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The New Learning Mantra

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 red and black patterned 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 is a textured, brownish-gold surface with faint, repeating patterns.

HISTORY- ARTS AND CULTURE



**THE UNIQUE LEGACY OF SHYAM
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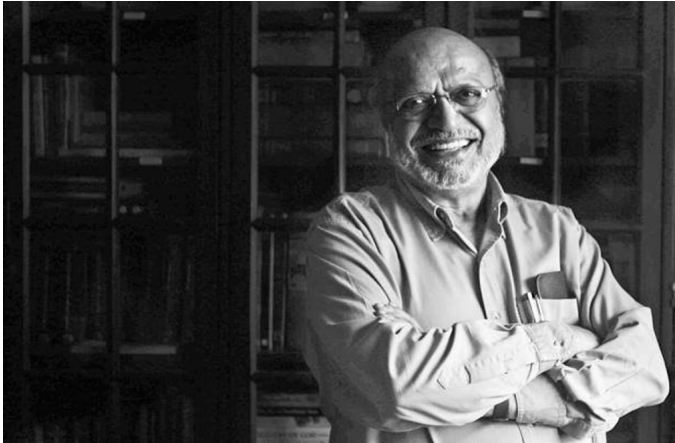
**THE AJMER DARGAH AND KHWAJA
MOINUDDIN CHISHTI: A HISTORICAL
OVERVIEW AND RECENT CONTROVERSY**

**THE LEGACY OF KHWAJA MOINUDDIN
CHISHTI: A REVERED SUFI SAINT AND HIS
IMPACT ON INDIA**



The Unique Legacy of Shyam Benegal: Hallmarks of a Visionary Filmmaker

CONTEXT: The memorial for acclaimed filmmaker and writer Shyam Benegal took place on Saturday evening (December 28) at Mumbai's Y B Chavan Hall, celebrating his remarkable legacy of 24 feature films and over 40 documentaries. Benegal, aged 90, passed away in Mumbai.



1. Authenticity in Filmmaking

Shyam Benegal's films stand out for their commitment to authenticity. Drawing inspiration from Bengali cinema and the works of auteurs like Satyajit Ray and Ritwik Ghatak, Benegal emphasized realistic portrayals, both in aesthetics and storytelling. For example, his use of regional music through collaborations with Vanraj Bhatia brought cultural depth to his films, as seen in *Trikaal* (1985), which employed Goan folk songs to depict the region's essence under Portuguese rule. His films often addressed socio-political issues, such as the Telangana peasant movement, and were shot on real locations, reflecting raw struggles and social relevance.

2. Focus on Characters Over Stars

In Benegal's cinematic universe, characters always overshadowed actors. His films rejected the trope of the larger-than-life hero, instead prioritizing narratives over individual fame. Actors like Naseeruddin Shah, Shabana Azmi, and Om Puri became recurring collaborators, embodying

roles that defined his stories. Films like *Mandi* (1983) are remembered not for their heroines but for the vivid characters they portrayed, such as women navigating life in a Hyderabad brothel.

3. Social Relevance as the Core

Benegal's films delved deep into India's societal fabric, addressing issues like casteism (*Ankur*, 1974), exploitation of women (*Nishant*, 1975), and the struggles of farmers (*Arohan*, 1982). Like Italian Neorealism, his cinema acted as a mirror to the socio-economic realities of the time, questioning the post-independence narrative of resolved inequalities. This commitment to social critique persisted into the 1990s with films like *Mammo* (1994) and *Sardari Begum* (1996), which explored unspoken challenges of nation-building.

4. Progressive Representation of Women

Benegal redefined the portrayal of women in Indian cinema. Rejecting traditional archetypes like the self-sacrificing mother or mere glamour objects, his films featured strong, complex female characters. Movies such as *Ankur*, *Nishant*, and *Bhumika* (1977) examined the societal circumstances that constrained women rather than questioning their morality. This nuanced representation resonated with themes explored in Bengali literature and cinema, where the modern woman was often a focal point.

5. A Legacy of Realism and Commitment

Benegal's films bridged the gap between art and mainstream cinema, making powerful statements about India's socio-political landscape. Through his exploration of marginalization, subaltern struggles, and human resilience, his work not only entertained but also educated, provoking critical dialogues on issues often overlooked by mainstream cinema.

Shyam Benegal remains a beacon of authenticity, artistry, and social consciousness in Indian cinema, leaving behind a legacy that continues to inspire filmmakers and audiences alike.

Honoring the Legacy of Diwan Todar Mal and the Sahibzadas

CONTEXT: As Punjab gears up for the annual Shaheedi Jor Mela, a solemn event commemorating the martyrdom of the two younger sons of Guru Gobind Singh, efforts to restore the historic Jahaz Haveli, once home to Diwan Todar Mal, have gained momentum. This initiative, backed by the Punjab government, serves as a tribute to the rich history surrounding the sacrifice of the Sahibzadas and the extraordinary acts of Todar Mal, whose actions are etched in the annals of Sikh history.

Who Was Diwan Todar Mal?

Diwan Todar Mal, a wealthy merchant and former revenue official in Sirhind, played a pivotal role in preserving the dignity of Guru Gobind Singh's family during a time of





great adversity. After the Sahibzadas – Sahibzada Fateh Singh (9) and Sahibzada Zorawar Singh (7) – were bricked alive under the orders of Mughal governor Wazir Khan, Todar Mal overcame immense challenges to perform their last rites. Facing the governor’s outrageous demand to purchase cremation land using vertically placed gold coins, Todar Mal paid an exorbitant amount to secure a dignified cremation for the children and their grandmother, Mata Gujri.

The Tragic Execution of the Sahibzadas

The young Sahibzadas and their grandmother Mata Gujri were captured in Sirhind after being separated from Guru Gobind Singh. Despite being offered rewards and urged to convert to Islam, the boys displayed unwavering courage by refusing to renounce their faith. Consequently, they were executed by being bricked alive on December 13, 1704. Mata Gujri, devastated by the tragedy, passed away soon after.

Accounts of the incident, such as those in Koer Singh’s Gurbilas Patshahi Dasveen and Rattan Singh Bhangu’s Panth Prakash, narrate the events leading to their capture and execution. The martyrdom of the Sahibzadas sparked widespread outrage and later served as a rallying cry for resistance against Mughal rule, culminating in the defeat of Wazir Khan by Baba Banda Singh Bahadur in 1710.

Jahaz Haveli: A Symbol of Courage and Faith

Jahaz Haveli, the residence of Diwan Todar Mal in Sirhind, is an architectural marvel built with Nanakshahi bricks

and shaped like a ship. Despite its historical significance, the structure has faced neglect over the years. Efforts to restore it to its original grandeur, led by the Punjab government in collaboration with the SGPC and other organizations, are currently underway. Restoration plans aim to revive its historical significance using archival photographs as reference.

Commemorating the Sahibzadas

The Government of India declared December 26 as “Veer Baal Diwas” in 2022 to honor the bravery and sacrifice of Sahibzada Fateh Singh and Sahibzada Zorawar Singh. This annual observance serves as a reminder of their steadfast commitment to their faith and values, inspiring future generations.

The Challenge of Historical Dates

There remains some ambiguity surrounding the exact dates of the Sahibzadas’ execution due to differences between the lunar and Gregorian calendars. Historians note that the adoption of the Gregorian calendar by the British in 1752 introduced a discrepancy of 11 days, which continues to pose challenges for pinpointing historical events.

The restoration of Jahaz Haveli and the ongoing commemoration of the Sahibzadas’ sacrifice reflect a collective effort to preserve and honor Sikh heritage. These initiatives highlight the extraordinary courage of Diwan Todar Mal and the Sahibzadas, whose legacy remains a source of inspiration and reverence.

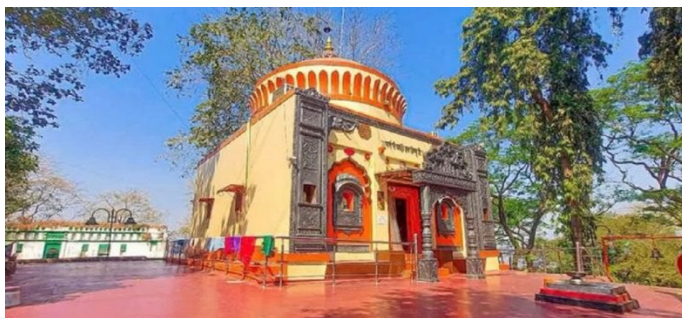
The Durgadi Fort Dispute: A Historical and Legal Saga of Maharashtra

CONTEXT: The Durgadi Fort in Maharashtra’s Kalyan has been at the center of a decades-long legal and communal dispute. The fort, significant for both Hindus and Muslims, has witnessed contested claims of ownership and worship rights. A recent court ruling has reignited tensions, affirming the Maharashtra government’s ownership of the site while dismissing the Muslim petitioners’ claims. This article delves into the historical and legal intricacies surrounding the Durgadi Fort.

Historical Overview of Durgadi Fort

Built in the 16th century under the Adil Shahi Sultanate, the Durgadi Fort was a prominent site in Kalyan, a bustling port town near Mumbai. The fort, covering approximately 70 acres, housed various structures, including a mosque, an eidgah, and later, a temple dedicated to Goddess Durga. Historical accounts, such as the 1892 Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, provide detailed descriptions of its architecture, including its prayer wall, mosque, and deep stone well.

In 1760, the Marathas captured the fort and transformed its character, renaming it Durgadi Killa and installing a wooden temple dedicated to Goddess Durga. The British subsequently took control in 1818, during which the site’s religious activities waned.



INDIA’S LARGEST ONLINE IAS COACHING ACADEMY



Celebrating Innovation, Stirring Controversy

CONTEXT: The Turner Prize, named after the renowned English painter JMW Turner, has been a cornerstone of contemporary art recognition since 1984. This year, Indian-origin artist Jasleen Kaur won the prestigious award for her exhibit reflecting her family's migration history to Scotland. While lauded for promoting innovative and rebellious art forms, the Turner Prize has also been a magnet for criticism and controversy.



The Essence of the Turner Prize

- **Origins and Legacy**

The prize honors JMW Turner, celebrated for his breathtaking landscapes and bold depictions of light. Established by the Patrons of New Art in 1984, it aims to foster interest in contemporary art and support Tate's acquisition of modern works.

- **Eligibility and Rewards**

The award, open to British artists or immigrants working in Britain, grants £25,000 to the winner and £10,000 to shortlisted candidates.

A Platform for the Unconventional

- **Championing Postmodern Art**

The Turner Prize often highlights postmodernism, showcasing conceptual and avant-garde works that challenge traditional norms. Notable examples include Tracey Emin's unmade bed and Marcel Duchamp's urinal sculpture.

- **Maverick Nominees and Winners**

Previous recipients have included groundbreaking artists like Anish Kapoor, whose works defy conventions and provoke thought.

Criticism and Controversy

- **Artistic Dissent**

The Stuckist movement opposes the prize's focus on conceptual art, advocating a return to traditional forms. Their protests highlight a perceived disconnect between Turner's painting legacy and the prize's avant-garde selections.

- **Commercial Bias**

Critics have pointed out links between prize winners and prominent London-based art dealers, accusing the prize of promoting art as a commodity rather than a cultural expression.

Impact on British Culture

- **Recognition and Mainstream Success**

The Turner Prize catapults artists into the spotlight, often raising the value of their work. However, this fame can bring unwelcome attention, as some winners have noted.

- **Public Reactions**

The award ceremony has witnessed controversial moments, such as Madonna's uncensored speech in 2001 and scathing comments from public figures like Culture Minister Kim Howells and Prince Charles, who critiqued the prize's artistic direction.

CONCLUSION: Art Beyond Boundaries

The Turner Prize remains a symbol of contemporary art's ability to challenge societal norms and provoke thought. While it has fueled debates over the definition of art, its significance in celebrating creativity and innovation is undeniable. Through its controversies and triumphs, the prize continues to shape the landscape of modern art.



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Nagaland's Hornbill Festival: Cultural Celebration Amidst Controversy

Introduction: Tradition Meets Modern Debate

The Hornbill Festival, a vibrant celebration of Nagaland's rich heritage, is currently under the spotlight, not just for its cultural grandeur but also for the debate surrounding liquor prohibition in the state. With the Nagaland government easing restrictions on Indian-made Foreign Liquor (IMFL) for the festival and contemplating the repeal of the Nagaland Liquor Total Prohibition (NLTP) Act, 1989, opposition from influential church groups has added complexity to the issue.



The Hornbill Festival: A Celebration of Naga Culture

• Origins and Purpose

Initiated in 2000 by the Nagaland government, the Hornbill Festival serves as a platform to showcase Naga heritage, foster unity among the 14 recognized tribes, and boost tourism. Held annually at Kisama Heritage Village, it integrates traditional festivals into one grand event.

• Tourist Magnet

The festival has grown into the state's largest public event and a significant tourist attraction. In 2023, it drew over 1.54 lakh visitors, including international tourists, underscoring its global appeal.

25 Years of Celebrating Naga Heritage

The Hornbill Festival started in 2000 as a modest three-day event in Kohima. Over the years, it has transformed into a significant 10-day tourism extravaganza for Nagaland. Visitors immerse themselves in tribal life, savor traditional cuisine, enjoy music and dance, and explore intricate local handicrafts. Around the mid-2000s, the festival moved to Kisama Heritage Village, a venue that accommodates a larger influx of tourists.

In its 25th year, the Hornbill Festival has become synonymous with Nagaland's presence on India's tourism map, showcasing the state's vibrant cultural heritage and dynamic traditions.

Major Highlights of the Hornbill Festival

1. Cultural Performances

The festival offers a window into the rich heritage of Nagaland. Visitors can witness traditional dances, tribal music, indigenous games, and war techniques performed by various Naga tribes, reflecting their diverse customs and traditions.

2. Naga Morungs Exhibition

Replicas of traditional Naga morungs – communal huts once used as dormitories for young men – are displayed at the festival. These structures played a pivotal role in imparting knowledge of customs, traditions, and warfare to the younger generation.

3. Indigenous Sports

Exciting indigenous games such as Naga wrestling, bamboo stilt races, and archery captivate festivalgoers and highlight traditional athleticism.

4. Crafts and Handloom Fair

A bustling marketplace at the festival showcases Naga craftsmanship, including handloom products, bamboo crafts, and tribal jewelry. It's a hub for exploring and purchasing authentic local creations.

5. Hornbill International Rock Contest

A major crowd-puller, the Hornbill International Rock Contest attracts rock bands from India and abroad. The competition is a spectacle of talent and energy, drawing music enthusiasts from all over.

6. Traditional Cuisine

The festival is a gastronomic delight, offering visitors a taste of authentic Naga dishes like smoked meats, bamboo shoot curries, and fiery Naga chilli sauces. These culinary experiences provide a deeper connection to the region's traditions.

7. Heritage Walks and Village Tours

Beyond the festival grounds, guided tours to nearby villages and heritage sites provide insights into Naga history, livelihoods, and biodiversity, offering a holistic cultural experience.

The Hornbill Festival is more than just a celebration – it's a testament to Nagaland's vibrant traditions and its journey to global recognition. As the festival marks 25 years, it continues to bridge the past with the present, offering visitors a unique glimpse into the rich cultural tapestry of the Naga people.

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





History and Controversy Surrounding Ajmer's Adhai Din Ka Jhonpra

Introduction: The Historical Significance of Adhai Din Ka Jhonpra

Adhai Din Ka Jhonpra, one of the oldest mosques in northern India, is located in Ajmer and has been at the center of a new legal and historical debate. Recently, there have been calls for a survey of the mosque amidst claims that it stands on the remnants of a 'Sanskrit college and temple'. This article explores the history of Adhai Din Ka Jhonpra, its architectural features, and the controversy surrounding its origins.



The Origins of Adhai Din Ka Jhonpra

The mosque was commissioned by Qutbuddin Aibak, a key figure in the early Delhi Sultanate who established the Mamluk Dynasty in 1206. Following the victory of Muhammad of Ghor over Prithviraj Chauhan in the Second Battle of Tarain, the region saw significant military and cultural changes. Muhammad of Ghor's invasion led to the destruction of several temples, including a temple dedicated to Visaldeva, the Chauhan ruler. The mosque was constructed by repurposing the remains of these structures.

Historian Har Bilas Sarada, in his 1911 book *Ajmer: Historical And Descriptive*, referenced the destruction of Visaldeva's College, which was partially converted into the mosque. This account has since become a central source for those advocating for a survey of the mosque and its historical context.

The Architectural Legacy of Adhai Din Ka Jhonpra

Adhai Din Ka Jhonpra is considered the second oldest completed mosque in North India, with the central mihrab inscribed with a completion date of 1199 and a second dome dating to 1200. This makes it the oldest surviving monument in Ajmer. The mosque is known for its iconic screen wall, built under Iltutmish, which is adorned with seven corbelled arches. This structure, completed in 1213, marks a significant evolution in Islamic architecture in India.

Contrary to popular legend, the name "Adhai Din Ka Jhonpra" – which means "the shed of two-and-a-half days" – does not refer to the mosque's construction time of 60 hours, but rather to the practice of faqirs sheltering at the site during the two-and-a-half-day long urs (death anniversary) of Panjaba Shah.

Hindu Workers and Iconoclasm in Mosque Construction

One of the key architectural elements of Adhai Din Ka Jhonpra is the use of materials from Hindu temples, a common practice during the period. Art historian Micael W. Meister noted that the mosque's pillared halls were constructed with the spoils of Hindu temples, while Hindu craftsmen, under Muslim supervision, contributed to the structure. This blending of styles is evident in the mixture of decorative motifs, balancing Islamic and Hindu artistic influences.

The mosque's pillars, some 70 of which still stand, feature unique craftsmanship that combines Hindu and Islamic elements, reflecting the complex cultural interactions of the time.

The Debate Over the Mosque's Origins

The mosque's origins have been a subject of controversy, with various historians offering different perspectives. While some, like James Tod, believed the mosque was built on the site of a Jain temple, others, such as Alexander Cunningham, argued that the mosque was constructed using the remains of Hindu temples destroyed by Muslim invaders.

Later excavations by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) revealed inscriptions referencing a Sanskrit college, which some believe was constructed in 1153 by Chauhan emperor Visaladeva. This discovery has sparked further debates about the site's pre-Islamic history and whether it was indeed a temple or a scholarly institution.

CONCLUSION: The Controversy Continues

Adhai Din Ka Jhonpra remains a symbol of both historical significance and ongoing debate. Whether viewed as a testament to the region's cultural convergence or as a symbol of destruction and transformation, the mosque continues to attract attention. The calls for a survey of the mosque reflect the deep historical and cultural divides that persist in contemporary India, highlighting the complexities of preserving heritage and reconciling the past.



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Revolutionizing Archaeology: AI UnCOVERS Hundreds of New Nazca Geoglyphs

CONTEXT: The Nazca Lines, a series of ancient geoglyphs created by the pre-Inca Nazca civilization in Peru, have long been one of archaeology's most intriguing mysteries. Discovered by chance in the 1920s, these lines, which span hundreds of square kilometers in the Nazca Pampa desert, have puzzled researchers for nearly a century. Until recently, archaeologists had identified around 430 of these geoglyphs. However, in a remarkable breakthrough, artificial intelligence (AI) and drones have led to the discovery of 303 new geoglyphs in less than six months, with more anticipated in the near future.



