industrialisation has led to the displacement of many rural communities, disproportionately affecting women. The migration of men to urban areas for employment has left women in rural areas to manage both household responsibilities and agricultural work, often without sufficient resources.

CONCLUSION

The effect of globalisation on Indian women has been a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it has created new opportunities for education, employment, and empowerment, particularly for urban women. Globalisation has allowed many women to break free from traditional roles, pursue higher education, and engage in the global workforce. On the other hand, globalisation has also widened existing inequalities, particularly between urban and rural women and between women of different social and economic backgrounds.

The future of women in India in the context of globalisation will depend on how the country addresses these challenges. Policies must be designed to ensure that the benefits of globalisation are distributed equitably, with a particular focus on the needs of marginalized women. Additionally, the empowerment of women must go hand in hand with efforts to address structural barriers such as patriarchy, gender-based violence, and economic inequality. Only then can globalisation be a truly transformative force



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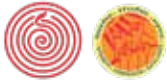
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MODEL QUESTION PAPER-MCQ





Q1. Which term refers to crimes that occur in virtual environments, especially within the context of the metaverse, involving digital assets, identity theft, and other forms of illegal activities?

- A. Cybercrimes
- B. E-crimes
- C. Metacrimes
- D. Digital Delinquencies

Q2. With reference to 'Nivahika' web portal often seen in news, consider the following statements.

1. The portal ensures accuracy and consistency in data for ministry submissions and national rankings.

2. The portal was designed by Centre for Development of Advanced Computing, Pune

Identify the correct statement/s.

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Q3. Consider the following.

- 1. Electronics
- 2. High-Temperature Use
- 3. Industrial Components
- 4. Medical Uses

How many of the above can be consider as the application of element 'Tantalum' often seen in news?

- A. Only One
- B. Only Two
- C. Only Three
- D. All the four

Q4. Consider the following statements regarding 'Canine Distemper Virus' often seen in news.

1. The virus spreads through respiratory droplets or contact with bodily fluids.

2. Vaccination is the most effective way to prevent CDV in domestic and wild animals.

3. The virus can be fatal particularly in unvaccinated dogs and vulnerable wildlife populations.

Select the correct statement/s using the code given

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

Q5. Which virus, often associated with causing fifth disease in children, is a small, single-stranded DNA virus known for its impact on red blood cell production?

- A. Epstein-Barr Virus
- B. Human Papillomavirus
- C. Parvovirus B19
- D. Cytomegalovirus

Q6. Consider the following statements regarding 'National Pest Surveillance System' often seen in news.

1. The Surveillance System was launched by National Disaster Management Authority.

2. The system Includes a mobile app and web portal for easy access ensuring all farmers can benefit from the system.

Identify the correct statement/s.

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Q7. Which of the following statements accurately describes Mpox?

A. It is a viral disease primarily transmitted through contaminated food and water, causing severe gastrointestinal symptoms.

B. It is caused by a bacterial infection that spreads through the air and primarily affects the respiratory system.

C. It is a zoonotic viral disease, transmitted mainly through close contact, causing symptoms similar to smallpox, including rashes.

D. It is a fungal infection that spreads through soil, mainly affecting the skin and leading to chronic lesions.

Q8. Which organization is responsible for releasing "The State of the World's Mangroves Report"?

A. World Wildlife Fund (WWF)

B. Global Mangrove Alliance

C. United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

D. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

Q9. In which state is Namdapha National Park located?

A. Arunachal Pradesh

B. Assam

C. Meghalaya

D. Nagaland

Q10. Which of the following statements about Xenophrys apatani is accurate?

A. It is a new forest-dwelling horned frog species discovered in Arunachal Pradesh, named after the Apatani community for conservation efforts.

B. It is a marine amphibian found in the Indian Ocean, known for its unique bioluminescent features discovered by marine biologists.

C. It is a desert-dwelling reptile found in Rajasthan, characterized by its ability to survive extreme temperatures and named after a local tribe.

