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A collection of historical artifacts is arranged on an old, detailed map. On the left, a brown leather flask with a metal cap stands upright. In the center, a rolled-up scroll with a reddish-brown cover lies horizontally. In the foreground, a metal ring with a dark stone and a key with a circular head are placed on the map. A gold chain is also visible near the flask. The background features a textured, brown surface with faint, repeating patterns.

# HISTORY- ARTS AND CULTURE





**VENKATESWARA TEMPLE: A SACRED  
LANDMARK IN TIRUMALA**

**DADASAHEB PHALKE AWARD: HONORING  
EXCELLENCE IN INDIAN CINEMA**

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**CYCLONE ASNA**

**SATURN'S RINGS**

**GALATHEA BAY**

**TYPHOON YAGI (VIETNAM)**

**SALT PAN LANDS**



## VENKATESWARA TEMPLE: A SACRED LANDMARK IN TIRUMALA

**CONTEXT:** India's beloved sweet, the laddu, has found itself at the center of an unappetizing controversy. The issue arose when Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu revealed that lab tests indicated the laddus, offered to the deity and later distributed to devotees at the renowned Tirupati temple, were contaminated with both animal and vegetable fat.

### BACKGROUND

Tirumala is the wealthiest pilgrimage center in the world and is home to Lord Venkateswara, situated atop the Seshachalam Hills, also known as the Seven Hills. The temple of Lord Venkateswara was originally built by the Thondaman King and later renovated by the Cholas, Pandyas, and Vijayanagar rulers. The temple rituals were formalized by Ramanujacharya in the 11th century A.D. These hills rise 980 meters above sea level and cover an area of approximately 10.33 square miles. In terms of income, the Tirumala temple ranks second globally, following Vatican City in Rome.

### TIRUMALA TIRUPATI'S MYTHOLOGICAL HISTORY



According to Srimad-Bhagavatam, during the Satya Yuga, Hiranyaksha's destructive actions caused the earth to sink into the Garbhodaka Ocean. The demigods turned to Lord Brahma, who prayed to Vishnu for help. Vishnu appeared as Sri Varahadev, defeated Hiranyaksha, and lifted the Earth goddess, Bhudevi, with His tusks, placing her atop the ocean. Bhudevi, an expansion of Goddess Lakshmi, was overjoyed to

reunite with her consort, Lord Varahadev. She requested Him to remain with her on Earth, to which He agreed, summoning Garuda to bring one of His favorite mountains from Vaikuntha. The mountain, now called Tirumala, became their residence.

The seven hills of Tirumala are said to be an incarnation of Sesa, the divine expansion of the Lord, who wished to support the Lord's divine activities on Earth. These hills are known as Seshadri, Garudadri, Anjanadri, Neeladri, Vrushabhadri, Venkatadri, and Narayanadri, representing different divine entities.

### TIRUMALA'S SEVEN HILLS

The sacred Tirumala Hills, covering 27 square kilometers, consist of seven peaks that represent the seven heads of Adishesha, the king of serpents:

1. Vrushabhadri (Hill of Nandi, vahana of Lord Shiva)
2. Anjanadri (Hill of Lord Hanuman)
3. Neeladri (Hill of Neela Devi)
4. Garudadri (Hill of Garuda, vahana of Lord Vishnu)
5. Seshadri (Hill of Sesa, servant of Vishnu)
6. Narayanadri (Hill of Lord Narayana)
7. Venkatadri (Hill of Lord Venkateswara)

These hills have deep religious significance, symbolizing various aspects of divine presence and mythology.

### SIGNIFICANT FEATURES

**Natural Arch (Silathoranam):** A stunning geological formation located near the temple, Silathoranam is an 8-meter-wide and 3-meter-high natural rock arch.

**Tirupati Laddu:** The famous Tirupati Laddu, made with dried fruits and nuts, holds Geographical Indicator (GI) status, with over 175,000 laddus made daily.

**Temple Architecture:** Constructed in the Dravidian style, the temple's sanctum, called Ananda Nilayam, houses the standing idol of Lord Venkateswara. The temple follows the Vaikhanasa Agama tradition and is recognized as one of the eight Vishnu Swayambhu Kshetras.

### TIRUMALA TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS (TTD)

Formed in 1930, TTD manages the temple's daily activities and its charitable operations. As the world's richest temple, the Tirumala temple receives millions of pilgrims annually. On special occasions like the annual Brahmotsavam, the number of visitors can reach up to 500,000 in a day.

## DADASAHEB PHALKE AWARD: HONORING EXCELLENCE IN INDIAN CINEMA

**CONTEXT:** Mithun Chakraborty has been honored with this year's Dadasaheb Phalke Award. The actor played a key role in shaping Bollywood's iconic disco culture.



### BACKGROUND

About the Award: The Dadasaheb Phalke Award is the most prestigious accolade in Indian cinema, forming part of the National Film Awards. It is named after Dhundiraj Govind Phalke, the visionary filmmaker who introduced India to its first film, Raja Harishchandra, in 1913. This award is given in recognition of an individual's outstanding contribution to the growth and development of Indian cinema, making it the highest honor in the Indian film fraternity.

### AWARD OVERVIEW

Instituted by the government in 1969, the Dadasaheb Phalke Award includes a 'Swarna Kamal' (Golden Lotus), a cash prize of INR 10 lakh, a certificate, a silk scroll, and a shawl. The award is presented by the President of India, typically in the presence



of the Union Minister of Information and Broadcasting, along with representatives from the Film Federation of India and the Confederation of All India Cine Employees. The first recipient of this award was Devika Rani Roerich in 1969.



### DHUNDIRAJ GOVIND ‘DADASAHEB’ PHALKE

The Father of Indian Cinema Born in 1870 in Trimbak, Maharashtra, Dhundiraj Govind Phalke, also known as Dadasaheb Phalke, was a man of many talents. After studying engineering and sculpture, Phalke developed a fascination with motion pictures upon watching the silent film *The Life of Christ* in 1906. Before his filmmaking career, Phalke worked as a photographer, ran a printing press, and collaborated with the renowned painter Raja Ravi Varma.

In 1913, Phalke wrote, produced, and directed India’s first feature film, the silent *Raja Harishchandra*. The film’s success inspired him to create 95 more films and 26 short films over the following 19 years, earning him the title of “Father of Indian Cinema.”

## INDIA’S OFFICIAL OSCARS ENTRY: LAAPATAA LADIES

**CONTEXT:** India’s official entry for the 97th Academy Awards, in the Best International Feature Film category, is *Laapataa Ladies* (Missing Women), directed by Kiran Rao. Announced by the Film Federation of India (FFI) on September 23, 2024, this film explores the story of two newlywed women who accidentally swap places on a train journey to their husbands’ homes. The film, produced by Aamir Khan’s production house, has been both critically acclaimed and commercially successful.



September 30, 2024. Filmmakers provide details about their films, crew, and a fee of Rs 1.25 lakh for consideration.

The FFI jury watches the submitted films and engages in in-depth discussions before selecting the final entry by vote. This year, 29 films, including *All We Imagine As Light*, *Aattam*, and *Animal*, were considered. According to Barua, the jury focuses on films that reflect India’s social systems and ethos.

### CRITICISM AND CONTROVERSY

The FFI’s selection process has faced criticism in recent years for being opaque. This year’s jury, composed solely of men, drew social media backlash, with many questioning the absence of women in the decision-making process. Moreover, the citation praising *Laapataa Ladies* was criticized for its language and typographical errors, sparking further debate.

The Best International Feature Film Category: Countries worldwide are invited to submit their best films for the Oscars in this category. The selection must be made by an approved organization or jury, where at least 50% are industry professionals. The Academy selects 15 films for a shortlist in the first round of voting, and the final five nominees are chosen through a second round of voting. Three Indian films have been nominated in this category to date: *Mother India* (1957), *Salaam Bombay!* (1988), and *Lagaan* (2001).

### CONCLUSION

With *Laapataa Ladies* as India’s 2024 Oscars entry, the film is set to compete on a global stage, representing the vibrant diversity and unique social fabric of Indian cinema. Whether it joins the ranks of India’s previous Oscar-nominated films remains to be seen.

### BACKGROUND

The Film Federation of India (FFI): The FFI, responsible for selecting India’s entry to the Oscars, describes itself as the parent body for major film associations in India. Its mission is to promote and protect the interests of the Indian film industry and its associated trades. Additionally, it aims to popularize Indian films both domestically and internationally. The FFI appoints a 13-member jury consisting of experienced professionals from the creative field to decide which film represents India at the Academy Awards. This year, Assamese director Jahnu Barua chaired the jury.

### SELECTION PROCESS

Filmmakers are invited to submit their works to the FFI, adhering to the Academy’s eligibility criteria. The submissions must include films at least 40 minutes long, with over 50% non-English dialogue, and must have been theatrically released in India for at least seven days between November 1, 2023, and

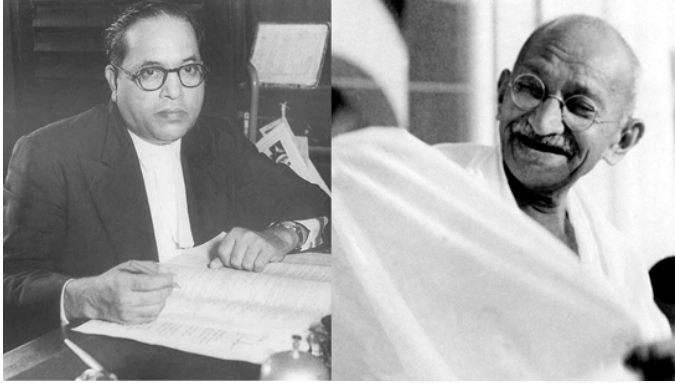


**INDIA’S LARGEST ONLINE IAS COACHING ACADEMY**



## GANDHI AND AMBEDKAR'S CLASH OVER SEPARATE ELECTORATES FOR SCHEDULED CASTES

**CONTEXT:** In September 1932, Mahatma Gandhi began a fast unto death in Pune's Yerawada Jail, protesting the British proposal for separate electorates for Scheduled Castes (SCs). This disagreement between Gandhi and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar would culminate in the Poona Pact, shaping India's reservation system, and leaving a lasting legacy in Indian politics.



### BACKGROUND

#### GANDHI'S EVOLVING VIEWS ON CASTE

Gandhi's stance on caste evolved over time. Initially conservative, he supported prohibitions on inter-dining and inter-marriage, but later rejected untouchability, referring to the oppressed as "Harijans" (children of God). Despite his opposition to untouchability, Gandhi never renounced the caste system itself, rooted in Hindu religious scriptures. Ambedkar criticized this approach, arguing that to dismantle caste, one must challenge the religious foundation that legitimized it.

#### AMBEDKAR'S CALL FOR SEPARATE ELECTORATES

Ambedkar believed in political empowerment for the lower castes as the key to social change. At the First Round Table Conference in London, he argued that SCs were a distinct group, socially excluded within Hinduism. To ensure political representation, he advocated for separate electorates with a double vote system, where SCs could elect their own representatives while also participating in the general electorate. This, he believed, was essential to challenge caste oppression and prevent SC representatives from being influenced by upper-caste Hindus.

#### GANDHI'S OPPOSITION TO SEPARATE ELECTORATES

Gandhi opposed separate electorates on several

grounds. He believed they would provide only minimal political power to the SCs and that they should instead aspire for full inclusion in society. Gandhi also feared that separate electorates would fragment Hindu society, furthering British colonial strategies of "divide and rule." At a time of rising Hindu-Muslim tensions, the introduction of separate electorates for SCs would weaken the unified Hindu political front.

#### THE GANDHI-AMBEDKAR DEBATE

The debate between Gandhi and Ambedkar reached its peak when Gandhi began his fast on September 20, 1932, framing it as a moral stand to protect Hindu unity. For Ambedkar, this created a difficult dilemma. While he opposed Gandhi's stance, the possibility of Gandhi's death threatened the burgeoning Dalit movement and could lead to violent backlash from upper castes. Under immense pressure, Ambedkar relented, signing the Poona Pact, which guaranteed reserved seats for SCs but abandoned the idea of separate electorates.

#### AFTERMATH AND REFLECTIONS

Many celebrated Gandhi's fast as a victory for Indian unity, with figures like Rabindranath Tagore praising his sacrifice for national integrity. However, others viewed it as a form of coercion, forcing Ambedkar into a compromise. Ambedkar later expressed his dissatisfaction with the Poona Pact, arguing that it left SCs politically vulnerable. He criticized the joint electorate system as a "rotten borough" in which SC representatives were beholden to upper-caste interests rather than truly representing the Dalit community.

1. The Gandhi-Ambedkar disagreement over separate electorates remains a defining moment in India's socio-political history. While the Poona Pact established reservations for SCs, Ambedkar's concerns about caste oppression and representation still resonate in contemporary debates on caste and political power.

## WORSHIPPING THE KARAM TREE: MYTH AND AGRICULTURAL PRACTICE IN THE TRIBAL HARVEST FESTIVAL OF KARMA

**CONTEXT:** The Karma or Karam Parv harvest festival is celebrated by tribal communities across Jharkhand, West Bengal, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Assam, and Odisha. Central to this festival is the worship of the Karam tree, symbolizing Karam Devta or Karamsani, the god of strength, youth, and vitality. This cultural and agricultural festival is a blend of mythological significance and farming practices.



### BACKGROUND

#### THE SACRED KARAM TREE

At the heart of the Karma festival is the worship of the Karam tree. While rituals may vary slightly across regions, the common practice involves the planting of a branch of the Karam tree in a courtyard or 'akhra,' symbolizing the festival's connection to nature and fertility. According to tradition, young women bring sand from the river a week before the festival and sow grains, symbolizing the community's agricultural roots.

On the day of the festival, devotees offer jawa (hibiscus) flowers to the Karam tree. The pahan (priest) performs rituals to honor Karam Devta, followed by singing and dancing of traditional Karam songs. The festival concludes with the immersion of the Karam branch in a river or pond, symbolizing the cycle of life and nature. In some regions,



branches from sal or bhelua trees are planted in fields, invoking the protection of Karam Devta for the crops.

**MYTHS SURROUNDING THE KARAM FESTIVAL**

The Karma festival is steeped in mythological tales, often involving seven brothers who failed to honor the Karam tree. In one such story from Odisha, the brothers neglect their worship, resulting in the withering of their fields, the decline of their health, and the illness of their cattle. Only after restoring the Karam tree and worshipping it did they regain prosperity and health.

A similar tale from another region tells of brothers enraged by their wives dancing near a Karam tree instead of bringing lunch to the fields. In their anger, one brother throws the Karam branch into a river, causing a series of misfortunes. They eventually repent, search for the Karam tree, and offer worship to seek forgiveness from Karam Rani, restoring balance and prosperity in their lives.

**CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE AND AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES**

According to Parwati Tirkey, an academic with expertise in the Oraon community, the origins of the Karma

festival are tied to the beginning of agricultural practices by these tribal communities. As they cleared forests and began cultivating crops, the festival became aligned with the agricultural cycles. It marks a celebration of the harvest, particularly of grains (dhaan/anaaj), symbolizing the community's gratitude for the abundance of nature.

During the festival, farmers plant stems of Chirchitti (chaff flower) and Sindwar (chaste tree) in their paddy fields alongside the Karam tree. These plants are believed to function as natural insecticides, reflecting the deep interconnection between cultural traditions and practical farming techniques. Through rituals, dance, and prayer, the festival seeks blessings for a bountiful harvest, ensuring the continuation of agricultural prosperity.

The Karma festival exemplifies the blending of myth, nature, and agricultural practices within tribal communities. By worshipping the Karam tree, these communities not only honor their cultural traditions but also reinforce their relationship with the land, marking a deep respect for nature's role in sustaining life and livelihood.

**THE GREAT STUPA OF SANCHI: FROM ASHOKAN TIMES TO THE PRESENT**

**CONTEXT:** The Great Stupa of Sanchi, a symbol of Buddhist heritage, has evolved from its origins in the third century BCE to modern-day reproductions across the world. Notably, in December 2022, a 1:1 replica of the East Gate was unveiled at the Humboldt Forum museum in Berlin, reflecting the historical significance of this ancient monument.



**BACKGROUND**

**THE GREAT STUPA OF SANCHI**

A Monument of Buddhist Legacy The Great Stupa, commissioned by Emperor Ashoka in the third century BCE, is one of the oldest and largest Buddhist monuments in India. It stands as the central structure within a larger complex of stupas, temples, and monasteries, developed over centuries, with the latest construction dating to the twelfth century CE. Originally built to enshrine sacred relics of the Buddha, the stupa is a hemispherical structure, reflecting the traditional burial mounds of pre-Buddhist India.

**SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ORNAMENTAL GATEWAYS (TORANAS)**

While the stupa itself is a plain dome crowned with a chhatra (parasol), the four elaborate gateways or toranas, built during the Satavahana dynasty in the first century BCE, make it instantly recognizable. These gateways, aligned to the cardinal directions, feature intricate carvings on square pillars and architraves, depicting scenes from the Buddha's life and Jataka Tales. The artistry of the toranas, adorned with floral motifs and even amorous scenes, demonstrates the cultural

richness of Buddhist art during this period.

**THE FAMOUS EAST GATE AND ITS REPLICAS**

The East Gate of Sanchi's Great Stupa is particularly renowned in Europe due to historical efforts by British officers to preserve the monument. When the stupa was rediscovered in 1818 by Henry Taylor, it was in ruins. Restoration efforts began in the late nineteenth century, culminating with a full-scale restoration led by John Marshall and funded by the begums of Bhopal in the 1910s.

In the 1860s, Lieutenant Henry Hardy Cole made plaster casts of the East Gate for the Victoria and Albert Museum. These casts became famous across Europe, leading to the creation of multiple replicas, including the latest reproduction installed at Berlin's Humboldt Forum in 2022.

**CULTURAL AND ARTISTIC ELEMENTS OF THE EAST GATE**

The East Gate's upper architrave portrays the seven Manushi Buddhas, with the middle architrave illustrating the Great Departure of Prince Siddhartha as he embarks on his journey towards enlightenment. The lower architrave depicts Emperor Ashoka's visit to the Bodhi tree, under which the Buddha attained enlightenment.

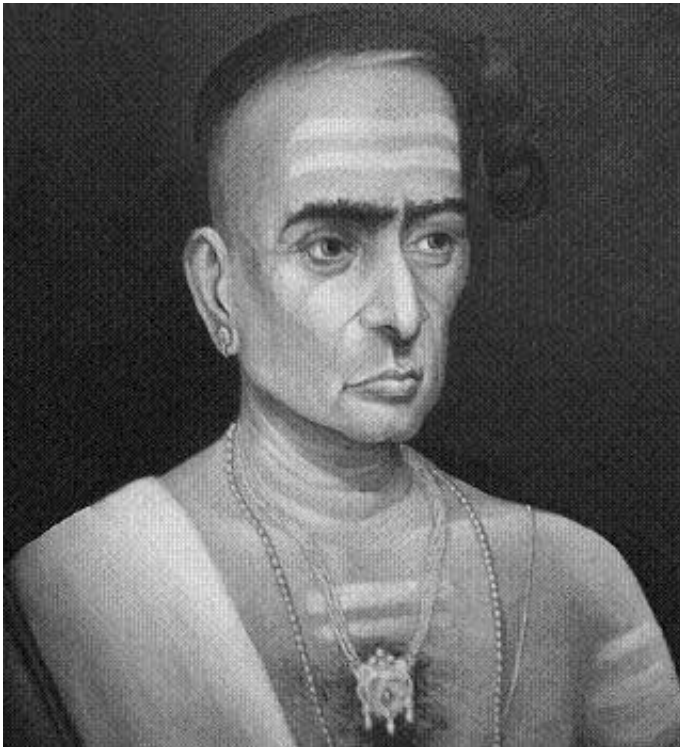
Other decorative motifs on the gate include the shalabhanjika, a fertility symbol represented by a yakshi (female spirit) grasping a tree branch, as well as carvings of elephants, winged lions, and peacocks. These elements underscore the symbolic and spiritual richness of the Great Stupa, which continues to inspire cultural connections worldwide.

The Great Stupa of Sanchi remains a testament to India's Buddhist heritage, from its origins under Ashoka to its global influence today. Replicas like the East Gate in Berlin symbolize not only the monument's artistic beauty but also its enduring legacy across time and continents.



## WHO WAS SAKTHAN THAMPURAN? THE LEGACY BEHIND THE FALLEN STATUE

**CONTEXT:** Suresh Gopi, the Minister of State for Tourism and Thrissur MP, has pledged to reconstruct a statue of Sakthan Thampuran, which was recently toppled by a state transport bus. This decision highlights the historical significance of Sakthan Thampuran, a prominent ruler of the Cochin kingdom.



### THE LIFE OF SAKTHAN THAMPURAN

Raja Rama Varma Kunjipillai, known as Sakthan Thampuran, ruled the Cochin kingdom from 1790 to 1805. Born in 1751 to Ambika Thampuran and Chendose Aniyan Namboodiri of the Cochin royal family, he was raised by an aunt who affectionately named him Sakthan, meaning 'powerful.' The title "thampuran" is believed to be derived from the Sanskrit word "samrat," meaning emperor. The Cochin kingdom, which was part of the Late Chera Empire, spanned regions from Ponnani in Malappuram to Thottappally in Alappuzha in present-day Kerala.

### A STRATEGIC RULER

Sakthan Thampuran became the heir apparent at the young age of 18 in 1769. As a strategist, he advised maintaining amicable relations with both the Dutch and the British, who were competing for trade dominance in the region. His political maneuvering is noted for orchestrating Mysore's attempted invasion of the Travancore kingdom, which had allied with the English East India Company. This effort led to the Powney Treaty, freeing the Cochin kingdom from Mysore's influence and establishing formal ties with the British.

Sakthan Thampuran took significant steps to consolidate power, such as abolishing the institution of the Yogiattirippads – spiritual heads who had previously conspired against the ruling monarch. He also reformed temple management by transferring control to the government, enhancing his reputation and significantly reducing crime in his kingdom.

### THRISSUR AND THE THRISSUR POORAM FESTIVAL

Sakthan Thampuran moved the capital of the Cochin kingdom from Thrippunithura to modern-day Thrissur. His



urban planning efforts laid the groundwork for the city's infrastructure, including the Thekkinkadu Maidanam and Swaraj Round. He actively encouraged merchants of all faiths and British officials to settle in the city, contributing to economic growth and stability.

In 1797, Sakthan Thampuran initiated the Thrissur Pooram festival as an alternative to the Arattupuzha Pooram, which was the largest temple festival in Kerala at the time. The Thrissur Pooram was designed to allow major temples in Thrissur to pay homage to Lord Shiva, the principal deity of the Vadakkumnathan Temple.

The commitment to reconstruct Sakthan Thampuran's statue reflects a recognition of his impactful legacy in the Cochin kingdom. His contributions to governance, urban development, and cultural celebrations continue to resonate in Thrissur today.

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





## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF TEACHERS' DAY IN INDIA: CELEBRATED ON SEPTEMBER 5

**CONTEXT:** Teachers' Day in India is observed annually on September 5, coinciding with the birth anniversary of former President Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1888-1975). This day is dedicated to honoring educators and recognizing their contributions to society.



### S. RADHAKRISHNAN: A PHILOSOPHER OF HINDUISM

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan is regarded as one of the most influential thinkers of the 20th century in India. His life and work focused on defining, defending, and promoting the Hindu religion. Radhakrishnan is recognized as a bridge between Indian philosophy and Western thought, significantly contributing to the West's understanding of Hinduism.

A leading advocate of the non-dualist Advaita Vedanta tradition, Radhakrishnan reinterpreted the philosophies of Adi Shankara for contemporary audiences. He also addressed what he described as "uninformed Western criticism" of Hinduism, thereby defending the religion's principles and values.

### A RESPECTED TEACHER

By the 1920s, Radhakrishnan had established himself as one of India's foremost scholars. He held prestigious positions, including the King George V Chair at Calcutta University from 1921 to 1932, and served as the second vice-chancellor of Andhra University from 1931 to 1936. Later, he became the fourth vice-chancellor of Banaras Hindu University from 1939 to 1948 and held the Spalding Chair of Eastern Religion and Ethics at the University of Oxford from 1936 to 1952. He was knighted in 1931 for his contributions.

Radhakrishnan was not only a brilliant academic but also a beloved teacher who formed strong personal connections with his students. He deeply valued the teaching profession and often emphasized that "teachers should be the best minds in the country."

### LEGACY AND CELEBRATION

Radhakrishnan served as the first Vice President of India from 1952 to 1962 and then as the second President from 1962 to 1967. In 1962, after becoming president, he learned that some former students wished to celebrate his birthday. Radhakrishnan declined a personal celebration, instead requesting that his birth anniversary be dedicated to honoring teachers across the nation.

Thus, Teachers' Day became a significant occasion in India, recognizing the vital role educators play in shaping society and empowering future generations.

## HAYAO MIYAZAKI WINS MAGSAYSAY AWARD: THE ENDURING APPEAL OF HIS ANIMATED FILMS

### ANIMATED FILMS

**CONTEXT:** Renowned Japanese filmmaker Hayao Miyazaki has been honored with the 2024 Ramon Magsaysay Award, recognizing his significant contributions to the field of animation. His films are celebrated for their gentle aesthetics and deeply resonant narratives, appealing to audiences of all ages.

### BACKGROUND

Who is Hayao Miyazaki? Born in Tokyo in 1941, Miyazaki grew up during World War II, which shaped his worldview and artistic vision. Despite his early passion for manga, he struggled with drawing human figures, focusing instead on aircraft and military vehicles, elements that would later appear in his films. After studying economics and political science, he began his animation career in 1963.

Before establishing Studio Ghibli, Miyazaki directed various projects, including the long-running series World Masterpiece Theater and Future Boy Conan. His breakthrough came with Kiki's Delivery Service in 1989, following earlier films that struggled commercially.

### THE BIRTH OF STUDIO GHIBLI

In 1985, Miyazaki, alongside director Isao Takahata and producer Toshio Suzuki, founded Studio Ghibli under Tokuma Shoten. While initial films like Castle in the Sky and My Neighbor Totoro didn't achieve commercial success, the studio later thrived with the release of Kiki's Delivery Service. Notably, Spirited Away (2001) garnered international acclaim,



winning the Academy Award for Best Animated Feature and marking a significant milestone in Miyazaki's career.

### THEMES IN MIYAZAKI'S FILMS

Miyazaki's films often reflect the profound changes in Japanese society post-World War II, particularly his fascination with aviation in films like Porco Rosso (1992). A prominent theme is pacifism; critics have described Spirited Away as anti-war propaganda. Additionally, environmentalism is a recurring motif, with Miyazaki expressing concerns about the destruction of nature in the name of progress.

Ram Prakash Dwivedi, a journalism professor, has highlighted parallels between Miyazaki's work and Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy, suggesting that both seek to illuminate the crises of modern civilization through their respective mediums.



### EMPOWERED FEMALE CHARACTERS

Studio Ghibli films are known for featuring strong female protagonists. Miyazaki's characters, such as Captain Dola from *Castle in the Sky* and Yasuko from *My Neighbor Totoro*, exhibit independence and resilience, often taking

on roles that challenge traditional gender stereotypes. His narratives avoid sexualization, focusing instead on the authentic experiences and emotional growth of young women.

Miyazaki has expressed a desire to portray contemporary children in Japan with authenticity, aiming to inspire joy through his storytelling. This approach stands in contrast to his critique of the current anime industry, which he believes prioritizes superficiality over genuine life experiences.

### INFLUENCES AND IDEOLOGIES

Miyazaki's leftist ideologies and views on communism align with his values, leading to criticism from conservative factions in Japan. He often critiques the prevailing trends in popular culture, advocating for a more profound connection to real life in the animation industry.

Miyazaki's films, characterized by their rich themes and visual beauty, continue to resonate with audiences, proving the timeless nature of his storytelling and artistic vision.

## UNRAVELING THE MYSTERIES OF MEHRAULI ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK: THE JAMALI KAMALI MOSQUE

**CONTEXT:** Located within the Mehrauli Archaeological Park, the Jamali Kamali mosque and tomb stand as a captivating 16th-century monument enveloped in mystery. While many may not recognize the name Shaikh Jamali Kamboh, his life and contributions are woven into the rich tapestry of India's historical narrative.

The Hidden Gem of Mehrauli Nestled at the end of a steep road within the park, the red sandstone structure of the Jamali Kamali mosque beckons visitors with its tranquil courtyard, shaded by two lush trees. This historical site is steeped in intrigue, often associated with ghost stories and enigmatic tales from the past.



### THE LIFE OF SHAIKH JAMALI KAMBOH

Shaikh Jamali Kamboh was a prominent figure during the reigns of three kings and served diligently in the courts of both the Lodi and Mughal dynasties. According to Dr. Gulfishan Khan, a history professor at Aligarh Muslim University, Jamali was not only a Sufi scholar but also a polymath and avid traveler. Her research highlights Jamali's influence on the Perso-Islamic culture, particularly during the flourishing high Mughal era, and emphasizes his role in shaping the later Indo-Islamic culture.

Historian Rana Safvi notes that the mosque was likely built on the site of saint Khwaja Qutbuddin's residence and is associated with the tomb of Shaikh Fazlullah, known as Shaikh Jamali Kamboh. Over the years, Jamali climbed the ranks, eventually becoming the tutor to Sultan Sikander Lodi.



### A TRANSITION IN ALLEGIANCE

As the Lodi dynasty fell, Kamboh gained favor with the Mughal emperors Babur and Humayun by composing poems that celebrated their reigns. Scholar Samir Zaweed explains that this earned him the title *Khusrau-i Sani*, or *Khusrau the Second*. During Humayun's campaign in Gujarat, Jamali passed away on May 2, 1536, and was interred in a room he had constructed for himself in Delhi.





Despite the prominence of Jamali Kamboh, the identity of Kamali, his counterpart, remains shrouded in speculation. Some theories suggest that Kamali may have been the true poet behind Jamali's verses or a fellow Sufi disciple, while the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) board claims they were brothers. Intriguingly, the cenotaphs inside the mosque refer to Kamali as Zainuddin, introducing yet another layer of mystery.

### ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Jamali Kamali mosque serves as an architectural testament to the transition of power from the Lodi dynasty to the Mughals. Percy Brown, in *Indian Architecture in the Islamic Period*, describes how the monument embodies a continuation

of Lodi architectural styles rather than a stark departure. The Mughals, preoccupied with consolidating their power after their victory in the Battle of Panipat, may not have focused heavily on architectural innovation at the time. Nevertheless, Brown notes an effort towards refinement in style, indicating a dedication to enhancing the quality of materials and craftsmanship in this significant period of transition.

The Jamali Kamali mosque is more than just an architectural marvel; it represents the confluence of history, culture, and mystery. The life of Shaikh Jamali Kamboh and the unanswered questions surrounding Kamali invite exploration and reflection, making this monument a significant piece of India's historical heritage.

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A vintage, sepia-toned map of the world, likely from the 17th or 18th century, serves as the background. The map features a grid of latitude and longitude lines and is labeled with various geographical names in Latin, such as 'ATLANTICVS', 'OCEANVS', 'AFRICA', 'EUROPA', 'ASIA', and 'AMERICA'. A brass compass is positioned in the lower right corner, and a magnifying glass with a brass frame is placed over the map in the upper right quadrant. The word 'GEOGRAPHY' is printed in a large, bold, black, sans-serif font across the center of the image.

# GEOGRAPHY



**CYCLONE ASNA**

**GLACIAL LAKE OUTBURST FLOOD  
(GLOF)**

**SATURN'S RINGS**

**GALATHEA BAY**

**TYPHOON YAGI (VIETNAM)**

**SALT PAN LANDS**



## CYCLONE ASNA

**CONTEXT:** Cyclone Asna, which formed over the Kutch coast in Gujarat, moved towards Oman without causing a significant impact in the region.

The cyclone, which originated from a deep depression, brought some rain and strong winds but caused no major damage or casualties.

### ABOUT CYCLONES:

Cyclones are intense systems of air circulation around a low-pressure center, characterized by violent storms and adverse weather conditions.

In the Northern Hemisphere, cyclones rotate counterclockwise, while in the Southern Hemisphere, they rotate clockwise.

The term "cyclone" comes from the Greek word

"Cyclos," meaning the coils of a snake, a reference coined by Henry Peddington due to the appearance of tropical storms in the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea resembling coiled serpents.

### CYCLONES ARE CLASSIFIED INTO TWO MAIN TYPES:

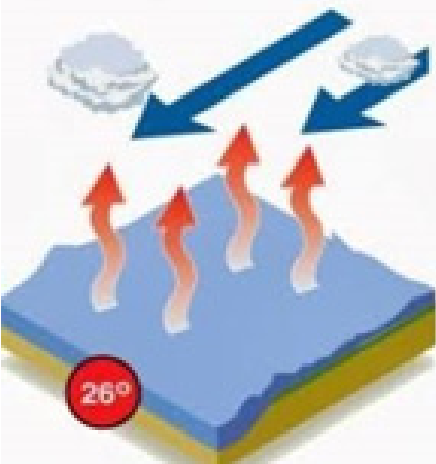
**Tropical Cyclones:** These form in tropical regions and include hurricanes and typhoons.

**Extra-Tropical Cyclones:** Also known as temperate, middle-latitude, or frontal cyclones, these occur in the mid-latitudes and are associated with weather fronts and low-pressure systems.

## How tropical storms are formed

High humidity and ocean temperatures of over 26°C are major contributing factors

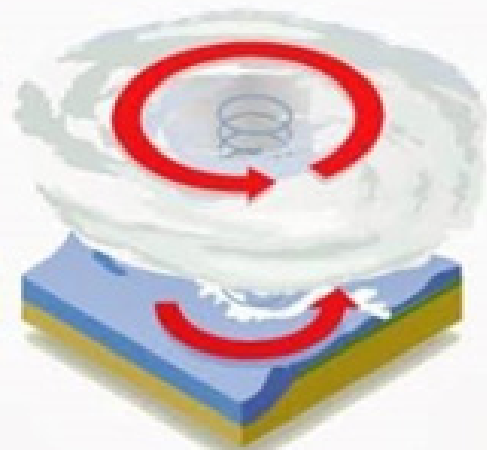
**Water evaporates** from the ocean surface and comes into contact with a **mass of cold air, forming clouds**



**A column of low pressure** develops at the centre. **Winds form** around the column



As pressure in the central column (the eye) weakens, the **speed of the wind** around it increases



## GLACIAL LAKE OUTBURST FLOOD (GLOF)

**Context:** A central team, as part of the GLOF (Glacial Lake Outburst Flood) Early Warning Systems Mission, visited Tenchungkha Lake in Sikkim, marking the first of 16 planned assessments in the region.

The NDMA (National Disaster Management Authority) has identified 188 critical lakes across the Indian Himalayan Region, vulnerable to GLOF events, and is working with state governments and experts, including ISRO scientists, to implement early warning systems and risk mitigation strategies.

Glacial lakes are large bodies of water formed by meltwater from glaciers, located in front of, on top of, or

beneath melting glaciers.

They develop near the glacier's snout as meltwater accumulates.

**Hazard:** As these lakes grow, they are often dammed by unstable ice or loose sediment, making them dangerous.

**GLOF (Glacial Lake Outburst Flood):** This occurs when the dam or boundary around a glacial lake fails, causing a sudden release of water that can flood downstream areas.

**Triggers:** GLOFs can be caused by earthquakes, heavy rains, or ice avalanches.

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## SATURN'S RINGS

**CONTEXT:** Saturn's iconic rings will "disappear" from view in March 2025 due to the planet's axial tilt, which will align the rings edge-on from Earth's perspective.

This phenomenon, known as an equinox, happens twice during Saturn's 29.5-year orbit around the Sun.

At these times, both of Saturn's hemispheres receive equal sunlight, causing the rings to become nearly invisible when observed from Earth.

However, the rings are not gone forever – they will reappear later in 2025 as Saturn continues its orbit.

This rare occurrence was first noted by Galileo in the 1600s with his early telescope

## GALATHEA BAY

**CONTEXT:** The Centre has designated Galathea Bay in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands as a 'Major Port,' marking the start of a ₹44,000 crore project.

The Great Nicobar Island International Container Transshipment Terminal (GNICTT) at Galathea Bay, with a depth of 20 meters, is a \$9 billion project in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. It will be India's second deep-water container transshipment terminal, following Vizhinjam International Seaport. This international transshipment hub will be developed through a public-private partnership and aims to capture cargo currently handled abroad.

India has 12 major ports and 200 non-major ports, with major ports regulated by the Major Ports Authority Act, 2021, and non-major ports managed by State Maritime Boards.

## TYPHOON YAGI (VIETNAM)

**CONTEXT:** Typhoon Yagi has claimed 143 lives in northern Vietnam, with 58 still missing. Typhoon Yagi is the strongest to hit Vietnam in decades, with winds reaching 149 kph.

Why Vietnam and the Philippines are affected by so many typhoons?

Vietnam and the Philippines are frequently affected by typhoons due to their geographic location in the Western Pacific, one of the most active typhoon basins in the world. Both countries lie along the Pacific typhoon belt, where warm ocean waters and atmospheric conditions favour the formation of strong tropical storms. Their long coastlines and low-lying areas also make them highly vulnerable to storm surges, flooding, and landslides triggered by typhoons. Additionally, the seasonal monsoons intensify these weather systems, especially during the peak typhoon season from June to November.



## SALT PAN LANDS

**CONTEXT:** Mumbai's salt pans, critical natural ecosystems, are under threat as the government approved the transfer of 256 acres to the Dharavi Redevelopment Project for housing slum dwellers.

These salt pans, spanning 5,378 acres in the city, help prevent flooding by accumulating rainwater and tidal inflows.

Environmentalists argue that developing these lands will worsen flooding in areas like Vikhroli and Kanjurmarg.

Despite their classification under Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) protections, pressure to use them for housing persists.

Salt pan lands are flat expanses of ground covered

with salt and other minerals, typically found in arid and semi-arid regions.

These lands are formed when bodies of water, such as lakes or ponds, evaporate, leaving behind salt deposits.

Salt pans are often associated with desert environments but can also occur in coastal areas where seawater evaporates in shallow basins.

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



# POLITY AND GOVERNANCE





**PM MODI INAUGURATES NATIONAL DISTRICT JUDICIARY CONFERENCE, HIGHLIGHTS MODERNIZATION EFFORTS**

**JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS: A NEED FOR REFORM**

**LIE DETECTOR TESTS AND NARCO ANALYSIS: A LEGAL AND ETHICAL DILEMMA**

**THE LAW COMMISSION OF INDIA: A BRIEF OVERVIEW**

**APARIJATA BILL: WB APPROVES DEATH PENALTY FOR RAPE**

**WHAT ROLE DOES CSTT PLAY IN STANDARDISING TECHNICAL TERMS?**

**AYUSHMAN BHARAT HEALTH INSURANCE SCHEME FOR SENIOR CITIZENS EXPANDED**

**SEIZED AND SOLD: INDIA'S ENEMY PROPERTY**



## PM MODI INAUGURATES NATIONAL DISTRICT JUDICIARY CONFERENCE, HIGHLIGHTS MODERNIZATION EFFORTS

**CONTEXT:** The National Conference of District Judiciary in India is a significant event that brings together judges from across the country to discuss and address challenges and opportunities in the judicial system. It provides a platform for sharing best practices, exploring modernization efforts, and ensuring the effective delivery of justice.

### THE EVOLUTION OF THE MODERN INDIAN JUDICIARY

#### Colonial Foundations

The Indian judicial system's roots lie in British colonial administration. The Royal Charter of 1661 granted the Governor and Council of the East India Company the authority to adjudicate civil and criminal cases according to English law. This led to the establishment of Supreme Courts in Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay, which initially functioned as separate entities from the Indian legal system.

#### Unification and Expansion

The High Court Act of 1861 marked a significant step towards unifying the Indian judicial system, merging the English and Indian systems of courts. This act established High Courts in Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay, replacing the existing Supreme Courts and native courts.

Despite these developments, the Indian judiciary remained largely influenced by English law and procedure. The Government of India Act of 1935 introduced the Federal Court of India as an intermediate appellate body, but its powers were limited, particularly in terms of enforcing its decisions.

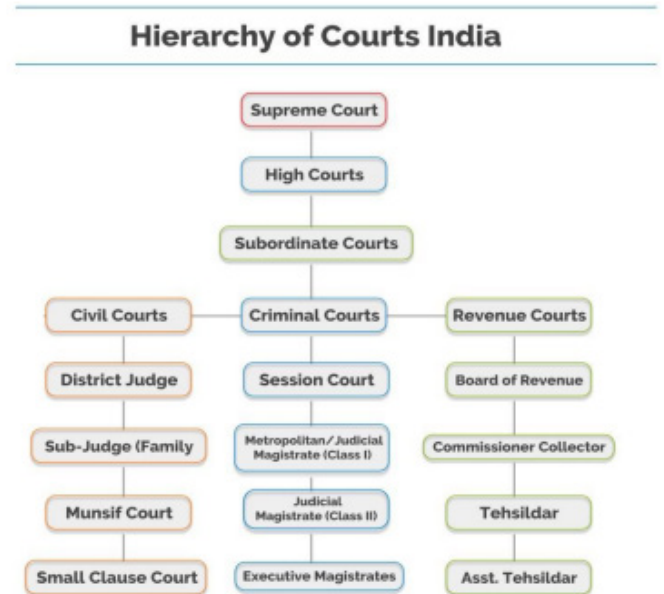
#### Post-Independence Transformation

With India's independence in 1947, the judiciary underwent a significant transformation. The Constitution of India established a Supreme Court as the highest court of appeal, along with a hierarchy of High Courts and subordinate courts.

#### Key Developments

- **Constitutional Framework:** The Indian Constitution enshrined judicial independence, ensuring that the judiciary operates free from government interference. It also granted the Supreme Court the power of judicial review, enabling it to strike down laws that are inconsistent with the Constitution.
- **Expansion of Jurisdiction:** Over the years, the Supreme Court has expanded its jurisdiction to include public interest litigation, environmental cases, and human rights matters. This has broadened the scope of judicial oversight and increased the judiciary's role in protecting citizens' rights.
- **Modernization Efforts:** The Indian judiciary has undertaken various modernization initiatives to improve efficiency and accessibility. These include the use of technology, the establishment of specialized courts, and reforms aimed at reducing case backlogs.

### STRUCTURE OF COURT SYSTEM IN INDIA



### KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF PM MODI'S SPEECH ON THE SUPREME COURT'S JOURNEY AND JUDICIAL REFORMS

**Evolution of the Supreme Court and Indian Democracy** PM Narendra Modi, in his speech, emphasized that the Supreme Court's 75-year journey is not merely about the institution itself but signifies the evolution of the Indian Constitution and the growth of India's democratic fabric. He lauded the contributions of the Constitution's framers, distinguished jurists, and the unshakable faith of citizens in the judiciary, positioning the Court as a symbol of trust and a key pillar in the nation's democratic system.

**Role of the Judiciary in Safeguarding Constitutional Democracy** PM Modi reiterated the pivotal role of the judiciary, particularly the Supreme Court, as the custodian of the Indian Constitution. He acknowledged the Court's instrumental role in upholding citizens' rights and ensuring that democracy thrives, even in challenging times.