The Nazca Lines: An Ancient Enigma

Geoglyphs are large motifs created on the ground by manipulating soil, gravel, or stones. The Nazca Lines, dating back more than 2,000 years, were created by removing surface earth to reveal lighter-colored ground beneath. Due to the arid climate of the region, these geoglyphs have survived for millennia with minimal erosion. The discovery of these lines, initially made by hikers in the 1920s, sparked intrigue, with many figures, such as trapezoids, spirals, and stylized animals, emerging when viewed from the air. Despite their historical significance, identifying and cataloging these geoglyphs has remained a challenge.

The Challenge of Discovering New Geoglyphs

Locating new geoglyphs in the vast Nazca Pampa has been an arduous task due to the scale of the landscape and the difficulty of spotting these formations from the ground. Even from the air, low-flying aircraft are required, limiting the area that can be surveyed in a single flight. Smaller geoglyphs, in particular, have been elusive, making new discoveries rare and time-consuming.

AI and Drones: Accelerating the Discovery Process

In September 2024, a groundbreaking study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences highlighted the role of AI and drones in the accelerated discovery of 303 new geoglyphs. Researchers, using low-flying drones, covered over 600 square kilometers of the Nazca Pampa. The images captured by the drones

were then analyzed using an AI application developed by Japanese researchers in collaboration with IBM. The AI was able to sift through vast amounts of imagery, eliminating 98% of unnecessary data and narrowing the search down to a manageable set of 47,410 sites. These were then manually reviewed by archaeologists, leading to the confirmation of 303 new geoglyphs.

Implications for Archaeology and Understanding the Nazca Civilization

The discovery of these new geoglyphs provides invaluable insights into the Nazca culture, which left no written records behind. For decades, archaeologists speculated that the geoglyphs had astronomical significance, but recent theories emphasize their ritualistic purpose. Dr. Masato Sakai, a leading archaeologist on the project, believes that the geoglyphs were likely used for community rituals and could be viewed as a form of public architecture.

The newly discovered geoglyphs are primarily located along trails across the Nazca Pampa, suggesting they may have been used to communicate information related to religious practices and animal husbandry. This revelation adds a new layer of understanding to the Nazca civilization's cultural and social practices.

AI: A Revolutionary Tool for Archaeological Discoveries

The recent surge in discoveries underscores the transformative potential of AI in archaeology. While traditional methods of identifying geoglyphs yielded a discovery rate of just 1.5 per year between the 1940s and 2000s, AI has accelerated the pace of discovery dramatically. The study notes that between 2004 and 2020, the discovery rate increased to 18.7 per year, and the current AI-assisted methodology has resulted in a sixteen-fold acceleration in the discovery process.

AI's ability to analyze high-resolution aerial imagery, pinpointing the faintest outlines of geoglyphs, promises a revolution in the way archaeological sites are explored and understood. Dr. Sakai believes there may be hundreds more undiscovered figures waiting to be found, potentially reshaping our knowledge of the Nazca Lines and the civilization that created them.

CONCLUSION: The Future of Archaeology with AI

The integration of AI and drones in the exploration of the Nazca Lines signals a new era in archaeology. This breakthrough not only enhances our understanding of one of the most famous ancient sites in the world but also demonstrates the power of technology to uncover hidden histories. As AI continues to evolve, it could unlock even more mysteries, offering new insights into ancient civilizations that were previously beyond our reach.



The Ajmer Dargah and Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti: A Historical Overview and Recent Controversy

CONTEXT: The Ajmer Sharif Dargah, a revered shrine dedicated to Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti, has become a focal point of controversy following a petition in the court, which calls for a survey of the site based on claims that it was constructed after demolishing Hindu and Jain temples. The article explores the rich history of both the dargah and the saint, along with the cultural and religious significance of the shrine that continues to attract followers from various faiths.

A recent petition in the court has sought a survey of the Ajmer Sharif Dargah, which houses the tomb of the renowned Sufi saint Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti. The petition claims that the dargah was constructed on the site of demolished Hindu and Jain temples. This legal plea has raised questions about the historical origins of the shrine and its significance within the broader context of Indian religious history.



The Legacy of Ajmer and its Historical Context

Ajmer, originally known as Ajaymeru, was established as the capital of the Chauhan dynasty in the mid-12th century. However, after the defeat of Prithviraj Chauhan by the Afghan invader Muhammad of Ghor in the Second Battle of Tarain in 1192, the city witnessed destruction, with temples being desecrated and demolished. The city then lay in ruin for nearly four centuries until the reign of Mughal Emperor Akbar, who revived the town and its shrine.

The Construction of the Dargah and Early Legends

The tomb of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti was built in the latter half of the 15th century, although earlier accounts suggest that a Shiva lingam was present at the site, with some narratives claiming that Khwaja Moinuddin had encountered Lord Shiva during his spiritual practices. These stories, popular among the followers, emphasize the saint's inclusive and tolerant nature, which bridged the gap between Hindu and Muslim communities.

Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti: The Saint and His Journey

Born in 1141 in Sistan (present-day Iran), Moinuddin Chishti began his spiritual journey after encountering

a wandering mystic. After years of study and spiritual development, Moinuddin joined the Chishti order and later journeyed to India, where he eventually settled in Ajmer. His acts of selflessness and compassion earned him the title of Gharib Nawaz (Friend of the Poor), as he provided shelter and support to those in need.

The Development of the Shrine: From Humble Beginnings to Imperial Patronage

After Khwaja Moinuddin's death in 1236, his tomb remained simple and unadorned until the 1460s when the Khalji rulers of Malwa constructed the initial mausoleum. Over time, the shrine expanded under the patronage of Mughal emperors, particularly during the reign of Akbar, who made numerous pilgrimages to the dargah. The Akbari Masjid and the grand white marble dome, built during Humayun's reign, are notable architectural developments of the shrine.

Architectural Influences and Controversy

The petition highlighting the Hindu and Jain temple origins of some of the dargah's structures, such as the Buland Darwaza and its stone chatrees, refers to claims by historian Har Bilas Sarada. While these architectural elements are identified as possibly stemming from older Hindu temples, no definitive evidence suggests that a temple was directly demolished to create the shrine. The dargah's expansion continued under subsequent Mughal rulers like Jahangir and Shah Jahan, further solidifying its religious and cultural significance.

The Role of Sufism and Khwaja Moinuddin's Legacy

Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti was part of the Chishti Sufi order, which emphasized tolerance, inclusivity, and devotion to God. The tradition of Sufism, which emerged as a mystical movement within Islam, adapted local spiritual practices and connected deeply with Indian cultural and religious ideals. The shrine continues to attract not only Muslims but also Hindus, who venerate the saint and his teachings.

A Symbol of Unity and Controversy

The Ajmer Sharif Dargah remains a symbol of unity, attracting devotees from various religious backgrounds. Despite the recent court petition, the dargah's significance in Indian culture and spirituality is unquestionable. Whether the claims about the destruction of temples are substantiated or not, the legacy of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti as a figure of religious harmony continues to resonate across generations. The dargah, now an enduring symbol of inclusivity, remains a testament to the saint's message of peace and devotion to all.



The Legacy of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti: A Revered Sufi Saint and His Impact on India

CONTEXT: The article discusses Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti, a key figure in the spread of Sufism across the Indian subcontinent. It highlights a legal petition involving the claim of a Shiva temple beneath his revered shrine in Ajmer, alongside a historical overview of Moinuddin Chishti's life and spiritual contributions. His teachings, which transcended religious boundaries, left an indelible mark on India's spiritual and cultural fabric.



Who Was Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti?

Moinuddin Chishti, born in 1141 CE in Sistan (modern-day Iran), is regarded as one of the most influential Sufi saints to have ever walked the Indian subcontinent. Often referred to as Gharib Nawaz (Friend of the Poor), his teachings focused on love, equality, and devotion to humanity, regardless of caste, creed, or religion.

Early Life and Spiritual Journey

Moinuddin was born into a noble family and was said to be a descendant of Prophet Muhammad. Orphaned at the age of 14, his spiritual journey began after a transformative encounter with a wandering mystic, Ibrahim Qandozi. This pivotal moment sparked Moinuddin's quest for self-discovery, leading him to study theology and philosophy at notable seminaries in Bukhara and Samarkand.

Mentorship and the Chishti Order

Moinuddin eventually became a disciple of Khwaja

Usman Harooni, a revered Sufi master in Afghanistan, who initiated him into the Chishti order. After years of spiritual training, Moinuddin embarked on his own path, which took him across the subcontinent, spreading the teachings of Sufism.

Establishing a Sanctuary in Ajmer

By the age of 50, Moinuddin arrived in Ajmer, a city on the cusp of political turmoil following the defeat of the Chauhan dynasty. Amidst the suffering in Ajmer after the invasion of Muhammad of Ghor, Moinuddin chose to stay and serve the city's people. With his wife, Bibi Ummatulla, Moinuddin established a humble refuge, offering food and solace to the needy, earning the title of "Gharib Nawaz."

A Message of Compassion and Inclusivity

Moinuddin's teachings emphasized universal values such as compassion, equality, and divine love. His engagement with Hindu mystics and sages demonstrated his belief in a shared spiritual quest, which transcended religious divisions. This message of unity resonated deeply with people from all walks of life during a time of great political and social upheaval.

The Chishti Order and Its Influence

The Chishti order, founded in the 10th century by Abu Ishaq Shami, was spread across the subcontinent through Moinuddin and his disciples. His notable disciples, including Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, Baba Fariduddin, Nizamuddin Auliya, and Chirag Dehalvi, continued his work long after his passing. Their spiritual leadership helped establish the Chishti order as one of the most influential Sufi traditions in India.

Patronage and Legacy

Moinuddin's influence extended beyond the spiritual realm, with many rulers, including Mughal Emperor Akbar, offering patronage to his shrine in Ajmer. Akbar's reverence for Moinuddin led to the beautification of his mausoleum and the development of Ajmer as a major pilgrimage site. This royal support solidified Moinuddin's place as a unifying figure in a region rich in religious diversity.

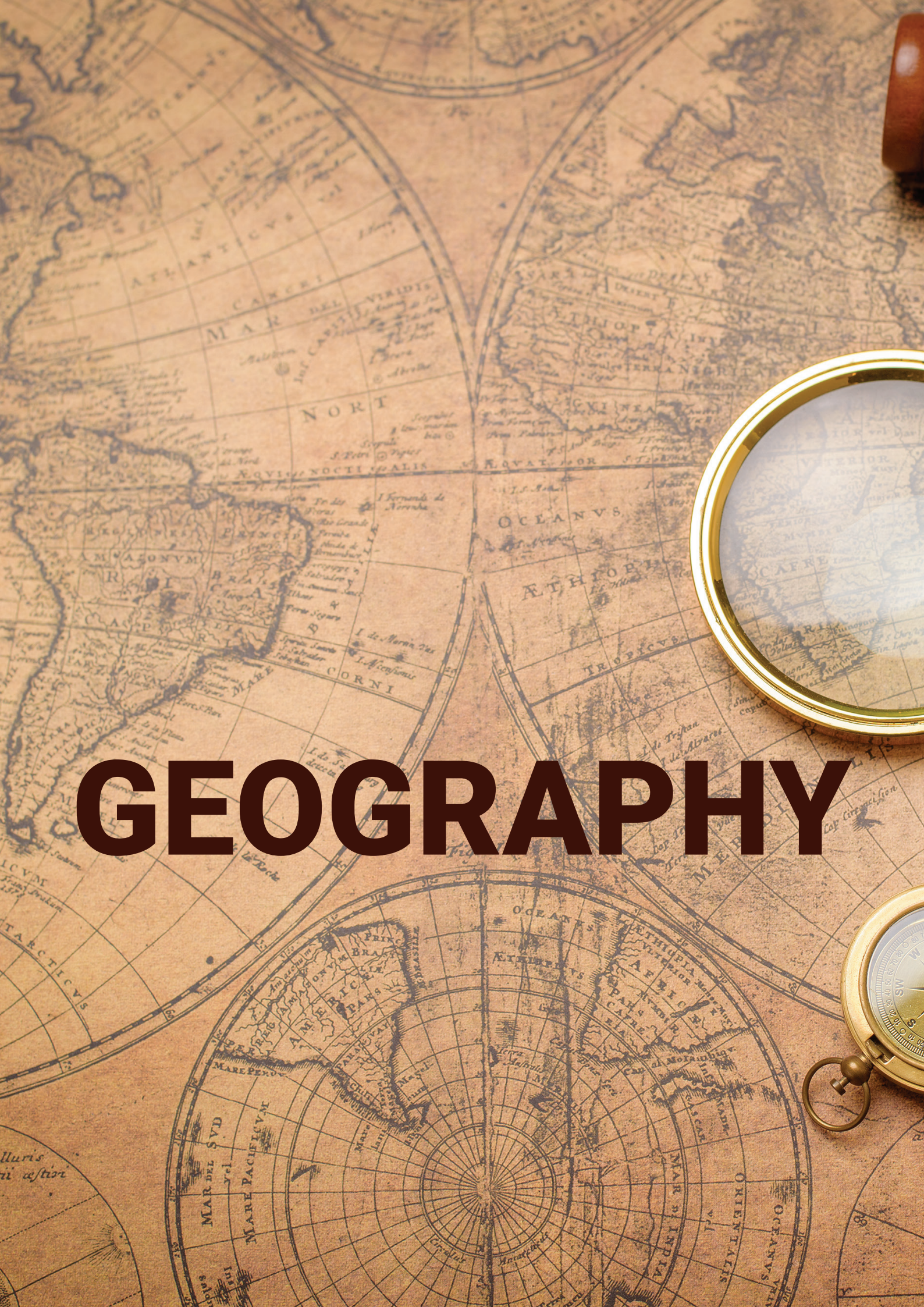
CONCLUSION: A Lasting Impact

Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti's legacy continues to inspire millions in India today. His teachings of love, compassion, and inclusivity remain a powerful force for unity in a religiously diverse country. The integration of Indian cultural practices with Islamic spirituality, as championed by Moinuddin, helped bridge gaps between communities, and his message continues to echo through the generations.

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



GEOGRAPHY





WOH G64 STAR

SOLAR STORM

**PUNATSANGCHHU-II HYDROPOWER
PROJECT**

LAKE EFFECT SNOW

NOVA

**KALESHWARAM LIFT IRRIGATION
PROJECT**

MALWA CANAL PROJECT



WOH G64 STAR

Recently, for the first time, scientists have succeeded in taking a zoomed-in picture of the WOH G64 star which is located in another galaxy.

It dwells in the **Large Magellanic Cloud**, a dwarf or satellite galaxy that orbits our Milky Way, which also happens to be one of the closest galaxies to us.

What are Magellanic cloud

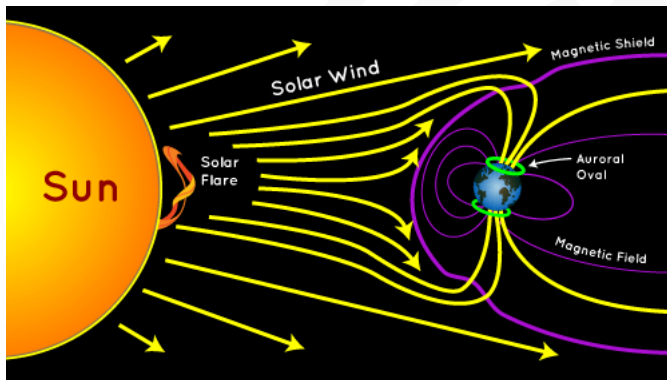
- These are irregular **galaxies that share a gaseous envelope** and lie about 22° apart in the sky near the south celestial pole.
- They are composed of two irregular galaxies, the Large Magellanic Cloud (LMC) and the **Small Magellanic Cloud (SMC)**, which orbit the Milky Way once every 1,500 million

years and each other once every 900 million years.

- These companion galaxies were named for the Portuguese navigator Ferdinand Magellan, whose crew discovered them during the first voyage around the world (1519–22).
- Magellanic Clouds were formed at about the same time as the Milky Way Galaxy, approximately 13 billion years ago.
- They are presently captured in orbits around the Milky Way Galaxy and have experienced several tidal encounters with each other and with the Galaxy.
- They contain **numerous young stars and star clusters**, as well as some much older stars.

SOLAR STORM

Scientists have uncovered evidence of an immense solar storm that struck Earth around 664–663 BCE.



About Solar Storm

A solar storm is a sudden explosion of particles, energy, magnetic fields, and material blasted into the solar system by the Sun.

What causes a solar storm?

- The sun's tangled magnetic fields get twisted up as the Sun rotates – with its equator rotating faster than its poles.

- Solar storms typically begin when these twisted magnetic fields on the Sun get contorted and stretched so much that they snap and reconnect (in a process called magnetic reconnection), releasing large amounts of energy.

These powerful eruptions can generate any or all of the following:

- a bright flash of light called a solar flare.
- a radiation storm, or flurry of solar particles propelled into space at high speeds.
- an enormous cloud of solar material, called a coronal mass ejection, that billows away from the Sun.

Effects on Earth:

- When directed toward Earth, a solar storm can create a major disturbance in Earth's magnetic field, called a geomagnetic storm, that can produce effects such as radio blackouts, power outages, and beautiful auroras.
- They do not cause direct harm to anyone on Earth, however, as our planet's magnetic field and atmosphere protect us from the worst of these storms.

PUNATSANGCHHU-II HYDROPOWER PROJECT

CONTEXT: India and Bhutan recently discussed hydropower projects including the 1020 MW Punatsangchhu-II hydropower project, and expressed satisfaction as it was “nearing completion”.

About Punatsangchhu-II Hydropower Project:

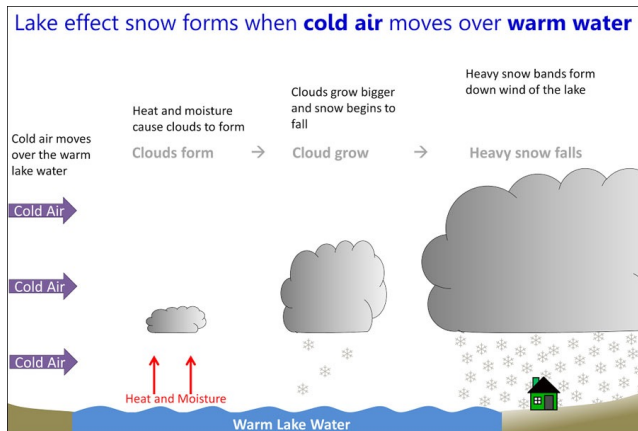
- It is a 1 GW run-of-the-river hydroelectric power-generating facility under construction in the Wangdue Phodrang district of Bhutan.
- It is located on the right bank of the Punatsangchhu River in the Wangdue Phodrang district in Western Bhutan.
- The project is being developed by the Punatsangchhu II Hydroelectric Project Authority, under an Inter-Government Agreement (IGA) between the Royal Government of Bhutan and the Government of India.
- It is funded by the Government of India (GoI): 30% grant and 70% loan at 10% annual interest, repayable in 30

equated semi-annual installments commencing one year after the mean date of operation.