D. It is a high-altitude bird species discovered in the Himalayas, noted for its distinctive feather patterns and named after a famous ornithologist.

Q11. With reference to coral bleaching, consider the following statements.

1. Coral bleaching occurs when corals lose their vibrant colours due to stress.

2. Primarily caused by rising sea temperatures, pollution, and excessive sunlight.

3. Stress causes corals to expel symbiotic algae, leading to loss of colour and health.

4. Bleached corals are more vulnerable to disease, starvation, and mortality.

How many of the above statement/s is/ are correct?

A. Only One

B. Only Two

C. Only Three

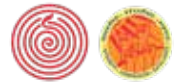
D. All the four

Q12. Which of the following statements about carbon markets is correct?

A. These markets facilitate the buying and selling of carbon credits to offset greenhouse gas emissions and promote reduction strategies.

B. These markets are primarily focused on regulating the amount of water usage in industrial processes to prevent scarcity.

C. These markets involve trading of fossil fuels between



countries to balance energy demands and control emissions.

D. These markets are platforms where countries exchange technologies to enhance their nuclear power capabilities for climate goals.

Q13. *Strobilanthes kunthiana*, commonly known as Neelakurinji, is endemic to which region?

- A. Western Ghats
- B. Eastern Ghats
- C. Himalayas
- D. Thar Desert

Q14. Galathea Bay is located in which of the following regions?

- A. Lakshadweep Islands
- B. Sundarbans Delta
- C. Gulf of Kutch
- D. Andaman and Nicobar Islands

Q15. Consider the following pairs.

(Wetlands in News: Location)

- 1. Nanjarayan Bird Sanctuary: Karnataka
- 2. Kazhuveli Bird Sanctuary: Tamil Nadu
- 3. Tawa Reservoir: Madhya Pradesh

How many of the above pair/s is/ are correctly matched?

- A. One pair only
- B. Two pairs only
- C. All the three pairs
- D. None of the pairs

Q16. Consider the following statements about INS Arighaat:

- 2) It is a Scorpene-class submarine built with collaboration of France.
- 3) It is a nuclear-powered submarine.
- 4) It is under the control of the strategic forces command of India

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 1 and 3 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Correct answer c

Q17. Consider the following statements:

- 1) Marriage and divorce are listed in the Concurrent list of Schedule 7 of the Constitution of India.
- 2) Only Parliament can define marriage age for the citizens by enacting an Act.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Correct Answer is a)

Q18. Consider the following statements about Plea Bargaining:

- 1) It is a practice whereby the accused exercises his right to plead not guilty and demand a full trial.
- 2) The procedure outlined in the CrPC applies only to offences punishable by up to seven years of imprisonment.
- 3) If the court rejects the plea bargain, the case can't

proceed to trial.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 2 only
- b) 1 and 2 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Correct

Ans: A

Q19. Consider the following Groupings:

- 1) BRICS
- 2) BASIC
- 3) G-20
- 4) G-4
- 5) IBSA
- 6) International Solar Alliance
- 7) Columbo Security Conclave

How many of the above groupings have Brazil and India as common members?

- a) Only Four
- b) Only Five
- c) Only Six
- d) All Seven

Correct

Ans: c

Q20. Recently, India signed an agreement with which country to develop National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC) at Lothal, Gujarat?

- a) Indonesia
- b) Egypt
- c) France
- d) Vietnam

Ans C

Q21. Consider the following statements

- 1) Diego Garcia recently seen in the news is an island in the Pacific Ocean
- 2) St. Martins island recently seen in the news is in South China Sea.

Which of the following is / are true regarding the above statements

- a) Only 1
- b) Only 2
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

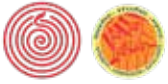
Ans c

Q22. Consider the following places in news

- 1) KURSK
- 2) SUMY
- 3) SUDSA
- 4) WARSAW

How many of the above places are not belonging to Russia or Ukraine

- a) Only 1
- b) Only 2
- c) Only 3
- d) All four



Ans A) Only 1

8) What is the primary objective of the Jiyo Parsi Scheme, recently seen in news?