**Modernization of the Judicial System** Reflecting on the government's efforts over the past decade, the Prime Minister outlined significant strides toward modernizing the judicial system. He highlighted the substantial investment in judicial infrastructure, with a large portion of these developments occurring in recent years. This has been crucial in enhancing accessibility to justice, particularly in remote areas.

**Technological Integration in Judicial Processes** The PM pointed to the introduction of e-Courts as a game changer, speeding up judicial processes and lightening the load on legal professionals and litigants. Furthermore, he announced the





government's ambition to create a unified technology platform for the judiciary, harnessing advancements in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Optical Character Recognition (OCR) to streamline court operations and improve efficiency.

**Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and Legal Reforms** The Prime Minister stressed the significance of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita—a reformed Indian legal code focusing on the principles of 'Citizen First, Dignity First, and Justice First.' This new legal framework removes obsolete colonial laws, addresses modern-day challenges with stricter measures against crimes, and recognizes digital records as valid evidence.

**Ensuring Women and Child Safety** PM Modi underscored the government's commitment to protecting women and children by enacting stringent laws and setting up fast-track courts to expedite cases related to atrocities against women. He highlighted the role of District Monitoring Committees in ensuring timely justice.

**Vision for a Developed India** Looking toward the future, the Prime Minister expressed confidence in the judiciary, especially the District Judiciary, as a robust pillar in building a modern and developed Bharat. He envisioned that ongoing judicial reforms and innovations would align with the nation's broader aspirations of 'Viksit Bharat' (Developed India) and 'Naya Bharat' (New India).

#### **KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA D.Y. CHANDRACHUD'S SPEECH**

**Promoting Legal Education in Regional Languages** CJI D.Y. Chandrachud stressed the need for making legal education more accessible by promoting the use of regional languages. He argued that this would help democratize legal knowledge, making it easier for citizens to understand legal proceedings in their native tongues. He expressed optimism that this would lead to a new generation of lawyers proficient in arguing cases in their mother languages.

**District Judiciary: The Backbone of the Legal System** The Chief Justice emphasized the crucial role of the district judiciary, referring to it as the "backbone" of the judicial system. He called for an end to the outdated practice of referring to the district judiciary as "subordinate," describing

it as a colonial-era relic that no longer aligns with India's post-independence judicial landscape.

**Challenges Facing the District Judiciary** CJI Chandrachud outlined the pressing challenges faced by district courts, including the high cost of legal representation, citizens' limited awareness of their rights, and geographical barriers in accessing the courts. He stressed the need for reforms to ensure that justice remains accessible to all, regardless of socio-economic status.

**Leveraging Technology for Citizen-Centric Justice** Highlighting the judiciary's growing reliance on technology, the CJI praised the digitization of court records, the establishment of e-Sewa Kendras, and the use of video conferencing for hearings. He stressed that these technological advancements are key to making the judiciary more citizen-friendly and accessible to those in remote areas.

**Increasing Representation of Women in the Judiciary** CJI Chandrachud pointed out the encouraging trend of more women entering the judiciary, especially at the district level. In states like Rajasthan, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, and Kerala, a significant percentage of recent judicial appointments have been women. This development, he noted, bodes well for the future of a young, dynamic, and gender-balanced judiciary.

**Translation of Supreme Court Judgments** He also mentioned that the Supreme Court has taken steps to translate its judgments into all languages recognized by the Constitution, with 73,000 judgments already available to the public. This effort aims to ensure that legal knowledge and court decisions are accessible to all citizens, regardless of linguistic barriers.

**CONCLUSION:** PM Modi, inaugurating the National District Judiciary Conference, highlighted the judiciary's modernization, focusing on technological advancements like e-Courts and legal reforms through the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. He emphasized the judiciary's role in safeguarding democracy and ensuring justice for all, particularly women and children. CJI D.Y. Chandrachud stressed promoting legal education in regional languages, enhancing district judiciary accessibility, leveraging technology, and increasing women's representation in the judiciary. Both leaders underscored judicial inclusivity and modernization.



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## JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS: A NEED FOR REFORM

**CONTEXT:** India's judicial system is plagued by a crippling backlog of cases, exacerbated by a chronic shortage of judges. A recent report reveals that while over 6 million cases are pending in High Courts alone, a staggering 30% of judicial positions remain vacant. This alarming statistic underscores the urgent need for reforms to address the appointment process and ensure a more efficient and accessible justice system.

**BACKGROUND:**

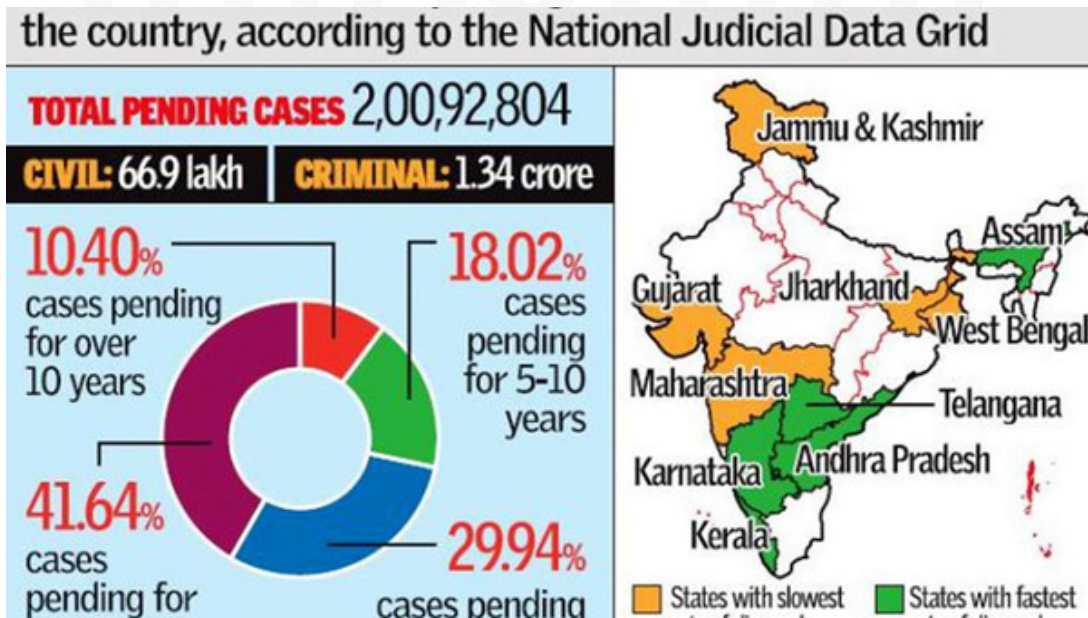
**STATUS OF JUDICIAL PENDENCY IN INDIA**

Court Level	Pending Cases (in lakhs)	Percentage of Total Pending Cases
Supreme Court	80.43	0.16%
High Courts	6170	12.34%
District Courts	45000	87.50%
Total	51950.43	100%

\*As on June 2024

**Key Observations:**

- **Overwhelming Burden on District Courts:** The majority of pending cases (87.5%) are concentrated in district courts, indicating a significant strain on the lower judiciary.
- **Government as Major Litigant:** The government is the largest litigant, contributing to 50% of all pending cases.
- **Land and Property Disputes:** These cases constitute a significant portion of the judicial backlog.
- **COVID-19 Impact:** The pandemic led to a sharp increase in case pendency due to disruptions in court proceedings.
- **Regional Variations:** States like Bihar and Uttar Pradesh have particularly high numbers of pending cases.
- **Steady Growth in Pendency:** The overall number of pending cases has been steadily increasing over the years.
- **Tribunals and Special Courts:** Even specialized courts designed for faster case disposal face significant backlogs and vacancies.



**JUDICIAL BACKLOG: A CRISIS IN INDIA'S COURTS**

Court	Pendency in 2019	Pendency in 2020	Pendency in 2021	Pendency in 2022
Supreme Court	59,535 (as on December 2019)	64,426 (as on December 2020)	69,855 (as on December 2021)	70,154 (as on March 2022)
High Courts	46,84,354 (as on December 2019)	56,42,567 (as on December 2020)	56,49,068 (as on December 2021)	58,90,726 (as on March 2022)
District & Subordinate Courts	3,22,96,224 (as on December 2019)	3,66,39,436 (as on December 2020)	4,05,79,062 (as on December 2020)	4,09,85,490 (as on March 2022)

REASON	EXPLANATION
Delays in Appointments	Political standoff and lack of consensus on judicial appointment processes. <b>NJAC Act, 2014, and the 99th Constitution Amendment, 2014 was struck down.</b>
Shortage of Judges	Insufficient number of judges to handle the caseload, especially in High Courts and District Courts.
New Mechanisms and Litigation	Increased use of Public Interest Litigation (PIL) expanding the scope of cases.
Shifting Role of the Supreme Court	Supreme Court handling a wider range of cases beyond constitutional matters.
Others	Court vacations, high government litigations, inadequate infrastructure, procedural delays, etc.

## APPOINTMENT OF JUDGES IN INDIA

The appointment and transfer of judges to the Supreme Court and High Courts in India are primarily governed by the Collegium System, which has evolved through judicial interpretations, though the Constitution outlines basic procedures.

### Constitutional Provisions:

- Article 124: This provision deals with the appointment of judges to the Supreme Court. It states that the President of India shall appoint Supreme Court judges after consulting the Chief Justice of India (CJI) and other judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts, as deemed necessary.
- Article 217: This article pertains to the appointment of High Court judges. The President, after consulting the CJI, the Governor of the concerned state, and, in some cases, the Chief Justice of the High Court, appoints judges to the High Courts.

### PROCEDURE OF APPOINTMENT:

#### 1. Supreme Court Judges:

- Collegium Recommendations: The process begins with the Collegium, comprising the CJI and the four senior-most judges of the Supreme Court, recommending names for appointments. These recommendations are based on seniority, merit, and other relevant factors.
- Government Approval: After the Collegium sends its recommendation, it is routed through the Ministry of Law and Justice to the Prime Minister, who advises

the President. The President formally approves the appointments.

#### 2. High Court Judges:

- High Court Collegium: For High Courts, the respective High Court's collegium (comprising the Chief Justice and two senior-most judges) makes recommendations. These are forwarded to the state executive.
- State Executive Recommendations: The Governor sends the recommendation to the Union Minister of Law and Justice, who forwards it to the CJI for consultation with senior judges of the Supreme Court.
- Final Approval: The recommendation, after approval by the CJI, is submitted to the Law Minister, who places it before the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister then advises the President for final approval.

#### Additional Information:

The Collegium System evolved as a safeguard for judicial independence, emphasizing the judiciary's role in its appointments. However, it has been subject to debate, with some calling for reforms to enhance transparency and accountability. The National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) was introduced in 2014 to replace the Collegium, but it was struck down by the Supreme Court in 2015 as unconstitutional, reaffirming the Collegium's supremacy.

While the collegium ensures judicial independence, criticisms about lack of transparency and a structured process have prompted discussions about revisiting the system.





## EVOLUTION OF COLLEGIUM SYSTEM

Case	Year	Key Decision	Impact on Collegium
First Judges Case	1981	Executive primacy in appointments.	Established executive dominance.
Second Judges Case	1993	Establishment of the Collegium system.	Shifted power to the judiciary for appointments.
Third Judges Case	1998	Expansion of the Collegium to five members.	Strengthened the judiciary's role in appointments.
NJAC Act and Fourth Judges Case	2015	NJAC Act struck down, Collegium system reaffirmed.	Reasserted judicial independence in appointments.

### Reasons for Evolution:

- **Judicial Independence:** The primary reason for the development of the Collegium System was to protect judicial independence by reducing executive control over judicial appointments.
- **Checks on Executive Power:** The growing concerns over the arbitrary exercise of power by the executive in appointing judges led the judiciary to assert its own role in appointments.
- **Constitutional Balance:** The Constitution envisaged a balance of power between the executive and the judiciary. Over time, the judiciary interpreted these provisions to enhance its own role in the appointment process, ensuring its autonomy.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** Despite the Collegium System's successes in preserving judicial independence, it has faced criticism for its lack of transparency and accountability, which continues to spark calls for reform.

The evolution of the Collegium System reflects India's broader constitutional debate on the separation of powers, with the judiciary striving to maintain its independence while navigating executive interests.

### Lessons from Other Countries on Judicial Appointments:

#### 1. United Kingdom (UK):

- The judicial appointments in the UK are overseen by the Judicial Appointments Commission (JAC), an independent body responsible for selecting candidates based on merit.
- The JAC consists of 15 members, 12 of whom are chosen through an open competition process. This system emphasizes independence, transparency, and merit-based selection to ensure that appointments are free from political influence.

#### 2. France:

- In France, judges are appointed to three-year renewable terms based on recommendations from the Ministry of Justice.
- The French model integrates regular performance evaluations, where the Ministry plays a key role in renewing or terminating judicial appointments, aiming

for accountability and continuous assessment of judicial competence.

#### 3. South Africa:

- The Judicial Service Commission (JSC), a 23-member body, advises the President on judicial appointments in South Africa.
- This system involves multiple stakeholders, including legal experts, members of parliament, and civil society representatives, ensuring a collaborative and transparent process.

#### 4. United States (US):

- In the US, judges of the Federal Courts are appointed by the President, with the advice and consent of the Senate.
- This process includes public hearings where judicial nominees are scrutinized for their qualifications, ideological stance, and professional background. The US system integrates significant political oversight, balancing judicial independence with democratic accountability.

#### 5. Germany:

- In Germany, judges of the Federal Constitutional Court are elected by both chambers of Parliament: the Bundestag and Bundesrat.
- This system reflects the emphasis on consensus, as judicial appointments require a two-thirds majority, fostering a cooperative approach between the executive, legislative branches, and legal community.

### Key Recommendations for India's Judicial Appointment Process:

#### 1. Establish a Comprehensive Regulatory Framework:

- A formalized framework should define clear criteria, qualifications, and processes for judicial appointments.
- This framework must include provisions for transparency, merit-based selection, and regular performance evaluations. It should also require the disclosure of reasons for appointments and transfers to maintain accountability.

#### 2. Strengthen Public Participation:

- Public consultations, open hearings, or the establishment of a judicial appointments commission that includes



representatives from civil society can enhance inclusivity.

- By incorporating diverse perspectives, this approach ensures that the judiciary reflects the values and aspirations of society.

### 3. Adopt an Alternate Proposal Based on Justice Madan B. Lokur's Ruling:

- **Appointment by Applications or Nominations:** Judicial appointments should be based on nominations from a variety of sources, including the Collegium, other judges, the Prime Minister, the President, and the Attorney General.
- **Committee of Eminent Citizens:** A participatory process involving a committee of eminent citizens from diverse fields (beyond the legal fraternity) can enrich the judicial

selection process.

- **Submission of Written File to the Executive:** A complete dossier, including views on the nominee's character, integrity, and antecedents, should be submitted to the executive for its review, ensuring that the candidate is thoroughly vetted before appointment.

### CONCLUSION:

Learning from global practices, judicial appointments in India should move towards greater transparency, meritocracy, and public participation. A robust regulatory framework and an inclusive appointment process, modeled after successful international systems, will promote a judiciary that upholds integrity, independence, and public confidence.

## LIE DETECTOR TESTS AND NARCO ANALYSIS: A LEGAL AND ETHICAL DILEMMA

**CONTEXT:** The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) recently conducted a second round of polygraph tests on several individuals linked to a high-profile murder case in Kolkata, sparking renewed discussions about the legal and ethical implications of using lie-detector tests in criminal investigations.

### LIE DETECTOR TESTS AND NARCO ANALYSIS IN INDIA: A DETAILED ANALYSIS

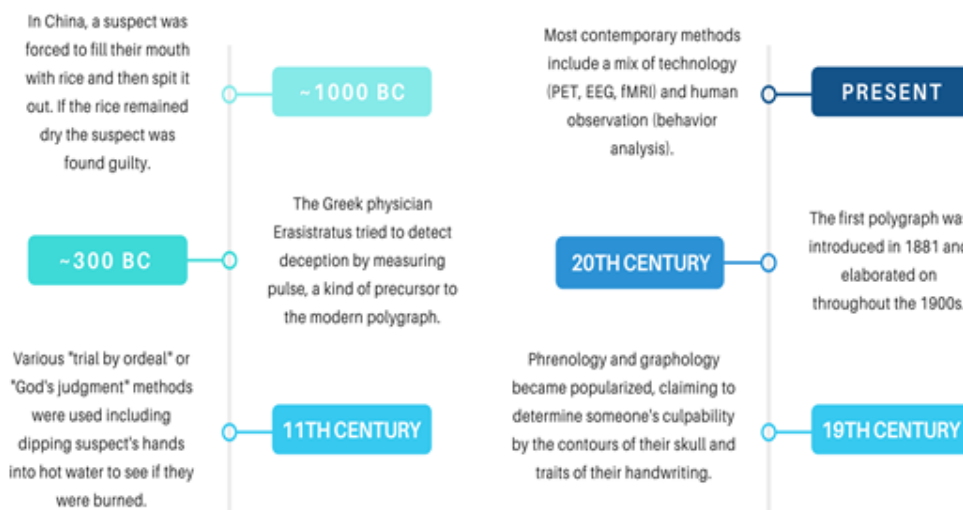
#### Introduction

The use of lie detector tests (polygraphs) and narco analysis in India has been a contentious issue, raising

significant legal, ethical, and scientific concerns. While these techniques have been employed in criminal investigations, their reliability and admissibility in court have been subject to intense scrutiny.

## THE EVOLUTION OF LIE DETECTION

A brief history of deception detection methods



PaulEkmanGroup.

### Legal Framework

The Supreme Court of India, in the landmark case of Selvi v. State of Karnataka (2010), established guidelines for the administration of lie detector tests. The Court held that these tests could only be conducted with the informed consent of the accused and in the presence of a lawyer. This ruling reinforced the principle that individuals have the right to refuse to participate in such tests without coercion or undue pressure.

The admissibility of evidence obtained through lie detector tests and narco analysis in Indian courts has been a subject of debate. While the Supreme Court has not explicitly

ruled on the admissibility of such evidence, it has emphasized the need for caution in relying on these techniques. In general, the courts have been reluctant to admit evidence obtained through involuntary or unreliable means.

### Scientific Validity

The scientific validity of lie detector tests and narco analysis has been questioned by experts. Polygraph tests, while often considered to be reliable, have limitations. Factors such as the skill of the polygraph examiner, the subject's physiological state, and the nature of the questions can influence the accuracy of the results.

Narco analysis, which involves the administration of



a drug to induce a hypnotic state, is even more controversial. Critics argue that the drug can impair a person's cognitive abilities and make it difficult to distinguish between truth and falsehoods. Additionally, there is evidence that individuals can learn to manipulate the effects of the drug, potentially rendering the technique ineffective.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The use of lie detector tests and narco analysis raises significant ethical concerns. These techniques can be invasive and potentially harmful, particularly when administered without proper consent or safeguards. There is also a risk of coercion or undue pressure being used to compel individuals to undergo these tests.

Furthermore, the use of these techniques can have implications for the fairness of the criminal justice system. If unreliable evidence obtained through lie detector tests or

narco analysis is admitted in court, it could lead to wrongful convictions.

### **ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

- **International Standards:** India should consider aligning its standards for the use of lie detector tests and narco analysis with international best practices, such as those established by the United Nations Human Rights Council.
- **Technological Advancements:** The development of new technologies, such as brain imaging techniques, may offer alternative methods for assessing truthfulness with potentially greater accuracy and fewer ethical concerns.
- **Public Awareness:** It is important to raise public awareness about the limitations and ethical implications of lie detector tests and narco analysis. This can help to prevent their misuse and ensure that they are used only in appropriate circumstances.

## **THE LAW COMMISSION OF INDIA: A BRIEF OVERVIEW**

**CONTEXT:** The 23rd Law Commission of India has been constituted by the Union government, with its chairperson and members yet to be appointed by the Appointments Committee of Cabinet.



**BACKGROUND:** The Law Commission of India is an independent body established by the Union government to review and reform Indian laws. It plays a crucial role in ensuring that the legal framework is just, fair, and effective. While not defined in the Constitution, it is established under Article 39A and functions as an advisory body to the Ministry of Law and Justice. The Commission's recommendations are often adopted by the government and lead to significant legal reforms.

### **THE LAW COMMISSION OF INDIA: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW**

The Law Commission of India has played a pivotal role in shaping the Indian legal landscape since its establishment in 1834 during British colonial rule. This non-statutory body, constituted by the Union government, has been instrumental in reviewing, reforming, and modernizing Indian laws to meet the evolving needs of the nation.

#### **HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

- **Pre-Independence:** The first Law Commission was established in 1834 by the British Government in India under the Charter Act of 1833, chaired by Lord Macaulay. Its primary objective was to unify and codify Indian laws.
- **Post-Independence:** The first Law Commission of independent India was established in 1955, headed by M.C. Setalvad. Since then, there have been a total of 22 Law Commissions, with the current 22nd Law Commission being chaired by Justice Ritu Raj Awasthi.

#### **Formation and Composition**

- **Formation:** The Law Commission is constituted by the Union government through a resolution passed by Parliament. The President of India gives assent to this resolution, authorizing the government to appoint the chairperson and members of the Commission.
- **Composition:** The Commission typically consists of a chairperson, usually a retired Supreme Court judge, and a team of legal experts, academicians, and senior advocates. Members are appointed for a term of three years.

#### **Functions and Role**

**The Law Commission plays a crucial role in legal reform by:**

- **Reviewing Existing Laws:** Identifying outdated or irrelevant laws that need to be repealed or amended.
- **Proposing New Laws:** Addressing emerging legal challenges and filling gaps in the legal framework.
- **Simplifying Legal Processes:** Making laws more accessible and understandable to the general public.
- **Studying Judicial Reforms:** Recommending changes in the judiciary to improve efficiency, reduce delays, and enhance justice delivery.

#### **Notable Achievements**

The Law Commission has contributed significantly to Indian legal reforms, including:

- The codification of various laws, such as the Indian Penal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure, and the Indian Contract Act.
- The introduction of significant legal reforms, such as the Hindu Code Bill and the Uniform Civil Code.
- The simplification of legal procedures and the promotion of legal literacy.

#### **SOME IMPORTANT RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE LAW COMMISSION**

- The Law Commissions of India have made several important recommendations over the years, covering diverse areas of law. Some key recommendations include:

##### **1. Criminal Law Reforms**

- 41st Report (1969): Recommended comprehensive reforms to the Indian Penal Code (IPC), Code of Criminal



Procedure (CrPC), and Indian Evidence Act to modernize the criminal justice system.

- 156th Report (1997): Suggested changes to the CrPC to expedite criminal trials and reduce delays.
- 262nd Report (2015): Advocated for the abolition of the death penalty for all crimes except terrorism-related offenses and waging war against the state.

## 2. Reforms in Civil Justice

- 54th Report (1973): Suggested amendments to the Code of Civil Procedure (CPC) to simplify procedures and ensure quicker justice delivery in civil cases.
- 230th Report (2009): Recommended measures to reduce delays in civil litigation by addressing adjournments and ensuring time-bound justice.

## 3. Uniform Civil Code (UCC)

- 21st Law Commission (2018): Recommended reforms to family laws rather than a Uniform Civil Code for the country, suggesting changes in existing personal laws to ensure equality, particularly in areas of divorce, inheritance, and adoption.

## 4. Electoral Reforms

- 244th Report (2014): Suggested reforms to prevent criminalization of politics, including barring candidates with serious criminal charges from contesting elections.
- 255th Report (2015): Recommended regulating election expenditures and ensuring greater transparency in electoral funding to curb the influence of money in politics.

## 5. Hate Speech and Freedom of Speech

- 267th Report (2017): Recommended amendments to the IPC to define hate speech and incorporate stricter laws for hate speech offenses while balancing it with the right to freedom of speech.

## 6. Legal Education Reforms

- 184th Report (2002): Suggested reforms in legal education to improve the quality of law courses, promote

clinical legal education, and ensure access to continuing education for lawyers.

## 7. Reforms in Anti-Torture Laws

- 273rd Report (2017): Recommended the enactment of a specific law on torture, suggesting a framework for addressing custodial torture in line with international standards, especially the UN Convention against Torture.

## 8. Commercial Courts and Arbitration

- 246th Report (2014): Suggested amendments to the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 to promote India as a hub for international commercial arbitration and reduce the intervention of courts in arbitration proceedings.

## 9. Personal Laws and Gender Justice

- 174th Report (2000): Recommended changes to the Hindu Succession Act, 1956, advocating for equal rights for daughters in inheritance matters.
- 242nd Report (2012): Proposed reforms to address issues in personal laws concerning child marriages, dowry and promote gender justice within personal law frameworks.

## 10. Legal Reforms on Sedition

- 22nd Law Commission (2023): Recommended reconsideration of Section 124A of the IPC, which deals with sedition, suggesting clearer definitions to avoid misuse and a balance between national security and freedom of speech.

These recommendations by various Law Commissions have significantly influenced legislative changes and reforms in the Indian legal system.

## CONCLUSION:

The Law Commission of India has played a vital role in shaping the Indian legal landscape through its comprehensive recommendations on various legal reforms. Its insightful reports have contributed to the modernization and improvement of Indian laws, ensuring a just, equitable, and efficient legal system.

## APARIJATA BILL: WB APPROVES DEATH PENALTY FOR RAPE

**CONTEXT:** West Bengal has unanimously passed a bill mandating the death penalty for rapists who cause the victim's death or leave them in a vegetative state, amid ongoing protests over the recent murder of a young doctor.

## THE APARAJITA BILL: A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO WOMEN'S SAFETY IN WEST BENGAL


The Aparajita Woman and Child (West Bengal Criminal Laws Amendment) Bill 2024 represents a significant step towards

strengthening the state's laws against sexual assault and ensuring swift justice for victims. The bill, passed unanimously by the West Bengal Assembly, introduces several key amendments to existing criminal laws.

### Key Amendments:

- **Death Penalty:** In cases where a rape results in the victim's death or permanent vegetative state, the bill mandates the death penalty for the offender. This applies to both single perpetrators and those involved in gang rapes.
- **Repeat Offenders:** For individuals convicted of rape multiple times, the bill prescribes

## WB legislation versus existing law

<p><b>Punishment for rape and murder</b></p> <p><b>WB Bill:</b> Death sentence if the victim dies or is left in a vegetative state</p> <p><b>Existing law:</b> Under BNS, if rape results in the victim's death or leaves her in a vegetative state, death penalty is only one of the punishments besides life term or minimum 20 years in jail</p>	<p><b>Probe deadlines</b></p> <p><b>WB Bill:</b> Investigation must be concluded within 21 days of the initial report</p> <p><b>Existing law:</b> Under BNSS, investigation must be concluded within two months of the filing of FIR. For trial, it specifies framing of charge within 60 days from the first hearing and judgment within 30 days (maximum of 60 days) after arguments conclude</p>	<p><b>Disclosing victim's identity</b></p> <p><b>WB Bill:</b> Imprisonment of 3 to 5 years</p> <p><b>Under BNS:</b> 2 years imprisonment and fine</p>
<p><b>Fast-track courts</b></p> <p><b>WB Bill:</b> Establishment of special courts for cases of sexual violence</p> <p><b>Existing law:</b> Under a centrally sponsored scheme, the department of justice provides funds to states for setting up fast track special courts for trial of cases relating to sexual offences</p>	<p><b>Junior doctors continue their protest in Kolkata.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">SAMIR JANA/HT</p> 	



rigorous imprisonment for life, a harsher punishment than the previous provision of simple imprisonment for life.

- **Aggravating Circumstances:** In cases where the perpetrator is a public servant or the rape is accompanied by other heinous acts, the bill allows for the imposition of the death penalty.
- **Gang Rape:** The bill extends the death penalty to cases of gang rape involving women of all ages, not just minors.
- **Acid Attacks:** For those convicted of acid attacks, the bill eliminates lesser punishments and mandates rigorous imprisonment for life.
- **Protection of Children:** The bill amends the Protection of Children Against Sexual Offences Act 2012 (POCSO) to include the death penalty for penetrative sexual assault against children.
- **Swift Justice:** To expedite investigations and trials in rape cases, the bill establishes special police teams and courts. These dedicated institutions will be responsible for ensuring that cases are handled efficiently and within strict timelines.

Overall, the Aparajita Bill demonstrates a strong commitment to women's safety and justice. By introducing harsher penalties for perpetrators and streamlining the legal process, the bill aims to create a more secure environment for women in West Bengal.

## THE EVOLVING LANDSCAPE OF STATE LAWS AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT

### The Precedents Set by Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra

Prior to West Bengal's Aparajita Bill, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra took significant steps to enhance their criminal laws against sexual assault. The Disha Bill and Shakti Bill, respectively, introduced the death penalty as a potential punishment for rape, particularly in cases involving minors and repeat offenders. While these bills have not yet received the President's assent, they serve as important precedents and demonstrate the growing momentum towards stricter measures.

### The Role of the President in Assenting to State Bills

The Aparajita Bill, like its predecessors, will now be presented to the Governor of West Bengal, who will then forward it to the President for her assent. This step is crucial for the bill to become law.

### The Supreme Court's Stance on Mandatory Death Penalty

The Supreme Court's ruling in the Mithu versus State of Punjab case (1983) has significantly influenced the introduction

of death penalties in Indian criminal laws. The court held that mandatory death sentences violate the fundamental rights of equality before the law and the right to life. Such provisions were deemed to be unfair, unjust, and unreasonable, as they could potentially deprive individuals of their lives without due consideration of individual circumstances.

## CHALLENGES FACING THE APARAJITA BILL

### 1) Constitutional Validity:

One of the primary challenges facing the Aparajita Bill is its constitutional validity. The bill seeks to amend central laws, which raises concerns about its jurisdictional authority. While states have the power to legislate on issues listed in the State List, the concurrent jurisdiction over criminal laws introduces complexity. If the bill overrides the central law, it requires the President's assent, which could potentially lead to legal challenges.

### 2) Unrealistic Timeframe:

The bill's stipulation of completing investigations within 21 days presents a significant challenge given the complexity of rape cases and the existing backlog in the legal system. This timeframe may be unrealistic and could potentially compromise the quality of investigations.

### 3) Legal Challenges:

Previous cases have demonstrated the potential for legal challenges to state amendments to central laws. In the State of West Bengal v. Union of India (1964), the Supreme Court invalidated a West Bengal law for conflicting with a central law. Similarly, in KK Verma v. Union of India (1960), the Supreme Court struck down a Madhya Pradesh law for inconsistency with central legislation. These cases underscore the judiciary's stance on the supremacy of central laws over state amendments.

## THE BALANCING ACT: STRIKING A BALANCE BETWEEN JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

While the desire for stricter punishments for sexual offenders is understandable, it is essential to approach this issue with caution. The Supreme Court's ruling highlights the importance of striking a balance between the need for justice and the fundamental rights of individuals.

### CONCLUSION:

The Aparajita Bill, while a significant step towards enhancing women's safety, raises complex ethical and legal questions regarding the appropriateness of the death penalty and the potential for unintended consequences.

## WHAT ROLE DOES CSTT PLAY IN STANDARDISING TECHNICAL TERMS?

**CONTEXT:** The importance of Indian languages in technical education has grown with the National Education Policy 2020.

To support this initiative, the Commission for Scientific and Technical Terminology (CSTT) plays a vital role in standardizing technical terms and offers a digital platform called "Shabd" for easy access

### THE GIST

- The CSTT is responsible for developing standardised scientific and technical terminology in Indian languages.
- The CSTT launched the 'Shabd' platform, a digital glossary search website that hosts all its technical glossaries in a searchable format.
- This platform serves as a central repository for scientific and technical terms in Indian languages, allowing users

to search by language, subject, or dictionary type. It aims to make terminologies more accessible and encourages feedback from users to refine translations.

## STANDARDIZING TECHNICAL TERMS FOR INDIAN LANGUAGES: THE ROLE OF CSTT AND THE SHABD PLATFORM

With the National Education Policy 2020 emphasizing education in Indian languages, the need for standardized technical terminology has become more crucial.

The Commission for Scientific and Technical Terminology (CSTT) plays a vital role in this endeavour.





### **CSTT: Championing Standardization**

- Established in 1961, the CSTT focuses on developing standardized scientific and technical terms across all 22 official Indian languages. They achieve this by:
- Publishing bilingual, trilingual, and multilingual glossaries, dictionaries, and monographs.
- Creating and publishing university-level textbooks through their network of Granth Academies and publication cells.
- Developing administrative and departmental glossaries used by government bodies, research institutions, and public sector units.
- Organizing workshops and conferences to promote the use of standardized terminology.

### **Shabd: A Digital Hub for Technical Terms**

The CSTT launched the “Shabd” platform, a digital glossary search website that serves as a central repository for their vast collection of technical terms. Users can:

- Search for terms across various Indian languages, subjects, and dictionary types.
- Access the entire collection or specific glossaries.
- Provide feedback on existing translations, aiding in continuous refinement.

## **AYUSHMAN BHARAT HEALTH INSURANCE SCHEME FOR SENIOR CITIZENS EXPANDED**

**CONTEXT:** The Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY), launched in 2018, has been expanded to include all senior citizens aged 70 and above, providing them with Rs 5 lakh annual health coverage regardless of income, benefiting an additional 6 crore elderly individuals.

### **OVERVIEW OF AYUSHMAN BHARAT PRADHAN MANTRI JAN AROGYA YOJANA (AB-PMJAY)**

Launched in September 2018, the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) is a key healthcare initiative under the broader Ayushman Bharat scheme. It aims to provide secondary and tertiary healthcare services to India’s most vulnerable and underprivileged populations. This health insurance scheme offers Rs 5 lakh per family per year for hospitalizations requiring advanced medical care, targeting families in need.

### **Recent Expansion for Senior Citizens**

The Union Cabinet has approved an expansion of AB-PMJAY to cover all senior citizens aged 70 years and above, regardless of their income. Previously, the scheme focused on economically disadvantaged families, offering Rs 5 lakh annual coverage for eligible family members. With this expansion, an estimated additional 6 crore elderly individuals from 4.5 crore families will now benefit, offering greater healthcare access to seniors in India.

### **Extension Details**

The extended scheme provides shared top-up coverage for senior citizens aged 70 and above within the same family. Each family member in this age group will receive an additional Rs 5 lakh cover per year. In families with multiple senior citizens, the coverage will be shared. Beneficiaries of other public health schemes like CGHS, ECHS, or Ayushman CAPF can either retain their current schemes or opt for AB-PMJAY.

### **Key Features of the Expanded Scheme**

- **Demand-based Coverage:** The scheme will expand as healthcare demands rise, ensuring adequate resources are available.
- **New Health Cards:** Senior beneficiaries will be issued new

### **A Rich Resource for Diverse Fields**

Shabd currently houses over 322 glossaries with a staggering 21,84,050 headwords. These terms cover a wide range of disciplines, including:

- Humanities and Social Sciences
- Medical Sciences and Engineering
- Agricultural Sciences
- Over 60 specific subjects like:
  - Journalism
  - Public Administration
  - Various scientific disciplines
  - Economics and Ayurveda
  - Engineering fields
  - Computer Science and Political Science
  - Agriculture and Culture
  - And many more

### **LOOKING AHEAD: EMBRACING TECHNOLOGY**

With a commitment to empower Indian languages as per its mandate, the CSTT is exploring the use of AI and related digital technologies to further streamline their work in the future. Shabd serves as a valuable resource for students, educators, researchers, and anyone needing access to standardized technical terms in Indian languages.

health cards to facilitate seamless access to healthcare services.

- **Inclusivity:** Senior citizens covered by private health insurance or the Employees’ State Insurance Scheme will also qualify for AB-PMJAY benefits.

### **Benefits of the Expansion**

This move is expected to relieve the financial burden on the elderly, particularly in an era where nuclear family structures dominate, leaving senior citizens more vulnerable. It marks a step forward in achieving universal health coverage, ensuring seniors—often managing chronic conditions—receive critical care without financial strain.

### **Target Population**

AB-PMJAY aims to cover 10.74 crore poor rural families and urban families in identified occupational categories based on the Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) data. This expansion brings focus to senior citizens, extending its reach to a previously underserved group.

### **Comprehensive Benefits Under AB-PMJAY**

- **Cashless Healthcare:** Beneficiaries receive cashless services at the point of care.
- **Comprehensive Health Packages:** The scheme covers surgeries, medical treatments, day care services, diagnostics, and medicine costs.
- **Annual Coverage:** Each eligible family is entitled to an annual insurance coverage of Rs 5 lakh for healthcare services.

### **Role of the National Health Authority (NHA)**

The National Health Authority (NHA) is responsible for managing and implementing AB-PMJAY. It oversees the design and strategy of the program and is also tasked with developing the National Digital Health Mission, which aims to create a unified digital health ecosystem in India. At the state



level, State Health Agencies (SHAs) have been set up to ensure smooth implementation.

**CONCLUSION:** This expansion strengthens the scheme's objective of delivering affordable healthcare to all segments of the population, with a special focus on senior citizens who often face higher healthcare needs.

**SEIZED AND SOLD: INDIA'S ENEMY PROPERTY**

**CONTEXT:** The Indian government has decided to auction a piece of land in Uttar Pradesh that once belonged to the family of former Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf. This land, measuring around 13 bighas and located in the Kotana Bangar village of Baghpat district, is being auctioned under the provisions of the Enemy Property Act. The Union Home Ministry has already issued a notice regarding the sale.



- The act stipulates that legal heirs or successors of such individuals, even if they are Indian citizens, have no rights to inherit these properties.
- The properties remain vested in the Custodian of Enemy Property and can be monetized or sold by the government under the law.

**Historical Context**

- Following the Indo-Pak wars of 1965 and 1971, as well as the Sino-Indian War of 1962, several individuals migrated from India to Pakistan and China, leaving behind their properties. These properties were subsequently seized under the Defence of India Rules, framed under the Defence of India Act, 1962, and handed over to the Custodian of Enemy Property.
- The Tashkent Declaration (1966) briefly addressed the issue of enemy properties, with provisions for India and Pakistan to negotiate their return. However, after Pakistan sold off such properties in 1971, the matter remained unresolved. Since then, India has continued to manage and utilize enemy properties through its legal framework.

**UNDERSTANDING ENEMY PROPERTY**

What is Enemy Property? Enemy property refers to the assets, properties, and land left behind by individuals who migrated to enemy nations such as Pakistan or China during or after wars involving India. These properties are seized by the Indian

**What is Enemy Property?**

Enemy Property Legislation	Amendment's aim
Was enacted to manage properties of Chinese subjects and those who accepted Pakistani nationality	To avoid litigations impinging on the original purpose of the law.
Properties were vested with a custodian	Dissenting parties' contention
	Present amendment is different from the previous amendment proposed by the UPA in 2010

**Scope of Enemy Property in India**

India has over 13,000 enemy properties, valued at more than ₹1 lakh crore. The majority of these properties belong to individuals who migrated to Pakistan, with over 100 belonging to those who moved to China.

- Uttar Pradesh has the highest concentration of enemy properties, with 5,982, followed by West Bengal, which has 4,354. Many of these properties consist of land, buildings, and shares in companies.
- A survey launched by the central government has been ongoing to further identify and monetize these properties, many of which have been encroached upon or occupied unlawfully.

**LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR ENEMY PROPERTY**

**The Enemy Property Act of 1968**

- This act legally vested all properties of individuals who migrated to enemy nations with the Custodian of Enemy Property.
- The government owns and controls such properties, with several high-value assets spread across different states. For example, properties in Bengaluru, Karnataka, are valued at around ₹500 crore.

**WHAT IS ENEMY PROPERTY**

**ENEMY PROPERTY** refers to movable and immovable property owned by those, who migrated to Pakistan after the partition of the country or after it waged war on India. It also includes the property of anybody who migrated to China after the 1965 India-China war.

**INITIALLY,** THE government took over the properties of those people under the Defence of India Act and later enacted an exclusive law called the Enemy Property Act in 1968.

**THE RECENT** amendment of the enemy property law debars the Indian heirs of those, who migrated to Pakistan or China, from laying claim to the property on the basis of their Indian citizenship.



**2,000** acres in Ranga Reddy district, 1,200 acres in Mahabubnagar district and 800 acres in Khammam district fall under the enemy property category.

government under the Enemy Property Act and managed by the Custodian of Enemy Property for India.

**Key Provisions of the Enemy Property Act:**

- Properties of individuals who migrated to Pakistan or China following the wars in 1947, 1965, and 1971 are classified as enemy properties.



### 2016 Amendment to the Enemy Property Act

- In 2017, the Enemy Property (Amendment and Validation) Bill, 2016 was passed by Parliament, strengthening the original act.
- This amendment expanded the definition of “enemy subject” and “enemy firm” to include legal heirs and successors of enemy nationals, irrespective of their nationality. This meant that heirs, even if Indian or from a non-enemy country, cannot claim succession rights to enemy properties.
- The amendment also allowed the Custodian to sell these properties with the approval of the government and provided clarity on the management and disposal of such assets.

### Significance of the Amendments

The amendments were introduced to prevent claims of inheritance or succession over enemy properties, particularly after court rulings that had weakened the Custodian’s authority.

- In a significant legal case, the Raja of Mahmudabad, who migrated to Pakistan in 1957, left behind vast estates in Uttar Pradesh. After his death, his son, who remained in India, claimed ownership of the properties. In 2005, the

Supreme Court ruled in favor of the son, leading to a surge in similar claims.

- To counter these claims, the government issued an ordinance in 2010, blocking courts from releasing enemy properties. This ordinance was replaced by the 2016 amendment, which reinforced the government’s control over such assets.

### Musharraf’s Land Auction: Broader Context

Pervez Musharraf’s ancestral land in Uttar Pradesh falls under this category of enemy property, making it subject to the laws governing such assets. The auction of Musharraf’s land is part of the government’s ongoing effort to identify and monetize enemy properties across the country.

### CONCLUSION

India’s legal framework for managing enemy properties reflects its post-war response to individuals who migrated to Pakistan and China. The Enemy Property Act and its subsequent amendments have ensured that these properties remain vested with the Indian government. The sale of Musharraf’s land under this act is emblematic of the larger effort to manage and utilize enemy properties for public and governmental purposes.

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# INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS





**INDIA'S CHINA DILEMMA: A SPECIAL CASE**

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**"INDIA AND GCC FORGE STRONGER  
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2024**



## INDIA'S CHINA DILEMMA: A SPECIAL CASE

**CONTEXT:** While addressing a forum, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar highlighted that India faces a “distinct China challenge” beyond the global concerns regarding the country. Given the state of border tensions and bilateral relations, he emphasized that Chinese investments in India warrant careful scrutiny.

### THE INDIA-CHINA BORDER DISPUTE: A COMPLEX OVERVIEW

The India-China border, spanning over 3,488 kilometres, is one of the world's most contentious and disputed frontiers. This complex border dispute can be broadly divided into three sectors: Western, Central, and Eastern.

#### The Western Sector

The most contentious portion of the border lies in the Western Sector, particularly in the Aksai Chin region. Originally part of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, Aksai Chin is now claimed by China as part of its autonomous Xinjiang region. China has effectively controlled Aksai Chin since the 1962 Sino-Indian War. India wants the entire Aksai Chin area to be repatriated to it.