- The project Authority shall be dissolved within two years after the commissioning, and the project shall be handed over to the Royal Government of Bhutan.
- The project involves the construction of a 91m-high and 223.8m-long concrete gravity dam, along with an 877.46m-long and 12m-diameter diversion tunnel with a discharge capacity of 1118 cubic metres per second.
- The project also involves a 168.75m-long and 22m-high upper cofferdam and a 102.02m-long and 13.5m-tall downstream cofferdam.
- Upon commissioning, the Punatsangchhu II power plant is expected to generate approximately 4,357 million units of electricity annually.

LAKE EFFECT SNOW

Recently, Lake-effect snow blowing in from the Great Lakes has blanketed parts of Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania and New York regions.



About Lake-Effect Snow:

It is a localized weather phenomenon which results from the interaction between cold air passing over warmer

lake water generating snow that is deposited in localized regions downwind from the lake.

It is common across the Great Lakes region during the late fall and winter.

Formation

- Lake Effect snow occurs when cold air, often originating from Canada, moves across the open waters of the Great Lakes.
- As the cold air passes over the unfrozen and relatively warm waters of the Great Lakes, warmth and moisture are transferred into the lowest portion of the atmosphere.
- The air rises, clouds form and grow into narrow band that produces 2 to 3 inches of snow per hour or more.
- Lake effect snow occurrence and location is mainly dependent on wind (speed and direction) and topography.
- For instance, wind direction and speed can affect how narrow or wide a snow band is, as well as its length; whereas topography can influence snowfall rate.

NOVA

Astronomers from the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) have spotted far ultraviolet (FUV) emissions from novae for the first time in the neighbouring Andromeda galaxy.



About Nova:

- It is a special class of transient astronomical event that causes the sudden appearance of a bright, apparently new star that slowly fades over weeks or months, during their outburst.
- Novae occur in binary star systems where a dense, Earth-sized white dwarf star orbits closely with a Sun-like companion.

- The white dwarf's strong gravitational pull draws matter from its companion, creating an intense accumulation of material on its surface.
- This process triggers powerful thermonuclear reactions, producing a sudden bright burst visible as a nova.
- A nova reaches maximum luminosity within hours after its outburst and may shine intensely for several days

Significance of the research

- Researchers discovered ultraviolet emission from 42 novae, a special class of stellar explosions, and even caught four of them in the act of outburst itself.
- This could help scientists study these interacting binary star systems in our nearest neighbour galaxy at different phases of their life, some piling up matter from their companion, while others spewing it into space.

Key facts about the Andromeda galaxy

- The Andromeda Galaxy, also called Messier 31 or M31, is the nearest major galaxy to the Milky Way.
- It is 2.5 million light years away from Earth and is the other major member of the Local Group, our local collection of galaxies.
- Like the Milky Way, it is a barred spiral galaxy, so-called for the bar-like structure formed by the stars in its center

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





KALESHWARAM LIFT IRRIGATION PROJECT

The National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA) is likely to submit its final report on the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Scheme (KLIS) soon, excluding the aspect of conducting geo-technical tests.

About Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project (KLIP):

- It is a multi-purpose irrigation project on the Godavari River in Kaleshwaram, Bhupalpally, Telangana, India.
- It is designed to provide water for irrigation and drinking purposes to about 45 lakh acres in 20 of the 31 districts in Telangana, apart from Hyderabad and Secunderabad.
- Currently the world's largest multi-stage lift irrigation project, its farthest upstream influence is at the confluence of the Pranhita and Godavari rivers.
- The Pranhita River is itself a confluence of various

smaller tributaries, including the Wardha, Painganga, and Wainganga rivers, which combine to form the seventh-largest drainage basin on the subcontinent.

- KLIP is divided into 7 links and 28 packages spanning a distance of approximately 500 km (310 mi) through 13 districts and utilizing a canal network of more than 1,800 km (1,100 mi).
- The project aims to produce a total of 240 TMC (195 from Medigadda Barrage, 20 from the Sripada Yellampalli project, and 25 from groundwater), of which 169 has been allocated for irrigation, 30 for Hyderabad municipal water, 16 for miscellaneous industrial uses, and 10 for drinking water in nearby villages, with the remainder being estimated evaporation loss.

MALWA CANAL PROJECT

Nearly 1.30 lakh trees and plants are likely to be felled for the construction of the proposed 150-km-long Malwa Canal, a flagship project of Punjab Chief Minister said recently.

About Malwa Canal Project:

- It is a planned irrigation and water management project in Punjab, India.
- It is the first of its kind to be constructed in Punjab since independence.
- Estimated to cost Rs 2,300 crore, the canal will originate from the Harike headworks on the Sutlej in Ferozepur district.

- It will tail off at Warring Khara village in Muktsar district, close to the border with Haryana, and will flow parallel to the Sirhind Feeder and Rajasthan Feeder canals, to the latter's east.
- The canal will be 149 km long, 50 feet wide, and 12.6 feet deep.
- It will carry 2,000 cusecs of water (A cusec is flow equivalent to 1 cubic foot per second.)
- It is designed to cater to the irrigation needs of nearly 2 lakh acres in southern Punjab, running parallel to the left bank of the Rajasthan Feeder Canal.

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POLITY AND GOVERNANCE





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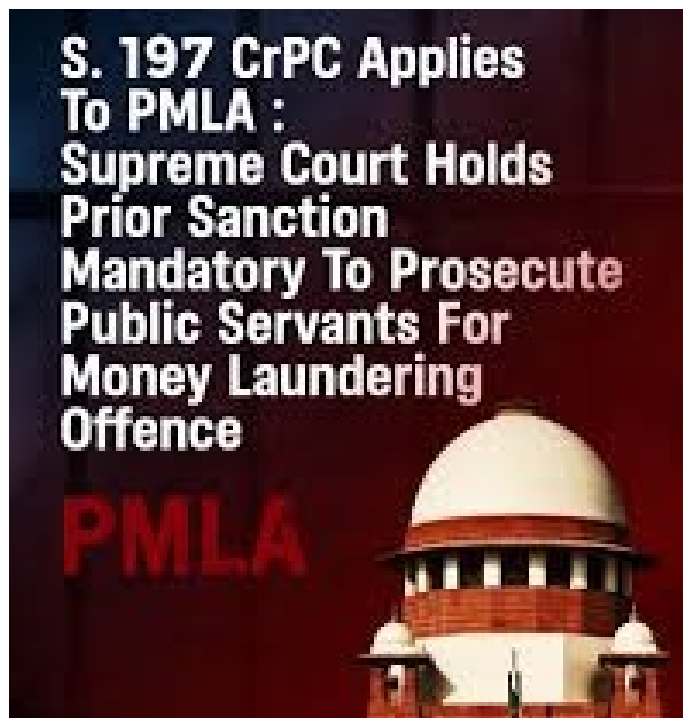


SC REMARK ON ED CASES AGAINST PUBLIC OFFICIALS

CONTEXT: The Supreme Court's recent ruling emphasizes the necessity of obtaining prior sanction under Section 197 of the CrPC before prosecuting public servants under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), reaffirming legal safeguards to balance accountability with protection against frivolous prosecutions for acts linked to official duties.

Why in the News?

- The Supreme Court, in its ruling on November 6th, for the very first time mandated that the Enforcement Directorate (ED) need to obtain prior sanction to prosecute public servants on money laundering charges.



Key Highlights of the Verdict

- **Section 71 of PMLA:**
 - Establishes that PMLA provisions override other laws in cases of inconsistency.
- **Supreme Court Ruling:**
 - Public servants cannot be prosecuted under PMLA without prior sanction as mandated by Section 197 of the CrPC.
 - Upheld the 2019 Telangana HC order, which set aside trial court cognisance due to lack of prior sanction.
- **Reasoning Behind the Ruling:**
 - Section 65 of the PMLA applies CrPC provisions unless inconsistent.
 - Alleged criminal acts of public servants were linked to their official duties, necessitating prior sanction.

ABOUT PRIOR SANCTION PROVISION

- **Purpose:**
 - Serves as a safeguard to protect public servants from frivolous or politically motivated prosecutions.
- **Relevant Legal Frameworks:**

- Section 197, CrPC (1973): Requires prior government sanction before prosecuting public servants.
- Section 218, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (2023): Aligns with CrPC provisions.
- **Mandates for Law Enforcement (e.g., ED):**
 - Agencies must secure prior approval from the government before initiating prosecution against a public servant.

MECHANISM FOR PRIOR SANCTION

1. Allegation: An allegation is made against a public servant involving corruption or misuse of office.
2. Investigation: Evidence is gathered by law enforcement agencies.
3. Sanction Request: If evidence supports prosecution, the agency requests prior sanction from the government.
4. Government Review: Authorities evaluate the evidence to determine if a prima facie case exists.
5. Outcome:
 - Sanction Granted: Prosecution proceeds.
 - Sanction Denied: Prosecution cannot continue.

KEY LEGAL PROVISIONS ON PRIOR SANCTION

- **Under Section 197, CrPC:**
 - Courts cannot take cognisance of offences committed by public servants during official duties without prior sanction.
 - Exceptions: Sanction not required for crimes like rape, sexual harassment, stalking, and human trafficking.
- **Under Prevention of Corruption Act (PCA):**
 - Section 19(1): Requires prior sanction for offences such as bribery and undue advantage.
- **Section 17A, PMLA (2018 Amendment):**
 - Government approval required for investigations into decisions made in the discharge of official duties.
 - SC to decide whether this provision applies to pre-2018 cases.

CONSTITUTIONAL PROTECTIONS FOR CIVIL SERVANTS

Article 309: Empowers Parliament to legislate on recruitment and service conditions of civil servants.

Article 311: Safeguards against arbitrary dismissal or rank reduction:

- Ensures reasonable opportunity to show cause.
- Protects civil servants from dismissal without a departmental inquiry in specific cases.
- **Doctrine of Pleasure:**
 - Allows government dismissal of civil servants but is subject to constitutional safeguards, natural justice, and fair play.

Cases Leading to SC Direction on Prior Sanction

1. Devinder Singh v. State of Punjab (2016):

- Section 197 protection applies only to acts within official duties, not crimes disguised as authority.



2. P.K. Pradhan v. State of Sikkim (2001):

- Sanction absence under Section 197 can be raised at any stage, even post-conviction, if tied to official duties.

3. Bibhu Prasad Acharya & Adityanath Das Case (2023):

- SC ruled that prior sanction under Section 197 is mandatory for public servants charged under PMLA for acts linked to official duties.

IMPLICATIONS FOR ED CASES INVOLVING PUBLIC SERVANTS

1. On Investigations and Complaints:

- ED investigations can proceed, but trial courts cannot take cognisance of chargesheets against public servants without prior sanction.

2. On Trials and Appeals:

- Convicted public servants can challenge trial validity in appeals, citing lack of prior sanction.

3. Potential Impact:

- Convictions may be overturned if courts accept arguments about missing sanction.

4. For Public Servants:

- Ensures protection for bona fide acts performed in official capacity while maintaining accountability for authority misuse.
- May delay trials and provide legal grounds to contest proceedings in PMLA-related cases.

WHAT IS THE PREVENTION OF MONEY LAUNDERING ACT, 2002?

The Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002 was enacted in January 2003 to combat money

laundering in India. The Act is a key legislative tool to address issues related to the laundering of illicitly acquired money, safeguard the financial system, and ensure compliance with global anti-money laundering standards.

DEFINITION OF MONEY LAUNDERING (SECTION 3)

- Money Laundering:** Refers to the process of concealing the origin of illicitly acquired money by making it appear legitimate.
- According to Section 3:
 - Anyone who directly or indirectly engages, assists, or participates in activities involving proceeds of crime and projects them as untainted property is guilty of money laundering.

WHAT IS HAWALA?

Hawala is an informal funds transfer system that allows for the shifting of money from one person to another without the actual movement of money. It is a simple process that requires no documentation and, therefore, is an anonymous system of moving money.

CONCLUSION: The Supreme Court's ruling underscores the importance of prior sanction under Section 197 of CrPC before prosecuting public servants under the PMLA. This safeguards public servants from frivolous prosecutions while maintaining accountability for misuse of power. The ruling has significant implications for ED investigations and trials involving public servants, potentially impacting the course of legal proceedings in such cases.

PM MODI ATTENDS 59TH ALL INDIA CONFERENCE OF POLICE CHIEFS IN BHUBANESWAR

CONTEXT: The 59th All India Conference of Director Generals and Inspector Generals of Police, held in Bhubaneswar, served as a vital forum for addressing national security challenges, fostering inter-agency collaboration, and enhancing policing strategies through technology, capacity building, and knowledge-sharing among senior law enforcement officials across India

for senior law enforcement officials to deliberate on issues of national security, law enforcement strategies, and inter-agency coordination. Organized annually, the conference facilitates a comprehensive review of internal security challenges and fosters knowledge-sharing on best practices among States and Union Territories (UTs).

These gatherings are particularly significant for aligning security strategies with contemporary challenges, enhancing the professionalism of law enforcement, and fostering collaboration between police forces, intelligence agencies, and the central government.

DETAILS OF THE 59TH CONFERENCE

Date and Venue

- Held from November 29 to December 1, 2024, the conference took place in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, in a hybrid format.

Participation

- Attendees included the Union Home Minister, the National Security Advisor, senior officials such as the Union Home Secretary, and Ministers of State for Home Affairs.
- Director Generals of Police (DGPs) and InspectorGenerals



Overview of the Annual Conference

The All India Conference of Director Generals and Inspector Generals of Police serves as a premier platform



- of Police (IGPs) from all States and UTs participated physically, while over 750 officers joined virtually.

Organizing Body

- The conference was hosted by the Intelligence Bureau (IB), which plays a crucial role in national intelligence coordination and internal security.

Objectives of the Conference

- 1. Strategic Security Discussions:** To assess internal and external security challenges and propose actionable strategies to address them.
- 2. Policy Coordination:** To ensure uniformity in the implementation of national security policies and law enforcement strategies.
- 3. Best Practices Exchange:** To highlight and share innovative policing methods implemented by States/UTs for broader application.
- 4. Capacity Building:** To discuss the role of technology and modern tools in enhancing policing efficiency and effectiveness.

Key Outcomes of the 59th Conference

1. Discussion of Emerging Challenges:

- Counter-terrorism, left-wing extremism, and cybercrime.
- Economic security, immigration, coastal security, and narco-trafficking.
- Addressing security concerns along the borders with Bangladesh and Myanmar.

2. Urban Policing and Smart Strategies:

- Focus on urban policing trends and the SMART policing approach – Strategic, Meticulous, Adaptable, Reliable, and Transparent.
- Scaling successful urban initiatives to all 100 Smart Cities in India.

3. Deepfake and Cybercrime Mitigation:

- PM Modi emphasized using Artificial Intelligence (AI) to counter deepfakes and combat digital fraud.
- Data from the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) revealed losses of over ₹11,333 crore to cyber fraud in 2024. Proactive measures saved ₹3,431 crore and led to the blocking of over 6.69 lakh SIM cards and 1.32 lakh

IMEIs linked to cybercrimes.

4. Strengthening Border Policing:

- Policemen were instructed to stay in border villages to better understand local issues and build community trust.

5. Dismantling the Narco-Trafficking Network:

- The PM called for stringent measures, emphasizing the dismantling of the drug nexus at all levels.

6. Review of Policing Reforms:

- Implementation of newly enacted criminal laws and a review of policing initiatives across the nation.

PM Modi's Speech Highlights

1. Deepfake and AI Concerns:

- Highlighted the disruptive potential of deepfakes and urged law enforcement to adopt AI for prevention and education.
- Called for digital fraud awareness campaigns at the grassroots, such as during school parent-teacher meetings.

2. Reducing Police Workload:

- Advocated for leveraging technology to optimize resource allocation and improve police working conditions.

3. Commemoration of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel:

- Recalled Patel's contributions to internal security and urged the police force to commemorate his legacy by enhancing professionalism and public trust.

Broader Significance of the Annual Conferences

- These conferences provide an opportunity to holistically address security dynamics, ranging from local law enforcement to global security trends.
- They foster a unified approach by aligning state-level and national policies on critical issues such as cybersecurity, urban crime, and border security.
- The annual reviews also promote accountability, identify gaps in current systems, and propose future-ready solutions to emerging threats.

CONCLUSION: The 59th conference underscored the need for adaptive strategies in policing, the integration of cutting-edge technologies, and the importance of community engagement in addressing contemporary security challenges.



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ONE NATION, ONE ELECTION: A COMPREHENSIVE OVERVIEW

CONTEXT: The Government of India has initiated the formation of a committee, led by former President Ram Nath Kovind, to examine the feasibility of implementing the concept of “One Nation, One Election” (ONOE). This reform proposes the simultaneous conduct of Lok Sabha (Parliament) and State Legislative Assembly elections across the country, aiming to streamline the electoral process and enhance governance.

BACKGROUND: The Constitution (129th Amendment) Bill, also known as the One Nation, One Election bill, was introduced in the Lok Sabha on December 17, 2024:

• What is its Purpose?

The bill aims to synchronize the terms of the Lok Sabha and state assemblies. It also seeks to empower the Election Commission of India (ECI) to conduct simultaneous elections for both the Lok Sabha and all state assemblies

WHAT IS ONE NATION, ONE ELECTION?

“One Nation, One Election” advocates for synchronizing elections for the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies. This would involve conducting these elections simultaneously at regular intervals, typically once every five years. By reducing the frequency of elections, ONOE seeks to enhance governance efficiency and minimize the disruptions caused by recurring electoral cycles. The concept promotes a cohesive and synchronized democratic system, aiming to benefit citizens, policymakers, and the governance framework at large.



HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

India initially practiced simultaneous elections during the first two decades post-independence. This tradition was disrupted in 1968 and 1969 due to the premature dissolution of certain State Legislative Assemblies and the Lok Sabha. Since then, elections have been staggered, leading to frequent electoral cycles across the country.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ONE NATION, ONE ELECTION SCHEME

The One Nation, One Election proposal, aimed at conducting synchronized elections for the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies, involves several critical Constitutional, legal, and procedural recommendations. These

recommendations are designed to align the election cycles, establish fixed tenures, and streamline the electoral process across multiple levels of governance.

1. Constitutional Amendments

To implement the One Nation, One Election scheme, amendments to the following constitutional provisions are necessary:

- **Article 83:** Amendments to ensure fixed tenures for the Lok Sabha (House of the People) and the State Legislative Assemblies, along with provisions for synchronizing their election cycles.
- **Article 85:** Modify the power of the President to dissolve the Lok Sabha, introducing fixed terms for the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies.
- **Article 172:** Adjust the duration of the State Legislative Assemblies to align with the national election cycle.
- **Article 174:** Amend the provisions on the dissolution of State Assemblies, limiting the Governor’s discretion to prematurely dissolve them, ensuring a synchronized election cycle.
- **Article 356:** Modify the application of President’s Rule to prevent premature dissolution of State Assemblies, preserving the election cycle integrity.