- To promote the education of Parsi children
- To reverse the declining trend of the Parsi population
- To provide financial aid for Parsi businesses
- To encourage Parsi cultural activities

Correct answer B

Q23. Consider the following statements

- Recently, Uttar Pradesh state has become the first Indian state to launch a Gross Environment Product Index
- Paetongtarn Shinawatra became the youngest prime minister of Thailand

Which of the following is / are true about the above statements

- Only 1
- Only 2
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

Ans B

Q24. Which country recently co-hosting a conference on online radicalisation with European Union?

- Japan
- China
- India
- France

Ans C)

Q25. Bureau of Police Research & Development (BPR&D), recently seen in the news, comes under which ministry?

- Ministry of Urban Development
- Ministry of Defence
- Ministry of Home Affairs
- Ministry of New and Renewable Energy

Ans C

Q26. which state assembly passed a bill to raise the minimum marriage age for women from 18 to 21 years?

- Rajasthan
- Gujarat
- Himachal Pradesh
- Kerala

Ans C

Q27. Consider the following statements regarding Unified Pension Scheme:

- The UPS promises government employees 50% of the average basic pay drawn over the last 12 months.
- The pension includes a periodic dearness relief hike in line with inflation trends.
- In case of a government employee's death, the family is assured a pension equivalent to 20% of the employee's pension.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- 1 and 2 only
- 1 and 3 only
- 2 and 3 only

d) 1, 2, and 3

Correct answer is a)

Q28. Consider the following statements regarding Classical Languages in the India:

- At present, there are six languages that enjoy the 'Classical' status in India.
- Sanskrit was the first language in India to be accorded classical language status in 2004.
- All the Classical Languages are listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- 1 and 2 only
- 1 and 3 only
- 2 and 3 only
- 1, 2, and 3

Correct answer is b)

Q29. With reference to "Dark Patterns", consider the following statements:

- Harry Brignull Introduced this term in 2010.
 - It is a deceptive practice employed to influence user behaviour in a way that benefits the company implementing it
- Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- None

Correct answer C

Q30. With reference to the 'Special Drawing Rights (SDRs)', consider the following statements:

- The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) is neither a currency nor a claim on the IMF.
- The private entities cannot hold Special Drawing Rights (SDRs).

Which among the above statement(s) regarding the Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) is / are true?

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 and 2

Q31. With reference to 'Fiscal Easing', consider the following:

- Increasing public expenditures.
- Reducing interest rates.
- Lowering taxation rates.

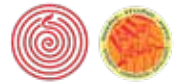
Which among the above statement(s) is / are true?

- 1 only
- 1 and 3 only
- 2 and 3 only
- 1, 2 and 3

Q32. Consider the following:

- Special Drawing Rights (SDR)
- Government Securities.
- Reserve Tranche Position (RTP)

Which among the above constituted the Foreign Exchange



Reserves?

- 1 only
- 1 and 3 only
- 2 and 3 only
- 1, 2 and 3

Q33. Consider the following:

1. Proceeds from disinvestments.
2. Interest received from loans granted.
3. Salaries and pensions.

Which of the above is/are belong to a Capital Receipt?

- 1 only
- 1 and 3 only
- 2 and 3 only
- 1, 2 and 3

Q33. Consider the following:

1. National Compensatory Afforestation Fund
2. Goods and Services taxes.
3. Education Cess.

Which of the above is/are part of the Public Account of India?

- 1 only
- 1 and 3 only
- 2 and 3 only
- 1, 2 and 3

Q34. A SWIFT Code, sometime seen in the news, is related to International Banking Transaction Payment Gateway System Quick Toll Plaza Electronic Payment None of the above

Q35. Which of the following developments may likely reduce the fiscal deficit?

1. Increasing Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)
2. Providing budgetary support to public sector enterprises
3. Waiving off farm loans.
4. Austerity measures should be adopted.