Another point of contention in the Western Sector is the Shaksgam Valley, which Pakistan ceded to China in the 1960s. India claims the Shaksgam Valley as its territory. Additionally, there is a dispute over Daulat Beg Oldi, a tehsil in Leh, India, which is believed to host the world's highest airstrip. China contests India's control over this area.

#### The Central Sector

In contrast to the Western and Eastern Sectors, the Central Sector, spanning approximately 625 kilometres, is relatively less controversial. There is no major disagreement over the boundary in this region between the two nations.

#### The Eastern Sector: The McMahon Line

The most significant dispute lies in the Eastern Sector, centered around the McMahon Line. This boundary was drawn up in 1914 during the Simla Convention to demarcate the border between British India and Tibet. The McMahon Line moved British control substantially northward, including areas now known as Arunachal Pradesh.

China has consistently rejected the McMahon Line, claiming that it was drawn without the consent of the Tibetan government. As a result, China considers Arunachal Pradesh to be part of Southern Tibet, a claim that India vehemently opposes. The dispute over Arunachal Pradesh is the largest area of disagreement between the two countries, covering approximately 90,000 square kilometers.

The India-China border dispute has been a major source of tension between the two nuclear powers. Despite numerous attempts at diplomacy and negotiation, the issue remains unresolved. The ongoing territorial disputes pose significant challenges to regional stability and have implications for global geopolitics.

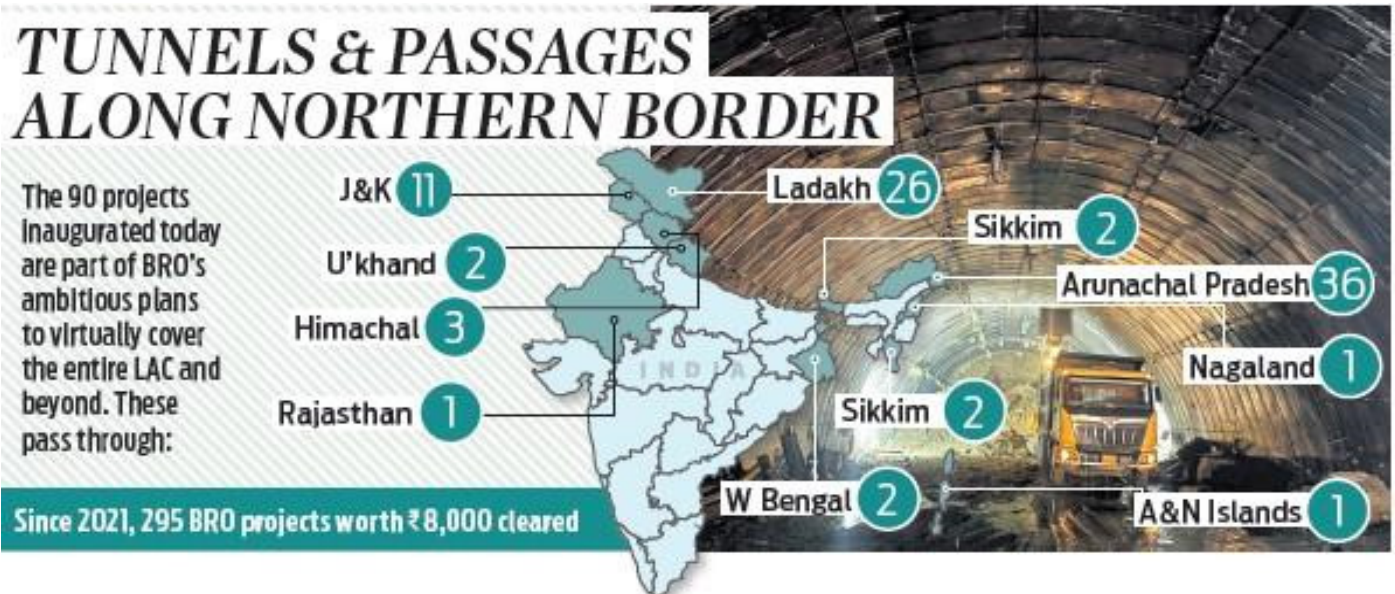


**INDIA'S LARGEST ONLINE IAS COACHING ACADEMY**



## THE BRO'S INFRASTRUCTURE PUSH ALONG THE INDIA-CHINA BORDER

The Border Roads Organization (BRO) has been instrumental in bolstering India's infrastructure along its contentious border with China. Since the 2020 Galwan Valley clash, the BRO has intensified its efforts to establish robust connectivity in the Ladakh region and the Northeast.



### Key Infrastructure Projects

- **Leh Connectivity:** The BRO is nearing completion of an alternate route to Leh via Nimu-Padam-Darcha, which will provide all-weather connectivity to the region. A key component of this project is the Shinku La tunnel, which, upon completion, will be the world's highest tunnel at 15,800 feet.
- **Ladakh Border Roads:** The BRO is prioritizing the construction of roads parallel to the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh. This includes the Leh-Demchok road and routes connecting Durbuk to Nyoma via Chushul.
- **India-China Border Roads (ICBR) Program:** Under this program, the BRO is focusing on completing strategic roads in Arunachal Pradesh and Ladakh. A total of 73 strategic roads are planned under the first two phases of the ICBR program.
- **Arunachal Pradesh Frontier Highway:** The BRO is constructing a nearly 1,800-kilometer frontier highway in Arunachal Pradesh, connecting various key locations close to the Myanmar border.
- **Other Key Projects:** The Sungal tunnel on the Akhnoor-Poonch National Highway and the Lipulekh Pass Road on the Mansarovar Yatra route are also priority projects for the BRO.



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# IN STEP WITH THE DRAGON'S MOVES

**CHINA, WITH ITS FIRST MOVER ADVANTAGE, IS BEEFING UP ITS BORDER ASSETS. INDIA HAS MADE TREMENDOUS PROGRESS IN THE PAST DECADE**

Text by **PRADIP R. SAGAR** | Graphic by **TANMOY CHAKRABORTY**

### INDIAN SIDE

**Hanuthang-Handanbroke-Zungpal-Turtuk road** between the Indus and the Shyok valleys

**Nyoma airfield** is upgraded

**Daulat Beg Oldi (DBO) & Fukche airfields** are operational

**Chisumle-Demchok Road**: world's highest motorable road

**4.1 km twin tube Shinkun La tunnel**, connecting Himachal Pradesh to Ladakh

**208 km-long Western Ladakh and Zaskar Valley** directly from the Manali axis

**Nine new tunnels** are under construction

**Rs 12,000 crore Char Dham highway project** to connect the shrines of Gangotri, Yamunotri, Kedarnath and Badrinath in Uttarakhand will have roads to LAC

**Strategic 2.5 km-long Sela tunnel** near Tawang at an altitude of 13,000 feet

**Frontier Highway** in Arunachal Pradesh to connect China-Bhutan-India border tri-junction to Vijaynagar via Tawang, Upper Subansiri, Slang, Dibang Valley and Kibithu

### CHINESE SIDE

PLA has built at least eight roads towards the LAC from China's G219, including a road connecting Sirijap at Finger 8 on the north bank of the Pangong Tso lake to the G219 highway

Road connecting Rutog County in Tibet to the Spangpur lake south of Pangong Tso

Road from the south of Shiquanhe to Chumar in Ladakh

Air bases in Kashgar, Gar Gonsa and Hotan

Heliports in Xaidulla, Tianshuihai, Shiquanhe and Domar regions

China has constructed a cluster of at least 60 buildings inside Arunachal Pradesh

## Strategic Importance

The BRO's infrastructure development along the India-China border has significant strategic implications. By improving connectivity, the BRO is enhancing India's military capabilities and facilitating rapid troop deployment.

Additionally, these infrastructure projects are vital for economic development and tourism in border regions.

## Challenges and Future Prospects

Despite the significant progress made by the BRO, challenges remain. Harsh weather conditions, difficult terrain, and logistical complexities can hinder construction efforts. However, the BRO's expertise and experience in operating in challenging environments have enabled it to overcome these obstacles.

As the India-China border dispute continues, the BRO's role in strengthening India's infrastructure will remain crucial. The organization's ongoing efforts to improve connectivity and bolster national security are a testament to its dedication and commitment to the nation.

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER'S SPEECH:

### 1. India's "Special China Problem":

- India faces a distinct set of challenges with China that go beyond the broader global concerns over China's rise. The External Affairs Minister (EAM) underscored that India's "special China problem" differs from the "general China problem" faced by countries like the United States and those in Europe. These unique challenges are rooted in India's direct border disputes and strategic concerns.

### 2. Scrutiny of Chinese Investments:

- Due to strained border relations, India is justified in carefully scrutinizing investments originating from China. Even nations without direct borders with China, such as the U.S. and many in Europe, have tightened their oversight on Chinese investments due to security implications. For India, this scrutiny is particularly warranted given the ongoing tensions.

### 3. Border Situation and Diplomatic Progress:

- Recent diplomatic engagements between India and





- China have shown some progress toward resolving the long-standing border standoff, which began in May 2020. A notable development from these talks was the use of the phrase “narrow down the differences” for the first time, signalling potential movement toward addressing the issues along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

### 1. Trade Deficit and China's Economic Influence:

- The EAM also addressed India's significant trade deficit with China, attributing it to China's unique production capabilities that many countries, including India, failed to adequately anticipate. To craft effective policies, India must grasp the intricacies of China's political and economic systems, which give it significant global leverage in production and trade.

### 2. Intersection of Economics and Security:

- The line between economic activities and national security is increasingly blurred, especially in the case of China. The EAM highlighted how issues of national security now extend into economic spheres, such as telecommunications, where dependence on Chinese technology could pose serious risks to sovereignty and security.

### 3. Ongoing Border Standoff:

- Despite some progress, the border standoff between India and China, which has lasted for over four years, remains unresolved in key areas. Both nations continue to maintain significant troop deployments along the LAC in eastern Ladakh. While some friction points have been addressed, legacy issues in critical regions like the Depsang Plains and Demchok remain unresolved

## CHINA AND INDIA MAKE PROGRESS ON BORDER DISENGAGEMENT

India and China have made progress in resolving their four-year military standoff in eastern Ladakh, focusing on disengaging from friction points like Demchok and Depsang. The Chinese Defence Ministry on September 27th confirmed that both sides have reduced differences and built some consensus on disengagement.

Talks have been ongoing through diplomatic and military channels, including discussions between External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and his Chinese counterparts. While troops have disengaged from several areas, issues in the Depsang Plains and Demchok remain unresolved. Shri Jaishankar noted that about 75% of disengagement challenges have been addressed but emphasized that patrolling and de-escalation issues still need resolution. Further talks are expected to outline the next steps, with both sides working to maintain peace along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

### CONCLUSION

The India-China relationship remains complex and multifaceted, with the border dispute serving as a significant obstacle to bilateral cooperation. While recent progress in disengagement along the LAC is encouraging, challenges persist in resolving the remaining friction points. The ongoing dialogue between the two nations is essential for maintaining peace and stability in the region. As India navigates the “special China challenge,” it is imperative to carefully balance economic interests with national security concerns, ensuring that the country's sovereignty and strategic autonomy are protected.

## WHY RECORD NUMBER OF INDIANS ILLEGALLY ENTER THE US?

**CONTEXT:** Recent data from U.S. Customs and Border Protection indicates a significant increase in the number of undocumented Indian migrants attempting to cross the U.S. border on foot.





**SURGE IN UNDOCUMENTED INDIAN IMMIGRANTS ENTERING THE U.S. ON FOOT**

Recent data from U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) reveals a sharp rise in the number of undocumented Indian migrants attempting to cross U.S. borders, particularly

on foot. This trend represents a significant shift in migration patterns, with more Indian nationals seeking unauthorized entry into the U.S. through both the southern and northern borders.



**Data on Undocumented Indian Immigration to the U.S.**

In the fiscal year 2022-23, a staggering 96,917 Indian nationals entered the U.S. without legal documentation. This figure is a fivefold increase from the 19,883 undocumented Indian immigrants recorded in FY 2019-20. The data further shows that, of the nearly 97,000 encounters in FY 2022-23:

- 30,010 occurred at the U.S.-Canadian border.
- 41,770 were at the U.S.-Mexico border.

This unprecedented rise reflects broader shifts in global migration trends and highlights the challenges posed by undocumented migration in the post-pandemic world.

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# FATAL ATTRACTION

## INDIANS DETAINED FOR ILLEGAL BORDER CROSSING IN THE US

**19,883** (2019-20)      **96,917\*** (Oct.'22-Sept.'23)

Caught on the Canada border **\*30,010**  
on Mexico border **\*41,770**

Source: US Customs and Border Protection, Sept. 2023

**725,000** Illegal Indian immigrants in the US, third largest after Mexico and El Salvador  
**4.4-5.4%** of all US workers are unauthorised immigrants since 2003

Source: Pew Research Center report, Nov. 2023

**“EARLIER, WE FLEW DIRECTLY TO MEXICO, BUT THE OFFICIALS THERE HAVE BECOME GREEDY... NOW, WE FLY INTO MEXICO FROM DIFFERENT COUNTRIES TO AVOID THEIR ATTENTION. WE KNOW IT IS A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE THIS GETS BUSTED. WE WILL CROSS THAT BRIDGE SOON”**

**-AN AGENT, 35, Mehsana**

## FACTORS DRIVING THE INCREASE IN UNDOCUMENTED INDIAN IMMIGRATION

Several factors contribute to the surge in undocumented Indian immigration to the U.S. These factors can be classified as push factors driving individuals to leave India and pull factors attracting them to the U.S.

### 1. Global Migration Growth Post-Pandemic

- The overall rise in global migration since the reopening of borders after COVID-19 has significantly impacted Indian migration. In FY 2021, 30,662 Indian nationals were apprehended attempting to enter the U.S. without documentation, which surged to 63,927 in FY 2022.

### 2. Unregulated Travel Agencies and Social Media Influence

- The proliferation of unregulated travel agencies in India, often exploiting social media platforms to reach hopeful migrants, has worsened the situation. Many migrants are lured into paying exorbitant amounts – often their life savings – to make dangerous journeys.

### 3. Smugglers Using Sophisticated Routes

- Human smugglers have established increasingly complex routes that span the Middle East, Europe, Africa, South America, and Mexico, before reaching the U.S. southern border. These routes, although risky and costly, have become a common pathway for undocumented migrants.

### 4. Severe Visa Backlogs

- Indian nationals face long waiting periods for U.S. visas, especially visitor visas. Instead of enduring the lengthy delays, many opt for the more immediate, albeit risky, option of attempting to cross the U.S. border without documentation.

### 5. Unguarded Canadian Border

- Canada’s relatively easier visa policies and its less fortified border with the U.S. make it an attractive alternative for migrants. This northern route is perceived as much safer than the hazardous “dunki” routes through regions like West Asia, Africa, or the Caribbean, which migrants use to eventually reach the heavily guarded U.S.-Mexico border.



# IN PURSUIT OF A DEADLY GOAL

The potential rewards such as better pay and improved living conditions in the US outweigh life-threatening risks of illegal immigration



## WHY DO THEY GO?

Based on the interrogation of around 70 individuals who returned from Vatry, Sanjay

Kharat, SP, CID, says:

- As families expand, farm land gets split into smaller parcels, making livelihoods unsustainable
- Families can't afford to employ farm labourers, so they have to do the laborious work themselves
- Depending on education and skills, they get jobs here, but a job in the US is more remunerative
- In 200-300 villages/towns in north and central Gujarat, almost every house has at least one member settled there. It keeps the door always half open
- Patel girls prefer boys settled in the US for a comfortable life, also independent of in-laws



## WHO FUNDS IT?

➤ Aspirants—mostly from middle class or lower

middle class backgrounds—do not bear the cost of travel at all

- Expenses are borne by US-based potential high-net worth employers from the community who promise to pay the agent only after the aspirant reaches
- The lenders start getting a reasonable return on their 'investment' within three years
- These well-oiled syndicates work on trust within the Gujarati communities, dominated by Patidars but not limited to them
- The homes and farmlands of the aspirants are treated as collateral
- Agents are paid through an opaque Hawala system

### Reasons for the Unprecedented Growth in Undocumented Indian Migration

The surge in undocumented Indian migration can be attributed to several push and pull factors that shape migration patterns.

#### Push Factors

##### 1. Oppression of Minority Communities

- Growing political and social oppression of minority groups in India, including Muslims, Sikhs, and Christians, has contributed to the recent spike in migration. Discriminatory policies and social tensions are pushing these communities to seek refuge abroad.

##### 2. Farmers' Protests

- The widespread protests by farmers against a series of controversial agricultural reforms in 2020 also played a role in increasing migration. Many individuals involved

in or affected by these protests filed asylum claims to escape the political and economic instability in India.

#### Pull Factors

##### 1. Successful Indian Diaspora

- The general success of the Indian-American community in the U.S. serves as a strong pull factor for potential migrants. Stories of those who successfully navigated similar journeys continue to inspire others to make the same attempt.

##### 2. Visa Backlogs and Family Reunification

- Long visa backlogs have made it increasingly difficult for immigrants to join their families in the U.S. Frustrated by the delays and the bureaucratic process, many migrants resort to illegal entry as a means of reuniting with their loved ones.

## FAVoured 'DUNKI' ROUTES

### VIA CANADA

- Agents acquire a valid visa for Canada on forged university admission or work permit
- The donkey stays in cold border areas of Canada for a few months
- At an opportune time, the agent sends them across the border—barely a kilometre walk

**Cost: ₹80 lakh**

### VIA TURKEY

- Agents obtain a UK visa on a work permit, basis which the traveller enters Turkey with an e-visa and lives there for 90 days
- In this period, they fly into a safe Central American country, where they stay for a week to a year
- At an opportune time, the agents move them into the US

**Cost: ₹80-90 lakh**



### VIA LATIN AMERICAN AND AFRICAN COUNTRIES

- Agents fly the immigrant to Dubai, Indonesia or Malaysia as a springboard on a valid tourist visa
- Some even fly them to African countries where they cool off for a few months. From there, they charter flights to Latin American

countries such as Bolivia, Guyana, Ecuador, Nicaragua. These countries allow on-arrival visas

- The person traverses harsh terrains to reach Mexico on foot through forests or water routes

**Duration:** Average six months before they reach the US

**Cost: ₹70-75 lakh**

### Record Number of Indian Citizens Renouncing Citizenship

In 2022, a record 225,620 Indian citizens gave up their citizenship to acquire foreign citizenship. This phenomenon, often referred to as the “great Indian migration,” is driven primarily by the search for better economic opportunities and improved social security in countries like the U.S., Canada, and Australia.

### The Rise of “Donkey Routes”

The term “donkey route” refers to a dangerous and circuitous journey undertaken by migrants to illegally enter western countries, most notably the U.S. The term originates

from the Punjabi word dunki, meaning “to hop from place to place.” These routes often involve perilous treks through multiple countries, facilitated by smugglers, before reaching the final destination.

### CONCLUSION

The surge in undocumented Indian migrants seeking entry into the U.S. is a complex phenomenon driven by a confluence of global, regional, and personal factors. Addressing this issue requires a multifaceted approach that considers both the push factors driving individuals to leave India and the pull factors attracting them to the U.S.



## MODI'S BRUNEI VISIT: A NEW CHAPTER IN INDIA-BRUNEI RELATIONS

### PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI'S HISTORIC VISIT TO BRUNEI DARUSSALAM: STRENGTHENING BILATERAL TIES

India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a landmark two-day visit to Brunei Darussalam, marking the

first-ever bilateral visit by an Indian Prime Minister to the Southeast Asian nation. The visit coincided with the 40th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries and underscored the growing significance of Brunei in India's 'Act East' Policy and Indo-Pacific Vision.



### BRUNEI'S SIGNIFICANCE IN INDIA'S 'ACT EAST' POLICY AND INDO-PACIFIC VISION

Brunei is an essential partner in India's 'Act East' Policy, which aims to enhance India's engagement with Southeast Asia, and the broader Indo-Pacific region. As a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Brunei plays a pivotal role in India's regional strategy. ASEAN remains the central pillar of India's 'Act East' Policy, serving as a key platform for fostering economic, political, and security ties. Brunei's strategic location in the South China Sea is also of considerable importance to India. With nearly 55% of India's trade passing through these waters, maintaining peace and stability in the region is vital. India's engagement with Brunei strengthens its ability to participate in regional security discussions, particularly in countering China's growing assertiveness in the South China Sea.

### ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE AND TRADE TIES

Brunei's role as one of the largest oil and gas producers in Southeast Asia further elevates its importance to India. In 2022, bilateral trade between India and Brunei stood at approximately \$286.20 million. As Southeast Asia continues to experience rapid economic growth, commerce remains central to India's relationship with Brunei. India's interest in diversifying its energy sources and securing long-term LNG supplies aligns well with Brunei's status as a key player in the global energy market.

### BRUNEI'S ROLE IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA AND CHINA+1 STRATEGY

Brunei holds claims in the South China Sea, although it has remained relatively quiet on the issue compared to other regional nations. Instead, Brunei has focused on bolstering trade ties with China, while diversifying its economy beyond oil. Experts believe that India can leverage Brunei's position and its "China Plus One" strategy to deepen economic collaboration. The China+1 strategy encourages companies to diversify their supply chains by investing in countries other than China, and India views Brunei as a potential partner in this shift.

### THE INDIAN DIASPORA IN BRUNEI

Brunei is home to approximately 14,000 Indian nationals, many of whom are involved in healthcare and education. Indian doctors and teachers have made significant contributions to Brunei's development in these sectors, enhancing the strong cultural ties between the two nations. Indian migration to Brunei began in the 1920s, following the discovery of oil, and the Indian community continues to play an integral role in the country's growth.

### SULTAN HAJI HASSANAL BOLKIAH'S VISITS TO INDIA

Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah, one of the world's longest-reigning monarchs, has visited India four times. His visits, including his attendance as the Chief Guest at India's



2018 Republic Day parade, have underscored the importance Brunei places on its relationship with India. These visits have paved the way for deeper cooperation in areas such as defense, trade, and cultural exchanges.

#### **KEY OUTCOMES OF PM MODI'S VISIT TO BRUNEI**

##### **1. Inauguration of India's New Chancery in Brunei**

- During his visit, PM Modi inaugurated the new Chancery of the High Commission of India in Bandar Seri Begawan. This building, designed with Indian motifs, symbolizes the cultural bond between the two countries and enhances diplomatic efforts.

##### **2. Strengthened Defense Cooperation**

- A key outcome of the visit was the agreement to establish a Joint Working Group on Defence Cooperation. This initiative will enhance military ties and increase defence collaboration between India and Brunei.

##### **3. Space Cooperation Agreement**

- Both nations expressed mutual interest in advancing technological collaboration in space exploration. Discussions were held about signing a space cooperation agreement, and PM Modi appreciated Brunei's support for hosting ISRO's Telemetry Tracking and Telecommand (TTC) Station.

##### **4. Energy Cooperation: LNG Supplies**

- India and Brunei explored the potential for long-term cooperation in the supply of liquefied natural gas (LNG). This is significant as India has recently shifted its energy imports, opting for Russian oil over Brunei's, but remains open to strengthening future energy ties.

##### **5. Elevating India-Brunei Relations to an Enhanced Partnership**

- The visit culminated in the two countries elevating their bilateral ties to an "enhanced partnership." This new framework includes cooperation across defense, trade, investment, space, health, education, and cultural exchanges. The two sides also emphasized the importance of regular dialogue through mechanisms such as the Joint Trade Committee (JTC).

#### **CONCLUSION**

Prime Minister Modi's historic visit to Brunei marks a pivotal moment in India-Brunei relations, reaffirming Brunei's importance in India's 'Act East' Policy and the Indo-Pacific Vision. The visit resulted in strengthened defense, space, and energy cooperation, while also highlighting opportunities for deeper economic and cultural engagement between the two nations.

#### **"INDIA AND GCC FORGE STRONGER ALLIANCES AT HIGH-LEVEL FOREIGN MINISTERS' SUMMIT"**

**CONTEXT:** External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar arrived in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on Sunday to participate in the inaugural India-Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Foreign Ministers' Meeting.





## INDIA-GCC RELATIONS STRENGTHEN AS EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER JAISHANKAR ATTENDS INAUGURAL MEETING IN RIYADH

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar arrived in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, to attend the first-ever India-Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Foreign Ministers' Meeting, marking a significant milestone in India's diplomatic engagements with the Gulf region.

### WHY IN NEWS?

Jaishankar's visit to Riyadh underscores the importance of the India-GCC relationship as both sides aim to deepen cooperation in areas of mutual interest, such as energy, trade, and geopolitical stability.

### GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL (GCC)

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is a regional political and economic alliance of six Arabian Peninsula countries – Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Established in 1981, the GCC's primary goals include fostering economic, cultural, and security cooperation among member states. The GCC holds annual summits to discuss key regional and global issues, reinforcing its role as a strategic bloc.

### IMPORTANCE OF THE GCC FOR INDIA

#### 1. Energy Security

- The GCC holds nearly 50% of the world's oil reserves and plays a crucial role in India's energy security.
- GCC countries supply about 35% of India's crude oil and 70% of its gas imports, making the region indispensable for India's energy needs.

#### 2. Trade and Investments

- Beyond energy, the GCC region is rapidly expanding into other sectors like tourism, construction, and finance. This diversification creates vast opportunities for Indian trade and investment.
- In FY 2023-24, India-GCC bilateral trade reached USD 161.59 billion, with Indian exports at USD 56.3 billion and imports at USD 105.3 billion.

#### 3. Geostrategic Significance

- The GCC nations are strategically located along the Persian Gulf, a critical trade route for global maritime traffic. Stability in the Gulf is key to maintaining secure sea lanes for global commerce, including India's.
- India and the GCC share common interests in ensuring political stability and security in the region, particularly against threats to regional peace.

#### 4. Indian Diaspora

- The GCC hosts a large Indian diaspora, with approximately 8.9 million Indians residing in the region. Indian expatriates contribute significantly to the local economies, particularly in sectors like healthcare and education.
- Remittances from the GCC constitute around 30% of India's total inward remittances, providing a vital source of income for Indian families.

### INDIA-GCC RELATIONS: A COMPREHENSIVE OVERVIEW

#### 1. Political Engagement

- The Gulf is India's immediate maritime neighbor across the Arabian Sea, making the region geopolitically crucial.
- The first India-GCC Political Dialogue was initiated on

the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in 2003, underscoring the growing political convergence between India and GCC nations.

- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Consultative Mechanisms was signed in September 2022, establishing an annual dialogue between India's External Affairs Minister and the GCC Troika, which includes the GCC Secretary-General and foreign ministers from current and incoming GCC presidencies.

#### 2. Economic and Trade Cooperation

- India's trade relations with the GCC have strengthened in recent years, particularly due to the rising demand for oil and gas.
- The ongoing negotiation of the India-GCC Free Trade Agreement (FTA) is expected to provide a major boost to bilateral trade, especially in light of the successful India-UAE FTA.
- India is also keen on exploring long-term cooperation in LNG supplies, particularly as it seeks to diversify its energy sources.

#### 3. Energy Partnership

- Given the GCC's substantial share in India's energy imports, energy cooperation remains a cornerstone of the India-GCC relationship.
- India is working on expanding its Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR), and several GCC countries have expressed interest in participating in this initiative.

#### 4. Indian Diaspora and Remittances

- With around 66% of all Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) living in GCC countries, the Indian diaspora plays an essential role in shaping bilateral relations.
- Though remittances from the GCC to India have declined slightly from over 50% in 2016-17 to about 30% in 2020-21, the region still remains a crucial source of foreign remittances.

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FIRST INDIA-GCC FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING

The inaugural India-GCC Foreign Ministers' Meeting held in Riyadh centered around strengthening bilateral ties across multiple sectors:

#### 1. Energy Cooperation

Discussions focused on deepening India's energy relationship with the GCC, particularly in the areas of oil, gas, and LNG supplies. The GCC's role in India's Strategic Petroleum Reserves was also highlighted.

#### 2. Bilateral Trade and Investment

With bilateral trade surpassing USD 161 billion in FY 2023-24, both sides explored ways to further expand economic ties. The potential for investments in sectors such as tourism, construction, and finance was also discussed.

#### 3. Strategic and Security Collaboration

Ensuring regional political stability and security was a key topic of discussion, with India and the GCC recognizing their shared interest in maintaining peace and stability in the Gulf and broader West Asia.

#### 4. Diaspora Engagement

The contributions of the large Indian expatriate community in the GCC were acknowledged, with discussions on further enhancing people-to-people ties and providing more avenues for Indian workers in the region.





## CONCLUSION

The first-ever India-GCC Foreign Ministers' Meeting marks a significant step in reinforcing India's multifaceted relationship with the GCC. With strong cooperation in energy,

trade, investment, and regional security, the India-GCC partnership is poised to grow even further, benefiting both sides strategically and economically.

## CROWN PRINCE OF ABU DHABI'S VISIT TO INDIA STRENGTHENS BILATERAL TIES

**CONTEXT:** The Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, visited India on a two-day official visit. This is his first visit to India as the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi.



### INDIA-UAE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP: A STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

#### Political Relations

India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) established diplomatic relations in 1972, marking the beginning of a robust partnership that has flourished over the decades. The relationship was further cemented with the signing of a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Agreement in January 2017, reflecting the depth and significance of their bilateral ties.

#### Key political engagements include:

- In February 2019, the UAE invited India as the "Guest of Honour" to address the Inaugural Plenary of the 46th Session of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), a notable diplomatic recognition.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has visited the UAE on three occasions, the latest being in August 2019 when he was conferred with the UAE's highest civilian award, the Order of Zayed.
- The foundation stone for the first traditional Hindu temple in Abu Dhabi was laid in April 2019, signifying cultural ties.
- In February 2022, PM Modi and HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, held a Virtual Summit. A key outcome of this summit was the Joint Vision Statement, titled "Advancing the India and UAE Comprehensive Strategic Partnership: New Frontiers, New Milestones."
- UAE's participation as a guest country at the G-20 Summit hosted by India further highlights the close cooperation between the two nations on global platforms.

#### Trade Relations

The UAE is a critical trading partner for India, with bilateral trade reaching USD 85 billion in 2022-23, making the UAE India's third-largest trading partner after China and the US. The UAE is also India's second-largest export destination, accounting for USD 31.61 billion in exports during the same period.

#### Key trade developments:

- The **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)** between India and the UAE was signed in **February 2022** during a Virtual Summit in New Delhi. The agreement covers nearly all tariff lines of trade, including **11,908 tariff lines for India** and **7,581 tariff lines for the UAE**.
- **Investment surge:** The UAE has emerged as the fourth-largest investor in India during 2022-23, a jump from its seventh position in 2021-22, with plans to invest USD 75 billion in India's infrastructure sector.

#### Economic and Financial Cooperation

**Trade Settlement in Local Currencies:** In **July 2023**, India and the UAE agreed to commence trade settlements in local currencies (INR-AED). An MoU was signed between the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** and the **UAE Central Bank**, establishing a framework for cross-border transactions using local currencies, thus promoting the **Local Currency Settlement System (LCSS)**.

**Linking Fast Payment Systems:** The two countries also agreed to link **India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI)** with the UAE's **Instant Payment Platform (IPP)**, streamlining cross-border payments.



## ENERGY COOPERATION

Energy cooperation is a cornerstone of the India-UAE relationship:

- In **2017**, the **Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC)** and the **Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Ltd. (ISPRL)** signed an agreement to establish a **strategic crude oil reserve** in Mangalore, Karnataka.
- **ADNOC** has been exploring additional crude storage opportunities in India and renewing its storage and management agreements. It already has a presence at the **Mangalore Cavern** and is evaluating further investments in Padur, Karnataka.
- A consortium led by **ONGC**, including **Indian Oil** and **Bharat PetroResources**, holds a 10% stake in the **Lower Zakum Concession**, securing India's energy interests in the UAE.

## INVESTMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- The **Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA)**, the UAE's principal sovereign wealth fund, is an anchor investor in India's **National Infrastructure Investment Fund (NIIF)**, with an investment of **USD 1 billion**. This highlights the UAE's pivotal role in boosting India's infrastructure growth.

## EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATION

- A significant development in educational cooperation is the establishment of an **IIT Delhi campus in Abu Dhabi**, formalized through a 2023 agreement between India and the **Education and Knowledge Department** of Abu Dhabi. This marks a new era of collaboration in higher education and knowledge exchange.

## INDIAN COMMUNITY AND REMITTANCES

- With a population of **3.5 million**, the Indian expatriate community is the largest ethnic group in the UAE, accounting for **35%** of the country's population. Remittances from this community represent **18% of the total remittances to India**, one of the highest in the world, contributing significantly to India's foreign exchange reserves.

## KEY OUTCOMES FROM THE CROWN PRINCE'S VISIT TO INDIA

Several key agreements were signed during the visit of the **Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi** to India, further strengthening bilateral ties:

1. **MoU on Nuclear Cooperation** between the **Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL)** and the Emirates Nuclear Energy Corporation (ENEC). This agreement focuses on cooperation in the operation and maintenance of the **Barakah Nuclear Power Plant**, sourcing nuclear goods from India, and capacity building.
2. **Long-term LNG Supply Agreement** between **ADNOC** and the **Indian Oil Corporation Limited** for the supply of **1 million metric tonnes per annum (MMTPA)** of LNG.
3. **MoU on Crude Storage**: ADNOC and ISPRL are exploring additional crude storage opportunities in India, further bolstering energy security.
4. **Production Concession Agreement for Onshore Block 1** between Urja Bharat (a joint venture of IOCL and Bharat PetroResources Ltd.) and ADNOC, marking the first-ever concession granted to an Indian company in the UAE.
5. **MoU on Food Parks**: An agreement was signed between the Government of Gujarat and Abu Dhabi Developmental Holding Company PJSC (ADQ) for the development of food parks in India, expanding cooperation in food security.

## FUTURE PROSPECTS: VIRTUAL TRADE CORRIDOR

A soft launch of the **India-UAE Virtual Trade Corridor (VTC)** was announced, alongside the **MAITRI Interface**, to facilitate smoother and faster bilateral trade.

## CONCLUSION

India and the UAE have built a multifaceted and strategic partnership, with cooperation spanning trade, energy, infrastructure, finance, education, and cultural ties. The deepening ties are marked by high-level political engagement and significant agreements that contribute to the mutual growth and development of both nations.

## UNITED NATIONS' REFUGEE AGENCY FOR PALESTINIANS (UNRWA)

**CONTEXT:** An Israeli airstrike on a school-turned-shelter operated by the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) in Nuseirat, Gaza, has claimed the lives of at least 18 people and injured over a dozen others. In the aftermath of the attack, UN officials have called on countries to reconsider their recent suspension of funding to UNRWA, a critical lifeline for Palestinian refugees.

The funding suspension followed allegations from Israel that certain UNRWA staff members were implicated in the October 7 attack. In response, the United States and eight other Western nations, which collectively contributed over half of UNRWA's budget in 2022, decided to halt financial support to the agency. UN officials are urging a reassessment of this decision in light of the escalating humanitarian crisis.

## UNITED NATIONS' REFUGEE AGENCY FOR PALESTINIANS (UNRWA): OVERVIEW

### ESTABLISHMENT AND OBJECTIVE

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) was created by the UN General Assembly in 1949, in the aftermath of the



1948 Arab-Israeli conflict. The agency's primary mission is to provide essential services such as relief, education, and healthcare to Palestinian refugees who lost their homes and means of livelihood during the Arab-Israeli wars.

### HEADQUARTERS AND RELOCATION

UNRWA began its operations in 1950, initially



headquartered in Beirut. In 1978, the agency's headquarters were moved to Vienna. Following the Oslo Accords in the early 1990s, the UN General Assembly transferred the agency's operations to the Gaza Strip in 1996 as a sign of commitment to the Arab-Israeli peace process.

**MANDATE EXTENSION**

Due to the ongoing absence of a resolution to the Palestinian refugee issue, the UN General Assembly has consistently renewed UNRWA's mandate, most recently extending it until June 30, 2026.

**SCOPE OF SERVICES**

UNRWA provides a wide range of services, including education, healthcare, relief, social services, camp infrastructure development, microfinance, and emergency

assistance during times of armed conflict. It operates in five key areas: Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the Gaza Strip, and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

**REFUGEE SUPPORT**

The agency supports over five million registered Palestinian refugees, including those who fled or were displaced during the 1948 Palestine war and the 1967 Six-Day War, as well as their patrilineal descendants.

**FUNDING AND LEADERSHIP**

UNRWA relies almost entirely on voluntary contributions from UN member states, with a small portion coming from the UN's regular budget, which is mainly allocated to cover international staffing costs. The agency's Commissioner-General, appointed by the UN Secretary-General, reports directly to the UN General Assembly, making it unique among UN agencies.



**RECENT DEVELOPMENTS: FUNDING CRISIS AND ACCUSATIONS APPEAL TO RESUME FUNDING**

Recently, UN officials have urged nations to reconsider their decision to pause funding for UNRWA. The call came after allegations of involvement of some staff in the October 7 attack on Israel. UNRWA warned that the suspension of aid funding jeopardizes its ability to provide critical services to nearly two million people in Gaza, especially amid the ongoing humanitarian crisis.

**Israel's Allegations**

Israel has accused UNRWA of having 12 staff members involved in the October 7 attack and claimed that Hamas diverts funds intended for the agency to support its activities. Additionally, Israel alleged that Hamas operates from within or near UNRWA facilities, with tunnels running beneath some locations, and accused the agency of promoting anti-Israel sentiment in its schools.

**UNRWA's Response**

UNRWA has firmly denied any involvement with Hamas. In response to Israel's accusations, the agency confirmed that nine of the 12 staff members named have been terminated, one is confirmed dead, and the identities of the remaining two are under investigation.

**The Importance of UNRWA for Gaza**

UNRWA plays a vital role in Gaza, especially in the wake of the current conflict. The agency provides essential supplies, including food, water, and shelter, to civilians. However, with funding suspended, UNRWA warns that it could run out of the necessary resources to continue its humanitarian work in a matter of weeks, further worsening the crisis in Gaza.

**CONCLUSION**

UNRWA continues to be a lifeline for Palestinian refugees, especially in times of conflict. As the situation in Gaza deteriorates, the agency's ability to function depends heavily on the restoration of international financial support.



## EXPLODING PAGERS IN LEBANON HEZBOLLAH ATTACK SUSPECTED AS SUPPLY CHAIN INFILTRATION

**CONTEXT:** In Lebanon, a series of simultaneous explosions involving pagers used by Hezbollah, a militant organization, has left thousands injured and caused at least nine fatalities. The blasts, which occurred almost at the same time across the country, have resulted in around 2,800 injuries, many of them critical.

While the exact cause of the incident remains uncertain, the attack appears to have been executed with a high level of sophistication. Hezbollah has accused Israel of orchestrating the explosions, though Israeli officials have yet to respond to these allegations.



### HEZBOLLAH: OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND ABOUT HEZBOLLAH

Hezbollah, translating to “Party of God,” is recognized as the world’s most heavily armed non-state actor, according to the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). The organization wields a diverse arsenal that includes rockets and missiles. Formed in opposition to Israel and Western influence in the region, Hezbollah has also backed Syrian President Bashar al-Assad during the Syrian civil war. In the mid-2000s, Hezbollah became more integrated into Lebanese politics, securing seats in the parliament, though it now faces rising protests due to Lebanon’s deteriorating economic conditions.

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## FORMATION

Hezbollah emerged during the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990), a conflict significantly influenced by the influx of Palestinian refugees following the establishment of Israel in 1948 and subsequent Israeli invasions of southern Lebanon in 1978 and 1982. The group was inspired by Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution and has received substantial funding and support from Iran, particularly from its Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).

## UNDERSTANDING PAGERS

### About Pagers

A pager, or beeper, is a compact, portable device designed to receive and occasionally send short messages or alerts. Pagers operate by receiving messages transmitted through radio frequencies from a central dispatch or base station. They can display numeric or alphanumeric messages, with two-way pagers enabling users to send and receive messages akin to early text messaging.

### Operation and Popularity

Pagers function on dedicated radio frequencies and are designed to operate over these frequencies, with their range determined by the frequency band utilized and the coverage area of the paging network. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, pagers gained widespread popularity in professions requiring dependable communication, such as healthcare and emergency services. Their independence from cellular networks made them more reliable in areas with poor cellular coverage.

## TYPES OF PAGERS

- Numeric Pagers:** Display only numbers, primarily used for transmitting phone numbers or simple alerts.
- Alphanumeric Pagers:** Capable of displaying both letters and numbers, allowing for more detailed messaging.

### Advantages of Pagers

Pagers are ideal for quick alerts and reliable communication, especially in remote areas where cellular signals may be weak. They are straightforward, user-friendly devices, less susceptible to technical malfunctions, and one-way pagers are generally untraceable.

## DECLINE IN USAGE

With the advent of mobile phones, which offer a plethora of features such as voice calls, text messaging, and internet access, the use of pagers has significantly diminished over time.

## RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN LEBANON

### About the Incident

Recently, Lebanon experienced a series of simultaneous detonations involving pagers, resulting in nine fatalities and approximately 3,000 injuries. Hezbollah

has utilized such devices for years to maintain secure communications. Following the explosions, Hezbollah reported that pagers used by personnel working for the organization's institutions began detonating under mysterious circumstances.

### Attribution of Responsibility

The incident occurred shortly after Israeli leaders hinted at intensifying their military operations against Hezbollah. While Hezbollah has accused Israel of orchestrating the explosions, Israeli officials have yet to make any public comment regarding the matter.

### Escalating Israel-Hezbollah Conflict

On October 8, 2023, Hezbollah began exchanging fire with Israeli forces, a day after Hamas launched attacks in southern Israel, thereby igniting the ongoing Israel-Gaza conflict. As an ally of Hamas, Hezbollah claims its military actions are in solidarity with Palestinians facing Israeli bombardment in Gaza. This conflict has drawn in Iranian-backed militants from across the region, with Hezbollah being a key member of the so-called "Axis of Resistance." While linked to the events in Gaza, the dynamics between Israel and Hezbollah have distinct characteristics, having fought multiple wars, with the last major confrontation occurring in 2006. Israel regards Hezbollah as a significant threat due to its expanding arsenal and influence in Syria.

### Analyzing the Pager Explosions

Initial theories speculated that the pager explosions were due to a hack that overheated the batteries, but this was quickly ruled out based on footage of the detonations. Cybersecurity experts characterized the event as potentially one of the largest physical supply chain attacks in history. Following Hezbollah's warnings to avoid mobile phones out of fear of Israeli interference, the group shifted to using pagers for communication.

Recent deliveries of new pagers have raised suspicions among experts that Israel may have infiltrated Hezbollah's supply chain, possibly implanting military-grade explosives within the devices. Experts suggest that the pagers might have been armed via an electronic signal, such as an alphanumeric message. According to a Hezbollah official, the devices were programmed to beep for several seconds before detonation, although the precise mechanism behind the explosions remains unclear.

## CONCLUSION

In summary, these developments underscore the complex interplay of regional politics and military dynamics, reflecting the growing tensions between Israel and Hezbollah amid the broader context of the Israel-Palestine conflict.

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## REASSESSING THE INDUS WATERS TREATY: INDIA'S FORMAL NOTICE TO PAKISTAN

**CONTEXT:** India has submitted a formal notice to Pakistan requesting the “review and modification” of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), building on a similar appeal made in January 2023.