These amendments will require broad political consensus and a rigorous legal process, including ratification by state legislatures.

2. Synchronized Election Cycles

• Two-Phase Election Process:

- Conduct Lok Sabha elections and approximately half of the State Assemblies in the first cycle.
- Hold elections for the remaining State Assemblies in a second cycle, about two and a half years later.
- This staggered approach ensures continuity of governance while reducing the frequency of elections.

3. Modification of No-Confidence Motion Procedures

- **No-Confidence Motion:** In the event of a no-confidence motion in either the Lok Sabha or State Legislative Assemblies, it should be accompanied by a confidence motion to form an alternative government.
- **Required Amendments:** This modification will necessitate changes in parliamentary procedures and possibly amendments to the Constitution to ensure the stability of governance during synchronized elections.

4. Limited Term for Prematurely Dissolved Houses

- In the event of the premature dissolution of a Lok Sabha or State Legislative Assembly, the newly constituted house should only serve for the remainder of the original house’s term.



- **Legislative Amendments:** This provision would require changes to the Representation of the People Act, 1951, and possibly further constitutional amendments to ensure the legitimacy of a truncated term.

5. Consolidation of Bye-Elections

- Bye-Elections due to deaths, resignations, or disqualifications should be consolidated and held annually.
- **Amendments Required:** Changes in the Representation of the People Act, 1951 and electoral rules will be needed to accommodate consolidated bye-elections, reducing their frequency and administrative burden.

6. Transitional Provisions for Tenure Adjustments

- **Adjusting Tenure:** To transition smoothly into the synchronized election cycles, the tenures of existing State Assemblies and the Lok Sabha may need to be curtailed or extended.
- **Constitutional Amendments:** This will require specific transitional provisions in the implementing legislation to ensure a seamless alignment with the new election schedules.

7. Amendment to the Representation of the People Act, 1951

- **Revise Election Schedules:** The Representation of the People Act, 1951 must be modified to reflect the new election timelines, which will include the synchronization of elections and adjustments in the terms of elected houses.
- **Bye-Elections and Procedures:** Amendments will also be necessary to accommodate revised procedures for conducting bye-elections and managing the electoral roll, especially in cases of the premature dissolution of assemblies.

Additional Considerations

1. **Political Consensus:** Achieving consensus among political parties and states will be a crucial step in implementing the scheme. Regional parties and opposition might resist the centralization of electoral cycles.
2. **Election Commission's Role:** The Election Commission of India (ECI) will play a vital role in managing the logistics of simultaneous elections across national and state levels. Provisions for empowering the ECI to manage this massive operation will be essential.
3. **Logistical and Administrative Overhaul:** The election machinery, including electronic voting machines (EVMs), voter rolls, and security arrangements, would need a substantial overhaul to handle the simultaneous elections across multiple levels of governance.

These recommendations form the core of the One Nation, One Election proposal. While the scheme promises benefits such as reduced election-related costs and improved governance efficiency, it will require extensive legal, constitutional, and procedural reforms to ensure its successful

implementation.

CONSTITUTION ARTICLES REQUIRING AMENDMENTS FOR ONE NATION, ONE ELECTION SCHEME

The One Nation, One Election proposal would necessitate several constitutional amendments to enable the synchronization of elections for the Lok Sabha, State Assemblies, and potentially local bodies. Below is an overview of the key constitutional provisions that would require modification:

1. Article 83(2): Duration of Lok Sabha

- **Required Amendment:** This article defines the duration of the Lok Sabha (House of the People) as five years. To facilitate the synchronization of national and state elections, an amendment would be needed to adjust the duration of the Lok Sabha's term and align it with state legislative cycles.

2. Article 172(1): Duration of State Legislative Assemblies

- **Required Amendment:** Similar to Article 83(2), Article 172(1) prescribes the duration of State Legislative Assemblies. For the One Nation, One Election plan to succeed, this article would require modification to allow state assemblies to function within the same electoral timeframe as the Lok Sabha.

3. Article 85: Dissolution of Lok Sabha

- **Required Amendment:** Article 85 grants the President of India the power to dissolve the Lok Sabha. The proposal for fixed terms for both national and state elections would necessitate an amendment to restrict the President's discretion in dissolving the Lok Sabha, ensuring elections are held only at the designated intervals.

4. Article 174: Dissolution of State Legislative Assemblies

- **Required Amendment:** This article empowers the Governor to dissolve State Legislative Assemblies. For synchronized elections, an amendment would be needed to limit the Governor's power to dissolve assemblies prematurely, ensuring the alignment of state elections with the national election cycle.

5. Article 356: President's Rule

- **Required Amendment:** Article 356 allows the imposition of President's Rule in states where the government is unable to function according to constitutional provisions. To maintain election cycles without disruption, this article may need to be amended to prevent the premature dissolution of State Assemblies through the imposition of President's Rule, preserving the synchronization of state and national elections.

6. Article 324: Superintendence of Elections

- **Required Amendment:** Article 324 vests the Election Commission of India (ECI) with the authority to superintend and conduct elections. An amendment would be required to empower the ECI to manage the logistics of conducting simultaneous elections for both the national



and state legislatures, ensuring the smooth functioning of the electoral process across India.

7. Article 325: Electoral Rolls

- **Required Amendment:** This article mandates that a common electoral roll be prepared for elections to the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, and State Legislative Assemblies. Under the One Nation, One Election proposal, an amendment to Article 325 may be needed to establish a single electoral roll for all elections, including local bodies, and streamline the voter registration process under the Election Commission of India. Additionally, this could include introducing Single Elector's Photo Identity Cards for voters across the country.

8. Articles 243K and 243ZA: State Election Commissions

- **Potential Impact:** Articles 243K and 243ZA deal with the role of State Election Commissions in conducting elections for Panchayats and Municipalities. Amendments to these articles may be required to modify the process for local body elections, aligning them with the synchronized national and state election cycle. This could involve adjusting the role of State Election Commissions in preparing electoral rolls for local body elections.

9. Proposed Article 324A: Simultaneous Elections for Local Bodies

- **New Article:** A new article, Article 324A, could be introduced to facilitate the simultaneous conduct of elections for Panchayats and Municipalities alongside general elections for the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies. This addition would help in consolidating the election cycles at all levels of governance – national, state, and local – into a single coordinated process.

Additional Considerations

- **Financial Implications:** The implementation of these amendments would require substantial resources and infrastructure upgrades, including the overhaul of the electoral machinery to handle the logistics of simultaneous elections across various levels of governance.
- **Political and Legal Consensus:** Achieving consensus among all political parties and states would be essential for implementing these changes. The amendment process itself would be complex, requiring detailed discussions and negotiations, as well as ratification by states as per the procedures outlined in Article 368 of the Constitution.

DEMERITS Or CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING ONE NATION, ONE ELECTION

The proposal for simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies aims to streamline governance and reduce election costs. However, it presents significant challenges and concerns:

1. CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL HURDLES

- **Amendments Required:** Synchronizing elections necessitates changes to multiple constitutional provisions,

including Articles 82, 85, 172, 174, and the Representation of the People Act, 1951.

- **Complexity of Consensus:** Achieving agreement among political parties and states is challenging due to the complexity of India's democratic and federal structure.
- **Conflict with Federalism:** The proposal risks undermining the autonomy of states by imposing a uniform electoral cycle, which may conflict with the federal spirit of the Constitution.

2. VIOLATION OF CONSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE

- **Impact on Federalism:** Separate and independent electoral cycles are a cornerstone of India's federal structure. Forcing states to align their elections with national cycles undermines this principle.
- **State Autonomy:** Forcing states to synchronize their electoral cycles with the Union could be perceived as encroachment on their constitutionally guaranteed autonomy.

3. CHALLENGES TO THE ELECTION COMMISSION'S AUTHORITY

- **Erosion of Powers:** A government-appointed committee making decisions on electoral reforms may sideline the Election Commission of India (ECI), a constitutional body responsible for free and fair elections under Article 324.
- **Potential Conflict:** Such interference could infringe on the ECI's constitutional mandate, raising concerns about impartiality and independence.

4. LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGES

- **Basic Structure Doctrine:** The Supreme Court's Basic Structure Doctrine considers free and fair elections an essential part of democracy. Simultaneous elections could be seen as altering this principle.
- **Potential Violation of Article 14:** Conducting mid-term elections only for "unexpired periods" may create inequalities in the tenure of governments, violating the Right to Equality.
- **Conflict with Local Body Elections:** Aligning local body elections with state and national elections may undermine the 73rd and 74th Amendments, which empower local self-governance.

5. LOGISTICAL CHALLENGES

- **Scale of Coordination:** Conducting simultaneous elections across the country would require managing voter rolls, polling booths, and security on an unprecedented scale.
- **Increased Demand for Resources:** Approximately 30 lakh electronic voting machines (EVMs) and voter-verified paper audit trail (VVPAT) machines would be needed, significantly increasing logistical demands.
- **Administrative Overload:** Ensuring readiness for such an extensive operation would place immense pressure on election machinery and resources.



6. DIMINISHMENT OF LOCAL PRIORITIES

- **Overshadowing Regional Issues:** Combining state and national elections risks diluting local issues, as broader national agendas dominate electoral discourse.
- **Marginalization of Grassroots Issues:** Local priorities and concerns may be sidelined, reducing the effectiveness of representative democracy.

7. RISKS TO POLITICAL DIVERSITY

- **Advantage to National Parties:** National parties with greater resources could dominate elections, marginalizing regional parties and reducing political plurality.
- **Dominant Party System:** Simultaneous elections may lead to outcomes where national electoral trends influence state results, curbing diversity in representation.

8. IMPACT ON VOTER BEHAVIOR

- **Overwhelming Choices:** Voters may struggle to make informed decisions due to the simultaneous nature of state, national, and potentially local elections.
- **Blurred Distinctions:** The distinction between national and local issues may diminish, reducing the quality of democratic participation.

9. GOVERNANCE RISKS

- **Prolonged President's Rule:** If a state government is dissolved prematurely, elections may be delayed to align with the national cycle, leading to prolonged President's Rule.
- **Governance Paralysis:** The nationwide implementation of the Model Code of Conduct would stall development and governance activities during the election period.

10. FINANCIAL AND SECURITY CONCERNS

- **Initial Investment:** The initial cost of implementing simultaneous elections, including upgrading infrastructure, would be substantial.
- **Security Challenges:** Ensuring safety and order during nationwide elections would demand extensive deployment of security forces, potentially straining resources.

11. THREAT TO INDIA'S FEDERAL DEMOCRACY

- **Centralized Influence:** The move could centralize power, reducing the importance of state politics and affecting the balance between the Union and States.
- **Anti-Defection Law Challenges:** Synchronization could complicate the implementation of anti-defection provisions, increasing political instability and horse-trading.

BENEFITS OF SIMULTANEOUS ELECTIONS

1. Reduction in Election Expenditure:

- Concurrent elections can significantly cut costs related to logistics, security, and campaigning. The National Institute of Public Finance and Policy estimates potential savings of up to ₹50,000 crore.

2. Enhanced Governance Continuity:

- Frequent elections disrupt governance as officials focus

on campaigning. ONOE can mitigate these disruptions, enabling sustained policy implementation.

3. Improved Policy Cohesion:

- Simultaneous elections may lead to more aligned policies across central and state governments, fostering smoother implementation of initiatives like the Swachh Bharat Mission.

4. Reduced Political Polarization:

- By decreasing the frequency of elections, ONOE could shift political focus to broader developmental issues rather than divisive local concerns.

5. Increased Voter Participation:

- States with simultaneous elections have historically recorded higher voter turnout (70.5% compared to 65.5%), indicating the potential for greater civic engagement.

6. Streamlined Security Arrangements:

- Unified elections reduce the need for repetitive security deployments, allowing for a more robust security apparatus during polling.

7. Fairness and Transparency:

- A unified electoral timeline ensures all candidates and parties operate under the same conditions, fostering a level playing field.

8. Minimized Educational Disruption:

- Reduced reliance on schools and teachers for electoral processes lessens the impact on education.

PROPOSED STRATEGIES AND INTERNATIONAL INSIGHTS

1. Parliamentary Standing Committee Recommendations:

- Implement a two-phase election schedule. States with Assembly terms expiring near Lok Sabha elections could align their polls with the general elections, while others could be scheduled midterm.

2. Exploring "One Year, One Election":

- A phased approach, holding elections once a year, could offer a practical alternative to ONOE while achieving similar benefits.

3. Learning from International Models:

- Countries like South Africa and Sweden successfully conduct simultaneous elections at multiple levels. Studying their systems can provide valuable insights for India's implementation.

CONCLUSION

"One Nation, One Election" presents a transformative opportunity for India's electoral and governance landscape. While it offers significant advantages like cost reduction, enhanced governance, and reduced polarization, its implementation requires meticulous planning and broad-based consensus. Constitutional amendments, safeguarding federal principles, and addressing logistical challenges are critical to its success.

The initiative must strike a balance between streamlining elections and preserving the diversity and integrity



of India's democracy. Thorough deliberation, stakeholder engagement, and pilot implementations can pave the way for

this ambitious reform, ensuring it aligns with the democratic ethos of the nation.

ELECTRONIC TRACKING OF UNDERTRIALS ON BAIL: BENEFITS, CHALLENGES, AND LEGAL PERSPECTIVES

CONTEXT: The Supreme Court's recent report on prison reforms explores the potential of electronic monitoring as a solution to overcrowding while acknowledging the need for stringent safeguards to protect the privacy and rights of individuals.

BACKGROUND:

Indian prisons are severely overcrowded, exceeding capacity by a significant margin. This has serious implications for the well-being of inmates. To address this, the Supreme Court's Centre for Research and Planning conducted a study on prison reforms. The report, released by President Droupadi Murmu, explores various strategies, including electronic monitoring, to decongest prisons. This initiative builds upon recommendations from other bodies like the Law Commission of India and the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs, all working towards finding effective solutions to prison overcrowding.

ELECTRONIC MONITORING OF PRISONERS: AN OVERVIEW

Electronic Monitoring (EM) of prisoners involves using technology, such as GPS devices or ankle bracelets, to track the location and behavior of offenders. This system is used in a variety of situations, including:

- **House Arrest:** Monitoring offenders placed under house arrest as part of their bail or pre-trial conditions.
- **Parole:** Tracking offenders who have been granted parole.
- **Community Sentences:** Using EM as part of a community service or suspended sentence order.
- **Early Release:** Allowing prisoners to be released early while still being monitored.

INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION

Countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Malaysia, and Australia have effectively used electronic tracking systems to alleviate prison overcrowding and ensure the supervision of offenders outside of incarceration.

Indian Legislative Framework

1. **Model Prisons and Correctional Services Act, 2023:** This Act introduced electronic tracking devices as a condition for granting prison leave.
2. **Law Commission of India's 2017 Report:** Recognized the potential benefits of electronic tagging for cost-saving and security, while emphasizing caution in its implementation.

BENEFITS OF ELECTRONIC MONITORING

1. Addressing Overcrowding in Indian Prisons

Indian prisons are severely overcrowded, with a prison occupancy rate of 131.4% as of December 2022, according

to the NCRB. Of the total prisoners, 75.8% are undertrials. Electronic monitoring offers an alternative to incarceration, helping to reduce the strain on overcrowded facilities.

2. Cost-Effective Solution

- **Financial Savings:** EM is significantly cheaper than traditional imprisonment. For example, in Odisha, it costs the government Rs 1 lakh annually per undertrial prisoner, while Rs 10,000–15,000 is spent annually on an electronic tracker.
- **Reduced Administrative Burden:** The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs (2023) endorsed ankle bracelets and tracking devices for their cost-effectiveness in monitoring prisoners and reducing the administrative workload.

3. Mental Health and Social Benefits

- **Family Contact:** EM improves family contact by allowing offenders to remain at home or in their community, reducing the isolation typically associated with incarceration.
- **Stress Reduction:** It reduces the stress caused by being in prison, contributing to better mental health for offenders.

CHALLENGES AND CONCERNS OF ELECTRONIC MONITORING

1. Privacy Concerns

- **Judicial Stance on Privacy:** In 2023, the Supreme Court of India struck down a bail condition that required an individual to share their location via Google Maps, citing a violation of the right to privacy under Article 21 of the Constitution. This ruling highlights the importance of protecting personal privacy in any monitoring system.
- **Informed Consent:** The Parliamentary Standing Committee (2023) emphasized that electronic monitoring must be voluntary and consent-based, with inmates' approval required before such measures are implemented.

2. Potential for Abuse: E-Carceration

- **Extension of Punitive Control:** In the US, electronic monitoring has been described as a form of "e-carceration," where technology extends the punitive control of prisons into broader society. This can lead to surveillance and increased government control over individuals outside of prison.
- **Marginalized Communities:** Both in the US and India, there are concerns that electronic monitoring disproportionately affects marginalized communities. For instance, in India, 68.4% of prisoners belong to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes, raising concerns about the unequal impact of such



practices.

3. Social Stigma and Mental Health Issues

- **Visible Devices:** Devices like ankle bracelets are visible and can lead to social stigma, isolation, and heightened mental health issues. These visible devices can cause anxiety, depression, and further alienation from society.

4. Financial Burden

- In some countries, monitored individuals are required to bear the costs of electronic monitoring devices. Setup fees can range from \$100 to \$200, and daily charges can range from \$3 to \$35. While India's Supreme Court has suggested the government bear these costs, there is a risk that financial burdens could shift to individuals, especially in the long term.

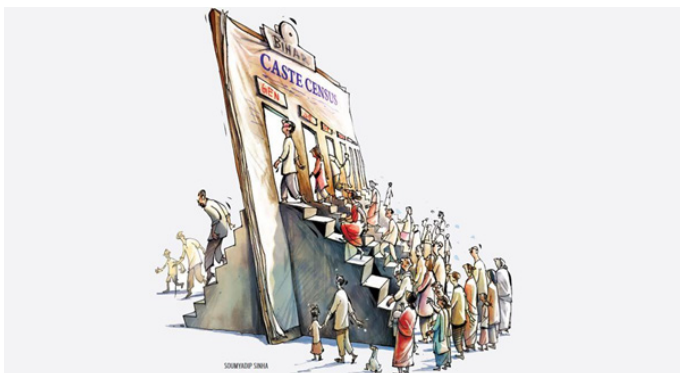
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE USE OF ELECTRONIC MONITORING IN INDIA

1. Strict Safeguards for Human Rights

- The Law Commission of India (268th report) recommended limiting the use of electronic monitoring to individuals convicted of grave and heinous crimes and those with prior convictions for similar offenses.
- **Clear Criteria for Use:** EM should only be applied under clearly defined criteria to ensure fairness and avoid discrimination.
- **Voluntary Participation:** Participation in electronic monitoring should be voluntary, with the consent of the monitored individual.

DOES A CASTE CENSUS SERVE ANY REAL PURPOSE IN MODERN INDIA?

CONTEXT: India's history of caste censuses is fraught with challenges, including inaccuracies and the potential for misclassification. While proponents advocate for their use to ensure equitable resource distribution, concerns exist regarding data reliability and the practical limitations of implementing proportional reservations for a vast and diverse population. The concept of the "creamy layer" further underscores the complexities of addressing caste-based inequalities within the framework of existing reservation policies.