Select the correct answer code:

- 1 and 4 only
- 2 and 3 only
- 2, 3 and 4 only
- 1, 2 and 3 only

Q36. One of the important goals of the economic liberalisation policy is to achieve full convertibility of the Indian rupee. This is being advocated because:

- convertibility of the rupee will stabilize its exchange value against major currencies of the world
- it will attract more foreign capital inflow in India
- it will help to promote exports
- it will help India secure loans from the world financial markets at attractive terms

Q37. Consider the following statements.

1. External Commercial Borrowings
2. Trade in goods and services
3. Private remittances.

Which among the above is part of the Revenue Account within the Balance of Payments?

- 1 only
- 1 and 3 only
- 2 and 3 only
- 1, 2 and 3

Q38. The Capital Account Convertibility of the Indian Rupee implies:

that the Indian Rupee can be exchanged by the authorised dealers for travel

that the Indian Rupee can be exchanged for any major currency for the purpose of trade in goods and services

that the Indian Rupee can be exchanged for any major currency for the purpose of trading financial assets

None of the above

Q39. Consider the following pairs:

Rock	Type
1. Gabbro :	Metamorphic
2. Limestone :	Sedimentary
3. Marble :	Igneous Rock

Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 3 only

Q40. Arrange the following elements in increasing of their weight percentage in the earth's crust:

1. Oxygen
2. Silicon
3. Aluminum
4. Iron

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- (a) 1-2-4-3
- (b) 1-2-3-4
- (c) 4-3-2-1
- (d) 4-3-1-2

Q41. Consider the following statements regarding the earth's crust:

1. Oceanic crust is thicker when compared to continental crust.
2. Oceanic crust is made up of basaltic rock.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q42. Which of the following are the possible factors behind earthquakes?

1. Mining activity
2. Volcanoes
3. Tectonic movements
4. Reservoir-induced seismicity

Select the correct answer using the code



given below.

- (a) 1, 2 and 3 only
- (b) 1, 2, 3 and 4
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1 and 4 only

Q43. With reference to the lava erupting from a volcano, consider the following statements:

- 1. Basic lava is highly fluid and poor in iron and magnesium.
- 2. Acid lava is highly viscous with a high melting point.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q44. Arrange the following Indian cities from north to south:

- 1. Chennai
- 2. Bengaluru
- 3. Bhopal
- 4. Jaipur

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- (a) 3-2-4-1
- (b) 3-4-2-1
- (c) 4-3-2-1
- (d) 4-3-1-2

Q45. In the context of plate tectonics, which of the following are classified as minor plates?

- 1. Pacific plate
- 2. Cocos plate
- 3. Nazca plate

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Q46. With reference to the earthquakes, consider the follow-

ing statements:

- 1. The point where the energy is released is called the focus.
- 2. The point directly above the focus is called the hypocentre.
- 3. Epicenter is the first point that experiences earthquake waves.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Q47. In the context of our solar system, arrange the following planets in increasing order of their density.

- 1. Mercury
- 2. Earth
- 3. Mars
- 4. Jupiter

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- (a) 1-3-4-2
- (b) 4-3-1-2
- (c) 4-1-2-3
- (d) 3-4-2-1

Q48. Consider the following statements with reference to the measurement of the earthquake:

- 1. The Richter scale measures the intensity of earthquakes while the Mercalli scale measures the magnitude of earthquakes.
- 2. While the magnitude scale measures the energy released during earthquakes, the intensity scale measures total damage caused by earthquakes.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

SPACE FOR ROUGH WORK



SPACE FOR ROUGH WORK



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SPACE FOR ROUGH WORK





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CURRENT AFFAIRS
AUGUST 2024**



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Plot no. -15, Sector -4,
R K Puram, New Delhi - 110022

VEDHIK IAS ACADEMY

Head Office: M4 - Houz New Delhi - 16
Registered Office : Mercy Estate 4th Floor,
Ravipuram, Pin - 682 015



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