This recent notice, issued under Article XII (3) of the IWT, is noteworthy because the inclusion of “review” indicates India’s intention to potentially revoke and renegotiate the 64-year-old treaty.

Article XII (3) permits modifications to the treaty through a ratified agreement between the two governments.



### OVERVIEW OF THE INDUS WATERS TREATY (IWT)

The Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) is a water-distribution agreement established between India and Pakistan, brokered by the World Bank. This treaty, signed in 1960, designates the management of six major rivers in the Indus River system: India has rights over the Ravi, Sutlej, and Beas rivers, while Pakistan has control over the Sindh, Jhelum, and Chenab rivers.

#### Rights and Obligations Under the Treaty

Under the IWT, India is obligated to allow the waters of the western rivers to flow freely, except for specific consumptive uses. The treaty allocates approximately 80% of the total water from the six-river Indus system to Pakistan, leaving India with just 19.48% of the total water resources.

India is permitted to construct storage facilities on the western rivers, with a capacity of up to 3.6 million acre-feet, although it has yet to utilize this provision fully. Additionally, the IWT allows for the construction of “run-of-the-river” projects on the western rivers, subject to precise design and operational criteria. India must also provide Pakistan with prior notification, including design details, for any new projects planned on these rivers.

#### Dispute Resolution Mechanism

The treaty includes a structured dispute resolution mechanism outlined in Article IX, which consists of three levels to address any differences or disputes concerning projects on the Indus waters:

##### First Level

Both parties are required to inform each other of any proposed projects on the Indus River, providing all necessary information. This initial process is managed by the Permanent Indus Commission (PIC), established to oversee the implementation and management of the IWT. If the PIC is unable to resolve the issue, it escalates to the second level.

##### Second Level

In the second level, the World Bank appoints a neutral expert to mediate and resolve the differences. If the neutral expert cannot reach a resolution, the matter escalates to the third level.

##### Third Level

At this stage, the issue is referred to a Court of Arbitration (CoA), with its chair appointed by the World Bank.

#### India’s Demand for Modification of the IWT

##### Recent Developments

India has formally notified Pakistan of its request to review and modify the IWT, citing “fundamental and unforeseen changes in circumstances.” This notification, which follows a similar request made in January 2023, highlights the impact of persistent cross-border terrorism and the need to reassess the treaty’s obligations in light of evolving demographic and environmental issues.

The notice emphasizes the necessity of reassessing the treaty’s terms due to shifts in population demographics, environmental challenges, and the urgency for clean energy development to meet emission targets. This request comes amidst controversy over two hydel power projects in Jammu and Kashmir – Kishanganga and Ratle – which Pakistan claims violate the IWT. These projects are designed as “run-of-the-river” systems, generating electricity without obstructing the natural flow of the rivers.

##### Background of the January 2023 Notice

India’s request in January 2023 for amendments to the IWT followed Pakistan’s objections to the aforementioned hydel projects. Initially, Pakistan sought the involvement of a “Neutral Expert” to address its concerns but later escalated the matter to the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA). India objected to this escalation, arguing that it violated the treaty’s established sequential dispute resolution process, which begins with discussions at the Indus Commissioners level,



followed by a Neutral Expert, and concludes with the PCA if necessary.

In 2016, the World Bank paused both the neutral expert and PCA processes, encouraging the two countries to resolve their differences amicably. However, despite India's

efforts, Pakistan did not engage in discussions between 2017 and 2022. In 2022, the World Bank decided to move forward with both the Neutral Expert and PCA processes, prompting India to issue its January 2023 notice – the first significant communication of its kind in over 60 years.

## INDIA-US BILATERAL RELATIONS

**CONTEXT:** As the Prime Minister of India is on his 3-day visit to America, to meet the US President and participate in the 6th QUAD summit, there is a need to analyse the transformation in the India - US ties over the years.



### TRANSFORMATION IN INDIA-US BILATERAL RELATIONS BACKGROUND: A JOURNEY OF UPS AND DOWNS

The bilateral relationship between India and the United States has experienced significant fluctuations over the past 75 years. Historical events have shaped these ties, from the imposition of US sanctions on India following its nuclear tests in 1974 and 1998 to the eventual normalization of relations, culminating in the landmark Indo-US nuclear deal in 2008. As of 2022, the US stands as India's largest trading partner, with bilateral trade in goods and services exceeding \$191 billion.

#### PHASES OF TRANSFORMATION IN RELATIONS

##### The First Transformation (2001-2021)

The first major transformation in India-US relations began in 2001, coinciding with George W. Bush's presidency, and continued until the end of Donald Trump's administration. During this period, the US demonstrated a willingness to accommodate India's key national interests while acknowledging persistent concerns regarding defense, trade, and regional security.

##### The Second Transformation: The Modi-Biden Era (2021-Present)

The current phase, marked by the tenure of President Joe Biden, has emphasized mutual interests and strategic alignment, particularly in response to China's expanding influence in the Indo-Pacific region. Key developments during this era include:

- **Initiatives on Technology:** In 2023, the National Security Advisors of both nations launched the India-US initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET) to foster collaboration in key technological domains.
- **Strategic Trade Dialogue:** The establishment of the Strategic Trade Dialogue and ongoing defense exercises reflect a robust commitment to sustaining the momentum

in bilateral relations.

- **Defense Cooperation:** Five 2+2 ministerial meetings have been held, focusing on defense and foreign policy collaboration. The US has supplied advanced military equipment, including C-130Js, C-17s, P-8Is, Apaches, Chinooks, and MH-60R helicopters, significantly enhancing India's military capabilities.

#### CHALLENGES IN THE MODI-BIDEN ERA

Despite the positive trajectory, the Modi-Biden era has faced notable challenges:

- **Energy and Defense Dependencies:** India's increasing oil imports and deep military reliance on Russia present concerns for US policymakers.
- **Divergent Views on Global Issues:** Differences regarding the war in Ukraine, human rights perspectives, and controversies surrounding alleged Indian intelligence operations on American soil complicate the relationship.
- **Strategic Integrity:** Despite these challenges, the strategic framework for deeper partnerships between India and the US remains largely intact, with prospects for further collaboration as the next American president is elected in the coming year.

#### AGENDA FOR PRIME MINISTER MODI'S RECENT VISIT TO THE US

During his recent visit to the US, Prime Minister Modi and President Biden outlined an ambitious agenda aimed at enhancing bilateral ties and expanding India's global role:

##### 1. Strengthening Bilateral Cooperation

The two leaders discussed avenues to deepen cooperation across various sectors, affirming that both nations enjoy a "comprehensive global strategic partnership."

##### 2. Enhancing India's Global Role

President Biden acknowledged India's significant leadership on the global stage, highlighting its contributions during its G20 presidency, strengthening the Quad partnership, and reinforcing the imperative of a "free, open, and prosperous Indo-Pacific."

##### 3. Collaboration in Technology and Innovation

Both leaders committed to regular engagements aimed at bolstering collaboration in cutting-edge fields such as space exploration, artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and biotechnology. Notably, plans for a semiconductor fabrication plant were discussed to enhance national security and support next-generation telecommunications.

##### 4. Advancing Defense Ties

President Biden welcomed India's procurement of 31 General Atomics MQ-9B remotely piloted aircraft, which will bolster India's intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities. He also praised India's decision to simplify its tax structure on maintenance, repair, and overhaul services,



marking a significant step toward building a robust aviation ecosystem.

### 1. Clean Energy Initiatives

The White House announced initial efforts to unlock \$1 billion in multilateral financing to support projects across the clean energy value chain, signalling a strong commitment to sustainable development.

### 2. Promoting Global Health and Development

The two leaders celebrated the launch of the new US-India Drug Policy Framework aimed at combating the illicit production and trafficking of synthetic drugs. They also announced the inaugural US-India Cancer Dialogue, emphasizing the need for collaborative efforts to tackle cancer through innovation and shared expertise.

### 3. Enhancing Agricultural Cooperation

Both nations committed to enhancing cooperation in agriculture, focusing on improving productivity and sharing best practices, thereby contributing to global food security.

#### CONCLUSION: A PROMISING FUTURE

The India-US partnership, driven by shared democratic values and strategic interests, is set for continued growth and collaboration. The initiatives launched during Prime Minister Modi's recent visit reflect a commitment to strengthening ties across various sectors, ultimately enhancing regional stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific and beyond. As the 2025 Quad Leaders' Summit approaches, the momentum of cooperation is expected to further solidify, paving the way for a resilient and inclusive future.

## PM MODI ADVOCATES GLOBAL COOPERATION AT 79TH UNGA SUMMIT OF THE FUTURE

**CONTEXT:** Prime Minister Modi addressed the "Summit of the Future" at the United Nations General Assembly in New York. The theme of the summit is "Multilateral Solutions for a Better Tomorrow."



### UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY (UNGA)

#### Overview

Established in 1945 under the United Nations Charter, the UNGA is headquartered in New York City. It is one of the six principal organs of the UN, serving as the main policy-making body of the organization. The assembly provides a unique forum for multilateral discussions on a wide range of international issues, with each member state holding an equal vote.

#### Key Decisions and Responsibilities

The UNGA plays a critical role in key decisions within the UN, including:

- Appointing the Secretary-General based on recommendations from the Security Council.
- Electing non-permanent members to the Security Council.
- Approving the UN budget.

#### SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS

Some notable accomplishments of the UNGA include:

- The Millennium Declaration, adopted in 2000.
- The 2005 World Summit Outcome Document.
- The formulation of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September 2015.

#### GENERAL DEBATE OF THE UNGA

The annual general debate of the Assembly allows member states to express their views on major international issues. The Secretary-General presents a report on the

organization's work on the opening day of the debate.

#### 79TH UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

##### Session Overview

The 79th session of the UNGA, held from September 10 to 30, 2024, focuses on accelerating progress toward achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). During this session, global leaders will address interconnected challenges and adopt the Pact for the Future, which includes a Global Digital Compact emphasizing gender equality.

- **Chairperson:** The session is being chaired by Cameroonian President Philémon Yang.
- **Theme:** "Leaving No One Behind: Acting Together for the Advancement of Peace, Sustainable Development, and Human Dignity for Present and Future Generations."

#### SUMMIT OF THE FUTURE

##### Event Overview

On September 22-23, 2024, heads of state and government convened at UN Headquarters in New York to tackle global governance challenges exposed by recent crises. The Summit aims to reaffirm commitments to the SDGs and the UN Charter, strengthen international cooperation, and lay the foundation for a more effective multilateral system.

- **Theme:** "Multilateral Solutions for a Better Tomorrow."
- **Expected Outcomes:** A Pact for the Future, along with documents such as the Global Digital Compact and Declaration on Future Generations.

#### KEY HIGHLIGHTS FROM PM MODI'S ADDRESS AT THE SUMMIT OF THE FUTURE

##### Collective Strength for Global Peace and Development

- Prime Minister Modi underscored that "the success of humanity lies in our collective strength, not in the battlefield." He stressed the importance of reforming global institutions to achieve lasting peace and sustainable development, advocating for a human-centric approach to addressing global challenges.

##### Emerging Conflict Arenas: Cyber, Maritime, and Space

- PM Modi highlighted the rise of cyber, maritime, and space as new theaters of conflict, alongside traditional threats like terrorism. He called for robust global digital governance to safeguard national sovereignty and integrity, emphasizing the need for balanced regulation to





- ensure the responsible use of technology.

### India's Commitment to Sustainable Development and the Global South

- Reflecting on India's achievement of lifting 250 million people out of poverty, PM Modi expressed the country's readiness to share its development experiences with the Global South. He reaffirmed the principle of "One Earth, One Family, One Future," demonstrated through initiatives such as One Earth, One Health and One Sun, One World, One Grid.

### Advocating for Global Governance Reforms

- PM Modi emphasized the necessity of reforming international institutions like the UN Security Council, aligning with India's aspirations for permanent membership. He cited the inclusion of the African Union in the G20 during India's presidency as a significant step toward enhancing inclusivity in global governance.

### Digital Infrastructure for Global Good

- PM Modi advocated for the development of digital public infrastructure to act as a bridge for global good, offering India's digital capabilities to the world. He stressed that global action must align with global ambition in areas such as cyber, maritime, and space security, emphasizing collective strength for a safer, more sustainable future.

### CONCLUSION:

In his address at the 79th UN General Assembly's "Summit of the Future," Prime Minister Modi emphasized the need for global cooperation and reform within international institutions to achieve sustainable development and lasting peace. Highlighting India's success in poverty alleviation and its commitment to the Global South, he stressed the importance of inclusivity. Modi's vision for a united global community aims to address emerging conflicts, signalling a hopeful step towards a more equitable future.

## PM MODI REAFFIRMS INDIA'S SUPPORT FOR PALESTINE IN MEETING WITH MAHMOUD ABBAS

**CONTEXT:** Prime Minister Modi held a meeting with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on the sidelines of the Summit of the Future in New York. This discussion took place shortly after India chose to abstain from voting on a UNGA resolution that called for Israel to cease its "unlawful presence" in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.



### INDIA-PALESTINE RELATIONS: AN OVERVIEW

#### Historical Evolution of the Relationship

India's support for the Palestinian cause has long been a cornerstone of its foreign policy. The relationship began to take shape in 1974 when India became the first non-Arab state to recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. In 1988, India was among the first countries to recognize the Palestinian State. The establishment of India's Representative Office in Gaza in 1996, later moved to Ramallah in 2003, marked a significant step in diplomatic engagement.

#### Advocacy at Multilateral Forums

India has consistently taken a proactive stance in supporting the Palestinian cause within international organizations. It has co-sponsored and voted in favour of several UN General Assembly resolutions that advocate for:

- The right to self-determination for Palestinians
- Israel's adherence to its legal obligations
- Palestine's status as a non-member state at the UN

In 2011, India supported Palestine's bid for full membership in UNESCO, further reinforcing its commitment.

#### Humanitarian Support through UNRWA

India has contributed significantly to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), supporting Palestinian refugees and their needs. Since 2002, India has contributed approximately \$36.5 million, and it became a member of UNRWA's Advisory Commission in 2020.

#### IBSA COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENTAL ASSISTANCE

The India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Fund has financed several projects in Palestine, totaling around \$5 million. India's developmental cooperation with Palestine has also been substantial, amounting to approximately \$141 million. This includes direct budgetary support of \$39 million to the Palestinian Authority and a recent Line of Credit worth \$50 million offered in July 2021 for sustainable projects.

#### KEY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

India has successfully executed several notable development projects in Palestine, including:

- The Palestine-India Techno-Park
  - The Jawaharlal Nehru Library at Al Azhar University in Gaza City
  - The Mahatma Gandhi Library-cum-Student Activity Centre at the Palestine Technical College in Deir Al Balah
- Currently, eight developmental projects are underway, including:
- The Palestinian Institute of Higher Diplomacy in Ramallah
  - The National Printing Press at Ramallah
  - A super-specialty hospital in Ramallah
  - Turathi Women Empowerment Centres in Ramallah and Gaza

#### Quick Impact Projects (QIPs)

In the fiscal year 2021-22, India implemented four Quick Impact Projects, which include:

- The rehabilitation of Yasser Arafat Square in Ramallah
- Integrating technology into education through the Young



- Scientists Club
- Establishing a nursery in Beitunia Municipality
- Constructing Aqraba Children Park

### RECENT DEVELOPMENTS: PM MODI'S MEETING WITH PALESTINIAN LEADERSHIP

During the UN General Assembly session in New York, Prime Minister Modi met with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. This meeting followed India's abstention from voting on a UNGA resolution demanding an end to Israel's "unlawful presence" in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which was adopted with a call for Israel to cease its occupation within 12 months.

In this meeting, PM Modi expressed deep concern over the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and reiterated India's commitment to restoring peace and stability in the region, reinforcing the long-standing friendship between India and Palestine.

### BALANCING APPROACH TO THE ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT

The recent meeting with President Abbas came after a phone conversation in October 2023, where PM Modi expressed condolences for civilian casualties in Gaza and reaffirmed India's principled position on the Israel-Palestine

issue. India has also provided humanitarian aid to Gaza amidst the ongoing conflict, while PM Modi expressed solidarity with Israel following the October 7 Hamas attacks, which he condemned as acts of terrorism.

India faces a diplomatic challenge in navigating its relationships with various stakeholders in West Asia, balancing strong strategic ties with Israel and its historical support for Palestine. By maintaining a balanced approach, India advocates for a two-state solution while offering humanitarian support to Gaza and abstaining from certain resolutions against Israel.

### CONCLUSION

Prime Minister Modi's reaffirmation of India's support for Palestine during his meeting with President Mahmoud Abbas highlights India's commitment to a balanced approach in the Israel-Palestine conflict. By acknowledging the humanitarian crisis in Gaza while maintaining strong ties with Israel, India emphasizes its dedication to promoting peace and stability in the region. This meeting underscores India's historical support for the Palestinian cause, reinforcing its role as a key player in advocating for a two-state solution amidst ongoing geopolitical challenges.

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE QUAD SUMMIT 2024

**CONTEXT:** Prime Minister Modi attended the sixth Quad Leaders' Summit held in Wilmington, Delaware, USA, which was hosted by the United States this year.

### WHAT IS QUAD?

#### Overview

The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, commonly known as Quad, is a coalition of four democracies: India, Australia, the United States, and Japan. Established to foster a free and open international order grounded in the rule of law, the Quad focuses on the Indo-Pacific region.

#### Objectives

The primary goals of the Quad include:

- **Maritime Security:** Ensuring safe and secure seas in the Indo-Pacific.
- **Combating the COVID-19 Crisis:** Fostering vaccine diplomacy and public health initiatives.
- **Addressing Climate Change Risks:** Collaborating to mitigate environmental challenges.
- **Investment Ecosystem Development:** Promoting a favorable environment for regional investments.
- **Boosting Technological Innovation:** Encouraging advancements in technology among member nations.

#### Evolution of Quad

The Quad's origins can be traced back to the informal alliance formed by India, Japan, Australia, and the US in response to the Indian Ocean tsunami, aimed at enhancing disaster relief efforts. The concept of a formal Quad was initially proposed by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2007. However, due to resistance from China and India's reluctance, it did not progress.

In 2017, the four nations reconvened during the ASEAN Summits to revive the initiative. The Quad was officially elevated to a ministerial level in September 2019, and in March 2021, the first virtual summit of Quad leaders was held, hosted by the United States. This was followed by the first in-person meeting of Quad leaders in September 2021, also in the US.



#### Naval Exercises

In November 2020, the navies of the Quad nations participated in their largest joint military drill, the Malabar Exercise, marking the first participation of all members in a joint military operation since 2007.

#### Key Outcomes of the 2024 Quad Summit

##### Quad Wilmington Declaration

To advance their agenda, the Quad leaders adopted the Quad Wilmington Declaration during the 2024 summit.

##### Quad Cancer Moonshot

The Quad Cancer Moonshot is a new initiative aimed at reducing the cancer burden in the Indo-Pacific region. Building upon their collaborative efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic, this partnership leverages investments and scientific expertise from both private and non-profit sectors. Initially targeting cervical cancer—a preventable disease with high mortality rates in the region—the initiative aims to address other forms of cancer in the future.

##### Maritime Initiative for Training in Indo-Pacific (MAITRI)

The Quad leaders announced the Maritime Initiative for Training in the Indo-Pacific (MAITRI) to assist regional



partners in effectively utilizing tools from the Indo-Pacific Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA) and other Quad initiatives. This initiative, first introduced in May 2022, focuses on enhancing monitoring, security, and law enforcement capabilities while deterring illegal activities in regional waters. India will host the inaugural MAITRI workshop in 2025.

#### **Quad-at-Sea Ship Observer Mission (2025)**

The Quad nations plan to launch the first-ever Quad-at-Sea Ship Observer Mission in 2025, involving the US, Japan, Australia, and Indian Coast Guards to enhance maritime safety and interoperability.

#### **Quad Indo-Pacific Logistics Network**

A pilot project for the Quad Indo-Pacific Logistics Network was launched to share airlift capacities and leverage collective logistical strengths, enabling quicker and more effective civilian responses to natural disasters across the Indo-Pacific region.

#### **Quad Ports of the Future Partnership**

This partnership aims to utilize the Quad's collective expertise to support the development of sustainable and resilient port infrastructure across the Indo-Pacific.

#### **Semiconductor Supply Chains Contingency Network Memorandum of Cooperation**

This initiative seeks to strengthen the resilience of

the Quad's semiconductor supply chains.

#### **Additional Announcements**

- A collective effort to enhance energy efficiency, including the deployment and manufacturing of high-efficiency, affordable cooling systems in the Indo-Pacific.
- India's establishment of a space-based web portal for Mauritius, promoting open science for monitoring extreme weather events and climate impacts.
- Introduction of a new sub-category under the Quad STEM Fellowship for students from the Indo-Pacific region to pursue a four-year engineering program at a Government of India-funded technical institute.

#### **Upcoming Quad Leaders' Summit 2025**

The leaders expressed enthusiasm for India's upcoming hosting of the Quad Leaders' Summit in 2025, marking a significant continuation of their collaborative efforts.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The Quad represents a strategic alliance among four key democracies, focused on promoting stability, security, and development in the Indo-Pacific region. With initiatives like the Cancer Moonshot and MAITRI, the Quad underscores its commitment to collaborative solutions addressing pressing global challenges, fostering a resilient and cooperative future.

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# **INTERNAL SECURITY**



**INDIAN NAVY'S P 8I AIRCRAFT LANDS  
IN FRANCE FOR VARUNA EXERCISE**

**INDIAN ARMY SET TO RECEIVE  
APACHE HELICOPTERS**

**TRIPURA SIGNS PEACE AGREEMENT  
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**INDIA COMMISSIONED INS ARIGHAAT**

**DRDO CONDUCTS SUCCESSFUL  
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ZORAWAR**

**YUDH ABHYAS-2024**

**INDIA, EU PREPARE FOR CONFERENCE  
ON ONLINE RADICALIZATION**

**US APPROVES \$ 52.8 MILLION  
SONOBUOY SALE TO INDIA**



## INDIAN NAVY'S P 8I AIRCRAFT LANDS IN FRANCE FOR VARUNA EXERCISE

An Indian Navy P8i Poseidon aircraft has landed at Air Base 125 Istres-Le Tube in France for the first time as part of India's participation in the bilateral naval exercise 'Varuna,' scheduled from September 2 to 4, 2024, in the Mediterranean Sea. It marks the first time in 63 years that an Indian Navy aircraft has operated from a French airbase since the Indian Navy's Alize aircraft operated from Hyeres Airbase. In addition to the P8i Poseidon, the Indian Navy's warship INS Tabar has also arrived in Toulon, France, to take part in the Varuna exercise.

### OBJECTIVE OF EXERCISE VARUNA

Exercise Varuna aims to improve cooperation and coordination between the Indian and French navies through advanced tactical drills and complex maritime manoeuvres.

### P8I POSEIDON AIRCRAFT

The P8i Poseidon is a specialized aircraft designed

for maritime patrol and reconnaissance missions. It was developed by Boeing Defence and is based on the Boeing 737-800 aircraft. Since being introduced into the Indian Navy in 2013, the P8i Poseidon has flown over 35,000 hours. It plays a vital role in coastal patrolling, monitoring the seas, fighting against submarines, and conducting search-and-rescue missions.

### HISTORY OF EXERCISE VARUNA

Exercise Varuna, initiated in 1993 and officially named in 2001, is a key element of the strategic partnership between India and France. It involves various naval assets like guided missile frigates, tankers, maritime patrol aircraft, and helicopters. These joint exercises enhance operational interactions and best practice sharing, improving the readiness of both navies for real-world cooperation.

## INDIAN ARMY SET TO RECEIVE APACHE HELICOPTERS

The Indian Army is set to receive its first three AH-64E Apache attack helicopters from Boeing in December 2024, after a delay of more than six months caused by supply chain problems. The helicopters were originally expected to be delivered between May and July, but the schedule was revised after discussions between India and the U.S. to prioritize delivery.

### APACHE HELICOPTER SPECIFICATIONS

The Apache helicopters are designed mainly for operations in desert areas and are highly effective against armored threats like tanks. However, they have limitations when used in high-altitude regions, such as mountainous terrain. To address this, India has developed the indigenous Light Combat Helicopter (LCH) by Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. The LCH is better suited for high-altitude operations and is planned to be deployed in Ladakh between 2024 and 2025.

### MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

In March, the Indian Army formed the 451 Aviation Squadron in Jodhpur to operate the new Apache helicopters. This marks the Army's second type of attack helicopter after the LCH. The new squadron is part of the Army's efforts to strengthen its aviation capabilities.

### PROCUREMENT AGREEMENTS

India signed an \$800 million deal with Boeing in 2020 to purchase six Apache helicopters. The agreement also includes training for six Indian pilots and 24 technicians in the United States. The Army had previously expressed interest in acquiring more Apaches, with a proposal for an additional 11 helicopters currently under consideration.

### STRATEGIC INSIGHTS

A review led by the Chief of Defence Staff identified a need for 39 heavy attack helicopters across the Indian armed forces. In response, the Defence Acquisition Council approved the procurement of 156 Light Combat Helicopters (LCH) for an estimated total cost of ₹ 45,000 Cr. This move highlights India's focus on expanding its attack helicopter fleet to meet its strategic needs.

### CURRENT OPERATIONAL FLEET

Along with the LCH, the Indian Army operates 75 Rudra helicopters, which are armed versions of the Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH). These helicopters, along with the Apaches and LCHs, will enhance the Army's ability to conduct operations across various terrains, from deserts to high-altitude regions, significantly boosting its combat capabilities.

## TRIPURA SIGNS PEACE AGREEMENT WITH INSURGENT GROUPS

The Centre and the State of Tripura will sign an important agreement with two groups known for their past involvement in insurgency: the National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT) and the All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF). The signing event will occur in New Delhi, with key figures like Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha attending.

### BACKGROUND ON INSURGENT GROUPS

The NLFT and ATTF are groups from Tripura, a state in north-eastern India. These groups have a history of fighting against the government, seeking more autonomy or self-rule for the indigenous people of Tripura. Their actions have sometimes involved violence, which has led to instability in the region.

### GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES FOR PEACE

The Centre, especially through the Ministry of Home

Affairs (MHA), has been actively working to bring peace to the Northeast region of India. Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, there has been a strong focus on reducing extremism and violence to create a peaceful and developed Northeast.

### PAST AGREEMENTS

Since Prime Minister Modi took office, the government has signed 12 important agreements aimed at resolving conflicts in the Northeast. Three of these agreements specifically dealt with issues in Tripura. These efforts have led to about 10,000 people giving up their weapons, showing a significant move towards peace in the region.

The upcoming agreement, known as the Memorandum of Settlement, is expected to continue the dialogue between the government and the insurgent groups. It's an important step towards lasting peace and stability in Tripura, which



aligns with the national goals of security and development.

### **NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT OF TRIPURA (NLFT)**

The National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT) is a militant group that has been active in Tripura since 1989. It was formed as a breakaway group from another insurgent group, the All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF). The NLFT aims to create a separate state called “Tipraland” for the indigenous people of Tripura. The group has been involved in activities like extortion and armed conflict, leading to several government crackdowns. The NLFT has been labelled a terrorist organization by the Indian government.

### **ALL-TRIPURA TIGER FORCE (ATTF)**

The All-Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF) is another militant group from Tripura, formed in 1990. It was created as a splinter group from the Tripura National Samata Party. The ATTF fights for the rights of the indigenous people of Tripura, seeking more autonomy and protection of tribal rights. In 2000, the ATTF signed a ceasefire agreement with the Indian government, but the violence resumed in 2009. Like the NLFT, the ATTF has also been designated as a terrorist organization by the Indian government.

## **VISHANU YUDDH ABHYAS**

India recently conducted its first comprehensive national mock drill called “Vishanu Yuddh Abhyas” from August 27 to 31, 2024, to address the growing threat of zoonotic diseases. Zoonotic diseases are illnesses that can be passed from animals to humans. This exercise was initiated under the National One Health Mission (NOHM) and aimed to evaluate how prepared the country is to handle such outbreaks.

### **OBJECTIVE OF THE EXERCISE**

The main goal of this exercise was to test how well India could respond to a simulated outbreak of a zoonotic disease. The drill focused on ensuring that there was a coordinated effort across different sectors, including human health, animal husbandry, and wildlife management. This approach is important because zoonotic diseases can spread through multiple channels, so a unified response is necessary to control them effectively.

### **PARTICIPANTS IN THE DRILL**

The drill involved various organizations and departments working together, including:

- National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC)
- Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)
- Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS)
- Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (DAHD)
- Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change (MoEF&CC)

- Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)
- State and District Health and Veterinary Service

These organizations played different roles, from identifying the disease to implementing control measures.

### **KEY COMPONENTS OF THE DRILL**

The exercise had two main parts:

- **INVESTIGATION AND IDENTIFICATION:** Teams worked to identify the mock virus that was causing the outbreak.
- **CONTROL MEASURES:** After identifying the virus, the next step was to take action to prevent it from spreading among both human and animal populations.

### **DRILL EVALUATION**

Independent observers were present to monitor how well the teams performed. Overall, the response from the National Joint Outbreak Response Team (NJORT) and other involved groups was timely and appropriate. However, the exercise also revealed some areas where improvements are needed.

The Vishanu Yuddh Abhyas was considered a successful exercise, providing valuable lessons that will help improve India's preparedness for future zoonotic disease outbreaks. The National One Health Mission aims to ensure that different sectors work together effectively to protect public health and the environment, making India better equipped to handle such crises.

## **BIPLAB SARMA COMMISSION**

The Assam Cabinet has approved the implementation of 57 out of 67 recommendations made by the Justice (retd.) Biplob Sarma Commission. This commission was formed by the Ministry of Home Affairs to implement Clause 6 of the Assam Accord. The Cabinet's approval is a big step toward protecting the rights and identity of the Assamese people.

### **ASSAM ACCORD**

The Assam Accord was signed in 1985 after long protests against illegal immigration into Assam. The Accord says that all foreigners who came to Assam after March 24, 1971, should be deported, no matter their religion. Clause 6 of the Accord focuses on protecting the rights and identity of the people of Assam by giving them constitutional, legislative, and administrative safeguards.

### **BIPLAB SARMA COMMISSION**

The Justice Biplob Sarma Commission was set up in Assam in 2019 to look into issues like corruption and misconduct in the state's police force. It aimed to make law

enforcement more accountable. Justice Sarma, a retired High Court judge, has worked in various important judicial roles. The commission's findings emphasized problems like poor training and supervision in the police force. The report also sparked conversations about the need for police reforms to improve transparency and public trust in Assam's law enforcement agencies. The Biplob Sarma Commission, led by Justice Biplob Kumar Sarma, was set up to speed up the implementation of Clause 6. The commission looked at ways to change laws and policies to ensure that the culture and identity of the Assamese people are protected.

### **KEY RECOMMENDATIONS APPROVED**

The Cabinet approved 57 recommendations from the commission, which will be applied across the state. However, some areas, like those under the 6th Schedule and the Barak Valley, will need to approve these recommendations locally. The other 10 recommendations are still being discussed with the Government of India. These recommendations will take



more time to finalize.

### IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

A Group of Ministers will be formed to talk with important groups like the All-Assam Students' Union (AASU) and other stakeholders. Together, they will make a detailed plan to implement the approved recommendations by April 15,

2025.

The commission also recommended constitutional amendments for the full implementation of Clause 6. This could include changes to Article 371-B, which deals with special provisions for Assam. These changes would help protect the Assamese identity even more.

## KONYAK UNION SEEKS BOUNDARY CORRECTION

A tribal group in Nagaland called the Konyak Union has raised concerns with the Chief Minister of Nagaland, Neiphiu Rio, about mistakes in how the boundary between Mon district (in Nagaland) and Charaideo district (in Assam) is shown on Google Maps. They claim that the map incorrectly shows that some areas that should belong to Mon district are instead marked as part of Assam.

### HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Nagaland became a state in 1963 when parts of Assam were reorganized. This change was based on earlier borders set during British rule, especially in regions with large Naga populations, such as the Konyak Nagas in Mon district.

### KONYAK UNION

The Konyak Union was created in 1979 to represent the Konyak tribe in Nagaland, India.

It aims to preserve Konyak culture and traditions. The Konyak tribe is famous for its unique face tattoos and warrior history. Konyaks are skilled in wood carving and making bamboo crafts. They practice shifting cultivation, also known as jhum farming. The Konyak language belongs to the Sino-Tibetan

language family. The union works to support the rights of tribal people.

### DISPUTED AREAS

The boundary issue involves specific villages like Hota-Hoti and Tekun, which are in Mon district and were established in the 1960s. The Konyak Union argues that the boundary should reflect traditional understandings and historical agreements between the Ahoms (a group from Assam) and the Konyak Nagas.

### LEGAL RAMIFICATIONS

The dispute over these boundaries is currently being examined by the Supreme Court of India. Incorrect information on maps like those on Google could lead to legal problems and potential conflicts between different communities.

The Konyak Union is asking the Chief Minister and other officials to quickly correct the mapping error. They warn that if the issue is not resolved, there could be serious consequences, and they do not take responsibility for any problems caused by the incorrect map information.

## INDIA COMMISSIONED INS ARIGHAAT

India has recently commissioned its second nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine (SSBN), named INS Arighaat. This is a major boost to India's naval capabilities, coming after the first SSBN, INS Arihant, which was commissioned in 2016.

India's journey into building nuclear-powered submarines began with the INS Arihant, which was the first of its kind for the country. The introduction of INS Arighaat represents significant progress, demonstrating improvements in technology and local production skills.

### KEY FEATURES OF INS ARIGHAAT

- **ENHANCED MISSILE RANGE:** INS Arighaat is equipped with missiles that can hit targets over 3,500 km away. This is a big improvement compared to the 750 km range of the INS Arihant.
- **INDIGENOUS CONTENT:** A large part of the INS Arighaat was designed and made in India, supporting the country's goal of becoming more self-reliant in defense technology.
- **ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY:** The submarine features new and advanced designs, showing the progress India

has made in its naval technology.

- **STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE:** Both INS Arihant and INS Arighaat are crucial for India's national security. They act as important deterrents against potential threats, helping to strengthen India's strategic position in regional waters. The Indian Navy plans to further increase its fleet of nuclear submarines. A third submarine is expected to be commissioned early next year, reflecting India's ongoing commitment to enhancing its maritime defense and security.

### INS ARIHANT

INS Arihant is India's first nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine, commissioned in 2016. It is 111 meters long and weighs about 6,000 tons. The submarine can carry 12 K-15 Sagarika missiles, with a range of 750 km. Designed for stealth, it has a double-hulled structure. Its nuclear reactor was developed under the Indian Navy's Advanced Technology Vessel program. INS Arihant is a key part of India's nuclear triad, which helps in deterring regional threats.

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## DRDO CONDUCTS SUCCESSFUL TRIALS OF INDIAN LIGHT TANK ZORAWAR

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) of India recently announced the successful testing of the Zorawar light tank. This tank is specifically designed for use in high-altitude areas, marking a step forward in India's push for self-reliance in defense technology.

### RECENT HISTORY

In 2021, the Indian Army issued a request to buy 350 light tanks that weigh less than 25 tonnes. These tanks are needed to improve the Army's flexibility and capability in difficult areas, especially in high-altitude regions. The India-China standoff in Eastern Ladakh increased the need for light tanks. Initially, the Army did not think they needed these vehicles, but as military tensions grew, especially during confrontations at the Kailash range, it became clear that light tanks could be vital for operations in high-altitude areas.

### ZORAWAR LIGHT TANK

The Zorawar light tank is being developed to operate in difficult terrains, especially at high altitudes, where quick movement and flexibility are crucial. It was designed by the Combat Vehicles Research & Development Establishment

(CVRDE) in partnership with Larsen & Toubro Limited, a major Indian company.

### ZORAWAR SINGH

Zorawar Singh, after whom the tank is named, was a famous Dogra General in the early 19th century. He is known for his military campaigns in Ladakh and Tibet. Born in 1786, he is remembered for his strategic brilliance and ability to win battles in harsh environments. He died in 1841 during a campaign in Tibet, symbolizing the tough conditions he faced during his military career.

### DEVELOPMENT AND OBJECTIVES

The preliminary trials were conducted to see how the tank performs in tough conditions, such as deserts. The Zorawar showed it could hit targets accurately during firing tests, proving its effectiveness and suitability for future military missions. The development of the Zorawar involved the participation of many Indian companies, including Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). This highlights India's efforts to strengthen its domestic defense manufacturing capabilities, reducing dependence on foreign suppliers.

## YUDH ABHYAS-2024

The 20th edition of the India-USA Joint Military Exercise, Yudh Abhyas 2024, started on September 9, 2024, at the Foreign Training Node in Mahajan Field Firing Ranges, Rajasthan. This exercise, scheduled from September 9 to 22, has grown larger and more complex compared to previous years.

### HISTORY OF YUDH ABHYAS

Yudh Abhyas has been held every year since 2004. The location alternates between India and the USA, providing both countries with a chance to work together and improve their military skills. It has become an important event for strengthening their defense ties. Both nations are sending strong forces. India is represented by 600 personnel from the RAJPUT Regiment and other army branches. The United States has sent an equally strong team from the 1-24 Battalion of the 11th Airborne Division, based in Alaska.

### AIMS OF THE EXERCISE

The main goal of Yudh Abhyas is to improve how Indian and US forces work together to conduct counter-terrorism operations. These operations take place in unique, difficult situations, following the rules set out by the United Nations (Chapter VII).

### FOCUS AREAS

The exercise takes place in a semi-desert setting. Important activities include:

- Working together to respond to terrorist actions
- Joint planning for missions
- Field training that mimics real counter-terrorism operations

### BENEFITS OF THE EXERCISE

Yudh Abhyas allows both countries to share knowledge about tactics and military strategies, improving how their forces work together. It helps build teamwork and friendship between Indian and US forces and strengthens defense cooperation, which supports a stronger relationship between the two nations.

### YUDH ABHYAS

Yudh Abhyas is an annual exercise between the Indian and US military forces, focusing on improving how they work together during counter-terrorism missions. The exercise started in 2004 and takes place in both India and the US in alternating years. In addition to practicing tactical operations, it includes live-fire drills and training in providing humanitarian assistance. It also involves air and logistical support, reflecting the growing strategic partnership between the two countries.

The More You Learn, The More You Earn





## INDIA LAUNCHES MALPE AND MULKI ANTI-SUBMARINE WARFARE SHIPS

The Indian Navy recently launched two new ships, named Malpe and Mulki. These are the fourth and fifth ships in a project to build eight Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) Shallow Water Crafts (SWC). The launch took place at Cochin Shipyard Ltd (CSL) in Kochi and is a big step toward India's goal of becoming more self-reliant in making its defence equipment.

### Details of the Launch

The Mahe class ships, like Malpe and Mulki, are named after important coastal ports in India. These ships continue the work of older minesweepers that used to protect the country's waters. They are part of India's plan to modernise its navy and make it better equipped to deal with threats, especially submarines.

### TECHNOLOGICAL FEATURES

These ships are built with advanced technology, most

of which is developed in India. They have special underwater sensors to detect submarines and are designed for anti-submarine operations in shallow coastal waters. Additionally, they can perform mine-laying and handle other low-intensity maritime operations.

The ASW SWC ships can reach speeds of 25 knots and can travel up to 1,800 nautical miles before needing to refuel or resupply. This makes them ideal for coastal defence, ensuring India can protect its waters more effectively.

More than 80 % of the materials and technology used to build these ships come from India. This supports the country's focus on 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' (self-reliant India), creating jobs and boosting India's ability to produce its defence equipment.

## INDIA-OMAN JOINT MILITARY EXERCISE AL NAJAH

The Indian Army has sent a team to participate in the 5th edition of the India-Oman Joint Military Exercise AL NAJAH, which is being held from 13th to 26th September 2024 in Salalah, Oman. This exercise is an important event that has been helping improve military cooperation between the two countries since it first started in 2015.

### BACKGROUND OF AL NAJAH

The AL NAJAH exercise is held every two years and alternates between India and Oman. The last edition took place in Mahajan, Rajasthan. The main goal of each exercise is to improve the joint operational abilities of the two armies, especially in situations involving counter-terrorism.

### AIM OF THE EXERCISE

The primary goal of Exercise AL NAJAH is to enhance the joint military capabilities of both India and Oman, especially for counter-terrorism operations. This cooperation follows Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, which focuses on maintaining peace and security.

### FOCUS AREAS OF THE EXERCISE

The exercise will be held in the desert and will focus on several tactical drills, including:

- Joint Planning
- Cordon and Search Operations (controlling an area and searching for threats)
- Urban Combat (fighting in city or built-up areas)
- Mobile Vehicle Check Posts (setting up checkpoints for vehicle searches)

- Counter Drone Operations
- Room Intervention Techniques (handling dangerous situations inside buildings)

The participants will go through field training exercises that mimic real-world situations, allowing them to practice and improve their counter-terrorism skills.

### BENEFITS OF THE EXERCISE

Exercise AL NAJAH V will allow both armies to share their best practices in military tactics and procedures. This will help improve their ability to work together, build goodwill, and strengthen the friendship between the two armies.

In addition to military training, this exercise aims to strengthen defence cooperation and improve the diplomatic relationship between India and Oman, improving closer ties between the two countries.

### INDIA-OMAN JOINT MILITARY EXERCISE

The India-Oman Joint Military Exercise, called AL NAJAH, began in 2015 and focuses on improving the ability of both armies to work together. It is held in the deserts of Oman and mainly involves infantry tactics and counter-terrorism operations. The exercise reflects India's strategic relationship with Gulf countries, especially with Oman, which is India's oldest ally in the region, dating back to 1950. This partnership also helps improve maritime security in the Arabian Sea by addressing regional threats. Through these exercises, India and Oman continue to strengthen their mutual respect and understanding.

## DRDO, INDIAN NAVY SUCCESSFULLY TEST VL-SRSAM MISSILE

The Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) and the Indian Navy recently conducted a successful flight test of the Vertical Launch Short Range Surface-to-Air Missile (VL-SRSAM). The test took place at the Integrated Test Range (ITR) in Chandipur, Odisha, marking another step forward in India's missile technology development.

### FLIGHT TEST OVERVIEW

The missile was launched from a land-based vertical launcher and accurately hit a high-speed aerial target flying at a low altitude. This success shows that the VL-SRSAM is ready for use in real-world military situations, proving its effectiveness in defending against airborne threats.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE TEST

The main goal of this test was to evaluate upgraded components of the missile, particularly the Proximity Fuse and Seeker. These are key parts that help improve the missile's accuracy and effectiveness in intercepting incoming targets.

### ABOUT DRDO

The Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) was founded in 1958. It is a key organization in developing indigenous missiles and advanced defense systems in India. DRDO has over 50 labs and research centers across the country and has played a major role in creating important missile systems like Agni and Prithvi. In addition to missile technology, DRDO works on systems like the Akash surface-to-air missile and the Tejas fighter aircraft. It also



collaborates with international partners on joint development projects, promoting self-reliance in defense technology. Notably, DRDO contributed to the development of the K9 Vajra howitzer, a powerful artillery system used by the Indian Army.