I. INTRODUCTION

- **The Caste Census Debate:** The debate surrounding the implementation of a caste census in India has intensified. Proponents argue it is crucial for equitable resource

2. Privacy Protections

- Stringent safeguards should be established to protect individuals' privacy rights and prevent the misuse of tracking devices.

3. Addressing Potential Bias

- **Mitigating Disproportionate Impact:** It is essential to address the discriminatory impact of electronic monitoring on marginalized communities, ensuring equal treatment for all offenders regardless of caste, creed, or socio-economic background.

4. Limit the Use to Specific Cases

- Electronic monitoring should be limited to offenders who pose a low to moderate risk or have been convicted of non-violent crimes. It should not be used as a blanket solution for all prisoners.

CONCLUSION:

Electronic monitoring of prisoners offers a promising solution to address overcrowding in India's prisons. It provides a cost-effective, less intrusive alternative to traditional incarceration while improving family contact and mental health outcomes for offenders. However, its implementation must be carefully regulated to protect individual rights, prevent discrimination, and avoid privacy violations. A balanced approach that respects both the rights of offenders and the need for effective monitoring is essential for the successful adoption of electronic monitoring in India.

allocation, reservation policies, and targeted social programs.

• **Background:**

- **Need for Social Justice:** The caste system continues to impact Indian society, with significant disparities in socio-economic outcomes across different caste groups.
- **Data Limitations:** Existing data on caste is limited and often unreliable, hindering effective policy formulation and implementation.

II. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

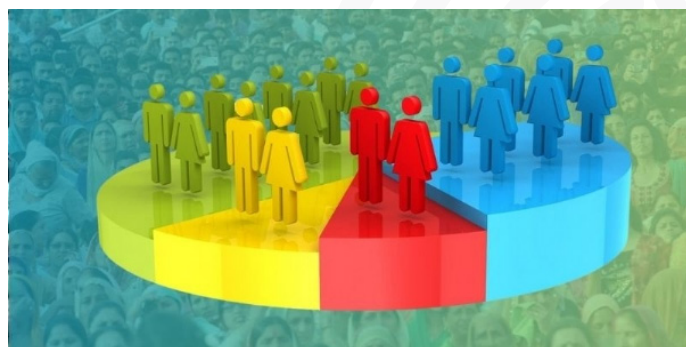
- **Colonial Era:** * The first detailed caste census was conducted in India during the British colonial period (1871-72).
- However, these early attempts were fraught with inaccuracies and inconsistencies in caste classifications due to the fluidity of caste identities and regional variations.
- **Post-Independence Era:**
 - The 1931 census attempted to identify 4,147 castes, but encountered challenges due to the dynamic nature of caste affiliations.
 - The Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC)



2011, while ambitious, recorded a significant number of errors, highlighting the complexities of accurately classifying individuals based on caste.

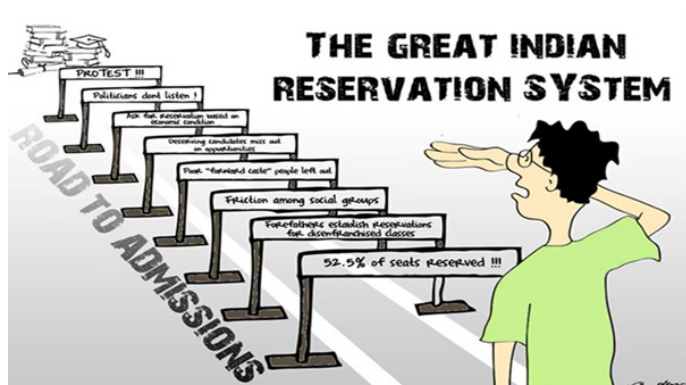
III. CHALLENGES IN CONDUCTING A CASTE CENSUS

- **Caste Mobility and Misclassification:**
 - Upward Mobility: Individuals may claim higher caste affiliations for social prestige, distorting accurate caste data.
 - Downward Mobility: Some communities may claim lower caste status to avail of reservation benefits.
 - Fluid Caste Identities: Caste identities are not static; they evolve over time, making accurate and consistent classification challenging.
- **Data Accuracy Issues:**
 - Subjectivity and Bias: Enumerator biases and subjective interpretations can significantly influence data collection, leading to inaccuracies.
 - Similar-sounding Castes: Confusion often arises due to similar-sounding caste names across regions, further complicating data collection and analysis.



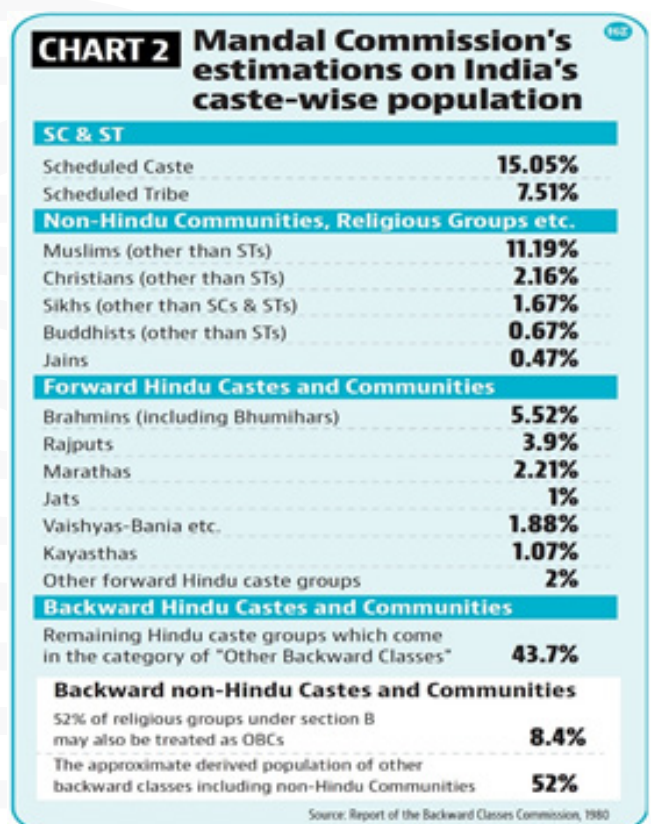
IV. LIMITATIONS OF PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

- **Practical Challenges:**
 - India has a vast and diverse population with thousands of castes.
 - Implementing proportional representation for all castes would be logistically complex and may not be feasible in many sectors.
 - Smaller castes may face significant hurdles in securing adequate representation due to their limited population size.



V. IMPLICATIONS OF A CASTE CENSUS

- **Social and Political Implications:**
 - A caste census could potentially exacerbate social divisions by reinforcing caste identities and potentially leading to increased competition for resources.
 - It could also raise concerns about potential misuse of caste data for discriminatory purposes.
- **Administrative Burden:**
 - Conducting and analyzing a comprehensive caste census would be a massive undertaking, requiring significant resources and manpower, potentially diverting attention from other pressing development priorities.



VI. ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES

- **Focus on Socio-economic Development:**
 - Prioritizing inclusive development strategies that address the root causes of social and economic inequalities.
 - Implementing targeted programs based on socio-economic criteria rather than solely on caste.
- **Strengthening existing mechanisms:**
 - Enhancing existing mechanisms for identifying and addressing the needs of marginalized communities, including through participatory approaches and community-based programs.

VII. DEFINITION OF "CREAMY LAYER"

- The "creamy layer" concept was defined by the Supreme Court of India in the 1992 Indra Sawhney judgment.



- It refers to those individuals within the reserved categories (OBCs, SCs, STs) who are economically well-off and do not require the benefits of reservation.
- This concept aims to ensure that the benefits of reservation programs reach the most disadvantaged within these groups.

VIII. PERCENTAGE OF OBC POPULATION

- According to recent estimates, Other Backward Classes (OBCs) constitute the largest segment of the Indian population, accounting for approximately 42% of

TAKING FLIGHT: ANALYZING THE BHARATIYA VAYUYAN VIDHEYAK 2024

CONTEXT: The Bharatiya Vayuyan Vidheyak 2024 aims to modernize India's aviation sector by replacing the outdated Aircraft Act of 1934. While the new legislation introduces key features such as the establishment of specialized authorities and enhanced penalties, concerns have been raised regarding the limited autonomy of the regulator, the scope of government intervention, and potential violations of fundamental rights



KEY FEATURES OF THE BHARATIYA VAYUYAN VIDHEYAK 2024:

- **Establishment of Specialized Authorities: Creation of three key authorities:**
 - Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) for regulatory functions and safety oversight.
 - Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) for security oversight.
 - Aircraft Accidents Investigation Bureau (AAIB) for investigating aviation accidents.
- **Enhanced Regulatory Powers:**
 - Expanded powers for the DGCA, including the regulation of aircraft design.
 - Updated rule-making powers to address modern challenges in the aviation sector.
- **Strengthened Penalties:**
 - Increased penalties for violations, including those related to prohibited goods, endangering safety, and non-compliance with regulations.
- **Revised Appeal Mechanism:**
 - Introduced a multi-tiered appeal process, although

households.

IX. CONCLUSION

While a caste census is intended to promote equity and inclusion, it presents significant challenges in terms of data accuracy, implementation, and potential social consequences. Alternative approaches that focus on inclusive development and targeted interventions for marginalized communities may be more effective in addressing the socio-economic disparities faced by various caste groups in India

appeals are ultimately limited to the Union Government.

Criticisms of the Bharatiya Vayuyan Vidheyak 2024:

- **Limited Regulator Autonomy:**
 - Concerns regarding the DGCA's independence from government control, including potential interference in its decision-making.
- **Restricted Appeal Process:**
 - Limiting appeals to the Union Government may hinder the ability of the aviation sector to challenge regulatory decisions effectively.
- **Potential for Abuse of Power:**
 - Concerns about the government's discretion in specifying criminal penalties and appointing arbitrators, which may raise concerns about the separation of powers.
- **Exclusionary Title:**
 - The Hindi title of the legislation has been criticized as excluding non-Hindi speaking regions of India.

Additional Information:

- **Ease of Doing Business:** The BBV 2024 aims to streamline regulations and improve the ease of doing business in the aviation sector, attracting more investment and promoting growth.
- **International Standards:** The legislation seeks to align Indian aviation regulations with international standards set by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).
- **Safety and Security:** Enhancing aviation safety and security is a key objective of the new legislation, with a focus on preventing and mitigating risks.

CONCLUSION:

The Bharatiya Vayuyan Vidheyak 2024 represents a significant overhaul of India's aviation laws. While it aims to modernize the sector and enhance safety, concerns regarding the autonomy of the regulator, the scope of government intervention, and the potential for abuse of power require careful consideration.



PROSECUTIONS UNDER PMLA: PROVISIONS AND KEY ISSUES

INTRODUCTION

The Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA) is India's principal legislation addressing the offence of money laundering. It aligns with international mandates to combat laundering proceeds derived from criminal activities.

The PMLA prescribes criminal penalties, including rigorous imprisonment, fines, and confiscation of properties. Its procedural framework integrates the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (CrPC), making the prosecution process a blend of CrPC and PMLA provisions. This is an attempt to comprehensively analyse the PMLA's operations and key legal issues arising in its enforcement.

1. DEFINITION AND PUNISHMENT OF MONEY LAUNDERING

1.1. Definition of Money Laundering

- Section 3: Defines money laundering as any attempt or actual involvement in the process or activity of projecting 'proceeds of crime' as untainted property. This includes concealment, possession, acquisition, or use of such proceeds.
- Proceeds of Crime (Section 2(u)):
 - Property derived or obtained, directly or indirectly, from criminal activities related to a scheduled offence.
 - Includes equivalent value properties held within or outside India.
 - Expanded by the 2019 amendment to encompass proceeds indirectly derived from scheduled offences.

1.2. Punishment for Money Laundering

- Section 4: Imposes rigorous imprisonment of 3 to 7 years, extendable to 10 years for offences under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act (NDPS). It also includes fines.

2. Scheduled Offences and Predicate Offences

2.1. Scheduled Offences

- Section 2(y): Categorizes scheduled offences into three parts:
 1. Part A: Covers major offences.
 2. Part B: Applies if the value involved exceeds INR 1 crore.
 3. Part C: Includes transnational crimes.

2.2. Predicate Offence Requirement

- Money laundering is contingent on the commission of a predicate offence. Both offences (predicate and money laundering) are tried together, as per Section 44.

2.3. Judicial Observations

- In Vijay Madanlal Chaudhary v. Union of India, the Supreme Court clarified that:

- Money laundering is an independent offence.
- Proceedings for money laundering abate if there is an acquittal in the predicate offence.

3. Procedural Aspects: Interplay with CrPC

3.1. Applicability of CrPC

- Section 65: Provisions of CrPC apply unless inconsistent with the PMLA.
- Examples of CrPC integration:
 - Arrests and investigation timelines (§167(2) CrPC).
 - Default bail if investigation exceeds prescribed timelines.

3.2. Overrides and Safeguards

- Maxim: Generalia Specialibus Non Derogant: PMLA provisions take precedence over CrPC.
- Safeguards include:
 - Written reasons for searches and seizures.
 - Judicial review of enforcement actions.

4. Burden of Proof

4.1. Reverse Burden

- Section 24: Presumes involvement in money laundering if proceeds of crime are established.
- Rebuttable Presumption:
 - Accused must disprove the presumption through evidence.

4.2. Constitutional Concerns

- Automatic liability contradicts fundamental rights under Article 20 of the Constitution.
- Courts emphasize the need for investigation and evidence before concluding guilt.

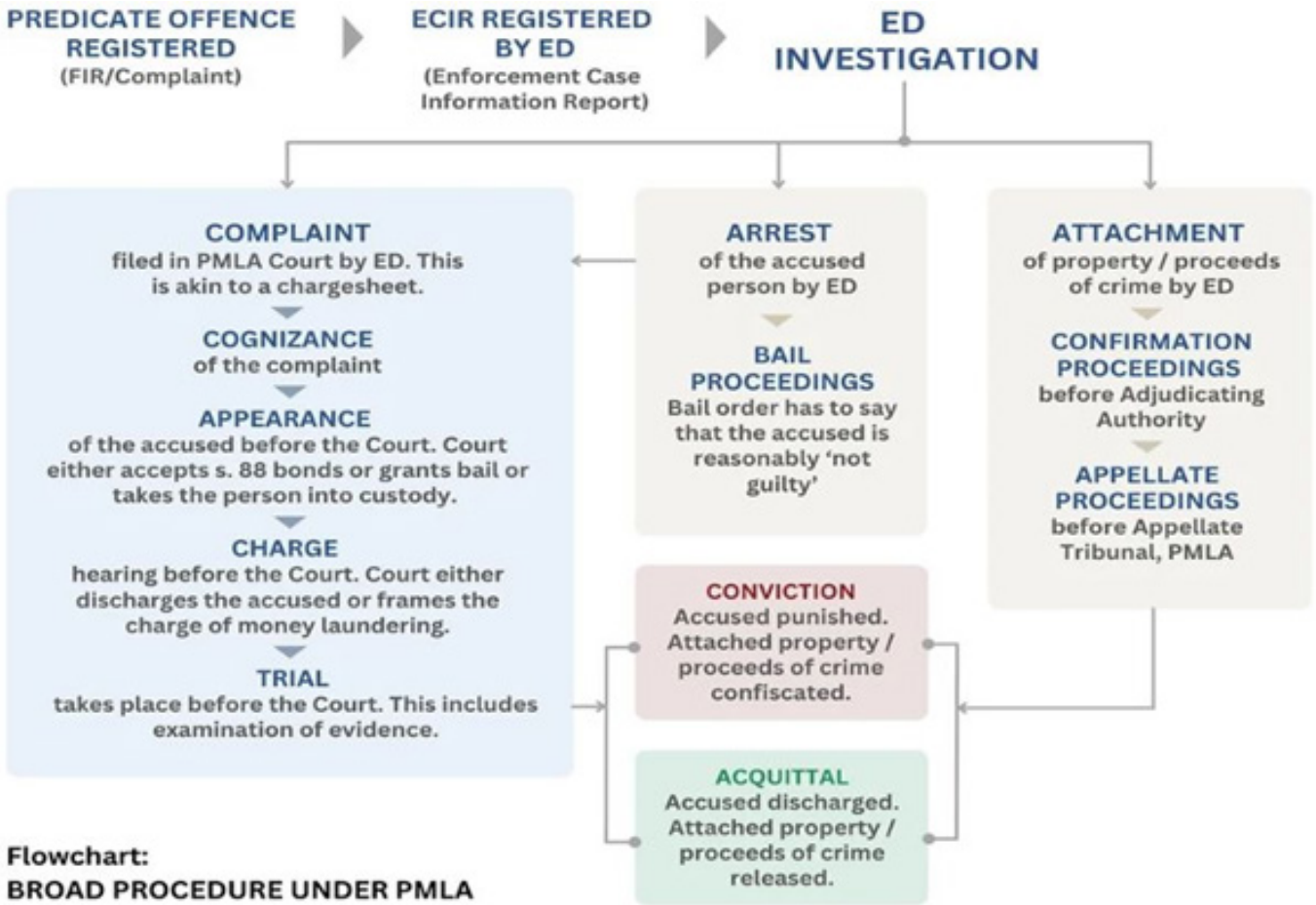
5. Trial and Jurisdictional Issues

5.1. Jurisdiction

- Section 44: Trials for money laundering are conducted by Special Courts.
 - Location: Based on where the laundering occurred.
- Judicial Precedent (KA Rauf v. Directorate of Enforcement):
 - Residency or witness location does not dictate jurisdiction.
 - Special Courts hold exclusive jurisdiction over PMLA offences.

5.2. Transfer of Cases

- Issues arise when predicate offence courts are higher in hierarchy than PMLA courts.
- Delays often result from jurisdictional conflicts and procedural transfer



6. Bail Provisions

6.1. Twin Conditions for Bail

- Section 45 imposes stricter bail conditions:
 - Opportunity for the prosecutor to oppose bail.
 - Court must find reasonable grounds to believe the accused is not guilty and unlikely to reoffend.

6.2. Judicial Developments

- Nikesh Tarachand Shah v. Union of India: Struck down the twin conditions as arbitrary.
- Amended Section 45 upheld in Vijay Madanlal Chaudhary.
- Courts consider constitutional safeguards in granting bail, especially in prolonged incarcerations.

7. Challenges in Enforcement

7.1. Procedural Delays

- Slow prosecution of predicate offences delays PMLA trials.

- Conflicts between hierarchical courts add complexity.

7.2. Balancing Rights and Enforcement

- Stringent provisions often face criticism for infringing on constitutional protections.
- Need for robust investigative frameworks to ensure fair trials.

CONCLUSION

The PMLA is a critical instrument in India's fight against financial crimes. Recent judicial decisions, particularly in Vijay Madanlal Chaudhary, have reinforced its constitutional validity while emphasizing procedural safeguards. However, challenges remain in harmonising its stringent provisions with fundamental rights. Continuous legal evolution and judicial scrutiny are essential to ensure the effective and fair implementation of the PMLA within India's legal framework.