## INDIA ACHIEVES TIER 1 STATUS IN GLOBAL CYBERSECURITY INDEX 2024

India has achieved Tier 1 status in the Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI) 2024, a remarkable accomplishment that shows the country's dedication to building a strong cybersecurity foundation. This recognition by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) reflects India's growing strength in protecting digital information and improving online safety for everyone.

### GLOBAL CYBERSECURITY INDEX (GCI)

The GCI is a global tool used to measure how committed different countries are to cybersecurity. It helps raise awareness about why cybersecurity is so important and looks at how different sectors—like business, government, and technology—work to stay secure online. It's a way to see which countries are leading the way in online safety.

### KEY AREAS OF ASSESSMENT

The GCI ranks countries by evaluating them in five key areas:

- **Legal Measures:** Are there laws and regulations to protect against cyber threats?
- **Technical Measures:** What technical tools and systems are in place to fight cyberattacks?
- **Organizational Measures:** How well are institutions organized to handle cybersecurity issues?
- **Capacity Development:** Are there efforts to educate and train people in cybersecurity skills?
- **Cooperation:** Are there partnerships with other countries to improve cybersecurity worldwide?

### INDIA'S PERFORMANCE IN GCI 2024

India earned an impressive score of 98.49, placing it among the top 47 countries in the world with the best

cybersecurity practices!

### SOME KEY REASONS FOR THIS SUCCESS INCLUDE:

- **STRONG LEGAL FRAMEWORK:** India has solid legal measures in place, like the Information Technology Act (2000) and the Digital Personal Data Protection Bill (2022), which help keep the digital space secure.
- **ADVANCED TECHNICAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL MEASURES:** India's high scores in these areas show that the country has invested in modern technologies and organized systems to prevent and manage cyber threats.

### WHY IS TIER 1 STATUS IMPORTANT?

Being ranked Tier 1 is a huge win for India and shows that the country is doing exceptionally well in keeping up with the ever-changing world of cybersecurity. Here's what it means:

- **Staying Alert:** India will continue to improve and update its defenses against new cyber threats.
- **Digital Inclusion:** Efforts will focus on making sure everyone has access to cybersecurity resources.
- **Raising Public Awareness:** People will be encouraged to adopt better online safety habits.
- **Improving Laws and Technology:** India will keep updating its laws and investing in new technologies to stay ahead.

### GLOBAL IMPACT

With this achievement, India stands alongside leading nations like the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom, showing its strong commitment to international cybersecurity cooperation. This is a powerful step forward in making the digital world safer for everyone.

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## 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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# ECONOMICS





**US ANNOUNCES SEMICONDUCTOR PARTNERSHIP WITH INDIA**

**INDIA LAUNCHES PM E-DRIVE SCHEME FOR ELECTRIC VEHICLES**

**UNION CABINET APPROVES ₹ 2,000 CR MISSION MAUSAM INITIATIVE**

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**MODI LAYS FOUNDATION STONE FOR VADHAVAN PORT PROJECT**

**NAVARATNA STATUS GRANTED TO NHPC, SJVN, RAILTEL PSUS**

**INDIA'S FIRST BIO-HYDROGEN PROJECT**

**INDIA'S FIRST CO<sub>2</sub> - METHANOL PILOT PLANT IN PUNE**

**INDIA, AUSTRALIA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT**

**INDIA JOINS US-LED MINERALS SECURITY FINANCE NETWORK**

**E-SHRAM PORTAL REGISTERS 30 CR UNORGANISED WORKERS**

**WHITE REVOLUTION 2.0**

**DIGITAL AGRICULTURE MISSION**

**AGRISURE FUND**



## US ANNOUNCES SEMICONDUCTOR PARTNERSHIP WITH INDIA

The US announced a partnership with India to improve its semiconductor supply chain. This plan will examine India's ability to make and use semiconductors, setting the stage for future projects between the two countries. It shows how important the semiconductor industry is globally.

### SEMICONDUCTOR ECOSYSTEM

Semiconductors are small, essential parts found in many devices like cars, computers, and medical equipment. The partnership between the US and India will closely look at India's current situation in making semiconductors. This includes checking laws, the skills of workers, and whether there is enough infrastructure to support this industry.

### ROLE OF THE CHIPS ACT

In August 2022, President Biden signed the CHIPS Act, a law that provides lots of money to boost the production of semiconductors in the US. Part of this law is the International Technology Security and Innovation (ITSI) Fund, which is focused on making sure the US and its allies, like India, have secure and stable supply chains for semiconductors.

India's involvement in the semiconductor industry is very important for both India and the US. The Covid-19 pandemic revealed how fragile global supply chains are, and current tensions with countries like China have further complicated the situation. By working together, the US and India can make semiconductor production more reliable and reduce dependence on major suppliers like Taiwan and China.

### INDIA SEMICONDUCTOR MISSION

- **OBJECTIVES:** Position India as the global hub for the Electronic Ecosystem Design and Manufacturing (EDSM).
- **ELIGIBLE BENEFICIARIES:** Companies that are involved in:
  - Silicon semiconductor fabrication
  - Display Fabrication
  - Sensor Fabrication
  - Silicon photonics
  - Semiconductor Packaging
  - Semiconductor Design.

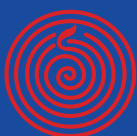
### COMPONENTS OF THE PROGRAM

- **CHIPS TO START- UP PROGRAM**
  - **OBJECTIVE:** Support 100 Domestic SEMICONDUCTOR DESIGN COMPANIES for Integrated Circuits, Chipsets, System on chips, Systems and IP cores to launch Start- Ups under the Design Linked Incentive Scheme.

- Design Linked Incentive Scheme:
- Product design Linked Incentive of up to 50% of eligible expenditure
- Product Deployment Linked Incentive S of 4% – 6% on net sales for 5 years.
- **SEMICONDUCTOR FABRICATION AND DISPLAY FABRICATION**
  - **OBJECTIVE:** Establish High- tech clusters with requisite infrastructure in terms of land, semiconductor grade water, high quality power, Logistics and research.
  - **STRATEGY:** Fiscal support of up to 50% of project cost for setting up Semiconductor Display and Fabrication Units.
- **ASSEMBLY, TESTING, MARKING, AND PACKAGING (ATMP)**
  - **OBJECTIVE:** Support Assembly, Testing, Marking, And Packaging (ATMP) with Production Linked Incentive Scheme.
  - **STRATEGY:** Fiscal support of up to 30 % of project cost for setting up Assembly, Testing, Marking, And Packaging (ATMP) facilities.
- **SEMI CONDUCTOR LABORATORY**
  - **OBJECTIVE:** The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology will work for the Modernization and Commercialization of the Semi-Conductor Laboratory.
  - **STRATEGY:** The MeitY will explore the possibility for the Joint Venture of brownfield Semi- Conductor Lab facility with a commercial fabrication partner.

### SIGNIFICANCE

- Set India's leadership in technological areas and increase economic Self- Reliance.
- Push innovation and build domestic capacities to ensure the digital sovereignty of India.
- Increase the skilled employment opportunities expected to 35,000 direct jobs and 1 Lakh indirect jobs and 85,000 well- trained Engineers.
- Facilitate capital support and Technological collaborations.
- Promote high domestic value addition in electronics manufacturing.
- Accelerate growth to achieve \$ 1 trillion digital economy and \$5 trillion GDP by 2025.



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## INDIA LAUNCHES PM E-DRIVE SCHEME FOR ELECTRIC VEHICLES

The Centre has launched the PM Electric Drive Revolution in Innovative Vehicle Enhancement (PM E-Drive) scheme, replacing the FAME II program that ended in March 2024. The primary aim of the PM E-Drive scheme is to promote the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) across India. Despite having a smaller budget than its predecessor, the scheme remains focused on increasing the prevalence of EVs in the country.

### OVERVIEW OF THE PM E-DRIVE SCHEME

The Union Ministry of Heavy Industries is in charge of the PM E-Drive scheme. The government has set aside ₹ 10,900 Cr for this program, which will run for two years. The scheme focuses mainly on electric two-wheelers and three-wheelers (like electric scooters, bikes, and auto-rickshaws) but does not include electric or hybrid four-wheelers (like electric cars).

### SUBSIDIES AND SUPPORT

The PM E-Drive scheme provides financial subsidies for electric two-wheelers and three-wheelers, electric trucks and buses and electric ambulances. In addition to supporting these vehicles, the scheme aims to build a network of 88,500 electric vehicle charging stations across India. These stations will make it easier for people to charge their EVs, encouraging more people to switch from traditional fuel-powered vehicles

to electric ones.

### FOCUS ON ELECTRIC BUSES

One of the key parts of this scheme is its focus on electric buses. The government plans to help state transport units and public agencies purchase 14,028 electric buses. A budget of ₹ 4,391 Cr has been allocated for this.

### FAST CHARGING INFRASTRUCTURE

The PM E-Drive scheme also includes plans for building a network of fast chargers for different types of electric vehicles. A total of ₹ 2,000 Cr has been set aside to develop this charging infrastructure. This will help reduce concerns about where people can charge their EVs, making the transition to electric vehicles smoother.

- 22,100 chargers for electric four-wheelers
- 1,800 chargers for electric buses
- 48,400 chargers for electric two- and three-wheelers

### INDUSTRY RESPONSE

The Indian auto industry has responded positively to the PM E-Drive scheme. Leaders from major companies like Ola and the Mahindra Group have praised the initiative. They believe this scheme will not only speed up the adoption of electric vehicles but also improve consumer confidence by ensuring that charging infrastructure is more widely available.

## UNION CABINET APPROVES ₹ 2,000 CR MISSION MAUSAM INITIATIVE

The Union Cabinet, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved a major initiative called 'Mission Mausam.' This project, with a budget of ₹ 2,000 Cr over two years, is designed to significantly improve India's weather prediction and atmospheric science capabilities.

### OBJECTIVES OF MISSION MAUSAM

Mission Mausam is an Indian program that began in 2016 to study climate change and monsoon patterns. The initiative brings together multiple research organizations to improve weather forecasting accuracy and promote better farming practices. It also aims to develop systems to warn people about extreme weather events and raise public awareness about how climate change impacts agriculture and livelihoods.

The Ministry of Earth Sciences will oversee the implementation of Mission Mausam. Several key institutions India Meteorological Department (IMD), Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) and National Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasting (NCMRWF) will be involved to ensure that the mission runs smoothly.

### ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY

Mission Mausam will use cutting-edge technology, such as artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML), to improve weather prediction. It will involve installing modern radars and satellite systems with advanced sensors to gather more accurate data. Additionally, high-performance

supercomputers will process this information quickly to deliver better forecasts.

### CORE FEATURES OF MISSION MAUSAM

The mission will include enhanced earth system models that simulate weather patterns. A GIS-based automated Decision Support System, which will provide real-time data to decision-makers, helping them respond quickly to weather changes.

### BENEFITS FROM THIS INITIATIVE

Mission Mausam is expected to benefit a wide range of sectors, including:

- **AGRICULTURE:** More accurate weather predictions can help farmers make better decisions about planting and harvesting crops.
- **DISASTER MANAGEMENT:** Improved weather forecasting can help prepare for natural disasters like floods or cyclones.
- **AVIATION AND TRANSPORTATION:** Better weather data can ensure safer and more efficient operations.
- **HEALTH AND URBAN PLANNING:** The mission will also support planning efforts by providing insights into environmental and weather changes.

Mission Mausam represents a crucial investment in India's ability to predict and manage weather conditions. It promises to enhance forecasting accuracy and provide multiple benefits to sectors like agriculture, disaster management, and health.



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## INDIA LAUNCHES BHASKAR

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), is introducing BHASKAR, a new digital platform to boost India's Startup community. This project is part of the Startup India programme and aims to bring together resources and help people in the Startup ecosystem work more closely, showing India's commitment to becoming a global leader in innovation.

### BHARAT STARTUP KNOWLEDGE ACCESS REGISTRY (BHASKAR)

BHASKAR is a digital platform that collects important information and resources for start-ups, investors, mentors, and service providers, making it easier for them to grow and work together. The platform will give each user a unique BHASKAR ID, which will make it easier for them to access personalised opportunities and connect with others in the Startup world.

#### SALEINT FEATURES OF BHASKAR

- **NETWORKING AND COLLABORATION:** It helps start-ups connect with investors and mentors, encouraging cooperation across different fields.

- **EASY ACCESS TO RESOURCES:** Start-ups will have immediate access to important tools and information, helping them grow faster.
- **PERSONALISED EXPERIENCE:** Unique BHASKAR IDs will provide a customised experience for each user.
- **BETTER SEARCH TOOLS:** Users can quickly find relevant resources and people to collaborate with.
- **GLOBAL RECOGNITION:** BHASKAR will promote India's position as a leader in innovation and help with international partnerships.

#### How BHASKAR will impact start-ups

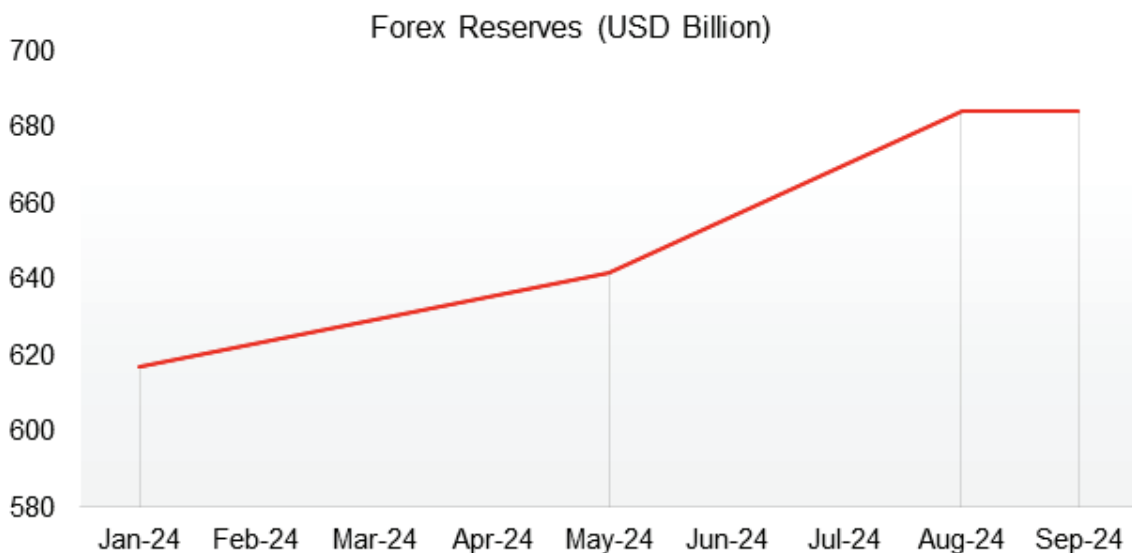
BHASKAR is an important step in promoting new ideas, creating jobs, and providing a central place for collaboration. It aims to unlock India's entrepreneurial potential and contribute to a strong and innovative economy. The Centre invites everyone involved in the Startup ecosystem to join this exciting platform. BHASKAR will improve connections and help reshape the Startup environment, making India a key player in global innovation and growth.

## INDIA'S FOREX RESERVES HIT RECORD HIGH

India's foreign exchange reserves hit a new record of USD 683.987 billion, marking an increase of USD 2.299 billion in one week, up from the previous high of USD 681.688 billion.

### GROWTH TREND IN 2024

In 2024, India's reserves have grown by more than USD 60 billion, showing impressive progress, especially compared to a decline of USD 71 billion in 2022. In 2023 alone, the reserves increased by about USD 58 billion, highlighting a positive shift in the country's economic position.



**FIGURE:** Line chart representation of the trends of the Forex Reserves of India in 2024. Source: Reserve Bank of India (RBI)

### COMPONENTS OF FOREX RESERVES

India's foreign exchange reserves consist of various assets. The largest portion is foreign currency assets (FCA), which have now reached USD 599.037 billion after growing by USD 1.485 billion. In addition to this, gold reserves have also seen an increase, rising by USD 862 million to a total of USD 61.859 billion.

### IMPORTANCE OF FOREX RESERVES

Foreign exchange reserves play a critical role in protecting the domestic economy from global financial shocks. They act as a financial cushion and are currently sufficient to cover around one year of India's projected imports. This

enhances financial stability and provides security during economic uncertainties.

### ROLE OF THE RESERVE BANK OF INDIA (RBI)

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is responsible for managing these reserves. It intervenes in the foreign exchange market when needed to stabilize the currency and control liquidity. For example, if the market becomes too volatile, the RBI might sell dollars to maintain stability, without targeting a specific exchange rate.

### FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESERVES

Foreign exchange reserves are the assets a country's central bank holds in foreign currencies. These reserves



typically include foreign banknotes, government bonds, and treasury bills. Countries like China, Japan, and Switzerland hold the largest reserves globally. Reserves help stabilize a country's currency, manage exchange rates, and settle

international debts. Many countries diversify their reserves by holding gold or even cryptocurrencies. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) monitors these reserves, which are vital for global trade and investment.

## GST COUNCIL MEETING

The 54th Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council meeting took place in New Delhi, led by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. The council focused on adjusting tax rates for essential items, including health insurance, cancer drugs, and snacks.

### MAJOR DECISIONS MADE

A special group, Group of Ministers (GoM) has been created to review GST rates on health insurance, cancer medicines, and savoury snacks (known as namkeens).

### POTENTIAL REDUCTIONS ON OTHER GOODS

- **CANCER DRUGS:** The council proposed reducing the GST from 12% to 5% on specific cancer treatments. This includes expensive drugs like Trastuzumab Deruxtecan, Osimertinib, and Durvalumab. The reduction in GST is expected to lower the cost of cancer treatments, which can be very high. India has seen a rise in cancer cases, and this move aims to help reduce the financial stress on patients.
- **SAVOURY SNACKS (NAMKEENS):** The council is considering reducing GST on these snacks from 18% to 12%, with non-fried variants possibly taxed at 5%.
- **RESEARCH SERVICES:** Services provided by government bodies, universities, and colleges for research could be exempt from GST.

### INCREASES IN GST FOR CERTAIN ITEMS

- **CAR AND MOTORCYCLE SEATS:** The GST on these

items may increase from 18% to 28%.

- **HELICOPTER CHARTERS:** GST for helicopter charters will stay at 18%, but passenger transport via helicopters will continue to be taxed at 5%.

### CHANGES IN TAXPAYER RESPONSIBILITIES

- **REVERSE CHARGE MECHANISM:** Updates have been proposed for how taxes are applied on commercial property rentals and metal scrap transactions. In certain cases, the buyer will be responsible for paying the tax.
- **INTEREST WAIVER:** Taxpayers who have pending tax demands from previous years may be eligible for a waiver if they pay by March 31, 2025.

### FUTURE PLANS

- **GoM REPORT ON INSURANCE:** The GoM will submit its findings on life and health insurance GST rates by October 2024.
- **NEW INVOICE SYSTEM:** A new Invoice Management System (IMS) will be introduced to simplify invoicing and reduce errors in input tax credits. A pilot project for B2C (business-to-consumer) e-invoicing will also be launched to improve retail transaction transparency.

This meeting reflects important changes in India's GST policy. By lowering taxes on key cancer drugs and other essentials, the council aims to ease the financial burden on consumers. However, certain goods and services like car seats may see higher taxes, balancing out the tax reliefs in other areas.

## MODI LAYS FOUNDATION STONE FOR VADHVAN PORT PROJECT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone for a major new project called the Vadhvan Port in Palghar, Maharashtra, on August 30, 2024. This project is expected to cost around ₹ 76,000 Cr and aims to make Vadhvan one of the top ten ports in the world.

### VADHVAN PORT PROJECT

The Vadhvan Port project in Maharashtra, set to be operational by 2025 will span around 1,000 hectares and feature a deep-water terminal for large ships, enhancing connectivity to regional industrial areas aims to alleviate congestion at major ports like JNPT. Designed to handle 23.2 million TEUs, the port will accommodate large container ships and serve as a major maritime gateway, boosting India's trade and economy. Located near Dahanu, it will be a deep-water port on key international shipping routes, reducing shipping time and costs. The port will feature advanced infrastructure, deep berths, and modern technology for efficient cargo handling.

The Vadhvan Port project will feature advanced infrastructure, including deep berths and modern cargo handling facilities, to ensure efficient operations. It aims to boost local employment and businesses, significantly contributing to the region's economic growth. The project emphasizes sustainability, adhering to strict environmental standards to minimize ecological impact. The Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (JNPA) will oversee the construction, with land reclamation work set to begin next year.

The Vadhvan Port project is expected to create jobs, support local businesses, and significantly contribute to regional economic growth. This initiative is part of India's broader efforts to upgrade its maritime infrastructure and is expected to generate thousands of jobs.

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## NAVARATNA STATUS GRANTED TO NHPC, SJVN, RAILTEL PSUS

The Government of India has accorded the prestigious “Navaratna” status to three major public sector companies in India, namely National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC), Sutlej Jal Vidyut Nigam Limited (SJVN), and RailTel. This status is a significant achievement for these companies, giving them more freedom and power to make decisions and expand their operations.

### ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To be awarded Navratna status, a company must meet specific criteria:

- **STATUS:** The company must already have Miniratna-I status, which is a lower level of recognition given to profitable public sector companies.
- **EXCELLENT PERFORMANCE:** The company must have received an “Excellent” or “Very Good” rating in its performance evaluation (MoU rating) for at least three of the last five years.
- **STRONG FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE:** The company must score at least 60 points in six key financial indicators, such as net profit, net worth, and earnings per share.
- **INVESTMENT AUTONOMY:** With Navaratna status, NHPC, SJVN, and RailTel now have more freedom to make investment decisions up to ₹ 1,000 Cr or 15 % of their net worth in a single project without needing approval from the government. They can also invest up to 30 % of their net worth in a year if it does not exceed the ₹ 1,000 Cr limit.
- **EXPANDED OPERATIONAL CAPABILITIES:** The Navaratna status also allows these companies to set up

subsidiaries abroad, form joint ventures, and restructure their organizations to improve efficiency and performance.

### OVERVIEW OF THE COMPANIES

- **Sutlej Jal Vidyut Nigam Limited (SJVN):** SJVN, which became a Miniratna in 2008, manages a large portfolio of 56,802 MW across 75 energy projects, including hydroelectric, solar, and wind power.
- **National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC):** Established in 1975, NHPC is one of India’s leading hydropower companies, with an installed capacity of 7,144.2 MW. The company aims to increase its capacity to 23,000 MW by 2032 and 50,000 MW by 2047, focusing on major projects in north-eastern states like Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.
- **RailTel:** In 2000, RailTel provided telecom infrastructure and broadband services in India. The company manages over 55,000 kilometers of optical fibre networks along railway tracks, making it one of the largest telecom infrastructure providers in the country. RailTel also offers Wi-Fi services at railway stations and supports various government initiatives like Smart Cities and e-governance.

The announcement of Navaratna’s status has drawn attention to the shares of these companies. However, despite this positive news, the shares of SJVN, NHPC, and RailTel have recently experienced significant declines, with SJVN and NHPC shares down by 18% and RailTel shares down by 21% from their all-time highs.

## INDIA’S FIRST BIO-HYDROGEN PROJECT

The Centre awarded a contract to develop the country’s first bio-hydrogen project, led by Gensol Engineering in collaboration with Matrix Gas & Renewables. Valued at ₹ 164 Cr, the project aims to align with the National Green Hydrogen Mission and is set to process 25 tonnes of bio-waste daily, producing 1 tonne of green hydrogen using advanced gasification technology over 18 months.

### BIO-HYDROGEN

Bio-hydrogen is hydrogen produced from organic materials like plants, food waste, and certain microorganisms. Unlike traditional hydrogen, which is derived from fossil fuels, bio-hydrogen is sourced from natural materials such as agricultural leftovers and industrial waste, making it a cleaner and more eco-friendly alternative. There are different ways to produce bio-hydrogen:

- **BIOPHOTOLYSIS:** Uses sunlight to split water molecules in organisms like algae, releasing hydrogen.
- **DARK FERMENTATION:** Bacteria break down organic material without oxygen, creating hydrogen as a by-product.

In the new Indian project, Gensol Engineering will use

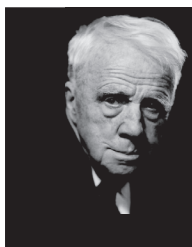
a technology called Plasma-Induced Radiant Energy-Based Gasification System (GH2-PREGS). This advanced process turns carbon-based waste into hydrogen gas.

### SIGNIFICANCE OF BIO-HYDROGEN FOR INDIA

India is actively reducing its reliance on fossil fuels through the National Green Hydrogen Mission. This initiative leverages agricultural waste to produce bio-hydrogen, offering a clean energy solution. This approach not only mitigates environmental pollution but also aids industries like steel and cement in lowering emissions. Additionally, it benefits rural communities by creating local plants that convert farm waste into energy, generating jobs and cleaner energy sources.

### OPPORTUNITIES OF BIO-HYDROGEN SECTOR

India produces approximately 380 million tonnes of agricultural waste annually, presenting a significant opportunity for bio-hydrogen production. Converting this waste into clean energy can reduce pollution and support a greener future. Additionally, bio-hydrogen can help industries like steel and cement, which are challenging to make eco-friendly, to lower their emissions.



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



## INDIA'S FIRST CO<sub>2</sub> - METHANOL PILOT PLANT IN PUNE

India has launched its first CO<sub>2</sub>-to-methanol pilot plant, emphasizing Carbon Capture and Utilisation (CCU) technologies. This initiative, located in Pune, aims to convert captured carbon dioxide into methanol, showcasing India's commitment to sustainable practices and reducing carbon emissions.

### PROJECT OVERVIEW

The pilot plant is located at Thermax Limited in Pune, Maharashtra, and can process 1.4 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per day. This plant is one of the first of its kind in India, aiming to capture carbon dioxide and convert it into methanol, a useful chemical. The project showcases India's pioneering efforts in carbon reduction technology.

### KEY STAKEHOLDERS

The project is a collaborative effort between IIT Delhi and Thermax Limited, supported by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) under a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model. This plant aligns with India's broader climate goals, including the Panchamrit targets announced at COP 26. The involvement of both academic and industrial

partners highlights the collaborative approach to tackling carbon emissions.

### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE INITIATIVE

The pilot plant serves as a transformative platform for advancing India's own carbon capture technologies. This project not only aims to reduce carbon emissions but also supports the development of innovative solutions that can be scaled up in the future.

### ALIGNMENT WITH NATIONAL GOALS

The initiative aligns with India's Panchamrit target, announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the COP 26 climate summit. The Panchamrit framework outlines India's goals to cut carbon emissions and promote sustainable development. By investing in technologies like CO<sub>2</sub>-to-methanol conversion, India is actively working towards these climate commitments and setting an example for carbon management. This project is a significant milestone in India's efforts to mitigate climate change, demonstrating the country's proactive stance on environmental protection and technological innovation.

## INDIA, AUSTRALIA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Trade ministers from India and Australia recently met to assess the progress of their discussions toward a comprehensive free trade agreement. This meeting comes nearly 20 months after the launch of the Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA), which has already played a big role in improving trade between the two countries.

### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ECTA

The ECTA has made a significant impact on trade between India and Australia, especially for Australia. Australian exports to India reached \$30 billion, largely thanks to the lower tariffs (taxes on imported goods). One area that benefited the most was Australian agriculture, where exports to India grew by 60%, reaching \$1.6 billion. This shows how the agreement has strengthened economic ties between the two nations.

### TRADE GOALS

During the meeting, India's Piyush Goyal and Australia's Don Farrell shared their goal of increasing trade between the two countries to \$100 billion by 2030. This ambitious target reflects their commitment to building even stronger trade relations through ongoing negotiations.

The trade agreement has led to lower tariffs, meaning imported goods from India are now cheaper for Australian consumers. It's estimated that Australian consumers have saved around \$225 million because of these reduced tariffs, demonstrating how the agreement has created benefits for everyday people in both countries.

### MAIN DISCUSSION

During their meeting, the ministers focused on:

- Reviewing the implementation of the ECTA.
- Discussing progress on a more comprehensive trade deal known as the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA).
- Addressing issues related to the World Trade Organization (WTO).
- Exploring opportunities within the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework – a regional trade initiative that both India and Australia are part of.

### AUSTRALIA'S AGRICULTURAL INTERESTS

Australia has expressed a desire to further reduce or eliminate tariffs on key agricultural products it exports to India, such as chickpeas and wine. However, India has been more cautious, especially when it comes to dairy products, which are sensitive to Indian markets. Despite these differences, both countries have shown a willingness to negotiate and find common ground.

Both ministers were optimistic about the future of their trade talks. They are committed to ensuring that any future trade agreements will be balanced, benefiting both countries while addressing public concerns. The hope is that the next deal will build on the successes of the ECTA, further strengthening economic ties between India and Australia.

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## INDIA JOINS US-LED MINERALS SECURITY FINANCE NETWORK

India has officially become part of the Minerals Security Finance Network (MSFN), a group led by the United States. This network was created to help countries work together to secure important minerals needed for technology and clean energy. The announcement was made by the US State Department on September 23, 2024, during the United Nations General Assembly. The network now includes 14 countries and the European Union.

### MINERALS SECURITY FINANCE NETWORK (MSFN)

The MSFN is linked to the Minerals Security Partnership (MSP), which was started by the US in 2022. India joined the MSP in June 2023, showing its growing role in securing important minerals globally. The MSFN focuses on reducing dependence on specific countries, especially China, for key minerals such as rare earth elements, which are essential for clean energy technologies like electric vehicles and solar panels.

The Minerals Security Finance Network focuses on securing a steady and sustainable supply of minerals that are crucial for clean energy technologies. These include minerals like lithium, cobalt, and rare earth elements. The network encourages innovation in mineral processing and recycling and supports responsible mining practices. It also works towards making mineral extraction more environmentally sustainable while addressing geopolitical challenges that can disrupt the supply of these important resources. By joining the MSFN,

India is playing a key role in ensuring the world has access to the minerals needed for future clean energy technologies and sustainable growth.

### SIGNIFICANCE

The network is designed to help countries reduce their reliance on a few sources for critical minerals, which are needed to transition to clean energy. Since many of these minerals are controlled by just a few countries, the MSFN helps nations work together to secure more reliable and sustainable supply chains. This cooperation ensures that countries can access the minerals needed for clean energy projects and technologies.

### PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR COLLABORATION

The MSFN encourages Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) and Export Credit Agencies (ECAs) in member countries to collaborate. By working together, they aim to create stronger supply chains for critical minerals. This collaboration allows these organizations to combine their resources and make a bigger impact than they would individually.

### ADDRESSING THE RISKS OF ENERGY TRANSITION

There is a need to increase the production of critical minerals. He pointed out that relying on a few countries for these minerals poses risks, especially as the world moves towards clean energy. The MSFN's goal is to reduce these risks by building stronger, more resilient supply chains.

## E-SHRAM PORTAL REGISTERS 30 CR UNORGANISED WORKERS

The Union Ministry for Labour & Employment announced that the eShram portal has successfully registered over 30 crore unorganised workers since its launch three years ago. This milestone underscores the government's commitment to supporting unorganised workers through a comprehensive digital system.

### e-Shram PORTAL

The e-Shram portal aims to provide a "One-Stop-Solution" for unorganised workers, facilitating access to various social security schemes and ensuring that the benefits reach all eligible workers. In the 2024-25 Budget speech, the government announced plans to further improve the eShram portal by linking it with other online platforms. This will make the portal even more useful as a central resource for unorganised workers.

### INTEGRATION WITH SOCIAL SECURITY SCHEMES

The Union Ministry for Labour & Employment is working to connect important social security schemes to the e-Shram portal. These schemes include:

**PRADHAN MANTRI JEEVAN JYOTI BIMA YOJANA (PMJJBY):** A government-backed life insurance scheme in India launched on May 9, 2015, it provides life insurance coverage for death due to any reason to the poor and low-income sections of society.

- **ELIGIBILITY:** Available to individuals aged 18 to 50 years with a bank account.
- **COVERAGE:** Offers a life cover of ₹ 2 lakhs.
- **PREMIUM:** The annual premium is ₹ 330, which is auto-debited from the subscriber's bank account.
- **RENEWAL:** The policy is renewable annually.

### PRADHAN MANTRI SURAKSHA BIMA YOJANA (PMSBY):

A government-backed accident insurance scheme in India, launched on May 9, 2015 to provide affordable accident insurance to the uninsured population in India.

- **ELIGIBILITY:** Available to individuals aged 18 to 70 years with a bank account.
- **COVERAGE:** Provides a one-year accidental death and disability cover, renewable annually.
- **BENEFITS:** Offers ₹ 2 lakhs for accidental death or full disability, and ₹ 1 lakh for partial permanent disability.
- **PREMIUM:** The annual premium is ₹ 20, which is auto-debited from the subscriber's bank account.

### AYUSHMAN BHARAT PRADHAN MANTRI JAN AROGYA YOJANA (AB-PMJAY):

A flagship health assurance scheme launched by the Government of India on September 23, 2018 to reduce the financial burden of medical expenses and improve access to quality health care for the underserved population.

- **OBJECTIVE:** To provide financial protection for health care to the most vulnerable sections of society.
- **COVERAGE:** Offers health insurance coverage of ₹ 5 lakhs per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization.
- **BENEFICIARIES:** Targets over 12 crore poor and vulnerable families, approximately 55 crore individuals, which is about 40% of India's population.
- **ELIGIBILITY:** Based on the deprivation and occupational criteria of the Socio-Economic Caste Census 2011.



**PRADHAN MANTRI STREET VENDORS ATMANIRBHAR NIDHI (PM-SVANidhi):** A Central Sector Scheme launched in June 2020 to empower street vendors and promote their economic upliftment affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **OBJECTIVE:** To provide affordable working capital loans to street vendors to help them resume their livelihood activities
- **LOAN AMOUNT:** Offers collateral-free loans of up to ₹10,000 for a one-year tenure.
- **INCENTIVES:** Includes an interest subsidy of 7% per annum on timely repayment and cashback incentives for digital transactions.
- **ELIGIBILITY:** Available to street vendors in urban, peri-urban, and rural areas who were vending on or before March 24, 2020.
- **IMPACT:** Aims to benefit approximately 50 lakh street vendors.

**MAHATMA GANDHI NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE ACT (MGNREGA):** A social welfare measure in India- largest and most ambitious social security and public works programs globally aimed at enhancing livelihood security in rural areas.

- **OBJECTIVE:** To provide at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment per financial year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer for unskilled manual work.
- **TARGET GROUPS:** Focuses on vulnerable sections, including Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, women-headed households, and other marginalized groups.
- **EMPLOYMENT PROVISIONS:** Employment must be provided within 5 km of the applicant's residence, and minimum legal wages must be paid. If work is not provided within 15 days of application, an unemployment allowance is given.
- **ASSET CREATION:** Aims to create durable assets like roads, canals, ponds, and wells, contributing to rural infrastructure and environmental conservation.
- **EMPOWERMENT AND EQUITY:** Promotes social equity, reduces rural-urban migration, and empowers rural women by guaranteeing them one-third of the jobs.
- **TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY:** Ensures efficient use of funds and upholds beneficiaries' rights through social audits, grievance redressal, and public disclosure.

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Gramin (PMAY-G): Flagship housing scheme by the Government of India aimed at providing affordable housing to the rural poor to significantly reduce rural housing shortages and improve living conditions in rural India.

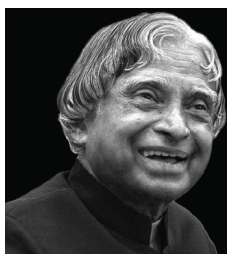
- **OBJECTIVE:** To ensure "Housing for All" by providing

pucca houses with basic amenities to all houseless households and those living in kutcha (temporary) or dilapidated houses in rural areas by 2024.

- **TARGET BENEFICIARIES:** Identified using the Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC) data and verified by Gram Sabhas.
- **Financial Assistance:**
  - 1,20,000 per unit for plain areas.
  - 1,30,000 per unit for hilly, difficult areas, and Integrated Action Plan (IAP) districts.
  - Additional financial assistance for toilet construction under Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin (SBM-G) and for LPG connections under Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana.
- **CONVERGENCE WITH OTHER SCHEMES:** Includes benefits from various government programs for piped drinking water, electricity, clean cooking fuel, and waste management.
- **IMPLEMENTATION:** The scheme promotes the use of local materials and designs, and involves training rural masons to ensure quality construction.
- **PROGRESS:** As of September 2022, over 2 crore houses have been constructed out of the targeted 2.72 crore.
- **RATION CARD SCHEME:** The Ration Card Scheme in India is a crucial initiative aimed at ensuring food security for all citizens, particularly the economically disadvantaged.
- **OBJECTIVE:** To provide subsidized food grains and essential commodities to eligible households under the Public Distribution System (PDS) as per the National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013.
- **ONE NATION ONE RATION CARD (ONORC):** Launched to enable ration card portability across India, allowing beneficiaries to access their entitlements from any Fair Price Shop (FPS) in the country.
- **ELIGIBILITY:** All households identified under the NFSA, with Aadhaar numbers linked to their ration cards.
- **BENEFITS:** Ensures food security for approximately 81 crore beneficiaries, including migrant workers, by providing uninterrupted access to subsidized food grains.
- **IMPLEMENTATION:** Utilizes an IT-driven system with ePoS devices at FPS to prevent fraud and ensure transparency.

#### **BENEFITS FOR UNORGANISED WORKERS**

By connecting these schemes to the eShram portal, unorganised workers will find it easier to access essential services and benefits. This integration will help ensure that these workers can secure their rights and improve their welfare more effectively. The portal is designed to make their lives better by providing them with easier access to important resources and support.



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

- A. P. J. ABDUL KALAM



## WHITE REVOLUTION 2.0

Union Minister Amit Shah introduced “White Revolution 2.0” to further strengthen India’s dairy sector. This initiative builds upon the success of Operation Flood, which started in 1970 and transformed the dairy industry through cooperative societies. Operation Flood made India one of the largest milk producers in the world.

### OBJECTIVES OF WHITE REVOLUTION 2.0

The primary goal of White Revolution 2.0 is to increase milk collection across the country by 50 % over the next five years. The aim is to boost daily milk procurement from 660 lakh kilograms to 1,007 lakh kilograms by 2028-29. This will also give dairy farmers better access to markets by expanding the cooperative network.

Cooperatives were the backbone of Operation Flood, and they remain central to White Revolution 2.0. Currently, there are about 1.7 lakh dairy cooperative societies across India, covering 30 % of the villages. These cooperatives handle about 10% of the national milk production, but the coverage is uneven across regions.

To increase coverage, the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) plans to set up 56,000 new cooperative societies and improve 46,000 existing ones over the next five years. The focus will be on states like Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, and Andhra Pradesh, where dairy cooperatives are currently less developed.

### FUNDING STRATEGIES

The initiative will receive funding from the National Programme for Dairy Development (NPDD) 2.0. This money will be used to set up milk collection centers, create chilling facilities to keep milk fresh, and provide training programs for dairy farmers.

### CURRENT MILK PRODUCTION LANDSCAPE

India is already the largest milk producer in the world, with a total production of 230.58 million tonnes in 2022-23. This is a huge increase compared to 17 million tonnes in 1951-52. However, the milk yield per animal is still low when compared to global averages.

### ECONOMIC IMPACT

The dairy industry accounts for about 40% of India’s agricultural output and provides livelihoods for more than 85 million people. Around 63% of the milk produced reaches the market, with the majority coming from the unorganised sector, while cooperatives control most of the organised sector.

White Revolution 2.0 is designed to build on past achievements. It aims to improve milk production, increase economic opportunities, and uplift rural communities, especially women, by empowering them through cooperative movements. This initiative will play a crucial role in India’s continued dairy development and in making the dairy sector more inclusive and efficient.

## DIGITAL AGRICULTURE MISSION

The Centre has approved the Digital Agriculture Mission, allocating ₹ 2,817 Cr to enhance farming practices and improve farmers’ livelihoods. This decision, made during a cabinet meeting, underscores the government’s commitment to modernizing agriculture through digital technology.

### Digital Agriculture Mission

The Digital Agriculture Mission aims to establish a digital framework for agriculture, leveraging technology to enhance efficiency and productivity. Building on successful pilot projects, it is expected to significantly improve farming practices in India.

### SUPPORTING FARMERS

In addition to the Digital Agriculture Mission, the government has introduced various programs to support farmers and ensure food and nutritional security. A key focus is on helping farmers adapt to climate change by promoting resilient crops that can endure changing weather conditions.

### Financial Plan

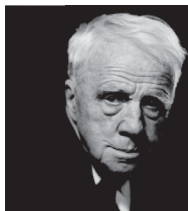
The government has laid out a detailed investment plan with specific allocations for various programs:

- **DIGITAL AGRICULTURE MISSION** to integrate technology into farming (₹ 2,817 Cr).

- **FOOD AND NUTRITIONAL SECURITY PROGRAMME** to ensure that everyone has access to enough nutritious food (₹ 3,979 Cr).
- **SUSTAINABLE HORTICULTURE DEVELOPMENT** to promote the growth of fruits, vegetables, and other plants in a sustainable way (₹ 860 Cr)
- **STRENGTHENING KRISHI VIGYAN KENDRA** to support agricultural research centers that provide training and advice to farmers (₹ 1,202 Cr).
- **NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT** to ensure the sustainable use of natural resources like water and soil (₹ 1,115 Cr)
- **SUSTAINABLE LIVESTOCK HEALTH AND PRODUCTION** to improve the health and productivity of livestock (₹ 1,702 Cr).

### Overall Impact

These initiatives aim to improve the lives of farmers by making agriculture more productive, sustainable, and resilient to climate change. By taking this comprehensive approach, the government hopes to create a strong and sustainable agricultural system in India by the year 2047.



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





## AGRISURE FUND

The Centre has launched the AgriSURE Scheme, an important initiative designed to support agricultural start-ups and rural businesses. This scheme is essential for strengthening India's agricultural sector, which plays a vital role in the country's economy.

### AgriSURE FUND

The AgriSURE Fund (Agri Fund for Start-ups & Rural Enterprises) is a ₹ 750 Cr. initiative launched in 2016. It pools resources from the Indian government, NABARD, banks, insurance companies, and private investors to support high-risk, high-impact agricultural ventures.

- **OBJECTIVE:** To foster innovation and introduce new technologies in agriculture to boost agricultural productivity while protecting the environment.
- **FOCUS AREAS:** Climate resilience, sustainable practices like precision farming, and eco-friendly farming methods.
- **SUPPORT:** Provides capital to agri-tech start-ups, especially in developing economies, and offers mentorship

to entrepreneurs.

- **COLLABORATION:** Works with local governments to enhance food security.

**Key Goals:** The main aim of the AgriSURE Fund is to help farmers by introducing new technology and innovative solutions. The government wants to:

- Lower the costs of farming.
- Ensure farmers get fair prices for their crops.
- Encourage growing a variety of crops.
- Protect farmers from losing crops due to unforeseen events

### AgriSURE Greenathon AWARDS

The government introduced the AgriSURE Greenathon Awards. These awards recognize start-ups that are solving important challenges in the agricultural value chain. Out of 2000 applicants, the top three start-ups – Greensapio, Krushikanti, and Ambrionics – were awarded for their impactful solutions.