OPPOSITION TARGETS VP DHANKHAR: IMPEACHMENT NOTICE EXPLAINED

CONTEXT: The opposition's plan to submit an impeachment resolution against Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar stems from allegations of partisanship and concerns over the undermining of constitutional offices, marking a significant political move without historical precedent for the removal of a Rajya Sabha Chairman.

WHY IN NEWS?

- Opposition parties under the INDIA bloc plan to submit a no-confidence or impeachment resolution against Vice President and Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar.
- While the opposition lacks sufficient numbers to pass the resolution, the move seeks to send a political message to the ruling party.



VICE PRESIDENT IN INDIA

About the Office

- The Vice President is the second-highest constitutional office in India, after the President.
- This role is modelled on the Vice President of the United States.

Eligibility (Article 66)

- Must be a citizen of India.
- At least 35 years old.
- Qualified to be elected as a member of the Rajya Sabha.
- Cannot hold any office of profit under the Government of India or state governments.

Election Process (Article 66)

- Elected by an electoral college comprising members of both Houses of Parliament using proportional representation and a single transferable vote.
- Unlike the presidential electoral college, this process includes both elected and nominated members of Parliament and excludes state legislative assemblies.
- Election disputes are resolved by the Supreme Court, whose decision is final.

Tenure (Article 67)

- Serves a term of 5 years, eligible for re-election.
- Can resign by submitting a resignation letter to the President.

- Can be removed through a resolution passed by an effective majority in the Rajya Sabha and agreed upon by the Lok Sabha.

ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND POWERS

1. Ex-Officio Chairman of Rajya Sabha (Article 64):

- Presides over Rajya Sabha sessions.
- Votes only to break ties.

2. Acting President (Article 65):

- Acts as President during their absence, resignation, removal, or death.

3. Ceremonial Role:

- Maintains the dignity and neutrality of the office without active involvement in governance.

Impeachment Process (Article 67(b))

- Requires a resolution passed by a majority of all members of the Rajya Sabha.
- Must be agreed upon by the Lok Sabha with a simple majority.
- Requires a 14-day notice before introducing the resolution.

NOTICE TO IMPEACH VICE PRESIDENT JAGDEEP DHANKHAR

About the Move

- The opposition plans to submit an impeachment notice under Article 67(b) of the Constitution.
- It alleges partisanship in Dhankhar's conduct as Rajya Sabha Chairman.

Opposition's Grievances

1. Accusations of Bias:

- Dhankhar allegedly named Congress MP Abhishek Singhvi in the context of an alleged currency recovery incident.
- Recently, the Chairman claimed that a wad of currency notes was recovered from Singhvi's seat in the Rajya Sabha.

2. Undermining Democracy:

- Opposition parties accuse the ruling party and government of undermining constitutional offices and parliamentary democracy.

Historical Context and Precedents

No Precedent for Rajya Sabha Chairman's Impeachment

- No Vice President has faced impeachment in India's history.
- In 2020, a no-confidence resolution was moved against Deputy Chairman Harivansh over disagreements on farm bills but was not successful.

Similar Past Resolutions Against Lok Sabha Speakers

- G.V. Mavalankar (1951), Sardar Hukam Singh (1966), and Balram Jakhar (1987):



- These resolutions were discussed but ultimately negated in the House.

THE UNIQUENESS OF THE VICE PRESIDENT IN INDIAN POLITY

The Vice President of India holds a distinct and multifaceted position in the country's constitutional framework. This role is unique in its structure, functions, and significance, blending ceremonial duties with critical responsibilities in governance.

Functions and Roles

1. Ex-Officio Chairman of the Rajya Sabha:

- The Vice President presides over the Rajya Sabha (Upper House of Parliament), ensuring the smooth conduct of legislative proceedings.
- They cast a vote only in the event of a tie, underscoring their impartiality.

2. Acting President:

- In the absence, resignation, or demise of the President, the Vice President assumes the role of Acting President, maintaining continuity in governance.

3. Ceremonial and Neutral Role:

- The Vice President upholds the dignity of the office by staying above active politics and governance, representing the neutrality of the position.

SIGNIFICANCE IN INDIAN POLITY

1. Constitutional Balance:

- The Vice President bridges the legislative and executive branches, symbolizing unity in the constitutional

framework.

2. Representation of Federalism:

- As the presiding officer of the Rajya Sabha, the Vice President represents the interests of the states within the Union government.

3. Stability and Continuity:

- Their role as Acting President ensures stability in times of transition, safeguarding the democratic process.

4. Democratic Accountability:

- The Vice President's election by an electoral college comprising members of both Houses of Parliament reflects the principle of accountability to the legislature.

ANALYSIS

The Vice President's role is a blend of ceremonial stature and constitutional significance, vital for maintaining the balance, dignity, and functionality of India's democratic framework. Their neutrality, combined with critical legislative and executive functions, underscores their unique position in Indian polity.

CONCLUSION

The impeachment notice against Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar highlights the opposition's dissatisfaction with his conduct as Rajya Sabha Chairman and serves as a symbolic gesture to uphold parliamentary norms. While lacking historical precedent and the numbers to succeed, this move emphasizes the importance of neutrality and accountability in constitutional offices.

INDIA'S MERCHANT SHIPPING BILL AND COASTAL SHIPPING BILL 2024: TRANSFORMATIVE REFORMS FOR THE MARITIME SECTOR

CONTEXT: The Indian Government plans to introduce the Merchant Shipping Bill, 2024, and the Coastal Shipping Bill, 2024, aiming to modernize maritime laws, address regulatory gaps, and boost the shipping industry's potential.



NEED FOR NEW LEGISLATION

1. Outdated Existing Acts:

- The Merchant Shipping Act, 1958 and the Coasting Vessels Act, 1838 are no longer sufficient to meet contemporary maritime needs.
- Regulatory gaps particularly impact offshore vessels, which form 50% of Indian-flagged vessels.

2. Limited Welfare Provisions:

- The current Act's welfare measures apply only to Indian-

flagged ships, leaving 85% of Indian seafarers on foreign-flagged vessels unprotected.

3. Absence of Provisions for International Conventions:

- The existing framework lacks enabling mechanisms for implementing global maritime conventions signed by India.

4. Hindrance to Modernization:

- License-era provisions restrict maritime administration's evolution into a facilitator-regulator model.

FEATURES OF THE MERCHANT SHIPPING BILL, 2024

1. Expanded Vessel Scope:

- Regulates previously unregulated crafts, including submersibles, hydrofoils, and mobile offshore units.
- Improves oversight and safety standards, especially in the offshore drilling sector.

2. Encouraging Foreign Investment:

- Reduces the ownership threshold for Indian entities from 100% to 51%, allowing NRIs and foreign entities to invest while retaining Indian control.

3. Bareboat Charter-Cum-Demise:

- Introduces a lease-to-own model for vessels, aiding entrepreneurs to enter the shipping industry without



significant capital.

4. Temporary Registration for Demolition:

- Eases the process for registering unseaworthy vessels destined for recycling, boosting ship recycling hubs like Alang.

5. Enhancing Coastal Security:

- Empowers authorities to regulate all vessel types, addressing security concerns highlighted by the 26/11 Mumbai attacks.

6. Marine Pollution Measures:

- Mandates the reduction of sulphur content in marine fuel and bans single-use plastics.
- Incorporates international conventions like MARPOL to ensure environmental sustainability.

7. Provisions for Seafarers:

- Extends welfare measures to Indian seafarers on foreign-flagged vessels.
- Aligns with the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) for better working conditions.

8. Regulation of Maritime Training:

- Introduces a legal framework to regulate private maritime training institutes, ensuring standardization and quality education.

FOCUS OF THE COASTAL SHIPPING BILL, 2024

1. Distinction Between Technical and Commercial Regulation:

- Separates the technical regulation of ships from the commercial use of Indian coastal waters.
- Licensing and coastal shipping operations are addressed under the new Coastal Shipping Bill.

2. Alignment with 'Sagarmala' Program:

- Promotes coastal shipping through dedicated berths and enhanced hinterland connectivity, supporting infrastructure development.

FEATURES OF THE MERCHANT SHIPPING BILL, 2024

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The focus of the Coastal Shipping Bill, 2024

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- Promotes coastal shipping through dedicated berths and enhanced hinterland connectivity, supporting infrastructure development.

CONCLUSION

- These reforms aim to modernize India's maritime laws, foster investments, enhance safety and sustainability, and provide better welfare for seafarers. By aligning with international standards and promoting coastal shipping, the bills seek to unlock the full potential of India's maritime sector.



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



JUSTICE SHEKHAR KUMAR YADAV: CONTROVERSY SPARKS DEBATE ON JUDICIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

CONTEXT: The recent controversy surrounding Justice Shekhar Kumar Yadav of the Allahabad High Court has raised serious questions about judicial ethics and eroded public trust in the judiciary.

JUSTICE YADAV'S CONTROVERSIAL REMARKS

Key Comments

- Asserted that the country operates based on the wishes of the majority population.
- Made contentious comparisons about values taught to children of different communities, emphasizing animal slaughter.
- Advocated for a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) and made remarks highlighting practices like polygamy and triple talaq in contrast to Hindu traditions.

Response from the Legal Fraternity

- Supreme Court: Took note of the controversy and sought details from the Allahabad High Court.
- Campaign for Judicial Accountability and Reforms: Alleged violations of judicial ethics by Justice Yadav.

JUDICIAL ETHICS AND CONDUCT

Global Standards for Judicial Conduct

- 1985 UN Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary: Emphasizes justice, human rights, and impartiality without discrimination.
- Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct (2002): Mandates judges to act with dignity, independence, and impartiality, while respecting societal diversity.

Indian Standards

- Restatement of Values of Judicial Life (1997): A code of judicial ethics adopted by the Supreme Court, focusing on impartiality and maintaining public confidence in the judiciary.

Alleged Violations

Justice Yadav's remarks, particularly at a politically affiliated event, seemingly breach these codes, undermining the judiciary's neutrality and public trust.

THE IMPEACHMENT PROCESS FOR JUDGES

Constitutional Provisions

- Article 124(4): Governs the removal of Supreme Court judges.
- Article 218: Extends similar provisions to High Court judges.
- Grounds for Removal: "Proven misbehaviour" or "incapacity," though the Constitution does not define these terms explicitly.

PROCEDURE AS PER THE JUDGES INQUIRY ACT, 1968

1. Initiating the Motion

- Requires signatures from at least 100 Lok Sabha members or 50 Rajya Sabha members.

- The motion is admitted or rejected by the Speaker/Chairman.

2. Inquiry Committee

- A three-member committee, including the Chief Justice of India (or a Supreme Court judge), a Chief Justice of a High Court, and a distinguished jurist, is formed to investigate.
- The committee frames charges, collects evidence, and submits its report.

3. Parliamentary Approval

- If the committee finds the judge guilty, each House of Parliament must pass the motion with a special majority (two-thirds of members present and voting).
- An address is sent to the President for the judge's removal.

4. In-House Procedure (1999): An alternative mechanism for less severe allegations, involving fact-finding and recommendations for voluntary retirement or impeachment.

HISTORICAL INSTANCES OF JUDICIAL IMPEACHMENT

- Justice Soumitra Sen (2011): Faced impeachment for corruption but resigned before the motion could be debated in the Lok Sabha.
- Justice S K Gangele (2015): Cleared of sexual harassment charges by an inquiry committee.
- Chief Justice Dipak Misra (2018): Impeachment motion rejected at the preliminary stage by then Rajya Sabha Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu.

THE LARGER DEBATE: JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Public and Institutional Reactions

Justice Yadav's case has reignited debates over judicial accountability and ethics, with a focus on the judiciary's role in upholding democratic principles and impartiality.

Impartiality and Public Trust

The judiciary must adhere to established codes of conduct, avoiding political or religious bias, to maintain public confidence and uphold constitutional values.

CONCLUSION

Justice Shekhar Kumar Yadav's remarks highlight the delicate balance between judicial independence and accountability. The controversy underscores the need for strict adherence to ethical standards and impartiality to preserve the judiciary's credibility. As the case unfolds, its handling will serve as a critical test of India's judicial accountability mechanisms.

LEGAL LANDSCAPE OF INDIA IN 2024 AND CHALLENGES AHEAD

CONTEXT: In 2024, India's judiciary, under the leadership of Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud, took decisive actions on politically sensitive issues, delivering landmark rulings and addressing long-standing criticisms. With key cases, institutional reforms, and contentious legislative reforms on the horizon, 2025 will be crucial in shaping the future of India's legal and political landscape.



Why in News?

The year 2024 marked a transformative phase for India's judiciary, as the Supreme Court took bold stances on numerous politically sensitive issues, addressing long-standing concerns about judicial inaction. This period of active judicial intervention set the stage for critical reforms, marking a pivotal moment in the country's legal landscape and raising expectations for continued judicial developments in 2025.

Key Verdicts and Judicial Interventions in 2024

Landmark Judgments:

- **Electoral Bonds Scheme:** The Supreme Court declared the Electoral Bonds scheme unconstitutional, addressing growing concerns about opacity in political funding and the influence of money in elections.
- **Bilkis Bano Case:** In a landmark ruling, the Court overturned the Gujarat government's remission for the convicts in the Bilkis Bano gangrape case, sending a strong message on the judicial system's commitment to justice and victims' rights.
- **Bulldozer Demolitions:** The Court issued significant guidelines to prevent illegal demolitions, particularly targeting practices that led to the unlawful destruction of properties in the name of urban development.
- **Opposition Leaders' Bail:** In a series of rulings, several opposition leaders were granted bail in politically motivated cases, reinforcing the judiciary's role in protecting democratic rights and maintaining judicial independence.
- **Mandir-Masjid Disputes:** The Court issued a directive barring district courts from hearing new cases related to the ownership of religious sites, thus reducing the scope for politically charged and potentially divisive litigation.

Addressing Long-Pending Issues:

- **Aligarh Muslim University's Minority Status:** A Constitution Bench heard the important case on whether Aligarh Muslim University should retain its status as a minority institution.
- **Taxation of Industrial Alcohol:** The Supreme Court provided clarity on the taxation of industrial alcohol, addressing concerns about tax avoidance and providing legal certainty for businesses.

Significance of These Interventions:

These rulings reflect a continuity of judicial reforms initiated during the tenure of Chief Justice U U Lalit, which were further strengthened under the leadership of Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud. The year saw the Court asserting its role as a guardian of constitutional values and social justice, particularly in politically sensitive matters.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN 2025

Leadership Transitions:

2025 will witness three Chief Justices presiding over the Supreme Court, with potential implications for the Court's composition and judicial approach:

- CJI Sanjiv Khanna will lead the Court until May 2025.
- Justice Bhushan Ramkrishna Gavai will serve for a brief tenure of 194 days.
- Justice Surya Kant will take over as CJI from November 2025 until February 2027.

The frequent leadership changes may impact the Collegium's decision-making process, which plays a crucial role in judicial appointments. This could present challenges in maintaining the continuity of judicial reforms and tackling the increasing backlog of cases.

Institutional Reforms:

Ongoing digital reforms under Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud have increased public scrutiny of the judiciary. These reforms, which include better case management systems and transparency initiatives, will require continued adaptation to manage the evolving expectations of an informed public.

Major Legal and Legislative Developments to Watch in 2025

Religious and Cultural Issues:

- **Places of Worship Act:** A key issue for 2025 will be the constitutional challenge to the 1991 Places of Worship Act, which froze the religious character of places of worship to what it was in 1947.
- **Hijab Ban:** The Supreme Court will revisit the legality of Karnataka's ban on hijabs in schools, with implications for freedom of religion and personal rights.
- **Essential Religious Practices:** The Court may review the doctrines governing cases like women's access to religious sites, continuing the conversation that began



with the Sabarimala case (2018).

Citizenship and Secularism:

- **Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019:** Challenges to the CAA, particularly regarding the exclusion of Muslims and its perceived violation of secularism, will test the Court’s commitment to equality, fraternity, and religious neutrality.

Gender Rights:

- **Marital Rape:** The ongoing debate over the criminalization of marital rape will continue to be a focal point in 2025, with the Court weighing the social and legal implications of such a significant change.

ENFORCEMENT DIRECTORATE’S POWERS:

The Supreme Court is expected to examine the powers of the Enforcement Directorate (ED), particularly in terms of arrest procedures and safeguards against misuse. This could have far-reaching consequences for the functioning of investigative agencies.

Contentious Legislative Reforms on the Horizon

One Nation, One Election:

The proposed reform to hold simultaneous elections for Lok Sabha, state assemblies, and Union Territories could reshape the political landscape, prompting significant constitutional and legal scrutiny.

New Criminal Laws:

The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, a proposed overhaul of the colonial-era criminal laws, has raised concerns over certain provisions, such as the rebranding of sedition as

“deshdroh” (treason), the extension of detention periods, and the scope of preventive detention.

Uniform Civil Code (UCC):

Uttarakhand’s implementation of the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) in January 2025 will mandate the registration of live-in relationships and impose penalties for non-compliance. Similar proposals in BJP-ruled states have triggered debates about the encroachment on personal freedoms and religious rights.

Sub-Classification of Scheduled Castes:

The Supreme Court will also address the implications of a new policy allowing states to create sub-quotas within the Scheduled Castes reservation. This policy could potentially reshape affirmative action strategies and influence social equity debates across the nation.

CONCLUSION

2024 marked a pivotal year for India’s judiciary, highlighting the Supreme Court’s proactive stance in addressing major legal, social, and political challenges. With key cases and legislative reforms looming in 2025, the judiciary’s role in shaping India’s future legal landscape will be crucial. As the country faces complex issues ranging from religious rights to gender equality and political reforms, the challenge for the judiciary will be to ensure that justice, constitutional principles, and the rule of law remain at the forefront, despite changing leadership and evolving societal dynamics.

APPLICABILITY OF POSH ACT TO POLITICAL PARTIES: CHALLENGES AND LEGAL INSIGHTS

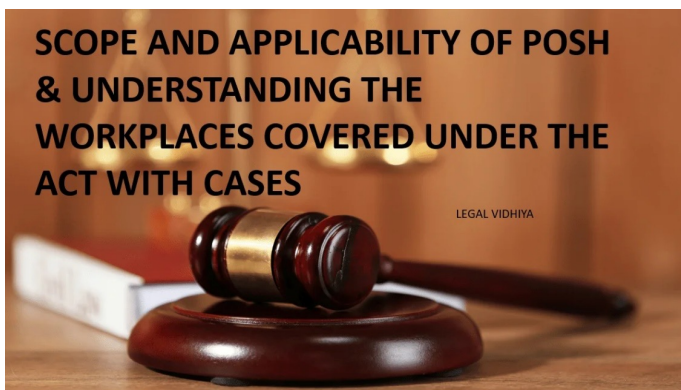
CONTEXT: The Supreme Court recently referred a Public Interest Litigation seeking the application of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act to political parties to the Election Commission of India. This decision arose from arguments that political parties, with their unique organizational structures, require specific mechanisms, such as Internal Complaints Committees, to effectively address and prevent sexual harassment within their ranks.

BACKGROUND: The POSH Act, 2013, ((Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013) stems from the landmark Supreme Court judgment in **Vishakha v. State of Rajasthan (1997)**. This judgment, arising from the horrific gang rape of Bhanwari Devi, a social worker, established the need for clear guidelines to prevent and address sexual harassment at workplaces

The Vishaka Guidelines laid the foundation for workplace sexual harassment redressal mechanisms, emphasizing the need for:

- **Prevention of sexual harassment:** Creating a safe and respectful work environment.
- **Redressal mechanisms:** Establishing clear procedures for filing and investigating complaints.
- **Awareness and training:** Conducting regular training programs to sensitize employees about sexual harassment.

The POSH Act, 2013, subsequently codified these guidelines into law, providing a comprehensive legal framework to combat sexual harassment in workplaces across India.





- **Beyond the Electoral Framework:** The ECI's primary focus lies within the electoral framework defined by the Constitution and the Representation of the People Act. Its authority to enforce other laws applicable to political parties, such as labor laws, social welfare laws, or environmental laws, is less clearly defined.
- **Advisory Role:** The ECI primarily utilizes an advisory approach to encourage compliance with laws beyond its core mandate.
 - o For example, it issued directives to political parties to refrain from involving children in election campaigns, aligning with the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986.
 - o This approach reflects the ECI's broader efforts to promote responsible political behavior and uphold ethical standards within the political sphere.

Challenges and Considerations:

- **Defining the Scope of ECI's Authority:** Clearly defining the ECI's authority to enforce laws beyond its core

electoral mandate remains a subject of ongoing legal and political debate.

- **Balancing Autonomy and Accountability:** Striking a balance between ensuring the autonomy of political parties and holding them accountable for their actions under various laws presents a significant challenge.
- **Practical Difficulties in Enforcement:** Enforcing compliance with laws like the POSH Act or the RTI Act within the complex and often decentralized structures of political parties presents practical difficulties.

CONCLUSION:

While the ECI plays a crucial role in upholding the integrity of the electoral process, its authority to enforce other laws applicable to political parties remains a nuanced and evolving area. The ECI's advisory approach, coupled with ongoing dialogue and potential legislative reforms, will be crucial in determining the extent of its role in ensuring that political parties adhere to all relevant laws and regulations.

RELIGION, CASTE, AND THE CONSTITUTION: EXAMINING THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR RESERVATIONS IN INDIA

CONTEXT: The Supreme Court recently made pronouncements on the relationship between religion and reservations in India, specifically focusing on the Court's oral observation against religion-based reservations and its denial of SC status to a woman who converted to Christianity.

Muslim communities highlights the challenges of using religion as the sole criterion for determining backwardness.

Furthermore, the issue of whether individuals who convert to religions other than Hinduism, Sikhism, or Buddhism should retain their SC status remains unresolved, despite recommendations from the Ranganath Mishra Commission.

The debate surrounding reservations in India continues to evolve, with ongoing discussions on issues such as defining backwardness, ensuring equity, and addressing concerns about potential unintended consequences.



RELIGION AS A CRITERION FOR OBC RESERVATIONS: A CONSTITUTIONAL AND JUDICIAL ANALYSIS

Constitutional Framework for Reservations Based on Religion

BACKGROUND:

The Indian Constitution, recognizing the historical injustices faced by marginalized groups, mandates reservations in education and employment for Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and Other Backward Classes (OBCs). While the focus initially centered on SCs and STs, the inclusion of OBCs has led to complex legal and political debates.

The Indian Constitution does not explicitly prohibit the identification of religious groups as beneficiaries of reservations under the Other Backward Classes (OBC) or Scheduled Tribe (ST) categories. However, the inclusion of religious groups within these frameworks has predominantly been within the OBC category.

Article 16(4) of the Constitution empowers states to provide reservations for "any backward class of citizens" that is inadequately represented in state services. This provision has facilitated the inclusion of Muslims within the OBC quota in various states over time. For instance:

- **Kerala:** Included Muslims under the OBC quota as early as 1956.
- **Karnataka:** Followed suit in 1995.
- **Tamil Nadu:** Extended similar provisions in 2007.

The Supreme Court, in the Indra Sawhney judgment, upheld reservations but emphasized the importance of objective criteria for identifying backward classes and set a 50% cap on total reservations.

The inclusion of religious groups within the OBC category has been contentious. The Calcutta High Court's decision striking down reservations for 77 predominantly



RELIGIOUS RESTRICTIONS IN SCHEDULED CASTE (SC) RESERVATIONS

Constitutional Basis: Article 341(1) of the Constitution empowers the President to specify castes, races, or tribes as Scheduled Castes (SCs). Pursuant to this, the **Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950** was issued, listing SC communities state-wise.

Religion-Based Exclusion: Clause 3 of the 1950 order restricts SC status to individuals professing Hinduism, Sikhism, or Buddhism. Over time, this order has been amended to include:

- SC Hindus converting to Sikhism (1956).
- SC Hindus converting to Buddhism (1990).

Judicial Interpretation: The Soosai Case (1985)

In the *Soosai v. Union of India* (1985) case, the Supreme Court dealt with the eligibility of a cobbler from the Adi-Dravida SC community who had converted to Christianity. The court did not conclusively determine whether religious converts retain their caste status but emphasized that to access SC benefits, the petitioner must demonstrate that caste-based oppression persists in the new religious context.

Ranganath Mishra Commission Recommendations (2007)

The **Ranganath Mishra Commission**, constituted in 2004, challenged the notion that caste discrimination is confined to specific religions. It concluded:

- The caste system transcends religious boundaries and affects all communities in India.
- A change in religion should not disqualify individuals from SC status once they are listed as Scheduled Castes.

However, the central government has consistently rejected these recommendations, thwarting efforts to extend SC reservations to converts from Christianity and Islam.

BROADER ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS

1. Constitutional Intent and Social Justice:

- o The Constitution's reservation provisions aim to uplift socially and educationally backward communities, irrespective of religion. However, implementing religion-based criteria without objective assessments risks undermining this intent.

2. Judicial Oversight:

- o The judiciary has played a crucial role in maintaining the balance between affirmative action and constitutional principles. Landmark judgments like *Indra Sawhney* have emphasized the need for objective criteria to ensure that reservations are just and equitable.

3. Practical Challenges for NRI Voters:

- o While there is increasing recognition of the socio-economic backwardness of certain religious groups, challenges persist in extending reservation benefits due to political, administrative, and societal resistance.

Karnataka's Approach and the Role of Backward Classes Commissions

In Karnataka, reservations for Muslims were implemented based on the recommendations of the **Third Backward Classes Commission (1990)** chaired by Justice O. Chinnappa Reddy. The commission identified Muslims "as a whole" as socially and economically backward, thus qualifying them for OBC reservations.

Further substantiating this, the **Justice Rajinder Sachar Committee Report (2006)** highlighted the severe underrepresentation of Muslim OBCs in Central Government departments. It noted that the benefits of backward class entitlements had largely eluded these communities, exacerbating their socio-economic marginalization.

Judicial Interpretations: The Indra Sawhney Case and Beyond

The landmark ***Indra Sawhney v. Union of India (1992)*** judgment by the Supreme Court established critical principles for OBC reservations:

- Reservations aim to address historical and systemic discrimination.
- While religion, caste, race, or other identities may be relevant factors, they cannot be the sole basis for granting reservations.
- Backwardness must be determined through objective criteria.

Recent Developments: The Calcutta High Court Decision (2024)

In a significant ruling on May 22, 2024, the Calcutta High Court invalidated OBC reservations for 77 classes, 75 of which were Muslim. The court observed that these reservations were granted without sufficient objective criteria to establish social and economic backwardness. The decision underscored that religion appeared to be the primary basis for categorization, violating the principles laid down in the *Indra Sawhney* judgment.



4. Policy Recommendations:

- o Objective Evaluation: Develop comprehensive criteria for determining social and economic backwardness across religious groups.
- o Inclusion of Converts: Revisit the exclusion of Christian and Muslim converts from SC reservations to address systemic discrimination.
- o Awareness Campaigns: Educate communities about their rights and entitlements under the reservation framework to promote inclusivity.

KEY ISSUES AWAITING SUPREME COURT ADJUDICATION:

- **Constitutional Validity of the 1950 Scheduled Castes Order:**
 - o The Supreme Court is currently considering the constitutional validity of the 1950 Scheduled Castes Order, specifically Clause 3, which excludes individuals who have converted to religions other than Hinduism, Sikhism, or Buddhism from SC status.
 - o While the Court initially indicated its intent to examine this clause in 2011, proceedings were deferred pending the submission of a report from the K.G. Balakrishnan Commission.
- **The K.G. Balakrishnan Commission:**
 - o Established by the Centre to review the issue of SC status for religious converts, the K.G. Balakrishnan Commission, chaired by a former Chief Justice of India, has been tasked with examining whether individuals who have converted to religions other than Hinduism, Sikhism, or Buddhism should continue to be considered as belonging to Scheduled Castes.
 - o The Commission has conducted public hearings across the country and has been granted an

extension to submit its report by October 2025.

- **OBC Reservations for Religious Groups:**

- o The Supreme Court is also grappling with the issue of whether OBC reservations can be extended to entire religious groups.
- o The Andhra Pradesh High Court struck down a state government's attempt to provide 5% OBC reservations to Muslims, citing the lack of objective criteria for classifying the entire religious group as backward.
- o While the Supreme Court has acknowledged the need to address this issue, further proceedings on this matter have been pending.

CONCLUSION:

The issue of religion and reservations in India presents complex legal and social challenges. While the Constitution aims to uplift marginalized communities, the interplay between religion, caste, and social backwardness requires careful consideration. The interplay between religion and reservations in India is a complex issue, deeply rooted in socio-political and constitutional considerations.

While religion alone cannot be the basis for granting reservations, acknowledging the socio-economic realities of marginalized religious groups is imperative for achieving true social justice. A balanced approach, guided by judicial principles and objective assessments, is essential to uphold the constitutional mandate of equality and inclusivity.

The Supreme Court's ongoing adjudication of key cases, such as the challenge to the 1950 Scheduled Castes Order and the validity of religion-based OBC reservations, will play a crucial role in shaping the future of reservation policies in India.



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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS





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PAKISTAN AIR STRIKES KILL 46, MOSTLY WOMEN AND CHILDREN, IN AFGHANISTAN, SAY TALIBAN

"INDIA'S STRATEGIC DIPLOMATIC NAVIGATION IN 2025: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES"



THE COLLAPSE OF ASSAD'S REGIME IN SYRIA AND THE EVOLVING DYNAMICS OF INDIA-SYRIA RELATIONS

The End of Assad's 24-Year Rule

- Syrian rebels successfully toppled President Bashar al-Assad's 24-year regime.
- Major cities, including Damascus, fell rapidly.
- Assad sought asylum in Russia, ending a political dynasty that ruled Syria since 1971.



Background: The Syrian Civil War

1. Roots of Assad's Dictatorship

- **1971:** Hafez al-Assad, Bashar's father, established a dictatorial regime, concentrating power within the Alawite minority.
- **2000:** Bashar al-Assad assumed power, initially seen as a reformist but later alienated the majority Sunni population through authoritarianism and socioeconomic inequality.

2. The Arab Spring and Escalation of Conflict

- **2011:** Inspired by the Arab Spring, protests erupted against Assad's regime due to unemployment, inequality, and systemic oppression.
- Violent suppression by Assad escalated the unrest into a full-scale civil war.
- Western and regional powers, including Turkey, began supporting the rebels.

3. Syrian Civil War: A Brief Overview

- **1971-2000:** The Assad family, led by Hafez al-Assad, established a totalitarian regime in Syria.
- **2000-2011:** Bashar al-Assad succeeded his father, initially presenting himself as a reformer. However, economic disparities, social grievances, and the concentration of power within the Alawite minority fueled discontent.
- **2011:** The Arab Spring ignited widespread protests against the Assad regime. These demonstrations evolved into an armed rebellion, drawing support from various external actors, including Western nations, Arab states, and Turkey.
- **2012:** The conflict escalated with the emergence of the Nusra Front, al-Qaeda's Syrian affiliate. Diplomatic efforts to achieve a political transition through the Geneva talks faltered due to deep divisions among the international community.
- **2013:** Hezbollah, backed by Iran, intervened decisively in the conflict, tilting the battlefield in favor of the Assad regime. A chemical weapons attack in Ghouta shocked the world but failed to trigger significant Western military intervention.

- **2014:** The rise of the Islamic State (IS) dramatically altered the conflict landscape, seizing vast territories in Syria and Iraq. The U.S. launched airstrikes against IS, forming an uneasy alliance with Kurdish forces, which strained relations with Turkey.
- **2015:** Russia's direct military intervention, providing crucial air support, significantly bolstered the Assad regime's position.
- **2016:** Turkey intervened militarily to counter Kurdish advances, establishing a zone of control along its border. The Nusra Front rebranded itself as Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, attempting to distance itself from al-Qaeda.
- **2017:** Israel openly acknowledged airstrikes targeting Hezbollah and Iranian forces operating within Syria.
- **2020:** A fragile ceasefire effectively halted major offensives, solidifying the Assad regime's control over most of the country.
- **2023:** The devastating Hamas attack on Israel diverted Hezbollah's attention and resources, weakening its support for the Assad regime.
- **2024:** A decisive rebel offensive, capitalizing on the weakened Assad regime and its diminished external support, rapidly gained ground, leading to the capture of major cities, including Damascus. The Assad regime ultimately collapsed.

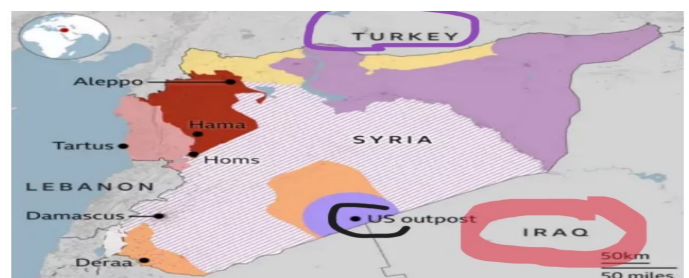
Key Players in the Conflict

Internal Forces

- **Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS):** Initially an Al-Qaeda affiliate, rebranded to gain legitimacy.
- **Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF):** Kurdish-led coalition backed by the U.S., focused on combating ISIS.
- **Syrian National Army (SNA):** Turkish-backed rebel group opposing Assad and Kurdish forces.

External Actors

- **Pro-Assad:**
 - **Russia:** Provided air support since 2015 but reduced involvement due to the Ukraine war.
 - **Iran and Hezbollah:** Central to the "Axis of Resistance," but their support diminished due to regional setbacks.
- **Anti-Assad:**
 - **USA:** Supported Kurdish forces and moderate rebels while targeting ISIS.
 - **Turkey:** Backed Sunni rebels to counter Kurdish autonomy.
 - **Israel:** Conducted airstrikes on Iranian and Hezbollah targets.





Reasons for Assad's Downfall

1. Domestic Discontent and Civil War

- Decades of authoritarian rule, corruption, and human rights abuses eroded domestic legitimacy.
- Prolonged conflict drained regime resources while rebellion gained traction among disenfranchised Syrians.

2. Resurgence of Rebel Forces

- Rebel forces, particularly HTS, exploited the weakened state of Assad's army.
- Turkey's alleged backing of HTS and SNA provided advanced weaponry and strategic advantages.

3. Decline of External Support

- **Russia:** Reduced military presence due to commitments in Ukraine.
- **Iran and Hezbollah:** Preoccupied with other regional conflicts and isolated Assad.
- **Geopolitical Shifts:** Western sanctions and international isolation further weakened Assad's regime.

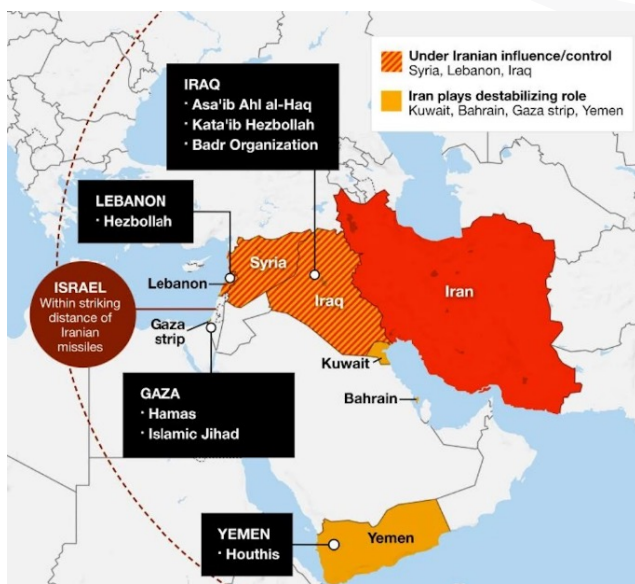
AXIS OF RESISTANCE

The term "Axis of Resistance" refers to a loose network of political and military groups in the Middle East that share a common opposition to the United States, Israel, and their regional allies.

It is not a formal alliance with a unified command structure, but rather a collection of entities united by shared interests and goals.

Key Components:

- **Iran:** The central player, providing financial, military, and political support to many of the groups within the network.
- **Hezbollah (Lebanon):** A powerful Lebanese Shia militia with significant military capabilities, considered a key component of the Axis.
- **Hamas (Palestine):** The ruling party in the Gaza Strip, engaged in an ongoing conflict with Israel.
- **Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ):** Another Palestinian militant group operating in the Gaza Strip.
- **Houthis (Yemen):** A Zaydi Shia movement that controls much of northern Yemen and has been engaged in a protracted conflict with Saudi Arabia.
- **Syrian Government:** While not always a fully integrated member, the Syrian government, led by Bashar al-Assad, has benefited from Iranian support and cooperation with Hezbollah.



Core Beliefs and Objectives:

- **Anti-Zionism and Anti-Israelism:** A central tenet of the Axis is opposition to the existence of the State of Israel and its policies.
- **Anti-Americanism:** The Axis views the United States as an imperialist power that supports Israel and seeks to dominate the Middle East.
- **Regional Hegemony:** Iran, through its support for the Axis, seeks to expand its influence and counter the influence of the United States and its allies in the region.
- **Support for Palestinian Rights:** The Axis advocates for Palestinian self-determination and an end to Israeli occupation.

Activities and Impact:

- **Military Operations:** Groups within the Axis have been involved in various conflicts and military operations, including the Lebanese Civil War, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Syrian Civil War, and the Yemeni Civil War.
- **Proxy Wars:** The Axis has been a key player in proxy wars across the Middle East, with conflicts often fuelled by Iranian-backed militias and groups.
- **Terrorism:** Some groups within the Axis, such as Hezbollah and Hamas, have been designated as terrorist organizations by some countries.
- **Regional Instability:** The activities of the Axis have contributed to significant regional instability and have exacerbated existing tensions.

Criticisms:

- **Human Rights Abuses:** Many groups within the Axis have been accused of human rights abuses, including the use of terrorism and the targeting of civilians.
- **Sectarianism:** The Axis has been criticized for exacerbating sectarian tensions in the Middle East, particularly between Shia and Sunni Muslims.
- **Destabilization:** The activities of the Axis have been blamed for destabilizing the Middle East and fueling regional conflicts.