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# ECOLOGY





**FOOD RECOVERY TO AVOID  
METHANE EMISSIONS (FRAME)  
METHODOLOGY**

**RISING GLOBAL SEA LEVELS  
POSE ESCALATING THREAT**

**INTERNATIONAL DAY OF CLEAN  
AIR FOR BLUE SKIES**

**INDIA SURPASSES CHINA AS  
LARGEST PLASTIC EMITTER**

**DECELERATION OF OCEAN  
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**IRAN VILLAGE EXPERIENCES  
ALARMING 82.2°C HEAT INDEX**

**GREEN ACTIVISTS PUSH FOR  
REVISION OF EU CLIMATE  
TARGETS**

**SUMMER 2024 THE HOTTEST ON  
RECORD**

**MYRISTICA SWAMP FOREST  
DISCOVERED**

**INDIA AIMS TO BECOME GLOBAL  
GREEN HYDROGEN HUB**

**WILDLIFE BOARD APPROVES  
TRANSMISSION LINES IN  
SENSITIVE AREAS**



## FOOD RECOVERY TO AVOID METHANE EMISSIONS (FRAME) METHODOLOGY

**CONTEXT:** New estimates indicate that each food bank reduces greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to removing 900 gasoline cars from the road annually.

**BACKGROUND:** In 2023, with funding from the Global Methane Hub, GFN initiated the development of a real-time methodology to quantify and track methane emissions prevented through food recovery by food banks across 63 organizations in 53 countries. This is the first methane methodology using the Microsoft Sustainability Manager tool, developed with the Carbon Trust.

### Food Recovery to Avoid Methane Emissions (FRAME) Methodology

• **Avoided Emissions Quantification:** FRAME quantifies emissions avoided by redirecting food loss and waste to human consumption through recovery operations.

- **Collaborative Development:** The methodology was developed by The Global Food Banking Network, Global Methane Hub, and Carbon Trust.
- **Pilot Project Origins:** FRAME began as a pilot in Mexico and Ecuador, analyzing six community-led food banks.
- **Measuring Emissions:** The FRAME tool enables food banks and organizations to accurately measure and manage emissions from food redistribution.
- **Global Methane Hub's Role:** This organization aims to reduce methane emissions and has donated \$10 million to assist countries in emission reduction efforts.



## RISING GLOBAL SEA LEVELS POSE ESCALATING THREAT

**CONTEXT:** UN Secretary-General António Guterres visited Pacific nations, including Tonga and Samoa, discussing the accelerating global sea level rise, which the UN calls an “urgent and escalating threat” to communities worldwide.

**BACKGROUND:** Since 1880, global sea levels have risen by 20-23 cm, with 2023 marking a record high, according to the UN's World Meteorological Organization (WMO). Alarmingly, the past decade's sea level rise has more than doubled compared to the rate observed from 1993 to 2002.

### Impacts of Rising Sea Levels

- **Caused by Ocean Warming** – Sea level rise results from ocean warming and glacier melting due to climate change.
- **Widespread Damage** – Coastal habitats, infrastructure, agriculture, and livelihoods face threats from saltwater flooding and contamination.
- **Health and Livelihood Risks** – Flooding promotes waterborne diseases, threatens freshwater supplies, and creates mental health stress.
- **Economic Disruptions** – Tourism, especially in small island nations, suffers as beaches and attractions are damaged.
- **Circular Feedback Loop** – Mangrove loss leads to more carbon gases, accelerating climate change and further sea level rise.

Around 900 million people globally, especially in coastal areas and small island nations, face significant risks from sea level rise due to climate change. The UN, through initiatives like the Paris Agreement and the Loss and Damage Fund, is coordinating global efforts to mitigate and adapt to these impacts.



### Loss and Damage Fund (LDF)

- Established at COP27 – The Loss and Damage Fund was launched in 2022 to support regions impacted by climate change.
- Addresses Economic and Non-Economic Losses – It covers both monetary losses (e.g., damaged infrastructure) and non-monetary impacts (e.g., trauma and biodiversity loss).
- Focus on Vulnerable Nations – The LDF provides vital financial aid to countries most affected by climate-related challenges.
- Governing and Management – Managed by a Governing Board, with the World Bank as interim trustee for four years.
- Funding via Grants and Contributions – Offers grants and concessional financing, encouraging voluntary contributions from both developed and developing nations.

## INTERNATIONAL DAY OF CLEAN AIR FOR BLUE SKIES

**CONTEXT:** The UN General Assembly designated 7 September to raise awareness and promote action against air pollution globally.

**BACKGROUND:** The United Nations General Assembly established 7 September as the International Day of Clean Air for blue skies, starting in 2020. The day promotes global action against air pollution, fostering collaboration across all levels to protect ecosystems and encouraging investments in clean air solutions (#CleanAirNow).

- Theme “Invest in #CleanAirNow” – Emphasizes urgent investment, policies, and responsibility to address air pollution impacts on health and climate.
  - Designated by UN in 2019 – Reflects global recognition of air pollution risks and the need to improve air quality since 2020.
  - Air Pollution’s Broad Impacts – Affects human and planetary health, biodiversity, and climate, necessitating clean air for a sustainable environment.
  - Vulnerable Populations Affected – Disproportionately impacts children, the elderly, and ecosystems, while exacerbating climate change.
  - Global Collaboration for Clean Air – Promotes action and cooperation across all levels to address air pollution and achieve sustainable development.
- The International Day of Clean Air for blue skies promotes global collaboration to combat air pollution and protect ecosystems. It encourages action at all levels, providing a platform for cooperation and urging countries to invest in solutions for clean air under the #CleanAirNow initiative.



### United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

- Global Environmental Authority – UNEP establishes the global environmental agenda and implements sustainable development initiatives from the UN framework.
- Established in 1972 – Founded after the UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, focusing on global environmental governance.
- Governing Council Role – Composed of 58 member countries, the council sets agendas, endorses programs, and approves UNEP’s budget.
- Executive Director – Appointed by the UN Secretary-General, overseeing the management and operations of UNEP initiatives.
- India-UNEP Collaboration – Since 2016, India engages with UNEP on various projects through the Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change.

## INDIA SURPASSES CHINA AS LARGEST PLASTIC EMITTER

**CONTEXT:** Research in Nature reveals India accounts for approximately 20% of global plastic emissions, totalling about 9.3 million metric tonnes annually.

**BACKGROUND:** India has emerged as the largest emitter of plastic waste, surpassing China, which ranks fourth, according to a University of Leeds study. The research highlights those plastic emissions, which include materials released into uncontrolled environments, are particularly high in southern Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, and Southeast Asia.

### Plastic Pollution and Waste Management Challenges

- Nigeria Leads Plastic Production – Nigeria produces 3.5 Mt of plastics annually, surpassing Indonesia and China.
- India’s Plastic Pollution – India ranks as a top plastic polluter due to population growth and inadequate waste management services.
- Dumping Site Issues – Uncontrolled land disposal sites outnumber sanitary landfills in India, exacerbating plastic waste challenges.
- Underestimated Waste Generation – India’s official waste generation rates may be underestimated, impacting accurate assessments of plastic pollution.
- Disparities in Waste Collection – Although India claims 95% waste collection coverage, rural areas and informal recycling are often excluded.
- Global Plastic Waste Sources – Twenty countries contribute to 69% of global plastic waste emissions, with low-income countries significantly represented.
- High-Income Countries’ Management – High-income nations have better waste management systems, resulting in lower pollution despite higher waste generation rates.
- Uncollected Waste Impact – Uncollected waste is a major contributor to plastic pollution, accounting for 68% of emissions in the Global South.



### Plastic Waste Management (Amendment) Rules, 2024

- Special Task Force Established – All States/UTs have formed Special Task Forces for eliminating single-use plastics and improving waste management.
- National Level Taskforce – A National Level Taskforce has been constituted by the Ministry to coordinate elimination efforts for single-use plastics.
- Online Monitoring Platforms – National Dashboard and CPCB Monitoring Module facilitate tracking of single-use plastic elimination and compliance.
- Enforcement Drives by CPCB – Regular enforcement actions are conducted by CPCB and State Boards to implement the plastic ban effectively.
- Hackathon for Alternatives – MoEF&CC organized “India Plastic Challenge – Hackathon 2021” to develop innovative alternatives to single-use plastics.

### DECELERATION OF OCEAN MOTION: A CONCERN

**CONTEXT:** Ongoing research with NASA satellites examines how warming oceans and melting ice may disrupt global ocean circulation and climate regulation.

**BACKGROUND:** The ocean is crucial for regulating Earth's climate by controlling temperature, absorbing carbon dioxide, and driving the water cycle through currents. The Atlantic Ocean's currents are particularly significant, but climate change may be weakening their movement, posing potential challenges for global climate stability.

#### Impact of Density on Ocean Currents and Climate Change

- Density Drives Currents – Differences in density, influenced by temperature and salinity, drive slow-moving deep ocean currents.
- Cold and Salty Water – Deep Ocean currents consist of cold, salty water that sinks from the surface.
- Sinking in the North Atlantic – In the North Atlantic, surface water sinks as it becomes colder and saltier.
- Thermohaline Circulation – The sinking of dense water powers a global conveyor belt of ocean currents known as thermohaline circulation.
- Impact of Climate Change – Rising carbon dioxide levels lead to warmer ocean temperatures, reducing water density and sinking.

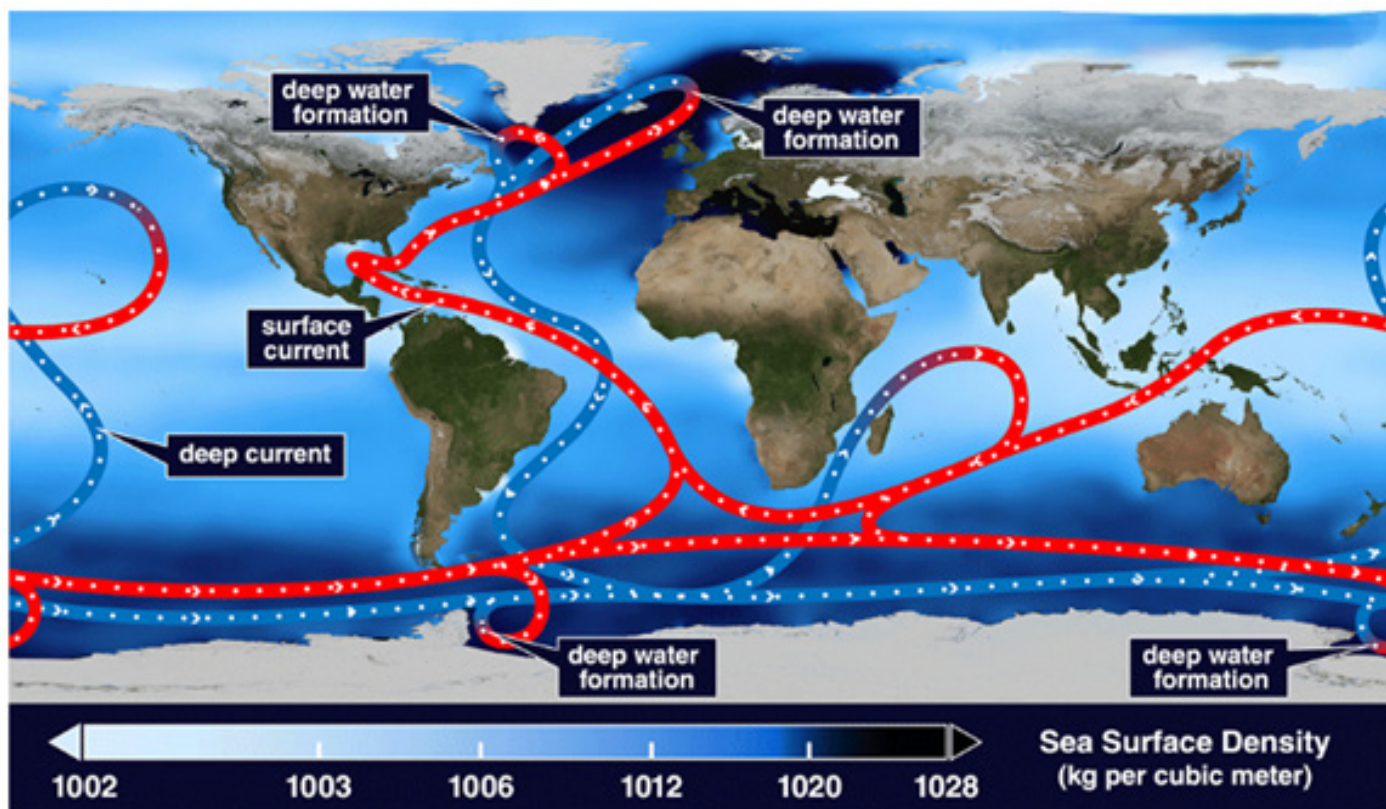
#### Future of the Atlantic Meridional Ocean Circulation (AMOC)

- Ongoing Research – Understanding when and how much the AMOC will weaken remains a significant area of scientific inquiry.
- Satellite Monitoring – Satellites like GRACE and altimeters complement ocean buoy and ship measurements to observe AMOC-related ocean features.
- IPCC Projections – Current IPCC projections suggest the AMOC is unlikely to collapse before the year 2100.
- Potential Collapse Impact – A collapse could lead to abrupt regional weather pattern shifts and alter the global water cycle.
- Global Food Production – Changes may include shifting rain belts and drying in Europe, significantly affecting worldwide food production.

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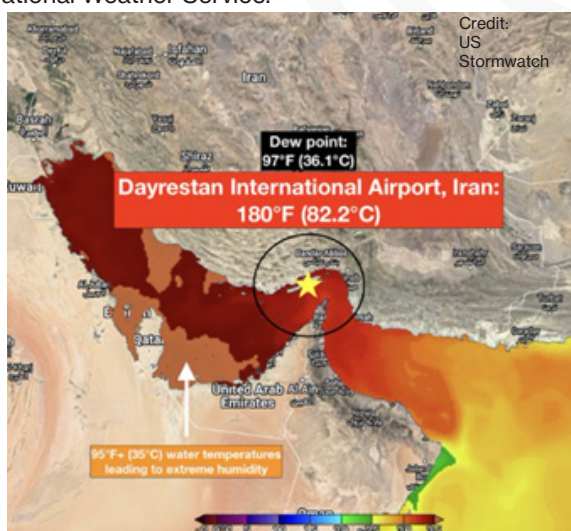
Credit: NASA

Rising carbon dioxide levels are increasing global temperatures, affecting ocean dynamics and contributing to Greenland's ice melt, which reduces salinity and density in the North Atlantic. The latest IPCC report indicates that the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC) is likely to weaken this century, altering regional weather patterns.

### IRAN VILLAGE EXPERIENCES ALARMING 82.2°C HEAT INDEX

**CONTEXT:** A village in southern Iran recorded an alarming heat index of 82.2°C at Dayrestan Airport on August 28.

**BACKGROUND:** If verified, a heat index and dew point of 36.1°C could set records as some of the highest ever documented globally. The Dayrestan Airport weather station reported a temperature of 38.8°C at 10:30 AM on August 28, according to the US National Weather Service.



#### Rising Heat and Humidity: A Dire Warning for Global South

- Record Temperature – Dayrestan Airport recorded 38.8°C on August 28, but high humidity raised the “feels like” temperature to 82.2°C.
- Humidity’s Impact – High relative humidity of 85% prevents sweat evaporation, making the body feel significantly warmer and increasing heatstroke risk.
- Dew Point Significance – Dew point indicates the temperature at which air cannot hold more water, affecting perceived temperature.
- Heat Wave Conditions – West Asia experienced extreme heat, with temperatures reaching 50°C, prompting facility closures and increased heatstroke cases.
- Future Predictions – Experts warn that heatwaves in the Global South are expected to become more frequent and prolonged in coming years.



## GREEN ACTIVISTS PUSH FOR REVISION OF EU CLIMATE TARGETS

**CONTEXT:** Environmental activists claim the European Commission may have acted unlawfully by rejecting a greenhouse gas emissions cut exceeding 55% by 2030.

**BACKGROUND:** GLAN, along with Climate Action Network (CAN) Europe, initiated an internal review of national emissions allocations based on the EU's 55% target, a crucial legal step for civil society groups lacking direct access to EU courts. This 2030 target aims to reduce greenhouse gases from 1990 levels as part of the Green Deal.

### Legal Challenge to EU's Climate Targets: NGOs Push for Stricter Ambitions

- **55% Target Legality** – The 55% emissions reduction target is legally binding only at the European level, prompting administrative challenges.
- **NGO Challenge** – Environmental NGOs are contesting the European Commission's modelling of emissions cuts, arguing for a more ambitious 65% target.
- **Aarhus Convention** – The challenge is facilitated by EU legislation implementing the Aarhus Convention, enhancing access to environmental justice.
- **Court's Priority** – The EU's General Court prioritized the case, indicating the urgency of climate action as recognized by the president.
- **EU Commission's Response** – The European Commission seeks dismissal of the case, arguing it targets fixed 2030 targets beyond the Aarhus Regulation's scope.
- **Potential Precedent** – The court's ruling could set a significant precedent for future challenges to EU environmental legislation and obligations.

Civil society groups have submitted final arguments to the General Court, challenging the Commission's refusal to evaluate the feasibility of exceeding a 55% greenhouse gas reduction target. The Commission claims a de facto 57% cut is achievable, while an interim target for 2040 is also expected.



### Fit To 55 Package: Key Proposals for Emission Reductions

- **Comprehensive Strategy** – The Fit To 55 Package aligns EU policies to achieve a 55% reduction in net greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.
- **EU Emissions Trading System** – The ETS prices carbon, reduces emissions caps annually, and phases out free allowances for aviation.
- **Effort Sharing Regulation** – This regulation sets differentiated national emission reduction targets based on each member state's GDP per capita.
- **Renewable Energy Targets** – The package increases the binding renewable energy target to 40% and energy efficiency to a 36% improvement by 2030.
- **Vehicular Emissions Reduction** – Emissions from vehicles must decrease by 55% by 2030, phasing out petrol and diesel vehicles by 2035.
- **Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism** – This mechanism applies a carbon price to imports, preventing carbon leakage and protecting EU industry from competitive disadvantages.

## SUMMER 2024 THE HOTTEST ON RECORD

**CONTEXT:** The EU's climate monitoring service reports that the recent summer in the northern hemisphere was the warmest on record.

**BACKGROUND:** The Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) monthly bulletin reported that the summer of 2024, spanning June to August, has surpassed summer 2023 in heat. This exceptional temperature rise raises the likelihood that 2024 may become the hottest year on record.

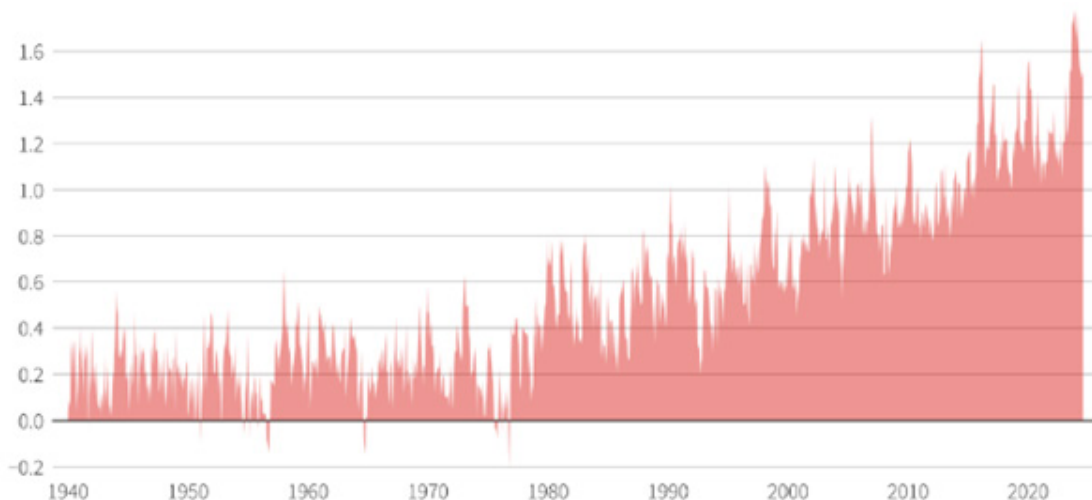


Image: Copernicus Climate Change Service/Reuters





### Record Heat and Climate Crisis: Implications for 2024

- Hottest Summer Recorded – June to August 2024 surpasses summer 2023, indicating potential for 2024 to be the hottest year ever.
- Extreme Temperature Events – The past summer has seen unprecedented heat, including the hottest June and August on record globally.
- Urgent Action Needed – Increased temperature-related extreme events emphasize the necessity for urgent greenhouse gas emission reductions to mitigate impacts.
- Global Heat Records – Japan, China, and Australia reported record-breaking summer temperatures, with extreme heat events occurring worldwide.
- Economic Impact of Severe Weather – The climate crisis is causing severe weather disasters, costing the global economy billions annually.

### MYRISTICA SWAMP FOREST DISCOVERED

**CONTEXT:** Researchers near the Goa-Maharashtra border have discovered a protected Myristica swamp forest sacred grove in Kumbal, maintained by the local community.

**BACKGROUND:** Myristica magnifica, an endangered plant species native to Karnataka and Kerala, has been discovered in Kumbal, Maharashtra, marking the second Myristica swamp forest in the state. This unique ecosystem, preserved by villagers in honor of Lord Shiva, was found by wildlife enthusiast Pravin Desai during a birding trail.



#### Myristica Swamp Forest

- **Location:** Myristica swamp forests are primarily found in tropical regions of India, particularly in Kerala and the Andaman Islands.
- **Biodiversity:** These forests are rich in biodiversity, hosting unique flora and fauna, including rare and endemic species.
- **Ecological Importance:** Myristica swamps play a crucial role in maintaining water quality, regulating water levels, and supporting local ecosystems.
- **Threats:** The forests face threats from deforestation, habitat loss, and climate change, impacting their

ecological balance and biodiversity.

- **Conservation Efforts:** Conservation initiatives are underway to protect Myristica swamp forests, promoting sustainable practices and raising awareness about their significance.

### INDIA AIMS TO BECOME GLOBAL GREEN HYDROGEN HUB

**CONTEXT:** The Prime Minister inaugurated the International Conference on Green Hydrogen (ICGH-2024) in Delhi, emphasizing India's commitment to climate change and green hydrogen's role in energy.

**BACKGROUND:** The Prime Minister emphasized India's commitment to a cleaner planet, noting that the country was the first G20 nation to meet its Paris Agreement goals for green energy ahead of schedule. He highlighted green hydrogen as a crucial innovation to decarbonize challenging sectors such as refineries, fertilizers, and heavy-duty transportation.



#### National Green Hydrogen Mission (NGHM) Overview

- **Objective:** The NGHM aims to position India as a leader in green hydrogen, fostering energy self-reliance and economic growth.
- **Investment Potential:** The mission could attract ₹8 lakh crore in investments and generate 6 lakh jobs, significantly impacting the economy.
- **Emission Reduction:** Targeting a reduction of 15 million metric tons of CO2 annually, the mission supports India's net-zero goal by 2070.
- **Renewable Energy Development:** To produce 5 million metric tons of green hydrogen by 2030, an investment of \$100 billion is required.
- **Future Demand:** Hydrogen demand in India is expected to grow to 29 MMT per annum by 2050, highlighting its critical importance.

The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, alongside various governmental departments, is organizing the 2nd International Conference on Green Hydrogen 2024

**Long Range Heavy Mobility**      **Port & Shipping**      **Steel**      **Biomass to Hydrogen**



(ICGH2024). The Solar Energy Corporation of India and EY will serve as implementation and knowledge partners, with FICCI as the industry partner for the event.

## WILDLIFE BOARD APPROVES TRANSMISSION LINES IN SENSITIVE AREAS

**CONTEXT:** In its first meeting since the election, the SC-NBWL approved projects, including a transmission line in Little Rann of Kutch.

**BACKGROUND:** The National Board for Wildlife (SC-NBWL) has approved various projects, including a transmission line in Little Rann of Kutch, a contentious transmission line in Goa's Mollem National Park, and several infrastructure initiatives in tiger corridors of central India. The board reviewed a total of 121 projects across 12 states.

### Transmission Line Approval in Goa

- **Approval:** The National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) conditionally cleared the 400 kV transmission line in Mollem National Park.
- **Protests Persist:** Local citizens have been protesting against the transmission line and related projects under the 'Save Mollem' campaign.
- **Deforestation Impact:** The project will result in the felling of 7,881 trees in the ecologically sensitive Western Ghats.
- **Supreme Court Involvement:** The Supreme Court previously ordered alignment with an existing corridor to minimize deforestation impacts.
- **Expert Committee Recommendations:** An expert committee suggested dividing the project's right of way into 'wire' and 'border' zones for better management.

### NATIONAL BOARD FOR WILDLIFE (NBWL)

- **Statutory Board:** The NBWL is established by the Central Government under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.
- **Conservation Guidance:** It guides government decisions on wildlife conservation and approves projects within protected areas.
- **WLPA Mandates:** Approval from the NBWL is mandatory for various activities, including habitat destruction and tourist lodge construction.
- **47-Member Structure:** The board consists of 47 members, including the Prime Minister and the environment minister as key leaders.
- **Delegated Tasks:** Many functions are assigned to the Standing Committee of the NBWL, led by the environment minister.

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**INDIA GRAPHENE ENGINEERING AND INNOVATION CENTRE (IGEIC)**

**VISHVASYA-BLOCKCHAIN TECHNOLOGY STACK**

**WHO UNVEILS FRAMEWORK TO UNDERSTAND PATHOGEN ORIGINS**

**ANTI-SUBMARINE WARFARE SHALLOW WATER CRAFT PROJECT**

**DOUBLE ASTEROID REDIRECTION TEST SPACECRAFT, OR DART**

**INDIA'S FIRST SILICON CARBIDE MANUFACTURING FACILITY**

**CYBERSECURITY INDEX 2024**

**MISSION MAUSAM**

**AI TOKENS**

**CENTRE FOR RURAL ENTERPRISE ACCELERATION THROUGH TECHNOLOGY**

**BHASKAR PLATFORM**

**INTERNATIONAL TECHNOLOGY SECURITY AND INNOVATION (ITSI) FUND  
MVA-BN VACCINE**

**BROADENING OPPORTUNITIES IN THE SPACE SECTOR**

**FIRST COUNTRY TO ELIMINATE LEPROSY**

**INDIAN CANCER GENOME ATLAS (ICGA)  
PM E-DRIVE SCHEME**



## INDIA GRAPHENE ENGINEERING AND INNOVATION CENTRE (IGEIC)

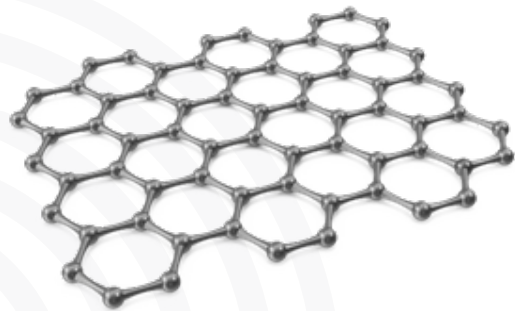
**CONTEXT:** The Ministry of Electronics and IT has launched the India Graphene Engineering and Innovation Centre (IGEIC) under the Viksit Bharat@2047 vision.

**BACKGROUND:** The Government of India has launched the India Graphene Engineering and Innovation Centre (IGEIC) to advance the commercialization of graphene technology. Announced by the Ministry of Electronics and IT, this initiative supports the Viksit Bharat vision, aiming to foster innovation and engineering excellence in the graphene sector.

### India's Push for Graphene Technology Development

- IGEIC: Incorporated as a not-for-profit Section 8 company, aiming to develop and commercialize graphene technology.
- Sustainable Applications: Focuses on developing sustainable uses of graphene across various industries and sectors.
- Research and Development: IGEIC's R&D base is located in Thiruvananthapuram, promoting innovation in graphene technology.
- Manufacturing and Business Hubs: With a manufacturing unit in Palakkad and a business hub in Bengaluru, it drives commercial efforts.
- Graphene Ecosystem: Engages startups, SMEs, academia, industry, and government to build a comprehensive graphene development ecosystem.

- Incredible Strength: Graphene is 200 times stronger than steel and is a million times thinner than human hair.
- High Conductivity: It conducts electricity better than copper and is an excellent heat conductor.
- Surface Area: Each gram of graphene has a massive surface area, over 2,600 square meters.
- Transparency and Flexibility: It absorbs only 2% of light and is impermeable to gases, ideal for foldable electronics and wearables.



### Exceptional Properties and Applications of Graphene

- Graphene Structure: A one-atom-thick carbon layer arranged in a hexagonal lattice, forming the building block of graphite.

## VISHVASYA-BLOCKCHAIN TECHNOLOGY STACK

**CONTEXT:** The government has launched the Vishvasya Blockchain Technology Stack, providing Blockchain-as-a-Service with a distributed infrastructure.

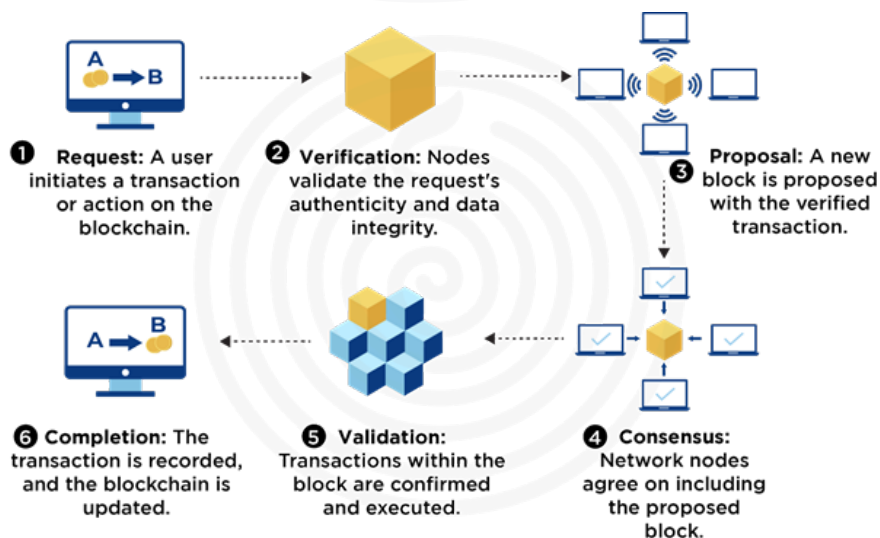
**BACKGROUND:** At a program hosted by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), the Secretary launched the Vishvasya Blockchain Technology Stack. This initiative aims to provide Blockchain-as-a-Service through a geographically distributed infrastructure, designed to support various permissioned blockchain-based applications in India.

### National Blockchain Framework (NBF) for Enhanced Digital Trust

- Trusted Digital Platforms: MeitY launched the National Blockchain Framework to ensure secure and transparent digital service delivery to citizens.
- Technology Stack: NBF's architecture includes distributed infrastructure, core framework functionalities, smart contracts, API gateway, and applications development.
- Blockchain as a Service: NBF offers Blockchain as a

Service (BaaS), supporting two permissioned Blockchain platforms with extensibility.

- Geographically Distributed Infrastructure: The technology stack is hosted at NIC Data centers located in Bhubaneswar, Pune, and Hyderabad.
- Blockchain Sandbox for Innovation: NBFLite provides a sandbox platform for startups and academia to prototype applications and enhance research capabilities.



**Figure:** Simplified Working of a Blockchain Technology



### National Blockchain Framework: Enhancing Security and Transparency for Citizens

- **Trusted Digital Service Delivery:** Shri S. Krishnan emphasized the NBF's role in ensuring security, trust, and transparency for citizen-centric applications.
- **Global Leadership in Blockchain:** The government aims to position India as a global leader in blockchain technology for widespread adoption.
- **Driving Economic Growth:** Leveraging blockchain solutions is expected to enhance economic growth, social development, and digital empowerment in India.
- **Transforming Governance:** Shri Bhuvnesh Kumar noted that blockchain can make public services more transparent, efficient, and accountable.
- **Scaling Applications:** There's a push to scale NBF applications across states and explore innovative components for enhanced functionality.

The National Blockchain Framework (NBF) aims to establish a scalable framework utilizing blockchain technology to tackle challenges like the shortage of skilled professionals for blockchain applications, vendor lock-in, and research issues related to security, interoperability, and performance, enhancing the overall development of blockchain solutions.

### WHO UNVEILS FRAMEWORK TO UNDERSTAND PATHOGEN ORIGINS

**CONTEXT:** The WHO has launched a global framework to understand the origins of new and re-emerging pathogens.

**BACKGROUND:** The WHO has established a global framework to guide studies on the origins of emerging and re-emerging pathogens with epidemic and pandemic potential. Developed by the Scientific Advisory Group for the Origins of Novel Pathogens (SAGO), this framework offers comprehensive guidance for Member States on necessary investigations.

#### Investigating Outbreaks of Novel Pathogens



- **Early Investigations:** Initial investigations focus on identifying sources of exposure and collecting samples to establish diagnostic assays for pathogens.
- **Human Studies:** Research aims to understand the epidemiology, clinical presentation, transmission modes, and pathology in syndromic surveillance samples.
- **Human/Animal Interface:** Studies explore potential animal reservoirs, intermediate hosts, and reverse zoonoses to identify infection sources.
- **Environmental Studies:** Research identifies insect vectors and other infection sources, as well as the earliest pathogen presence in the environment.
- **Genomics and Phylogenetics:** Studies analyze genomic characteristics, evolution in hosts, and spatial distribution of pathogens over time for better understanding.

Supported by SAGO, the WHO has released a global framework to guide Member States in investigating the origins of new and re-emerging pathogens. This structured approach emphasizes early investigations, human-animal interfaces, and biosafety studies, offering essential guidance for public health authorities to enhance outbreak response and prevention efforts.

### ANTI-SUBMARINE WARFARE SHALLOW WATER CRAFT PROJECT

**CONTEXT:** The fourth and fifth ships of the ASW SWC project, named 'Malpe' and 'Mulki,' have been simultaneously launched.

**BACKGROUND:** The Indian Navy's fourth and fifth ships, Malpe and Mulki, of the Eight Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft project were launched at Cochin Shipyard Ltd in Kochi. Following maritime traditions, Mrs. Vijaya Srinivas launched the ships in the presence of VAdm V Srinivas, Chief of the Southern Naval Command.

Mahe Class ASW Shallow Water Crafts: A Strategic Naval Development

- **Naming Convention:** The Mahe class ASW Shallow Water Crafts are named after strategically important Indian ports, honoring past minesweepers.
- **Contract Signing:** The Ministry of Defence signed a contract with CSL on April 30, 2019, to build eight ASW SWC ships.
- **Advanced Capabilities:** Equipped with indigenously developed underwater sensors, these ships are designed for anti-submarine and maritime operations.
- **Performance Metrics:** The ASW SWC ships can reach a maximum speed of 25 knots with an endurance of 1,800 nautical miles.
- **Indigenous Production:** Over 80% indigenous content ensures significant defense production by Indian manufacturers, boosting employment and national capabilities.



**ANTI SUBMARINE  
WARFARE SHALLOW  
WATER CRAFT**



### Capabilities and Features of ASW Shallow Water Crafts

- Operational Versatility: ASW Shallow Water Crafts are designed for Anti-Submarine Warfare, Low Intensity Maritime Operations, and Mine Laying Operations.
- Advanced Warfare Coordination: Capable of conducting coordinated ASW operations with aircraft and interdiction of sub-surface targets in coastal waters.
- Search and Rescue Functions: Equipped to perform Search and Rescue missions during both day and night in coastal regions.
- Sophisticated Weapons Systems: Features include torpedo tubes, anti-torpedo defence systems, rocket launchers, and various gun systems for effective combat.
- Comprehensive Communication and Navigation: Utilizes advanced communication suites, integrated bridge systems, and navigation tools to enhance operational efficiency and safety.

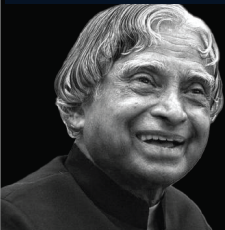
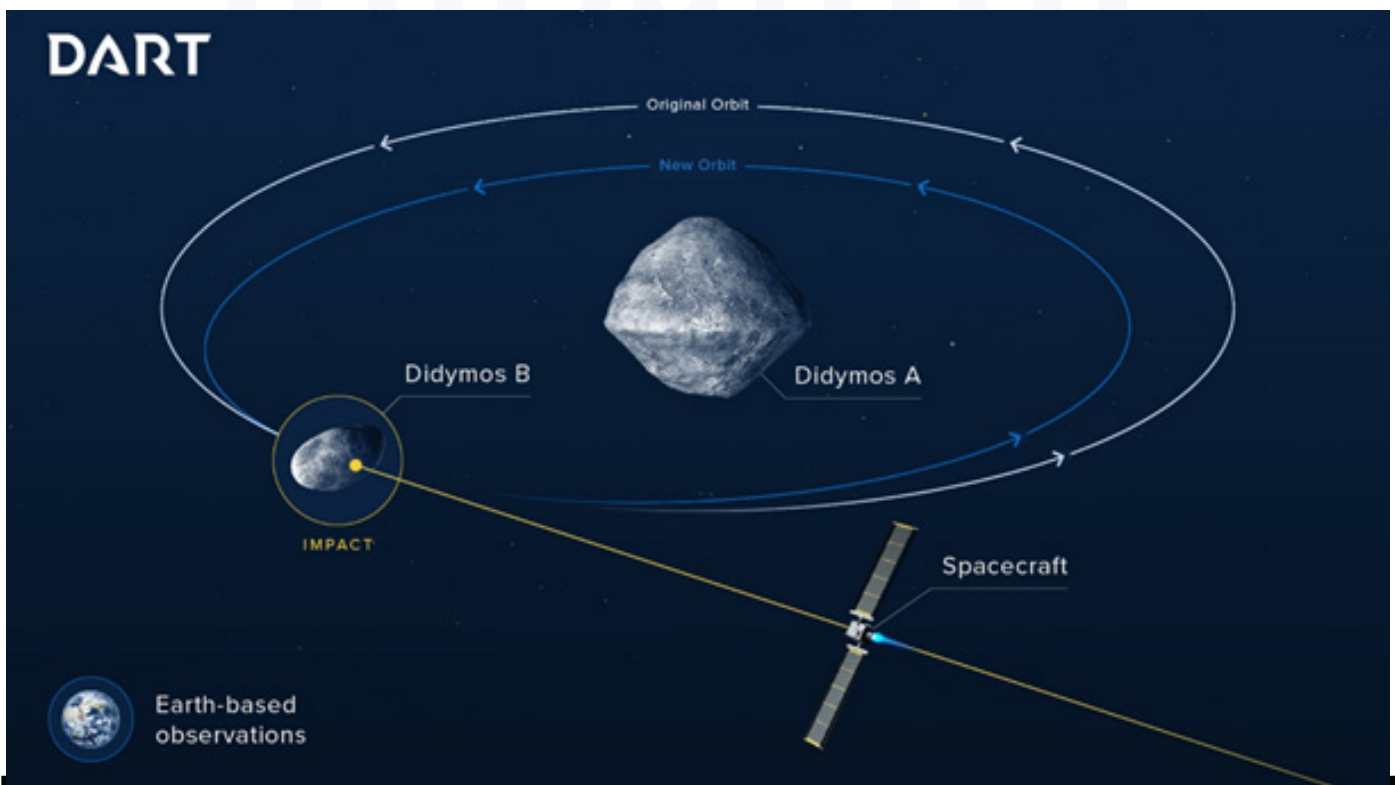
### DOUBLE ASTEROID REDIRECTION TEST SPACECRAFT, OR DART

**CONTEXT:** New images showcase NASA's findings from its spacecraft collision with an asteroid, revealing significant insights from the experiment.

**BACKGROUND:** Nearly two years ago, the Double Asteroid Redirection Test (DART) spacecraft successfully collided with Dimorphos, a small moonlet of the larger asteroid Didymos, traveling at approximately 14,000 miles per hour. This mission aimed to test a defence strategy against potential asteroids threatening Earth.

#### Key Findings from the Study of Didymos and Dimorphos

- Spinning Off: Dimorphos likely separated from Didymos during a "large mass shedding event," enhancing the formation of smaller asteroids.
- Age Comparison: Didymos is significantly older, estimated at 12.5 million years, while Dimorphos is less than 300,000 years old.
- Formation Evidence: Analysis indicates that Dimorphos formed in stages using material from Didymos, supporting its spinoff origin.
- Rubble Pile Characteristics: Boulders on Dimorphos exhibit similarities to rubble pile asteroids, suggesting a common formation process among them.
- DART's Impact: The DART mission provided crucial geological data on Didymos and Dimorphos, enhancing understanding of their geophysical properties.



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

- A. P. J. ABDUL KALAM





### Accomplishments of the DART Mission

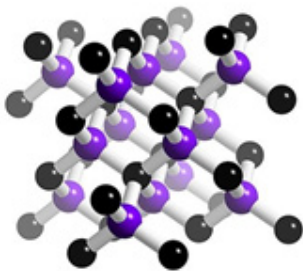
- First Planetary Defense Test: DART was the inaugural mission to intentionally alter the motion of a celestial object.
- Viable Mitigation Technique: Demonstrated that a kinetic impactor could successfully deflect an asteroid threatening Earth.
- Activation of Dimorphos: Made Dimorphos an active asteroid, enabling scientists to study its formation and behavior.
- Orbit Shortening: The impact of DART reduced Dimorphos' orbit around Didymos by 32 minutes, proving effective intervention.
- Innovative Spacecraft Mission: DART showcased new strategies in planetary defense, setting a precedent for future asteroid impact prevention efforts.

## INDIA'S FIRST SILICON CARBIDE MANUFACTURING FACILITY

**CONTEXT:** India will establish its first silicon carbide manufacturing facility in Odisha.

**BACKGROUND:** Chief Minister of Odisha attended the groundbreaking ceremony for India's first silicon carbide manufacturing facility, set to be established in the state with an investment of Rs 620 crore. The project will be developed by RIR Power Electronics Limited at EMC Park, Infovalley, Bhubaneswar.

### Overview of Silicon Carbide (SiC) and Its Applications



- Composition: Silicon carbide (SiC) is a semiconductor made of pure silicon and carbon, enabling n-type and p-type doping.
- Manufacturing Methods: SiC is produced by melting silica sand with carbon at high temperatures or through chemical vapor deposition techniques.
- Advantages: SiC exhibits high thermal conductivity, low thermal expansion, and high current density, making it superior to traditional silicon.
- Key Applications: SiC is vital in high-power electronic devices like MOSFETs and Schottky diodes, supporting high efficiency and voltage thresholds.
- Efficiency Gains: SiC devices can significantly reduce system losses, size, and costs, making them ideal for weight-sensitive applications.

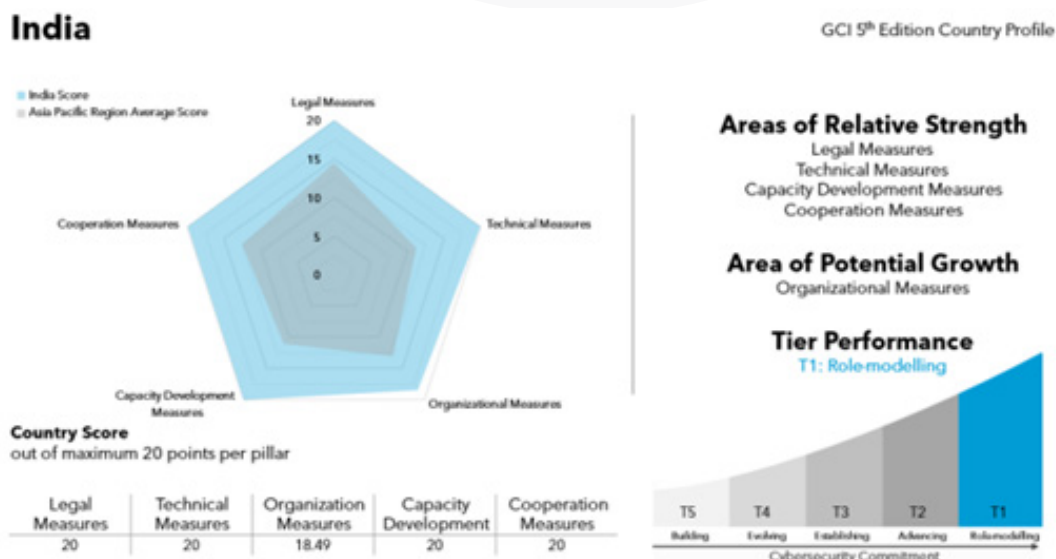
### Applications and Benefits of Silicon Carbide (SiC)

- Widespread Adoption: SiC is increasingly utilized in electric vehicles, solar energy systems, and data centers to enhance efficiency.
- Automotive Efficiency: In electric vehicles, SiC improves energy conservation, extends driving distances, and reduces battery management system size.
- Cost Reduction: Goldman Sachs predicts SiC can lower electric vehicle manufacturing costs and ownership expenses by nearly \$2,000.
- Fast-Charging Optimization: SiC enhances EV fast-charging processes, reducing system losses and increasing power density while minimizing component count.
- Solar Industry Impact: SiC-based inverters double switching frequency, resulting in smaller, lighter designs, while ensuring durability and reliability for long-term operation.

## CYBERSECURITY INDEX 2024

**CONTEXT:** India has achieved Tier 1 status in the Global Cybersecurity Index 2024.

**BACKGROUND:** India has ascended to Tier 1 in the 2024 Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI) released by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), reflecting the country's commitment to cybersecurity. The updated GCI now employs a five-tier analysis, emphasizing each nation's progress in meeting cybersecurity obligations and impacts.



Credit: ITU



## India Achieves Tier 1 Status in Global Cybersecurity Index 2024

- **Top Tier Achievement:** India attained Tier 1 status in the Global Cybersecurity Index 2024 with a score of 98.49.
- **Government Leadership:** The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) served as the nodal agency, demonstrating India's commitment to cybersecurity practices.
- **Comprehensive Evaluation:** GCI 2024 assessed national efforts across five pillars, using a detailed questionnaire with 83 questions and various indicators.
- **Cybersecurity Initiatives:** India's strong performance is attributed to government initiatives enhancing cyber resilience, legal frameworks, and sector-specific support teams.
- **Education and Collaboration:** Targeted campaigns and international partnerships have promoted cybersecurity awareness, skill development, and innovation within the country.

### ITU's Global Cybersecurity Index 2024 Overview

- **Five Pillars Assessment:** The Global Cybersecurity Index 2024 evaluates national efforts in legal, technical, organizational, capacity development, and cooperation domains.
- **New Five-Tier Analysis:** GCI 2024 introduces a tier system focusing on individual country advancements in cybersecurity commitments and their impacts.
- **Tier 1 Role Models:** 46 countries achieved Tier 1 status, showcasing exemplary commitment across all five cybersecurity pillars.
- **Establishing and Evolving:** Most countries fall under Tier 3 or Tier 4, indicating growth in digital services but lacking cybersecurity integration.
- **Cybercapacity Gap:** Many countries face a "cybercapacity gap," revealing challenges in skills, staffing, equipment, and funding across regions.

## MISSION MAUSAM

**CONTEXT:** : Mission Mausam, a ₹2,000 crore initiative, aims to improve India's weather and climate forecasting by 2026.

**BACKGROUND:** The Union Cabinet has approved Mission Mausam, an ambitious initiative with a budget of ₹2,000 crores over two years, aimed at making India 'Weather Ready' and 'Climate Smart.' The mission focuses on significantly improving weather and climate observations, forecasting, and services for enhanced accuracy and timeliness.

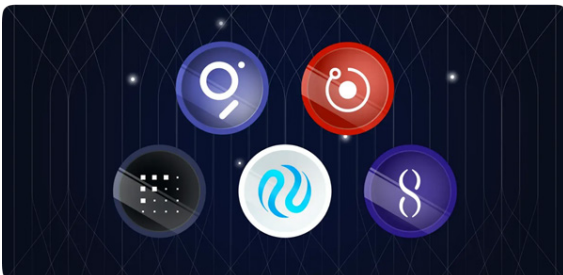
### Mission Mausam: Objectives and Goals

- **Objective:** Develop advanced weather technologies for better climate resilience and mitigation against extreme weather events.
  - **Implementation:** Planned for 2024-26, focusing on improving national capabilities in weather surveillance and prediction.
  - **Infrastructure Development:** Establish 50 Doppler Weather Radars and various weather stations to enhance data collection and monitoring.
  - **Capacity Building:** Focus on training and technology development for effective weather management and last-mile connectivity.
  - **Data-Driven Innovation:** Utilize AI/ML for improved earth system models and weather prediction capabilities, enhancing understanding of climate processes.
- The Mission Mausam initiative aims to enhance weather forecasting and air quality data by March 2026 through an expanded network of radars and advanced technologies. The Ministry of Earth Sciences plans to improve data dissemination and services, ensuring no weather system goes undetected, benefiting various sectors economically and socially.

## AI TOKENS

**CONTEXT:** AI tokens, including TAO, NEAR, and RENDER, experienced significant double-digit gains recently.

**BACKGROUND:** An investor, previously influential in Solana's growth, is now focusing on a promising AI token valued under \$0.15. The potential for a 50x return has generated considerable interest and curiosity among market watchers regarding this emerging opportunity.



### Understanding Tokens in AI

- **Definition:** A token is a fundamental unit of data processed in AI, especially in natural language processing.
- **Role in Text Processing:** Tokens represent components like words, characters, or phrases, essential for breaking down sentences for analysis.

- **Tokenization Process:** Tokenization is crucial for preparing data, as it divides text into manageable units for AI models.
- **Versatility:** Tokens extend beyond text; they can represent image segments in computer vision or sound snippets in audio processing.
- **Importance:** The flexibility of tokens is essential for AI's ability to interpret and learn from various data types effectively.

Tokens are fundamental units of data in AI, enabling algorithms to process diverse information, including text, images, and sounds. The token concept is essential for AI applications, ranging from basic text processing to advanced tasks that require comprehension of context and nuances in human language.



## CENTRE FOR RURAL ENTERPRISE ACCELERATION THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

**CONTEXT:** The Union Minister for MSME inaugurated the Centre for Rural Enterprise Acceleration through Technology (CREATE) in Leh via virtual mode.

**BACKGROUND:** The Union Minister for Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME) recently inaugurated the Centre for Rural Enterprise Acceleration through Technology (CREATE) in Leh via virtual mode. This initiative aims to enhance rural enterprises by leveraging technology for growth and development in the region.

### CREATE's Impact on Local Development

- Pashmina Wool Roving Facility: CREATE will establish a Pashmina Wool Roving Facility to enhance product quality and production.
- Essential Oil Extraction: Training for Essential Oil Extraction from roses and other flowers will boost local economic potential.
- Bio-processing Training: CREATE will provide training in bio-processing of fruits and raw materials, improving local productivity.
- Operational Machinery: The machinery for Pashmina wool roving has been installed and commissioned, ready for immediate operation.
- Community Livelihoods: This initiative will improve livelihoods and empower local communities through enhanced economic opportunities.

## BHASKAR PLATFORM

**CONTEXT:** DPIIT is set to launch BHASKAR, an innovative platform aimed at enhancing India's startup ecosystem.

**BACKGROUND:** The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) will soon launch the Bharat Startup Knowledge Access Registry (BHASKAR), a transformative digital platform aimed at enhancing India's startup ecosystem. This initiative, part of the Startup India program, will centralize and improve collaboration among startups, investors, mentors, service providers, and government entities.



### Key Features of the BHASKAR Platform

- Networking and Collaboration: BHASKAR will facilitate seamless interaction among startups, investors, mentors, and stakeholders across various sectors.
- Centralized Resource Access: The platform will consolidate critical tools and knowledge, enabling startups to make faster decisions and scale efficiently.
- Personalized Identification: Every user will receive a unique BHASKAR ID, enhancing personalized interactions and tailored experiences on the platform.
- Enhanced Discoverability: Powerful search features will allow users to easily find relevant resources, collaborators, and opportunities for swift action.
- Promoting India's Global Brand: BHASKAR aims to enhance India's reputation as an innovation hub, facilitating cross-border collaborations for startups and investors.

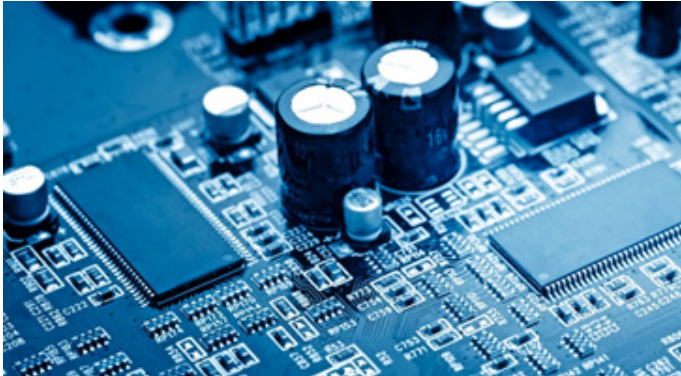
The launch of BHASKAR represents a major advancement in India's efforts to foster innovation and entrepreneurship. By serving as a central hub for startups, investors, and government bodies, the platform aims to enhance collaboration and resources, positioning India as a global leader in entrepreneurship and driving economic growth.



## INTERNATIONAL TECHNOLOGY SECURITY AND INNOVATION (ITSI) FUND

**CONTEXT:** The US Department of State will partner with India's Semiconductor Mission to expand and diversify the semiconductor ecosystem.

**BACKGROUND:** The United States and India have made significant progress in expanding the global semiconductor supply chain. The US Department of State will partner with the India Semiconductor Mission under the Ministry of Electronics and IT to enhance and diversify the semiconductor ecosystem, supported by the International Technology Security and Innovation (ITSI) fund from the CHIPS Act of 2022.



### International Technology Security and Innovation (ITSI) Fund

- Funding Source: The ITSI Fund is part of the CHIPS Act of 2022, appropriating \$500 million over five years.
- Annual Allocation: The fund provides \$100 million per

year starting from Fiscal Year 2023 to support specific initiatives.

- Primary Objectives: It aims to promote the development of secure and trustworthy telecommunications networks and enhance semiconductor supply chain security and diversification.
- Department of State: The fund is allocated to the Department of State, highlighting its focus on international technology security.
- Distinct Funding: The ITSI Fund operates separately from other funding provided to the Department of Commerce and agencies under the same Act.

Under the INDUS-X initiative, the US and India have announced \$1.2 million in funding for ten companies, promoting innovation in sectors like space exploration and telecommunications. This collaboration, supported by the CHIPS Act, aims to enhance the global semiconductor ecosystem and strengthen supply chains in critical technologies.

## MVA-BN VACCINE

**CONTEXT:** The WHO has added the MVA-BN vaccine to its prequalification list as the first vaccine against mpox.

**BACKGROUND:** The prequalification approval is anticipated to improve timely access to a crucial vaccine in communities with urgent needs, aiding in transmission reduction and outbreak containment. The WHO's assessment for prequalification is based on data submitted by Bavarian Nordic A/S and evaluated by the European Medicines Agency, the vaccine's regulatory authority.



### MVA-BN Vaccine: Key Points

- Vaccine Type: MVA-BN is a modified vaccinia virus Ankara-based vaccine designed to protect against monkeypox.
- Safety Profile: It exhibits a strong safety profile, having been well-tolerated in clinical trials with minimal side effects.
- Efficacy: Demonstrates promising efficacy in generating a robust immune response, effectively neutralizing the monkeypox virus.
- Storage Requirements: Requires standard refrigeration for storage, facilitating easier distribution compared to some other vaccines.
- Target Population: Aimed primarily at high-risk individuals, including healthcare workers and those exposed to monkeypox cases.

## BROADENING OPPORTUNITIES IN THE SPACE SECTOR

**CONTEXT:** India is advancing in space exploration with several ambitious missions and projects approved by the Union Cabinet.

**BACKGROUND:** Led by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), India's ambitious space program reflects the nation's commitment to becoming a leader in space technology and research. Initiatives like the Chandrayaan-4 mission, Venus Orbiter Mission, and the Bharatiya Antariksh Station (BAS) aim to enhance technological capabilities and strengthen India's global position in space exploration.

### Chandrayaan-4 Mission

- Mission Objectives: Chandrayaan-4 aims to develop technologies for safe lunar sample return and demonstrate capabilities for future manned missions.
- Technological Focus: The mission will showcase advancements in docking, undocking, landing, and returning safely to Earth after lunar exploration.
- Collaboration and Participation: Managed by ISRO, the mission emphasizes strong collaboration with industry and academia, fostering knowledge sharing and engagement.
- Funding and Development: The mission requires Rs. 2,104.06 crore for spacecraft development, launch vehicles, and special design validation tests.
- Future Research Potential: Establishing facilities for lunar



sample preservation and analysis will create valuable national assets for ongoing scientific research and development.

### Venus Orbiter Mission (VOM)

- **Mission Overview:** The Venus Orbiter Mission represents a significant advance in India's planetary exploration beyond the Moon and Mars.
- **Scientific Objectives:** The mission aims to enhance understanding of Venus's surface, subsurface, atmospheric processes, and the Sun's influence on its environment.
- **Launch and Budget:** Scheduled for March 2028, the mission has an approved budget of Rs. 1,236 crores, focusing on spacecraft development and payloads.
- **Collaboration and Employment:** The mission emphasizes partnerships with Indian industry and academic institutions, fostering employment opportunities and

technological advancements.

- **Future Exploration Capabilities:** This initiative will strengthen India's ability for future planetary missions, improving payload handling and optimizing orbital insertion techniques.

### Bharatiya Antariksh Station

- **Bharatiya Antariksh Station:** The construction of BAS-1 enhances the Gaganyaan program, focusing on technologies for an operational Indian space station by 2035.
- **Gaganyaan Program Expansion:** Initially approved in 2018, the program now includes additional missions and hardware for human spaceflight to Low Earth Orbit.
- **Chandrayaan-4 Mission Goals:** Chandrayaan-4 aims to demonstrate key technologies for lunar sample retrieval, supporting India's 2040 crewed Moon mission ambitions.
- **Venus Orbiter Mission Objectives:** Launching in March 2028, VOM will study Venus's evolution, enhancing understanding of planetary environments and advancing India's space capabilities.
- **Funding and Economic Impact:** The revised Gaganyaan program receives ₹20,193 crore, promoting technological advancements and generating employment in high-tech sectors related to space.

India's space program is embarking on an exciting new chapter with the approval of Chandrayaan-4, the Venus Orbiter Mission, and the Bharatiya Antariksh Station. These initiatives reflect the government's commitment to advancing space exploration, fostering technological innovation, and generating significant employment opportunities while enhancing India's global standing in space research.



## FIRST COUNTRY TO ELIMINATE LEPROSY

**CONTEXT:** Jordan has become the first country to eliminate leprosy, receiving verification from the WHO.

**BACKGROUND:** Jordan's remarkable achievement in eliminating leprosy serves as a beacon of hope in global health, demonstrating that dedication and collaboration can overcome even the most persistent diseases. As the first country to eradicate leprosy, Jordan is paving the way for a future free from this ancient illness.

### Jordan's Success in Combating Leprosy



- **Leprosy Overview:** Also known as Hansen's disease,

leprosy is a chronic infectious disease caused by Mycobacterium leprae.

- **Social Stigma:** Despite being curable, leprosy carries a significant social stigma, leading to ostracism and untreated cases.
- **Historical Challenges:** The disease was once deemed nearly impossible to eliminate, particularly in regions with limited healthcare access.
- **Jordan's Public Health Efforts:** Jordan's success resulted from targeted public health campaigns, early detection programs, and free treatments for citizens.
- **Collaborative Approach:** The Jordanian Ministry of Health partnered with WHO and international organizations to provide multi-drug therapy and community education.

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## INDIAN CANCER GENOME ATLAS (ICGA)

**CONTEXT:** India has launched its first repository for cancer genomics.

**BACKGROUND:** To enhance understanding of genetic variations in cancer among the Indian population, the Indian Cancer Genome Atlas (ICGA) foundation has launched a new portal. This platform aims to serve as a comprehensive repository of information covering various aspects of cancer research and genetics.

### Breast Cancer Research through Genomic Data

- **Data Integration:** Genome sequencing data from 50 breast cancer patients will be moved to cBioPortal for analysis.
- **Expansion Goals:** The initiative aims to increase the database to 500 patients within a year, enhancing research capabilities.
- **Personalized Treatments:** Building a comprehensive genomic database will enable the development of personalised cancer treatments tailored to individual patients.
- **Improved Survival Rates:** The focus on genomics aims to improve survival rates and reduce the overall burden of cancer care in India.
- **Leadership Vision:** Dr. Deshpande emphasized the potential of genomic data to transform cancer treatment strategies during the foundation's annual meeting.



### Indian Cancer Genome Atlas: Enhancing Cancer Research and Treatment

- **ICGA Foundation:** A not-for-profit organization established as a public-private-philanthropic partnership to host the Indian Cancer Genome Atlas.
- **Mission Statement:** Aims to create a comprehensive multi-omics database of prevalent cancers in the Indian population, facilitating better clinical diagnosis.
- **Collaborative Initiatives:** Formed in 2020-21, ICGA consists of a national consortium involving government agencies, cancer hospitals, and academic institutions.
- **Precision Medicine Focus:** The foundation fosters collaboration among cancer scientists, onco-clinicians, and data scientists to promote precision medicine in India.
- **Global Contribution:** ICGA seeks to enhance the Global Cancer Knowledge Base by improving translational cancer research through indigenously developed resources.

## PM E-DRIVE SCHEME

**CONTEXT:** Excluding electric cars from the PM E-DRIVE scheme may negatively impact sales in the sector.

**BACKGROUND:** The Centre's new PM Electric Drive Revolution in Innovative Vehicle Enhancement (PM E-DRIVE) Scheme, with a budget of Rs 10,900 crore over two years, offers fiscal incentives for electric two- and three-wheelers, buses, trucks, and ambulances. Notably, it excludes electric cars, unlike the previous FAME-2 scheme.

### PM E-DRIVE Scheme: Advancing Electric Mobility in India

- **Scheme Overview:** PM E-DRIVE has an outlay of Rs 10,900 crore over two years to promote electric mobility in India.
  - **Subsidies and Incentives:** Allocating Rs 3,679 crore, the scheme incentivizes purchases of electric two-wheelers, three-wheelers, ambulances, and trucks.
  - **E-Voucher System:** Buyers will receive Aadhaar-authenticated e-vouchers via mobile for demand incentives after purchasing electric vehicles.
  - **E-Ambulance Initiative:** A budget of Rs 500 crore is set to deploy electric ambulances, ensuring comfortable, eco-friendly patient transport.
  - **Charging Infrastructure Development:** To mitigate range anxiety, Rs 2,000 crore will install public charging stations in high EV penetration areas and highways.
- Electric vehicles (EVs) enjoy a reduced GST rate of 5%, significantly lower than the 28% for hybrid and CNG



vehicles and 49% for internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles. Additionally, states like Maharashtra, Telangana, and Tamil Nadu exempt EVs from road tax and registration fees, further encouraging adoption.



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A close-up photograph of a person's hands clasped together, wearing a dark blue suit jacket. The background is a solid, lighter blue color. The text 'CSAT' is overlaid in the center in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

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## DEDUCTIVE REASONING



## DEDUCTIVE REASONING

Deductive reasoning is a logical process in which a conclusion is drawn from a set of premises. It begins with general statements and moves towards a specific conclusion. Here's a detailed approach to understanding and applying deductive reasoning:

### Understand the structure of Deductive Reasoning

- **PREMISES:** These are statements or propositions that provide the foundation for the argument.
- **CONCLUSION:** This is the statement that logically follows from the premises.

Example:

**Premise 1:** All humans are mortal.

**Premise 2:** Socrates is a human.

Conclusion: Therefore, Socrates is mortal.

### Identify the Premises

Begin by clearly stating the general principles or facts that serve as the premises of your argument. Ensure that these premises are true or acceptable.

### Analyze the Logical Relationships

Examine how the premises are related to each other. Ensure that they logically support the conclusion. Deductive reasoning relies on the relationships between the premises to reach a conclusion.

### Formulate the Conclusion

Based on the premises, derive a specific conclusion. The conclusion must follow necessarily from the premises. If the premises are true, the conclusion must also be true.

### Validate the Argument

- **Validity:** An argument is valid if the conclusion logically follows from the premises, regardless of the truth of the premises.
- **Soundness:** An argument is sound if it is both valid and the premises are true.

### Use Syllogisms

Syllogisms are a common form of deductive reasoning:

- **Major Premise:** A general statement.
- **Minor Premise:** A specific statement that falls under the major premise.
- **Conclusion:** The specific conclusion drawn from both premises.

Example:

- **Major Premise:** All mammals have hearts.
- **Minor Premise:** A dog is a mammal.
- **Conclusion:** Therefore, a dog has a heart.

### Check for Fallacies

Be aware of common logical fallacies that can undermine deductive reasoning, such as:

- **Affirming the Consequent:** Assuming the conclusion is true because the premises are true.
- **Denying the Antecedent:** Assuming the premises are false because the conclusion is false.
- **Hasty Generalization:** Making a broad conclusion based on insufficient evidence.

### Practice with Examples

Work through various examples of deductive reasoning. Try to formulate your own premises and conclusions, and analyze their validity and soundness.

Use deductive reasoning in real-world problem-solving:

- Identify the problem and gather relevant information.
- Formulate premises based on the information.
- Draw conclusions to guide decision-making or predictions.
- Continuous Improvement
- Regularly practice deductive reasoning through puzzles, logic games, and critical thinking exercises to enhance your skills and confidence.

By following this structured approach, you can effectively employ deductive reasoning to analyze arguments, draw conclusions, and solve problems logically.

### APPLICATION OF DEDUCTIVE REASONING

Deductive reasoning is a crucial skill that is valued in many different jobs and industries. It is widely applied in many different industries and valued by employers. The main applications of deductive reasoning are listed below.

- A marketing professional may use deductive logical reasoning to formulate and test advertising strategies.
- It is useful for people in management positions who have to make critical business decisions every day.
- It helps to test a hypothesis by implementing a solution that resolves the reason for the issue.
- In hiring a candidate the deductive reasoning test demonstrates a candidate's ability to analyze and interpret information to make a logical deduction. This is generally more relevant for highly skilled roles, but also useful for almost every job application.
- Recruiters and employers use deductive reasoning tests as part of the application process before an interview as this type of test is easy to apply on a range of candidates, irrespective of their specific knowledge or skill set.

### TYPES OF DEDUCTIVE REASONING

There are mainly three types of deductive reasoning questions as listed below.

**Syllogism:** Syllogisms is a type of deductive reasoning which always appears in the three-line form, with a common term that appears in both the premises but not in the conclusion.

Given below is a deductive reasoning example for syllogism,  
P: "If a person is born in the 1970s then they are in generation X."

Q: "If a person is in Generation X then they have listened to music in a Walkman."

So the conclusion according to syllogism is "if a person is born in the 1970s then they have listened to music in a Walkman."

**Modus Ponens:** This type of reasoning is also called "affirming the antecedent," because only the first premise is a conditional statement whereas the second premise merely affirms to which the first part of the previous statement applies to be true..

Given below is a deductive reasoning example for Modus Ponens,

P: "If a person is born between 1981 and 1996 then they are a millennial."

Q: "John was born in 1992."

So the conclusion according to Modus Ponens is "John is a millennial."

**Modus Tollens:** It is another type of deductive reasoning question, which is also called "the law of contrapositive." It is the opposite of modus ponens because its second premise



negates the second part of the previous statement.

Given below is a deductive reasoning example for Modus Tollens,

P: "If a person is born between 1981 and 1996 then they are a millennial."

Q: "Brian is not a millennial."

So the conclusion according to Modus Tollens is "Brian was not born between 1981 and 1996."

**Problem 1:**

X: All footballers are healthy and fit.

Y: All the famous sports players are footballers.

Given that the above statements are true, find which of the following the logical deduction is.

1. "All footballers are famous sports people."
2. "All famous people are healthy and fit."
3. "All famous sports players are healthy and fit."
4. "All fit and healthy people are footballers."
5. "All football players are men."

**Solution:**

We first simplify the given facts.

1. We cannot deduce that all footballers are famous sports people, as we do not have that information.
2. We cannot deduce that all famous people are healthy and fit, because the fact is about famous sports people.
3. This is the logical answer as we conclude that all famous sports players are healthy and fit.
4. This information is also not given so all footballers are healthy and fit but we cannot logically link that all healthy and fit people are footballers.
5. This is obviously incorrect as no gender is mentioned in the question.

Hence we get that number 3 is the correct logical deduction which is "All famous sports players are healthy and fit."

**Problem 2:** In our Sixth Form this year, 94 % of students achieved A to C grades. Last year, 95 % of students achieved A to C grades. The school has said that its new approach to mentoring students has had a brilliant impact on student performance.

Based on the information above, which of the following statements are true?

1. "Next year, student performance will be less than this year."
2. "All students taking A-Levels achieved A to C."
3. "Before last year, no students achieved A to C."
4. "Before last year, less than 94% of students achieved A to C."
5. "Every school has seen a rise in student performance."

**Solution:**

With the given information, the only logical conclusion we derive is 4. Below we have described why other options are not logically correct.

1. The student performance is increasing, so this cannot be correct given the facts.
2. In this school 6 % of students did not achieve A\* to C.
3. We do not have the data to make that deduction.
4. We know that student performance has increased, so the year before last must have seen results below 94 %.
5. We do not have the information to deduce performance in other schools.

Thus the correct conclusion we deduce is "Before last year, less than 94 % of students achieved A to C."



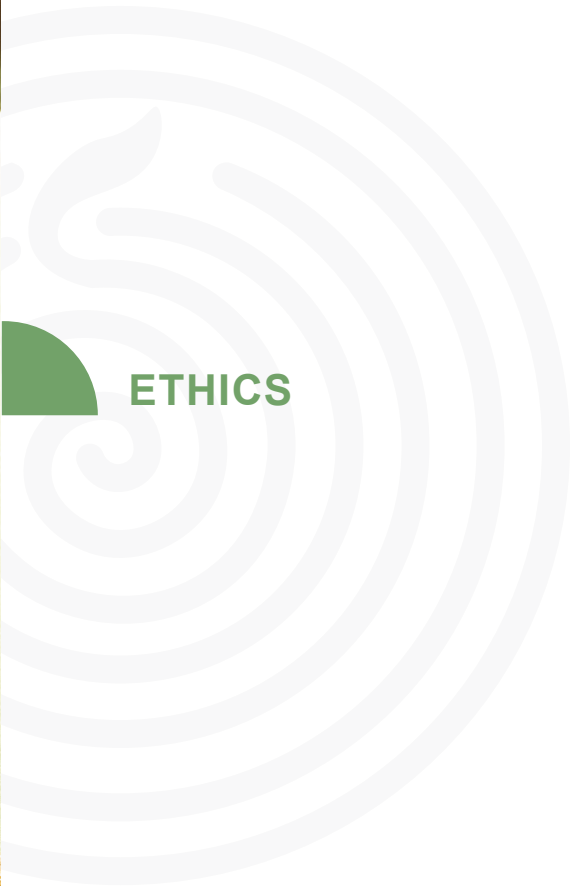
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**ETHICS**



Rakesh was working as a Joint Commissioner in Transport department of a city. As a part of his job profile, among others, he was entrusted with the task of overseeing the control and functioning of City Transport Department. A case strike by drivers' union of City Transport Department over the issue of compensation to a driver who died on duty while driving the bus came up before him for decision in the matter.

He gathered that the driver (deceased) was plying Bus No. 528 which passed through busy and congested roads of the city. It so happened that near an intersection on the way, there was an accident involving a middle-aged man. It was found that there was altercation between the driver and the car driver. Heated arguments between them led to fight and the driver gave him a blow.

Lot of passer-by had gathered and tried to intervene but without success. Eventually, both of them were badly injured and profusely bleeding and were taken to the nearby hospital. The driver succumbed to the injuries and could not be saved. The middle-aged driver's condition was also critical but after a day, he recovered and was discharged. Police had immediately come to the spot and FIR was registered. Police investigation revealed that the quarrel in was started by the bus driver and he had resorted to physical violence. There exchange of blows between them.

The City Transport Department management is considering of not giving any extra compensation to the driver's (deceased) family. The family is very aggrieved. Depressed and agitated against the discriminatory and non-sympathetic approach of the City Transport Department management.

The bus driver (deceased) was 52 years of age, was survived by his wife and two school-college going daughters. He was the sole earner of the family. The City Transport Department workers' union took up this case and when found no favourable response from the management, decided to go on strike. The union's demand was twofold. First was full extra compensation as given to other drivers who died on duty and secondly employment to one family member. The strike has continued for 10 days and the deadlock remains. (250 words) (25 marks)

- What are the options available to Rakesh to meet the above situation?
- Critically examine each of the options identified by Rakesh.
- What are the ethical dilemmas being faced by Rakesh?
- What course of action would Rakesh adopt to diffuse the above situation?

In addressing the situation regarding the driver's death and the demands of the workers' union, Rakesh has several options to consider:

- Engage in Dialogue:** Rakesh can initiate discussions with the City Transport Department management, the deceased driver's family, and the union representatives to understand their perspectives and concerns better. Open communication may help in finding a resolution that satisfies both parties.
- Review Compensation Policies:** Rakesh should review the existing compensation policies for deceased employees, particularly in light of this incident. He could advocate for a reconsideration of the decision, potentially providing additional compensation based on the circumstances of

the death.

- Conduct an Inquiry:** Rakesh could suggest an inquiry into the incident to assess whether the driver's actions leading to the altercation were a result of job-related stress or unsafe working conditions. This could help in determining the appropriateness of compensation and addressing underlying issues in the workplace.
- Negotiation with Union:** He could negotiate with the union to explore a compromise, such as offering partial compensation and job placement for a family member while emphasizing the need for responsible conduct among drivers to prevent similar incidents in the future.
- Mediation:** If the situation remains tense, Rakesh could propose involving a neutral third-party mediator to facilitate discussions between the union and the management, aiming to reach an agreement that honours the deceased driver's service while addressing the union's concerns.
- Internal Policy Review:** Rakesh could recommend a review of the transport department's policies regarding employee conduct and safety to prevent future incidents, thereby addressing systemic issues that may contribute to employee stress and conflicts.
- Public Communication:** If the strike continues and affects public transport, Rakesh might consider issuing a public statement acknowledging the tragedy and the department's commitment to reviewing policies, which may help alleviate public pressure and demonstrate empathy.

By employing a combination of these strategies, Rakesh can work towards resolving the deadlock, addressing the needs of the deceased driver's family, and restoring normalcy within the transport department.

Here's a critical examination of the options identified by Rakesh to address the situation regarding the deceased bus driver and the demands of the workers' union:

#### 1. Engage in Dialogue

**Pros:** This approach fosters communication and understanding between all parties involved. It may help to build trust and create a collaborative atmosphere for problem-solving.

**Cons:** If the dialogue does not lead to tangible solutions, it could further frustrate the union and the deceased driver's family. Additionally, the management may be unwilling to negotiate.

#### 2. Review Compensation Policies

**Pros:** A thorough review can ensure that compensation practices are fair and consistent, potentially leading to a more just outcome for the deceased driver's family.

**Cons:** This process may be time-consuming and could delay addressing the immediate needs of the family. Furthermore, there could be pushback from management regarding changes to established policies.

#### 3. Conduct an Inquiry

**Pros:** An inquiry can provide clarity on the circumstances of the incident, potentially leading to policy changes that could prevent future occurrences and justify compensation.

**Cons:** This may also prolong the resolution process and could lead to blame being assigned, which might further anger the union and the family.

#### 4. Negotiation with Union

**Pros:** Negotiation may lead to a compromise that addresses



both compensation and employment for a family member, potentially restoring goodwill.

**Cons:** The union may see any compromise as inadequate or insincere, which could maintain or escalate the strike.

### 5. Mediation

**Pros:** A neutral third-party mediator can facilitate a more balanced discussion and potentially lead to innovative solutions that satisfy both parties.

**Cons:** Mediation requires both parties to agree to the process, and if one side is not willing to compromise, it may be ineffective.

### 6. Internal Policy Review

**Pros:** This could address systemic issues within the department that contribute to employee stress and conflict, improving working conditions in the long run.

**Cons:** Such reviews are often lengthy and may not provide immediate relief or solutions for the current crisis.

### 7. Public Communication

**Pros:** Public acknowledgment of the tragedy and the department's willingness to review its policies can demonstrate empathy and accountability, potentially diffusing public tension.

**Cons:** If not followed by action, public statements may be viewed as empty promises, further eroding trust with the union and the family.

Rakesh's options, while well-intentioned, each carry their own benefits and risks. The situation requires a balanced approach that recognizes the legitimate grievances of the deceased driver's family and the union while addressing the operational and ethical responsibilities of the City Transport Department. Ultimately, a combination of dialogue, negotiation, and a review of policies may be necessary to achieve a satisfactory resolution.

Rakesh faces several ethical dilemmas in this situation, which can be analyzed as follows:

#### 1. Balancing Compassion with Policy

**Dilemma:** Rakesh must balance the compassion for the deceased driver's family with the established policies of the City Transport Department regarding compensation. The ethical question here is whether to adhere strictly to policy, which may seem unjust given the circumstances, or to advocate for a compassionate exception to support the grieving family.

#### 2. Accountability vs. Sympathy

**Dilemma:** The police investigation indicates that the deceased driver instigated the altercation, raising questions about accountability. Rakesh faces the ethical challenge of how to hold the driver accountable posthumously while also recognizing the tragic outcome of his actions, which leaves a family in distress. This involves the ethics of judgment versus empathy.

#### 3. Union Relations and Fairness

**Dilemma:** The strike by the drivers' union poses a challenge regarding the duty to maintain labour relations and ensure fairness among workers. Rakesh must consider the implications of his decisions on the union's trust in management, which could affect morale and productivity in the long term. He needs to find a balance between management's interests and the rights of the workers to seek fair treatment.

#### 4. Public Image vs. Ethical Responsibility

**Dilemma:** The ongoing strike and public sentiment can

damage the reputation of the City Transport Department. Rakesh must consider whether to prioritize the department's public image or to act in alignment with ethical principles that prioritize the needs and rights of the deceased driver's family, even if it means facing criticism.

#### 5. Precedent for Future Cases

**Dilemma:** Granting compensation in this case could set a precedent for future incidents, especially if the deceased's actions are deemed to have contributed to his fate. Rakesh must weigh the ethical implications of setting a precedent that might encourage similar claims or disputes in the future, potentially leading to further complications.

#### 6. Impact on the Family's Future

**Dilemma:** Rakesh needs to consider the long-term impact of his decisions on the deceased driver's family, who are now without their primary breadwinner. The ethical challenge lies in ensuring that the family receives adequate support and opportunities for a sustainable future, which includes considering the union's demand for employment for a family member.

Rakesh is confronted with a complex web of ethical dilemmas that require careful consideration of compassion, accountability, fairness, and the long-term implications of his decisions. Navigating these dilemmas will require Rakesh to reflect on his values and the values of the organization he represents while striving to find a solution that respects both the rights of the deceased driver's family and the principles of justice and equity within the transport department.

To diffuse the situation surrounding the strike by the drivers' union over the compensation for the deceased driver, Rakesh could consider the following course of action:

#### 1. Initiate Dialogue with the Union

Rakesh should arrange a meeting with the drivers' union representatives to discuss their grievances openly. Establishing a line of communication can help foster understanding and show that the management is willing to listen to the union's concerns.

#### 2. Assess the Circumstances

Rakesh should conduct a thorough review of the incident, including the circumstances leading to the driver's death and the established compensation policies. This review should consider the specifics of the case, acknowledging the driver's contributions and the tragic nature of the incident.

#### 3. Propose a Compassionate Solution

After assessing the circumstances, Rakesh can propose a compassionate compensation package that, while not necessarily matching the full compensation of other drivers who died on duty, acknowledges the special circumstances of this case. This may include providing some financial support or a one-time ex gratia payment to the family.

#### 4. Offer Employment Support

Rakesh can discuss the union's demand for employment for a family member of the deceased driver. Exploring options for training or job placement within the City Transport Department could be beneficial, showing a commitment to supporting the family's future.

#### 5. Set Up a Committee for Policy Review

To address the broader issues highlighted by the union and prevent similar conflicts in the future, Rakesh can establish a committee that includes union representatives



to review compensation policies for drivers who die on duty. This committee could ensure that policies are equitable and sensitive to the circumstances of each case.

**6. Communicate the Resolution to All Stakeholders**


After reaching a decision, Rakesh should communicate the outcomes of the discussions and resolutions clearly to all stakeholders, including the drivers' union, City Transport Department staff, and the media. Transparency can help rebuild trust and prevent misunderstandings.

**7. Promote a Supportive Work Environment**

Rakesh should work towards fostering a more supportive work environment within the City Transport

Department. Implementing mental health support programs and regular feedback mechanisms can help employees feel valued and heard, reducing the likelihood of future strikes.

By taking these actions, Rakesh can demonstrate leadership and empathy, helping to resolve the immediate conflict while also addressing the underlying issues that led to the strike. This approach will not only provide relief to the grieving family but also promote a culture of open communication and fairness within the City Transport Department.

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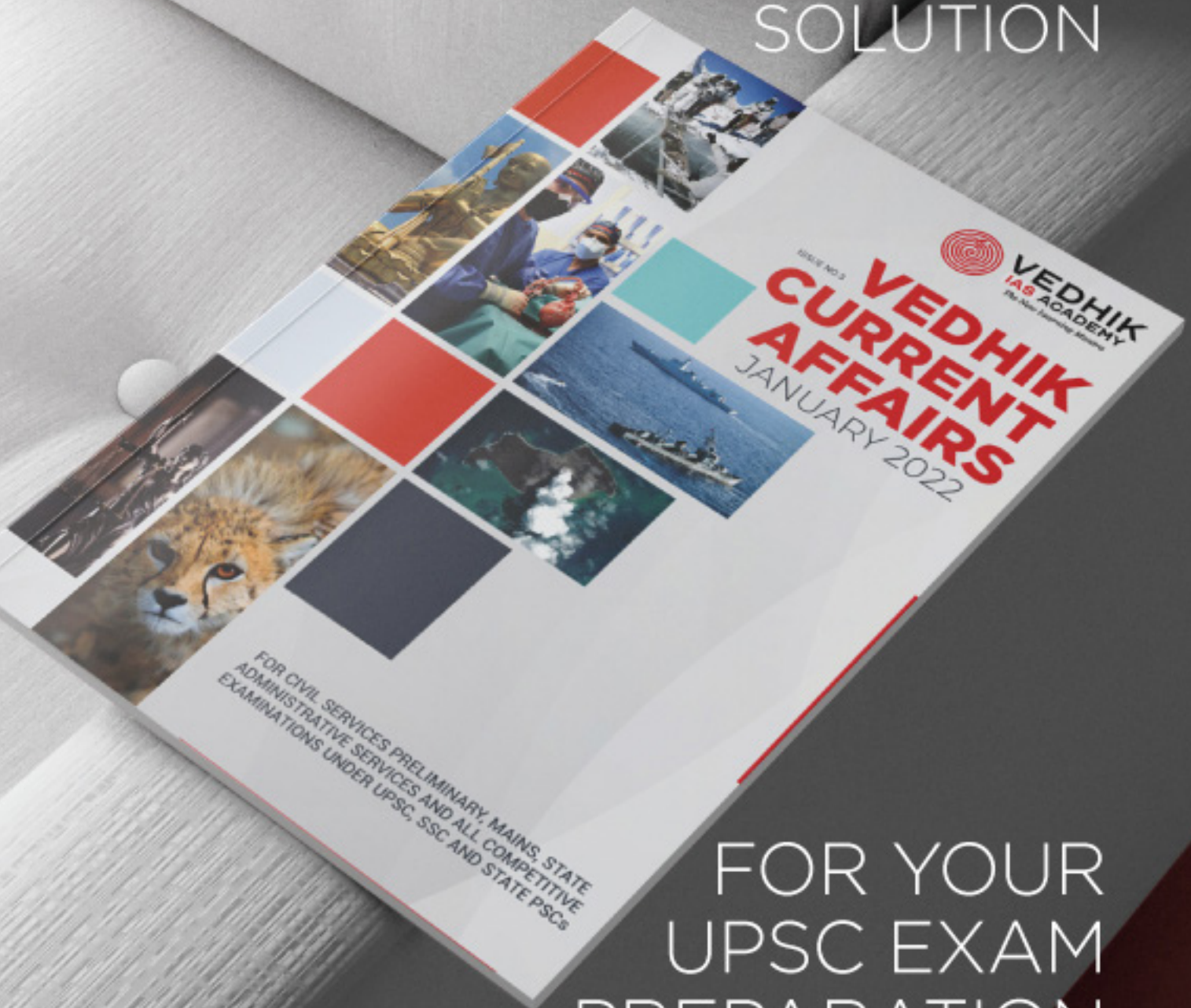
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# TOPICS OF THE MONTH





**THERE IS NO PATH TO HAPPINESS;  
HAPPINESS IS THE PATH**

**- DR. Alexander Jacob IPS**

**“THE EMPIRES OF THE FUTURE WILL BE THE  
EMPIRES OF THE MIND”**

**-DR. Babu Sebastian**

**THE TRUE TEST OF CHARACTER: POWER  
AND ITS INFLUENCE ON HUMAN NATURE**

**-DR. G. Prasanna Kumar IAS**



## THERE IS NO PATH TO HAPPINESS; HAPPINESS IS THE PATH

Mahatma Gandhi once said, “There is no path to happiness; happiness is the path.” This quote resonates deeply with the real-life journey of ISRO scientists during the Chandrayaan-2 mission. When the lander, Vikram, lost communication just moments before its planned touchdown, the nation shared in the heartbreak.

Yet, instead of dwelling in disappointment, ISRO immediately shifted focus to future missions, embracing the process rather than the outcome. Their resilience culminated in the success of Chandrayaan-3, reaffirming that happiness lies not in the destination but in the continuous pursuit of progress. This journey inspired millions across India, showing that fulfilment is found in the efforts, perseverance, and belief in tomorrow, rather than in singular achievements alone.

### **Introduction: Defining Happiness as a Way of Life**

Happiness is often mistakenly viewed as a future achievement or a reward earned after overcoming life’s hurdles. However, this view can create a constant chase for something that feels out of reach. A more profound understanding of happiness reveals it as an intrinsic part of our everyday life, cultivated through our thoughts, actions, and attitudes. It isn’t about external accomplishments but the quality of our journey. When we shift focus from the destination to the path itself, we learn to appreciate life’s simple moments, practice mindfulness, and foster resilience in the face of challenges.

Living with gratitude, empathy, and a sense of purpose enriches our daily experiences, creating lasting happiness from within. This internal approach to happiness emphasizes personal growth and self-awareness, ensuring that fulfilment comes from how we live, not from what we achieve. Such a perspective aligns with timeless wisdom from various philosophies and religious traditions that have long advocated for happiness as a journey, not an endpoint. Whether it’s through the teachings of Buddhism or the Stoic philosophies of the West, history is filled with examples of thinkers and spiritual leaders who have espoused this path-centered approach to happiness, which we now explore through these ancient lenses.

### **Historical Perspective: Philosophical and Religious Teachings**

Throughout history, various philosophical and religious traditions have emphasized that happiness is not something to be pursued as an external goal but a state of being cultivated from within. In Buddhism, the Eightfold Path teaches that happiness arises through right understanding, mindfulness, and ethical living. The idea of detachment from material desires and focusing on inner peace aligns with the belief that happiness is found in the present, not in future achievements.

Similarly, Stoic philosophy, particularly the teachings of Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus, advocates for inner contentment through virtue and self-control. Stoicism teaches that external events are beyond our control, and only our responses to them can lead to true happiness. The Bhagavad Gita, a sacred text in Hinduism, also echoes this sentiment, urging individuals to focus on righteous action without attachment to the outcomes, thereby finding peace and fulfilment in the present moment.

These ancient teachings highlight that happiness is a

mindset, deeply intertwined with how we live and perceive the world. In modern times, this view is supported by psychological research, which shows that happiness is not merely a result of external circumstances but can be nurtured through deliberate practices, as we explore in the next section on the psychological science of happiness.

### **Psychological Dimension: The Science of Happiness**

Modern psychological research reinforces the idea that happiness is not a destination to be reached but a process to be cultivated through daily habits and mindset. The field of positive psychology, pioneered by Martin Seligman, emphasizes that happiness is not just the absence of negative emotions but the presence of positive ones, nurtured by conscious efforts like gratitude, kindness, and engagement in meaningful activities. Studies suggest that nearly 40% of our happiness is determined by intentional activities, such as practicing gratitude or engaging in “flow” – a state of deep immersion in tasks that challenge and fulfil us.

Psychologists have also identified cognitive biases like the “hedonic treadmill,” where people quickly adapt to new circumstances, meaning external achievements or possessions only provide short-term happiness. Long-term contentment, however, comes from focusing on intrinsic values like relationships, personal growth, and purpose. This understanding aligns with ancient teachings that advocate for an inward focus, reaffirming that happiness stems from within. One of the key factors in maintaining a happy life is adopting a growth-oriented mindset, where setbacks are seen as opportunities for development. In the next section, we will explore how personal growth, through cultivating a positive mindset and gratitude, can further enhance our experience of happiness.

### **Personal Growth: The Role of Mindset and Gratitude**

Personal growth is central to experiencing happiness as a continuous journey rather than a fleeting emotion. The mindset we adopt shapes how we perceive challenges and setbacks, and a growth-oriented mindset helps us view difficulties as opportunities for learning and self-improvement. Psychologist Carol Dweck’s concept of the “growth mindset” highlights that individuals who believe their abilities can develop through effort are more likely to feel fulfilled and content. They derive happiness from the process of growth, not merely from achieving fixed goals.

Gratitude plays an equally crucial role in fostering long-term happiness. By regularly practicing gratitude, individuals shift their focus from what they lack to what they already have, fostering a sense of contentment. Studies show that people who cultivate gratitude tend to be more optimistic, have stronger immune systems, and experience lower levels of stress. This positive mental framing enables individuals to find joy even in challenging circumstances, as they remain anchored in appreciation and resilience.

However, happiness is not a solitary pursuit. Research consistently shows that social connections and meaningful relationships are key to sustained well-being. In the next section, we will explore the essential role that relationships play in contributing to our happiness, illustrating that we find joy in our interactions with others.



## Social Connections and Relationships

Human beings are inherently social creatures, and the quality of our relationships plays a significant role in shaping our happiness. Studies in psychology and sociology consistently show that strong social connections, whether with family, friends, or community, are among the most powerful predictors of long-term well-being. Positive relationships provide emotional support, a sense of belonging, and opportunities for shared experiences, all of which contribute to a fulfilling life. Harvard's famous "Grant Study," which tracked participants for over 75 years, found that close relationships, more than wealth or fame, are what keep people happy throughout their lives. They buffer against life's adversities and promote mental and physical health.

Acts of kindness and compassion also strengthen social bonds, enhancing our own happiness while uplifting others. When we invest time and effort in building meaningful relationships, we experience joy not just in our achievements but also in the shared journey with others. These connections remind us that happiness is found in moments of togetherness and mutual support.

However, modern society often equates happiness with personal success and achievements. In the next section, we will explore how the perception of happiness tied to success can be limiting and why redefining success may unlock a deeper sense of contentment.

### Happiness and Success: A Shift in Perception

In modern society, success is often seen as the key to happiness, with many believing that financial wealth, career milestones, or social status will eventually lead to lasting joy. However, this perception can be misleading. Research shows that while achievements and material wealth may provide temporary pleasure, they do not guarantee long-term happiness. Psychologists call this the "hedonic treadmill," where individuals quickly adapt to new accomplishments, only to seek the next goal, perpetually postponing happiness.

True happiness, instead, lies in redefining success not by external metrics but by personal growth, well-being, and alignment with one's values. This shift in perception helps us see success as a byproduct of living a meaningful and purpose-driven life. When success is viewed in terms of learning, relationships, and self-fulfilment, the journey itself becomes more rewarding than any singular achievement. As a result, happiness can flourish regardless of societal benchmarks.

This perspective becomes even more important in times of adversity, when traditional forms of success may feel unattainable. In the next section, we will explore how resilience and acceptance during difficult times allow us to find happiness even in the face of challenges, reinforcing the idea that happiness is the path, not the outcome.

### Happiness in Adversity: Resilience and Acceptance

Happiness is often perceived as being tied to favourable circumstances, but true contentment can thrive even in the face of adversity. Resilience and acceptance are key to navigating life's inevitable challenges. Resilience allows individuals to bounce back from setbacks, while acceptance helps them embrace situations they cannot control, finding peace in the present rather than in a future free of hardship. Viktor Frankl, a Holocaust survivor and psychiatrist, famously highlighted this when he wrote about finding meaning and

even moments of joy amidst extreme suffering. His philosophy shows that happiness can emerge from how we respond to life's trials rather than from avoiding them.

Building resilience involves maintaining a positive outlook, seeking support from relationships, and learning from challenges. Acceptance does not mean surrendering to difficulties, but rather recognizing that suffering is part of life's journey, and joy can still be cultivated despite it. These qualities help us grow through adversity, transforming hardship into a pathway for deeper fulfilment.

This idea extends beyond the individual, influencing how societies approach well-being. While many nations prioritize economic growth, this doesn't always equate to happiness. In the next section, we will examine the balance between economic development and overall well-being, and how nations can prioritize happiness at a broader level.

### Economic Development vs. Well-being: A National Perspective

The pursuit of economic development has traditionally been viewed as synonymous with progress and societal well-being. However, this perspective is increasingly being challenged by research indicating that higher GDP does not automatically correlate with greater happiness. While economic growth can provide resources and opportunities, it often overlooks critical factors contributing to overall well-being, such as mental health, environmental sustainability, and social cohesion. Countries like Bhutan have pioneered a shift in focus from Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to Gross National Happiness (GNH), recognizing that true prosperity encompasses not only economic indicators but also the quality of life and happiness of their citizens.

In many developed nations, despite significant wealth, issues like loneliness, stress, and disconnection reveal a gap between economic success and personal fulfilment. Policymakers are beginning to understand that fostering social connections, community engagement, and environmental stewardship can enhance well-being alongside economic growth.

As nations navigate this complex landscape, a holistic approach that prioritizes happiness and quality of life becomes essential. This transition leads us to consider the importance of sustainable living, which plays a crucial role in fostering happiness. In the next section, we will explore how sustainable practices contribute not only to environmental health but also to a deeper sense of fulfilment and community well-being.

### Sustainable Living and Happiness

Sustainable living is increasingly recognized as a vital pathway to happiness, intertwining environmental responsibility with personal fulfilment. As individuals and communities embrace practices that prioritize ecological health, they often experience a profound sense of purpose and connection to the world around them. Engaging in sustainable activities, such as growing one's own food, reducing waste, or participating in community initiatives, fosters a sense of belonging and promotes mental well-being.

Research indicates that people who actively engage in sustainable practices report higher levels of life satisfaction, as these actions resonate with their values and contribute to a greater good. Furthermore, sustainable living encourages mindfulness, prompting individuals to appreciate the present



moment and cultivate gratitude for the resources they have. This harmonious relationship between happiness and sustainability highlights that well-being is deeply connected to how we care for our environment and each other. By prioritizing sustainable choices, we not only contribute to the planet's health but also enhance our own sense of happiness

and fulfilment.

As we reflect on the journey toward happiness, it becomes clear that embracing sustainable living is part of a broader philosophy: happiness is not merely a goal to be achieved but a path to be walked daily, rich with purpose and interconnectedness.



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## “THE EMPIRES OF THE FUTURE WILL BE THE EMPIRES OF THE MIND”

The phrase “The empires of the future will be the empires of the mind” was famously coined by Winston Churchill, the British statesman, in a 1943 Harvard speech. It alluded to a profound shift in global power dynamics, suggesting that future dominance would not be determined by territorial conquest or physical might but by intellectual and ideological prowess. This statement has grown in relevance over time, as technological advancements, knowledge economies, and intellectual capital have become the primary drivers of global influence in the 21st century. This essay explores this concept through various lenses: historical context, the role of education, the knowledge economy, digital transformation, and the geopolitical ramifications of intellectual dominance.

### **Historical Context: From Empires of Land to Empires of the Mind**

For centuries, empires were built on territorial expansion, colonialism, and the domination of physical space. The British, Roman, Ottoman, and Mongol empires rose to power through military conquest, resource extraction, and control over vast geographical regions. The idea of empire was historically synonymous with physical dominance, control of trade routes, and access to resources like gold, spices, and later oil. However, the two World Wars in the 20th century shattered this notion. Colonial powers were weakened, and many of their colonies gained independence. The post-war world saw the rise of ideological battles, particularly during the Cold War, where the United States and the Soviet Union vied for global influence through the spread of ideas, economic models, and military alliances.

The Cold War marked the beginning of a shift toward “empires of the mind.” Instead of conquering land, the superpowers aimed to win over hearts and minds through propaganda, cultural diplomacy, and economic aid. The battle was not for territory but for ideological supremacy, between democracy and communism. The eventual collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 signaled the triumph of one set of ideas over another. It was clear that intellectual influence and ideological commitment could be just as powerful as military might.

### **The Role of Education: Knowledge as Power**

One of the most critical aspects of building empires of the mind is the role of education. In today’s world, nations that invest in the intellectual development of their citizens tend to have more significant global influence. Countries like the United States, China, and Germany have become powerhouses in part because of their educational institutions and research capabilities. The quality of universities, research output, and the nurturing of intellectual talent has become a primary currency in the global arena.

Education is a tool for empowerment and a medium through which ideas are cultivated, disseminated, and adopted. Societies that prioritize education are more likely to innovate and solve complex challenges. For instance, countries like Finland, South Korea, and Singapore have invested heavily in their education systems and are now recognized for their high-performing economies despite their small geographical sizes. These nations have understood that their intellectual capital, rather than physical resources, will drive future growth.

Moreover, education is not just a national concern

but a global one. The rise of online education platforms, international student exchanges, and global collaboration in research means that ideas can travel across borders more easily than ever before. As a result, nations that open their doors to intellectual collaboration and prioritize innovation will likely have more substantial global influence.

### **Knowledge Economies: A New Form of Power**

The knowledge economy is one of the clearest manifestations of the “empires of the mind.” In a knowledge-based economy, intellectual assets such as data, research, and creativity are the primary drivers of economic growth. This is in stark contrast to the industrial age when physical resources like coal, steel, and oil were the backbone of global power.

In the modern era, companies like Google, Apple, Microsoft, and Amazon are examples of how intellectual capital has overtaken traditional industries in terms of economic value. These companies, built on ideas, innovation, and information, are now among the most valuable in the world. Their influence extends far beyond economic power; they shape public discourse, culture, and even political outcomes. The data they collect, the algorithms they develop, and the platforms they provide all contribute to their intellectual empire.

Moreover, the countries that are home to these corporations – primarily the United States – benefit immensely from their global reach. Through their technological advancements and intellectual output, these companies help extend the influence of their home countries without the need for physical expansion. In essence, they are modern-day imperial entities, not in the sense of territorial control, but in their ability to dominate global markets, culture, and information flows.

China’s rise as a global power further underscores the importance of intellectual capital in the modern world. Over the past few decades, China has transitioned from being the “world’s factory” to a leading innovator in artificial intelligence, 5G technology, and renewable energy. By prioritizing technological advancements and investing heavily in research and development, China is positioning itself as an intellectual superpower.

### **The Digital Age and the Empire of Data**

The digital revolution has brought the idea of “empires of the mind” into sharper focus. The rise of the internet, social media, and big data has made information the most valuable commodity of our time. The companies and countries that control information flows – through search engines, social media platforms, and cloud storage systems – hold immense power.

Data is often described as the new oil. However, unlike oil, data is not a finite resource. It can be generated, collected, and analyzed continuously, giving those who control it the ability to shape opinions, influence markets, and direct the course of public discourse. Companies like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube have become central to political campaigns, social movements, and even geopolitical conflicts, simply by controlling how information is disseminated and consumed. Furthermore, the ability to harness and analyze big data has given rise to new forms of control and influence. Governments and corporations can now use data analytics to predict



consumer behavior, target advertising, and even influence election outcomes. The 2016 U.S. presidential election and the Brexit referendum are prime examples of how data-driven strategies can shape the political landscape. As a result, nations and corporations that excel in data collection and analysis are effectively building empires of the mind, influencing the thoughts, beliefs, and actions of billions of people around the world.

### Intellectual Property and Geopolitics

In the modern world, intellectual property (IP) has become one of the most significant assets a nation or corporation can possess. The protection of patents, copyrights, and trademarks is crucial for economic growth, innovation, and global competitiveness. Countries that lead in research and development – like the U.S., Japan, and Germany – have built intellectual empires by protecting and leveraging their innovations.

The battle for intellectual property rights is also at the heart of global trade tensions, particularly between the United States and China. As China has rapidly risen as a technological power, accusations of IP theft and forced technology transfers have become central issues in U.S.-China relations. The global competition for intellectual dominance has now become one of the most critical arenas for geopolitical influence.

The growing importance of intellectual property underscores the broader shift from physical to intellectual dominance. In the past, nations fought over land, resources, and trade routes. Today, they are fighting over patents, technological standards, and control of global information flows. The future of geopolitics will increasingly be defined by who controls the most valuable intellectual assets.

### The Role of Soft Power

In addition to education, technology, and intellectual property, soft power plays a critical role in shaping the empires of the future. Soft power refers to a country's ability to influence others through culture, values, and diplomacy rather than military force. It is an essential component of an intellectual empire because it helps shape global perceptions and ideas.

The United States, for instance, has long wielded significant soft power through its cultural exports like Hollywood films, music, and popular culture. American

universities, think tanks, and media outlets also contribute to its soft power by shaping global discourse and thought. Even as the U.S. faces challenges to its hard power, its soft power remains a crucial tool for maintaining global influence.

Similarly, China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and its growing investments in cultural diplomacy reflect its understanding of the importance of soft power. China is investing in Confucius Institutes, media outreach, and international cooperation to build a more favorable global image. By promoting its culture, language, and development model, China is trying to extend its influence beyond its borders, further exemplifying the idea of an empire of the mind.

### Challenges to Intellectual Empires


While the concept of intellectual empires is compelling, it is not without challenges. The digital age has democratized access to information, but it has also given rise to misinformation, cyber warfare, and the erosion of privacy. The same tools that can be used to build intellectual empires can also be exploited to destabilize them.

The rise of artificial intelligence, automation, and surveillance technologies raises ethical questions about the use of intellectual power. Governments and corporations have unprecedented control over data, but this comes with concerns about privacy, civil liberties, and the potential for misuse. The empires of the future will need to navigate these challenges to ensure that intellectual dominance is used for the greater good, rather than for control and manipulation.

### Conclusion: The Ascendancy of the Mind

In conclusion, the phrase "The empires of the future will be the empires of the mind" aptly captures the evolving nature of power in the 21st century. Physical territory, military might, and natural resources are no longer the primary determinants of global influence. Instead, education, intellectual capital, data, and soft power are shaping the future of global dominance.

As the world becomes more interconnected through technology and the flow of information, the nations and corporations that invest in intellectual development, innovation, and global collaboration will be the ones to shape the future. In the end, the true empires of tomorrow will be built not on conquest but on the power of ideas, knowledge, and the mind.

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## THE TRUE TEST OF CHARACTER: POWER AND ITS INFLUENCE ON HUMAN NATURE

The quote “Nearly all men can stand adversity, but to test the character, give him power” underscores the profound complexities of human nature, particularly in how individuals respond to power dynamics. Adversity often reveals resilience and strength, showcasing the ability to endure hardships. However, power acts as a magnifying lens, exposing deeper facets of character. When individuals are placed in positions of authority, their true values, ethics, and moral compass become evident.

Power can corrupt, leading some to exploit their positions for personal gain, while others may rise to the occasion, using their influence to foster positive change. This duality in human response illustrates that character is not merely about how one handles difficulties, but also how one navigates the responsibilities and temptations of power. The essence of this quote invites reflection on leadership, accountability, and integrity, suggesting that the true measure of a person lies in their actions when they possess the means to affect change, for better or worse. Understanding this dynamic helps us evaluate leaders and individuals more critically, recognizing that the influence of power can shape not only outcomes but also the very nature of humanity itself. Adversity tests resilience and reveals strength, often shaping a person's character through challenges and hardships. In contrast, power serves as a crucial test of integrity, exposing true values and ethics. When individuals face adversity, they may develop empathy and determination; however, when given power, they might either exploit it for personal gain or harness it to enact positive change. The interplay between adversity and power highlights that character is not solely defined by enduring difficulties but also by how one wields influence and responsibility. Ultimately, these experiences profoundly shape individual behaviour and moral integrity.

Adversity often serves as a catalyst for personal growth, prompting individuals to develop resilience, determination, and strength. Faced with challenges, people learn to navigate difficulties, adapting their strategies and attitudes to overcome obstacles. This process fosters a deeper understanding of their capabilities and instills a sense of purpose. As they confront hardships, individuals often discover inner resources and support networks they may not have recognized before. The experience of overcoming adversity not only builds character but also enhances problem-solving skills and emotional intelligence, empowering individuals to face future challenges with greater confidence and tenacity.

Historical figures like Nelson Mandela exemplified resilience and determination by enduring 27 years in prison while fighting against apartheid in South Africa, ultimately emerging as a unifying leader. Similarly, Anne Frank's bravery in documenting her life during the Holocaust reflects immense strength and hope in the face of unimaginable adversity. In contemporary times, Malala Yousafzai embodies courage and determination after surviving an assassination attempt for advocating girls' education in Pakistan, becoming a global symbol for education rights. These individuals demonstrate how admirable qualities can shine through challenges, inspiring others to persevere and advocate for change.

While adversity often reveals an individual's strength,

it is a universal experience that many people face and can ultimately overcome. Challenges such as personal loss, health struggles, or socio-economic difficulties are part of the human condition, and they can affect anyone regardless of background. The process of enduring hardships fosters growth and resilience, enabling individuals to develop coping mechanisms and support systems. By sharing their experiences, people can inspire one another, reinforcing the idea that overcoming adversity is not only possible but also a common journey that shapes character and fosters a deeper understanding of life's complexities.

Power can be understood in multiple contexts. In politics, it refers to the authority to make decisions, enforce laws, and govern society, often held by elected officials or institutions. Socially, power manifests in the ability to influence relationships, norms, and group dynamics, impacting societal structures and behaviours. Economically, power involves control over resources, wealth distribution, and market influence, determining one's ability to affect economic conditions. On a personal level, power represents individual agency and autonomy, encompassing the capacity to make choices, pursue goals, and assert one's identity in various situations, shaping one's life experience and relationships.

The psychological and moral challenges of power are significant, often leading to a temptation to misuse authority. Individuals in positions of power may experience pressure to prioritize self-interest over the common good, risking ethical compromises. This power dynamic can foster a sense of entitlement, leading to decisions that serve personal agendas rather than societal needs. Additionally, the isolation that often accompanies power can distort perceptions, making it difficult to empathize with others' experiences. Navigating these challenges requires a strong moral compass, self-awareness, and accountability, as the ability to wield influence responsibly is crucial for fostering trust and integrity in leadership.

Historical figures like Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela exemplified responsible power, using their influence to advocate for justice, equality, and non-violence. Gandhi's philosophy of peaceful resistance inspired millions, while Mandela's leadership helped unify South Africa post-apartheid, emphasizing reconciliation over revenge. In contrast, figures such as dictators like Joseph Stalin or corporate moguls like Enron's Jeffrey Skilling illustrate how power can corrupt. Their authoritarian regimes and unethical practices prioritized self-interest and control over the welfare of others, leading to oppression, suffering, and systemic failures. This stark contrast highlights the profound impact of ethical leadership versus the dangers of unchecked ambition and authority.

The examples of Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela contrast sharply with dictators like Stalin and corporate moguls like Jeffrey Skilling, illustrating how power can elevate or degrade character. Gandhi and Mandela harnessed their power to promote justice and unity, embodying integrity and selflessness, which enhanced their legacies and inspired positive change. In contrast, Stalin and Skilling abused their authority, prioritizing personal gain and control, leading to widespread harm and societal discord. This comparison underscores that while power can empower individuals to effect meaningful change and uphold moral



values, it can equally lead to corruption and moral decay when wielded irresponsibly.

Contemporary leaders like Jacinda Ardern, former Prime Minister of New Zealand, exemplified responsible power by prioritizing public health and well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic, showcasing empathy and transparency. In contrast, figures like Elon Musk have faced scrutiny over their influence in business and social media, where decisions can significantly impact public discourse and markets, raising ethical concerns. Additionally, political leaders like Donald Trump have illustrated the complexities of power, with actions that polarized opinions and sparked debates about accountability and ethics. These examples demonstrate the diverse challenges leaders face when navigating the responsibilities and consequences of their power.

Accountability, transparency, and ethical standards are crucial in ensuring responsible power exercise. Accountability mandates that leaders and organizations answer for their actions, fostering a culture of responsibility and trust. Transparency allows stakeholders to access information about decision-making processes, reducing the likelihood of corruption and misuse of power. Ethical standards establish a framework for acceptable behaviour, guiding leaders in prioritizing the common good over personal interests. Together, these elements create a system of checks and balances that encourages ethical leadership, promotes integrity, and enhances public confidence. By upholding these principles, leaders can wield power effectively and positively impact society.

Checks and balances are essential in preventing the abuse of power by ensuring that no single entity or individual can dominate decision-making processes. This system divides authority among different branches of government or organizational structures, enabling oversight and accountability. By requiring collaboration and mutual consent for significant actions, checks and balances create a framework that protects against authoritarianism and corruption. They promote transparency and encourage ethical behaviour by holding leaders accountable to both the law and the public. Ultimately, this mechanism fosters trust in institutions and reinforces the principles of democracy, safeguarding individual rights and promoting fair governance. Psychological theories on power highlight its profound effects on behaviour and decision-making. Social dominance theory posits that individuals in power often prioritize their interests, which can lead to discriminatory behaviours against subordinate groups. The power paradox suggests that power can enhance prosocial behaviour initially but may lead to entitlement and decreased empathy over time. Additionally, the theory of power dynamics explains how power imbalances influence interpersonal relationships, often resulting in assertiveness or aggression from those in authority. Overall, these theories

illustrate that power significantly shapes individual behaviour, decision-making processes, and interpersonal interactions, often leading to complex moral and ethical dilemmas.

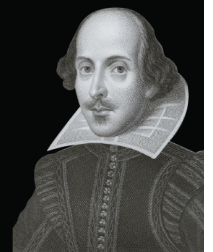
Studies demonstrate that power can enhance confidence and risk-taking while sometimes fostering unethical behaviour. Research by Galinsky et al. (2003) found that individuals primed with power displayed greater assertiveness and willingness to take risks in decision-making. Another study by Keltner et al. (2003) suggested that power can diminish empathy, leading individuals to engage in self-serving or unethical behaviours. Additionally, a study by Lammers et al. (2011) indicated that those in power are more likely to justify unethical actions, believing that their status affords them special privileges. These findings underscore the complex relationship between power, behaviour, and morality. Self-awareness and moral integrity are crucial in managing the influence of power effectively. Self-awareness enables individuals to recognize their motivations, biases, and the potential consequences of their actions, fostering accountability and responsible decision-making. By understanding how power can distort perceptions and lead to unethical behaviour, leaders can remain grounded and make choices that prioritize the common good. Moral integrity acts as a guiding principle, ensuring that decisions align with ethical standards and societal values. Together, these qualities empower individuals to wield power judiciously, promoting trust, transparency, and positive outcomes, ultimately mitigating the risks of power corruption and abuse.

While adversity undeniably tests resilience by challenging individuals to endure and grow through hardships, power serves as a more revealing test of character. Adversity often elicits responses rooted in survival, prompting individuals to draw on inner strengths and support systems. In contrast, power offers the opportunity to shape outcomes and influence others, exposing true values and ethics. It can amplify both noble intentions and darker impulses, revealing how individuals prioritize their interests over the common good. Thus, the way one navigates the complexities of power ultimately provides a deeper insight into their character, highlighting integrity or potential for corruption.

Cultivating ethical leadership and personal integrity in positions of power is vital for fostering trust and positive change within society. Ethical leaders set the standard for behaviour, inspiring others to act responsibly and prioritize the common good. Personal integrity serves as a moral compass, guiding decision-making and ensuring accountability, even in the face of temptations associated with power. As leaders navigate complex challenges, their commitment to ethical principles can mitigate the risks of corruption and abuse, ultimately enhancing the well-being of their communities. By prioritizing integrity and ethical leadership, we can create a more just and equitable society for all.

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

- WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE





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# **MODEL QUESTION PAPER-MCQ**





**Q1.** Consider the following statements.

1. Agricultural practices release significant carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.
2. Organic farming produces more greenhouse gas emissions than conventional farming methods.
3. Livestock production contributes global greenhouse gas emissions annually.

Which of the above statement/s is/ are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

**Q2.** Consider the following statements:

Statement-I: Global warming significantly contributes to rising sea levels.

Statement-II: Global warming cause thermal expansion of seawater and melting polar ice sheets.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- A. Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I.
- B. Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is not the correct explanation for Statement-I.
- C. Statement-I is correct but Statement-II is incorrect.
- D. Statement-I is incorrect but Statement-II is correct.

**Q3.** What is the primary objective of the Loss and Damage Fund established under international climate agreements?

- A. To provide financial support for renewable energy projects in developing countries.
- B. To compensate nations for the impacts of climate change that cannot be mitigated or adapted to.
- C. To fund research and development for carbon capture technologies.
- D. To facilitate technology transfer for climate change mitigation.

**Q4.** What is the theme of the International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies 2024?

- A. Clean Air for All
- B. Air Quality Awareness
- C. Clean Air and Healthy Lives
- D. Invest in CleanAirNow

**Q5.** With reference to Plastic Waste Management (Amendment) Rules, 2024 often seen in news, consider the following statements.

1. All States/UTs have formed Special Task Forces for eliminating single-use plastics and improving waste management.
2. A National Level Taskforce has been constituted by the Ministry to coordinate elimination efforts for single-use plastics.

Identify the correct statement/s.

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

**Q6.** Which of the following statements correctly describes the Fit for 55 Package?

- A. The Fit for 55 Package is an EU initiative aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030.
- B. The Fit for 55 Package focuses solely on increasing

fossil fuel production to meet the energy demands of European countries.

C. The Fit for 55 Package aims to enhance carbon emissions by promoting new coal-fired power plants across Europe.

D. The Fit for 55 Package includes measures to ensure energy independence through extensive investments in traditional energy sources.

**Q7.** Consider the following statements regarding Myristica swamp forests.

1. These forest types are exclusively found in the northern regions of India.

2. They play a crucial role in carbon sequestration and maintaining local hydrology.

Identify the correct statement/s.

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

**Q8.** Consider the following statements:

Statement-I: Graphene exhibits remarkable superconducting properties.

Statement-II: Graphene unique two-dimensional structure allows for low resistance and high critical temperatures.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- A. Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I.
- B. Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is not the correct explanation for Statement-I.
- C. Statement-I is correct but Statement-II is incorrect.
- D. Statement-I is incorrect but Statement-II is correct.

**Q9.** INS Malpe and Mulki, which have been frequently in the news, are classified as:

- A. Frigates
- B. Destroyers
- C. Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft
- D. Aircraft Carriers

**Q10.** With reference to Double Asteroid Redirection Test (DART) sometimes seen in news, consider the following statements.

1. It is a NASA mission designed to test asteroid deflection techniques using kinetic impact.

2. The target for DART is the binary asteroid system Didymos, with a moonlet named Dimorphos.

3. DART's successful impact on Dimorphos will be measured by observing orbital changes around Didymos.

How many of the above statement/s is/ are correct?

- A. Only One
- B. Only Two
- C. All the Three
- D. None of the above

**Q11.** India will establish its first silicon carbide manufacturing facility in which of the following states?

- A. Gujarat
- B. Tamil Nadu
- C. Maharashtra
- D. Odisha

**Q12.** The Global Cybersecurity Index 2024 was released by which of the following organizations?



- A. World Economic Forum
- B. International Telecommunication Union
- C. United Nations
- D. International Organization for Standardization

**Q13.** With reference to AI Tokens, consider the following statements.

1. They can be the units of digital currency used in artificial intelligence applications.
2. They can be used for transactions within decentralized platforms utilizing artificial intelligence.
3. These tokens can enhance security and transparency in digital ecosystems involving artificial intelligence.

Which of the above statement/s is/ are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

**Q14.** The 'Bhaskar Platform', often seen in the news, is related to which of the following?

- A. Enhancing India's agricultural productivity
- B. Promoting renewable energy sources
- C. Enhancing India's startup ecosystem
- D. Advancing space research initiatives

**Q15.** Which of the following countries was the first to eliminate leprosy, receiving verification from the World Health Organization (WHO)?

- A. India
- B. Brazil
- C. Jordan
- D. Madagascar

**Q16.** With reference to the 'Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC)', consider the following statements.

1. The Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) is a statutory body constituted through an amendment to the Banking Regulation (Amendment) Act, 2019.
2. The Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) was created to strengthening and institutionalizing the mechanism for maintaining financial stability, enhancing inter-regulatory coordination and promoting financial sector development.
3. The Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) was chaired by the Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

Which among the above statement(s) is / are NOT true?

- a. 1 and 2 only
- b. 1 and 3 only
- c. 2 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3

**Q17.** With reference to the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), consider the following statements:

1. The decisions and minutes of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meetings are published after each meeting.
2. The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) insulate the formulation of monetary policy from undue influence of the government.
3. The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) is accountable to the Parliament and public for its decisions.

Which among the above statement(s) is / are true?

- a. 1 only
- b. 1 and 3 only
- c. 2 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3

**Q18.** With reference to the VIVAD SE VISHWAS – Scheme, consider the following statements:

1. The scheme introduced in India to settle pending indirect tax disputes.
2. Taxpayers who availed of the scheme were given immunity from prosecution for offences related to the disputed tax demand.
3. Taxpayers who availed of the scheme were also not required to pay any interest or penalty.

Which among the above statement(s) is / are true?

- a. 1 only
- b. 1 and 3 only
- c. 2 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3

**Q19.** With reference to the Services Trade Restrictiveness Index (STRI), consider the following statements:

1. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development release the Services Trade Restrictiveness Index on a biennale basis.
2. India is ranked consistently at the top of Index on a regular basis.

Which among the above statement(s) regarding the Services Trade Restrictiveness Index (STRI) is / are true?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

**Q20.** With reference to the transfer pricing, consider the following statements:

1. Transfer pricing refers to the pricing of transactions between unrelated Multi-National Enterprises (MNEs) involving goods, services, intangibles, or financing arrangements.
2. The main objective of transfer pricing is to ensure transactions between related entities within a Multi-National Enterprises (MNEs) reflect the prices that would be charged between independent entities in similar circumstances.

Which among the above statement(s) is / are true?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

**Q21.** With reference to the Contingency Fund of India, sometimes seen in news, consider the following statements.

1. Article 267 of the Constitution mandates formation of a corpus under Contingency Fund of India to deal with any emergency situation.
2. The Contingency Fund of India is placed at the disposal of the Union Council of Ministers.

Select the correct statement/s from the code given below.

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

**Q22.** Consider the following statements regarding Negative-yield bonds.

1. Negative-yield bonds are debt instruments that offer



to pay the investor a maturity amount lower than the issue price of the bond.

2. Negative-yield bonds are generally issued by central banks or governments.
3. Negative-yield bonds attract investments during times of stress and uncertainty.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 1 and 3 only
- c. 2 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3

**Q23.** With reference to the Ways and Means Advances (WMA), consider the following statements:

1. Ways and Means Advances (WMAs) is the temporary loan facility provided by the RBI to meet any temporary mismatches in the receipts and payments of the Centre and State Governments.
2. The interest rate for Ways and Means Advances (WMA) is currently charged at the Bank rate.

Which among the above statement(s) is / are true?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

**Q24.** Consider the following statements regarding the significance of the National Land Monetization Corporation (NLMC):

1. Generate revenues by monetizing unused and under-used of non-core assets.
2. Enable productive utilization of these under-utilized assets
3. Speed up the strategic disinvestment process of Government owned CPSEs.

Which among the above statement(s) is /are true?

- a. 1 only
- b. 1 and 3 only
- c. 2 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3

**Q25.** With reference to the National Asset Reconstruction Company Ltd, consider the following statements:

1. It is a specialized Financial Institution (FI) to manage and recover Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) (bad loans) of ₹ 1000 crore and above.
2. It is a joint initiative of Public and Private sector banks, with majority-stake owned by State-owned banks.
3. It comprises of an Asset Reconstruction Company (ARC) and an Asset Management Company (AMC).

Which among the above statement(s) is / are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 1 and 3 only
- c. 2 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3

**Q26.** With reference to the Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs), consider the following:

1. The system of D-SIBs was adopted following the recommendation of Nachiket Mor Committee.
2. Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs) need to maintain a higher share of risk-weighted assets as tier-I equity.
3. Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs)

needs to have assets that exceed 2 % of the domestic GDP. Which among the above statement(s) is / are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 1 and 3 only
- c. 2 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3

**Q27.** Consider the following statements.

1. Interests received on loans extended.
2. Proceeding from the disinvestments
3. Taxation receipts.

Which of the above constitutes the part of the 'Revenue receipts'?

- a. 1 and 2 only
- b. 1 and 3 only
- c. 2 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3

**Q28.** With reference to the 'initial public offering (IPO)' consider the following statements.

1. It is the process by which a private company can go public by sale of its stocks to general public.
2. After listing on the stock exchange, the company becomes a publicly-traded company and the shares of the firm can be traded freely in the open market.
3. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) did not allow large companies selling shares to the public for the first time to offer a smaller portion of their stock in initial public offerings (IPOs).

Which of the above statement(s) is / are correct?

- a. 1 and 2 only
- b. 1 and 3 only
- c. 2 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3

**Q29.** India has recently imposed anti-dumping duty on the Chinese antibacterial drug Ciprofloxacin Hydrochloride. With reference to the anti-dumping duty, consider the following statements:

1. The anti-dumping duty is meant to guard the domestic industry against sanitary and phyto-sanitary risks posed by the neighbouring country.
2. The duty was imposed following a recommendation by the commerce ministry's investigation arm Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR).

Which among the above statement(s) is / are true?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 and 2

**Q30.** With reference to the term 'legal tender', consider the following statements.

1. Legal Tender is a coin or a banknote, legally tenderable for discharge of debt or obligation.
2. Every banknote issued by Reserve Bank of India, unless withdrawn from circulation, shall be legal tender at any place in India in payment or on account for the amount expressed therein, and shall be guaranteed by the State and Central Government.

Which among the above statement(s) is / are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2





d. Neither 1 nor 2

**Q31.** With reference to the 'Macaulay Minutes', consider the following:

1. Proposed and believed in "Downward filtration theory".
2. Focussed on primary education.
3. Supported promotion of education in native language.

Which among the above is / are recommendation under a 'Macaulay Minutes'?

- a. 1 only
- b. 1 and 3 only
- c. 2 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3

**Q32.** Consider the following:

1. The President of India can return a Money Bill duly passed by a State Legislature reserved by the State Governor under Article 201 of the Indian Constitution.

2. A law enacted by a State Legislature which has received assent of the President of India upon reserved by the State Governor can override laws enacted by the Parliament of India in event of inconsistencies in provisions between laws enacted between the Parliament of India and State Legislature within the territory of the State.

Which among the above is / are true?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

**Q33.** Who was hailed as the 'Liberator of the Press' abolishing all restrictions on vernacular press?

- a. Sir Charles Metcalfe
- b. Lord Lytton
- c. Lord Ripon
- d. Lord Dalhousie

**Q34.** Recently, Australia has categorised koalas as endangered species, with reference to the Koalas, consider the following statements:

1. Koalas is an arboreal herbivorous marsupial species.
2. The natural habitat of Koalas extends from the rainforest in the Southeast Asia to temperate forests in Australia.

Which among the above statement(s) is / are true?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

**Q35.** Nayanars are Bhakti saints who are Devotees of Shiva. With reference to 'Nayanars', consider the following statements:

1. Nayanars rejected the hierarchical caste system and believed in devotion to God
2. Divya Prabandham, the sacred anthology of Tamil Shaiva Siddhanta compiled by Nambi and other saints
3. Saiva Nayanars Saints, Nambi and others compiled Tamilmurai / Tamil Veda, Shiva devotional poets

Which among the above statement(s) is / are true?

- a. 1 and 2 only
- b. 1 and 3 only
- c. 2 and 3 only

d. 1, 2 and 3

**Q36.** The term 'Extended Producers Responsibility (EPR)' is often heard with regard to

- a. Waste management
- b. Distributed Ledger Technology
- c. Biofuels manufacture
- d. None of the above

**Q37.** With reference to the 'National Adaptation Fund on Climate Change', consider the following statements:

1. The National Adaptation Fund on Climate Change was meant to meet the cost of adaptation to climate change for the State and Union Territories of India under Kyoto Protocol, particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change.

2. The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change manages the National Adaptation Fund on Climate Change.

Which among the above statement(s) is / are true?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

**Q38.** With reference to the Central Bank Digital Currency often seen in news, consider the following statements.

1. Fiat currency in an electronic form that would appear as liability on the balance sheet of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

2. The Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) uses Distributed Ledger Technology (DLT) for facilitating transactions.

Which among the above statement(s) is / are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

**Q39.** 'Montreux Record' often seen in news is related with

- a. Keystone species
- b. Migratory species
- c. Wetlands
- d. Ocean acidification

**Q40.** Consider the following countries:

1. Australia
2. UAE
3. USA.

Which among the above is / are member(s) of the 'AUKUS' alliance?

- a. 1 and 2 only
- b. 1 and 3 only
- c. 2 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3

**Q41.** 'Nord Stream 2' pipeline recently in news is running through the

- a. Baltic Sea
- b. Red Sea
- c. Black Sea
- d. None of the above

**Q42.** With reference to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) often seen in news, consider the following statements:

1. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations (UN).



2. The headquarters of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) is located at Geneva, Switzerland.

Which of the above statement(s) is / are correct?

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

**Q43.** Consider the following countries:

1. Iran
2. Iraq
3. Libya
4. Qatar

Which among the above is / are member(s) of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)?

- 1, 2 and 3 only
- 1, 2 and 4 only
- 1, 3 and 4 only
- 2, 3 and 4 only

**Q44.** Consider the following statements:

1. The Union Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers serves as the nodal ministry of the Pradhan Mantri Jan-Aushadhi Yojana (PMBJP)

2. The mandate of the Pradhan Mantri Jan-Aushadhi Yojana (PMBJP) is to provide quality medicines at affordable prices to the masses through the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Kendra.

Which among the above statement(s) regarding the Pradhan Mantri Jan-Aushadhi Yojana (PMBJP) is / are true?

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

**Q45.** Consider the following statements:

1. Voluntarily relinquishing membership of the political party.

2. Independent Member joining a political party after elections.

3. Nominated House Members joining any political party before the expiry of 6 months from the date of assuming office.

Which among the following category is a ground for disqualification of members under the Anti-Defection Act, 1952?

- 1 and 2 only
- 1 and 3 only
- 2 and 3 only
- 1, 2 and 3

**Q46.** With reference to 'Municipal Performance Index(MPI),2020', consider the following statements:

1. The Municipal Performance Index (MPI),2020 is published by the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs

2. The Municipal Performance Index (MPI),2020 is a framework to assess and analyse the performance of Indian Municipalities having over a million population only based on

their defined set of functions

Which among the above statement(s) is / are true?

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

**Q47.** Following is a description of an organisation: It is the only tripartite agency of the United Nations Organisation (UNO). The agency brings together governments, employers and workers of 187 member States, to set labour standards, develop policies and devise programmes promoting decent work for all women and men. Identify the organisation:

- Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)
- International Labour Organisation
- International Monetary Fund
- International Court of Justice

**Q48.** With reference to the 'MILAN', consider the following statements:

1. The Indian Navy hosted MILAN 2022 as a biennale multilateral naval exercise at Kochi.

2. The inaugural edition of the MILAN exercise was held in 2000.

Which among the above statement(s) is /are true?

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

**Q49.** With reference to the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), consider the following statements:

1. Set global standards in anti-Money Laundering (ML) activities.

2. Combat terrorist financing

3. Counter the financing of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

Which among the above is / are role of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF)?

- 1 and 2 only
- 1 and 3 only
- 2 and 3 only
- 1, 2 and 3

**Q50.** With reference to Wetlands, consider the following pairs:

1. Tso Kar Wetland Complex - Ladakh

2. Bhoj Wetlands - Madhya Pradesh

3. Lonar Lake - Maharashtra

4. Loktak Lake - Meghalaya

Which among the above pair(s) of wetlands is / are correctly matched?

- 1, 2 and 3 only
- 1, 2 and 4 only
- 1, 3 and 4 only
- 2, 3 and 4 only



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16	36	56	76	96
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**SPACE FOR ROUGH WORK**





**SAMKALP  
VEDHIK  
CURRENT AFFAIRS  
SEPTEMBER 2024**



**SAMKALP**

**SAMKALP BHAWAN**

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 4<sup>th</sup> Floor,  
Ravipuram, Pin - 682 015



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IAS ACADEMY  
*The New Learning Mantra*