Turkey, Israel, and the United States employ a multifaceted approach to counter the influence of Iran and its Axis of Resistance.

Military Action:

- o **Airstrikes:** Israel has conducted numerous airstrikes targeting Iranian military installations, weapons shipments, and proxy forces in Syria and elsewhere.
 - o **Covert Operations:** Allegations of covert operations and assassinations targeting Iranian officials and scientists have been made, though often denied.
 - o **Military Aid:** The U.S. provides significant military aid to Israel and some Arab states, enhancing their capabilities to counter Iranian influence.
- ### Diplomatic and Political Pressure:
- o **Sanctions:** The U.S. and its allies have imposed extensive sanctions on Iran, targeting its economy, oil exports, and key sectors. These sanctions aim to weaken Iran's ability to fund its proxies and support regional activities.
 - o **International Isolation:** Efforts are made to isolate Iran diplomatically, limiting its engagement with international institutions and restricting its access to global markets.
 - o **Regional Alliances:** The U.S. has sought to strengthen



alliances with regional partners, including Israel, Saudi Arabia, and some Arab states, to counter Iranian influence and create a united front against the Axis of Resistance.

- **Countering Iranian Propaganda:**
 - **Information Warfare:** Efforts are made to counter Iranian propaganda and disinformation campaigns that seek to undermine regional stability and promote anti-Western narratives.
 - **Supporting Independent Media:** Support is provided to independent media outlets in the region to provide alternative narratives and counter Iranian influence.
- **Addressing Underlying Issues:**
 - **Promoting Regional Stability:** Efforts are made to address underlying issues such as political instability, sectarian tensions, and economic grievances that can be exploited by Iran and its proxies.
 - **Supporting Democratic Transitions:** Support is provided to democratic movements and civil society organizations in the region to promote political reform and counter authoritarian regimes that may be susceptible to Iranian influence.

Challenges and Limitations:

- **Internal Divisions:** Disagreements among the U.S., Israel, and regional partners on strategy and tactics can hinder effective counter-efforts.
- **Proxy Wars:** The nature of the conflict, with many actors operating through proxies, makes it difficult to attribute responsibility and target specific individuals or groups.
- **Unintended Consequences:** Counter-efforts can sometimes have unintended consequences, such as fueling regional instability and exacerbating existing tensions.
- **Limited Effectiveness:** Despite significant efforts, the Axis of Resistance remains a potent force in the region, and Iranian influence continues to grow in some areas.

CONCLUSION:

The Axis of Resistance is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon with significant implications for regional and global security. It is a loose network of groups with diverse ideologies and objectives, but united by a shared opposition to the United States, Israel, and their allies.

The Axis has played a significant role in shaping the political landscape of the Middle East, and its activities continue to have a profound impact on the region.

INDIA-SYRIA RELATIONS: A HISTORICAL AND EVOLVING PERSPECTIVE

1. Historical Ties

- **Non-Aligned Movement (NAM):** Strong bonds emphasizing mutual respect for sovereignty.
- **Economic and Cultural Relations:** India assisted Syria in infrastructure and education, fostering long-standing ties.

2. India's Neutral Stance During the Civil War

- India adhered to non-interference, refraining from direct involvement.
- Maintained diplomatic ties with Assad's regime while condemning terrorism.

3. Post-Assad Opportunities and Challenges

- **Reconstruction:** India's expertise in infrastructure and technology positions it as a key partner in rebuilding efforts.
- **Terrorism and Security:** Stability in Syria is crucial for addressing extremist threats.

- **Geopolitical Alignments:** Engagement may balance India's ties with Russia, Iran, and Western powers.

4. Future Prospects

- **Energy Cooperation:** Exploring opportunities in Syria's energy sector as part of India's West Asia policy.
- **Cultural Diplomacy:** Enhancing people-to-people ties through cultural and educational exchanges.

CONCLUSION

- Assad's fall marks a turning point, ending decades of authoritarian rule and reshaping Syria's geopolitical landscape.
- The evolving scenario presents India with opportunities to enhance its influence in West Asia through strategic partnerships and developmental initiatives.
- By engaging in Syria's reconstruction and addressing security concerns, India can contribute to regional stability while advancing its national interests.

WHAT IS KNOWN AS ARAB SPRING?

Arab Spring: Its Impact on the World and India, and Its Current Influence

The Arab Spring refers to a wave of uprisings, protests, and political transformations that began in late 2010 and swept through many Arabic nations in the **Middle East and North Africa (MENA)** by early 2011. This movement was driven by public demands for democratic reforms, social justice, and an end to authoritarian regimes. The Arab Spring has had profound implications globally and for India, shaping geopolitics, economies, and regional alliances to this day.

Origins and Causes of the Arab Spring

The Arab Spring originated in Tunisia in December 2010, triggered by Mohamed Bouazizi's self-immolation in protest against police corruption and economic hardship. Key factors behind the movement include:

1. **Authoritarianism:** Decades of oppressive rule by autocratic regimes alienated citizens.
2. **Economic Inequality:** High unemployment rates, corruption, and poor living conditions fuelled public resentment.
3. **Social Media:** Platforms like Facebook and Twitter played a critical role in organizing protests and spreading awareness.
4. **Demographic Pressure:** A significant youth bulge, coupled with limited opportunities, led to widespread dissatisfaction.
5. **Inspiration:** The rapid success of protests in Tunisia inspired similar movements across the region.



Key Events of the Arab Spring

- **Tunisia (2010-2011):** Protests ousted President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, leading to democratic reforms and a relatively stable transition.
- **Egypt (2011):** Massive demonstrations in Tahrir Square ended Hosni Mubarak's 30-year rule, though subsequent political instability saw a return to military dominance.
- **Libya (2011):** Protests escalated into a NATO-backed civil war, resulting in the fall and death of Muammar Gaddafi but leaving Libya in prolonged chaos.
- **Yemen (2011):** Protests forced President Ali Abdullah Saleh to resign, leading to ongoing civil war fueled by external powers.
- **Bahrain (2011):** Shia-majority protests against the Sunni monarchy were suppressed with help from Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) forces.
- **Syria (2011):** Protests spiraled into a devastating civil war involving regional and global powers.
- **Morocco and Jordan (2011):** Limited protests led to constitutional and political reforms, maintaining relative stability.

Global Impacts of the Arab Spring

1. Geopolitical Realignments:

- Power vacuums emerged in Libya, Yemen, and Syria, allowing extremist groups like ISIS to thrive.
- Regional rivalries, such as those between Saudi Arabia and Iran, intensified, with both powers vying for influence.
- The European Union faced challenges, including an influx of refugees and migrants from conflict zones.

2. Rise of Political Islam:

- Islamist parties gained prominence in countries like Egypt and Tunisia, though their success varied.
- The Muslim Brotherhood briefly rose to power in Egypt but was later ousted by the military.

3. Impact on Oil Markets:

- Instability in oil-producing nations caused fluctuations in global oil prices, affecting energy-importing countries.

4. Humanitarian Crises:

- Civil wars in Syria, Yemen, and Libya caused massive displacement, with millions becoming refugees or internally displaced persons (IDPs).

5. Role of Social Media:

- The Arab Spring highlighted the transformative power of social media in mobilizing movements and spreading awareness, a trend adopted by protest movements globally.

Impact on India

1. Economic Implications:

- India, a major importer of oil, faced challenges due to volatile oil prices during the Arab Spring.
- Instability in the Gulf region, home to millions of Indian expatriates, raised concerns over remittances and job security.

2. Security Concerns:

- The rise of extremist groups in the aftermath of the Arab Spring posed security threats, especially in terms of radicalization and terrorism.

3. Diplomatic Challenges:

- India's neutral stance on the Arab Spring helped maintain its relations with both authoritarian regimes and emerging democratic governments.
- Balancing ties with regional powers like Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Turkey became more complex.

4. Opportunities for Engagement:

- Post-Arab Spring reconstruction efforts in countries like Libya and Yemen offered potential for Indian involvement in infrastructure development.
- Strengthening ties with relatively stable countries like Tunisia and Egypt aligned with India's West Asia policy.

The Arab Spring's Current Influence

While the Arab Spring's initial promise of democratic reforms has been realized in some cases, such as Tunisia, the broader region remains marred by instability and conflict. Key trends include:

1. Prolonged Conflicts:

- Syria's civil war continues, with external powers like Russia, Iran, and Turkey deeply involved.
- Yemen remains a battleground for Saudi-Iranian rivalry, with devastating humanitarian consequences.

2. Authoritarian Resurgence:

- In Egypt, the military's return to power under President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi reflects a retreat from democratic ideals.
- Bahrain and Saudi Arabia have tightened authoritarian controls, suppressing dissent.

3. Economic Challenges:

- Many MENA nations struggle with high unemployment, corruption, and economic stagnation, conditions that initially fueled the Arab Spring.

4. Youth and Technology:

- The region's youth remain a potent force for change, leveraging technology to advocate for reform despite government crackdowns.

5. Global Implications:

- The Arab Spring has influenced protest movements worldwide, from Occupy Wall Street to recent demonstrations in Hong Kong and Iran.

India's Role in the Evolving Landscape

1. Energy Security:

- India must secure stable energy supplies through diversified imports and long-term agreements with Gulf states.

2. Diaspora Engagement:

- Ensuring the safety and well-being of Indian expatriates in the Gulf remains a priority.

3. Strategic Partnerships:

- India can leverage its neutral position to mediate and engage in peace-building efforts in conflict-affected nations.

4. Soft Power:

- Promoting cultural diplomacy, educational exchanges, and development assistance can enhance India's influence in the region.

CONCLUSION

The Arab Spring has left a complex legacy, reshaping the political and social fabric of the MENA region while



influencing global geopolitics. For India, the Arab Spring underscores the importance of a nuanced and proactive approach to its West Asia policy. As the region continues to evolve, India's ability to balance economic interests, security

concerns, and strategic partnerships will be crucial in navigating the challenges and opportunities presented by the post-Arab Spring world.

REGIONAL IMPACTS OF ASSAD'S FALL

1. Fracturing of the "Shia Crescent"

• What is the Shia Crescent?

The "Shia Crescent" refers to a geopolitical arc of influence led by Iran, spanning Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq, which supports Shia-majority or Shia-aligned governments and groups. This crescent has been pivotal in enabling Iran to exert regional influence and maintain logistical and ideological links with its proxies.

• Impact on the Middle East:

- o Assad's fall disrupts this network, weakening Iran's ability to support proxy groups like Hezbollah.
- o It threatens key supply routes used for transferring weapons, funds, and fighters to Hezbollah and other militias.
- o The reduced Iranian influence could embolden Sunni-majority nations like Saudi Arabia and Turkey, reshaping alliances and rivalries in the region.

2. Strengthening of Extremist Groups

• Radicalization Risk:

- o Groups like Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) and remnants of ISIS may exploit the power vacuum in Syria.
- o There is a heightened risk of extremist factions establishing militant strongholds, destabilizing not only Syria but also neighboring states like Iraq and Jordan.

• Spillover Effects:

- o The potential for regional spillover includes increased terrorist activities, cross-border insurgencies, and refugee crises.

3. Intensification of Turkish Influence

• Strategic Positioning:

- o Turkey, having supported opposition groups, is likely to seek greater control in northern Syria, aiming to counter Kurdish autonomy movements and secure influence over key regions.
- o Ankara's focus may include securing oil-rich territories and expanding its sphere of influence.

• Challenges:

- o Turkey will face competition from factions within Syria and rivals like Iran, Russia, and the Gulf states.
- o Domestic concerns, such as managing millions of Syrian refugees, could complicate Turkey's long-term plans.

4. Israeli Security Dilemma

• Weakened Iranian Foothold:

- o Assad's fall reduces Iran's proximity to Israel, which is critical for its support to Hezbollah in Lebanon.

• New Threats:

- o The rise of jihadist forces near Israeli borders may create unpredictable security challenges.
- o Israel is likely to intensify its military presence and operations in southern Syria to deter potential threats.

5. Ripple Effects on Lebanon

• Hezbollah's Weakening:

- o The loss of logistical and military support from Syria undermines Hezbollah's operational capacity.

• Domestic Instability:

- o Lebanon could face exacerbated political and economic crises, with reduced Iranian backing compounding existing tensions among sectarian factions.

• Regional Spillovers:

- o Instability in Lebanon may trigger broader unrest in the Levant region.

6. Complications for Saudi Arabia and the GCC

• Opportunity to Counter Iran:

- o The Gulf states may see Assad's fall as a chance to reduce Iran's influence and solidify Sunni dominance in the region.

• Balancing Risks:

- o They must avoid empowering radical Islamist groups that could destabilize the region further.

• Regional Stability:

- o The GCC's role in mediating or managing post-Assad dynamics will be crucial to maintaining regional order.

7. Increased Rivalries Among External Powers

• Competition for Influence:

- o Russia, the U.S., and European powers will compete to shape Syria's post-Assad trajectory.
- o This competition could lead to prolonged instability or even proxy conflicts as external powers back competing factions.

• Energy and Reconstruction:

- o Control over Syria's resources and involvement in its reconstruction efforts will be major factors in this geopolitical rivalry.

CONCLUSION:

The fall of Assad marks a critical juncture for the Middle East. While it disrupts Iran's strategic ambitions through the Shia Crescent, it introduces significant challenges, such as the rise of extremist groups, intensified rivalries, and potential instability in neighboring nations. The region's political landscape is poised for a realignment, with key players recalibrating their strategies to navigate the post-Assad era.



INDIA RE-ELECTED TO UN PEACEBUILDING COMMISSION FOR 2025-2026

CONTEXT: India has been re-elected to the UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) for the 2025-2026 term. India's previous term was set to expire on December 31, 2024.



Dag Hammarskjöld Medal

- Posthumous award for military, police, or civilians who lose their lives in UN Peacekeeping operations.
- **2024 Recipient:** Naik Dhananjay Kumar Singh, honored for his service in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO).

Principles of UN Peacekeeping

There are **three basic principles** that continue to set UN peacekeeping operations apart as a tool for maintaining international peace and security.

Consent of the parties

Impartiality

Non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate

1. BACKGROUND:

Purpose: UN Peacekeeping assists countries in transitioning from conflict to peace.

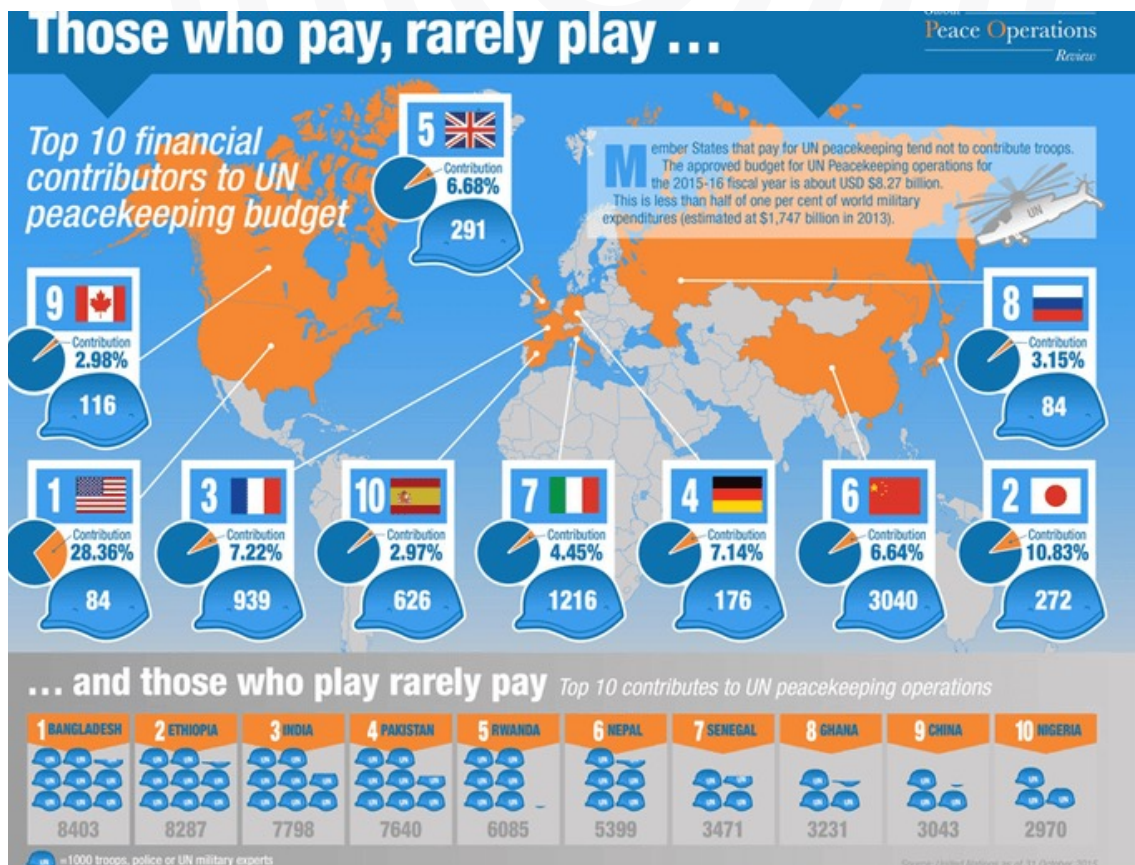
Blue Helmets/Blue Berets: UN Peacekeepers are referred to as "Blue Helmets" after the UN adopted light blue as its official colour in 1947.

2. INTERNATIONAL DAY OF UN PEACEKEEPERS

- Observed annually on **May 29** to honour peacekeepers.
- **Significance of May 29:** Marks the launch of the first UN Peacekeeping Mission, the UN Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO) in Palestine (1948).
- **Theme for 2024:** "Fit for the Future, Building Better Together."

3. PRINCIPLES OF UN PEACEKEEPING

1. **Consent of the Parties**
2. **Impartiality**
3. **Non-use of Force** (except in self-defense and defense of mandate).





4. SCOPE OF MODERN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS

- Maintaining peace and security.
- Facilitating political processes.
- Protecting civilians.
- Supporting disarmament and reintegration.
- Organizing elections and restoring rule of law.

Current Peacekeeping Operations

- 11 UN Peacekeeping missions are currently deployed across three continents.

5. UN PEACEBUILDING FUND (PBF)

- **Established:** 2006 as the UN's financial instrument for conflict prevention and peacebuilding.
- **Scope:** Works with governments, civil society, and UN entities.
- **Investment:** Over \$1.9 billion invested across 60+ countries.

6. UN PEACEBUILDING COMMISSION (PBC)

About the PBC

- **Established:** 2005 by the UN General Assembly and Security Council.

- **Role:** Supports peace efforts in conflict-affected countries by enhancing peacebuilding capacity.

Composition

- **31 Member States** elected from:
 - o UN General Assembly
 - o UN Security Council
 - o Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)
- Includes top financial and troop-contributing nations.

Key Objectives

- Mobilize resources for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery.
- Develop integrated strategies for reconstruction and sustainable development.

Strategic Focus

- Advocates an integrated framework linking **security, development, and human rights.**
- Acts as a bridge between UN organs for coordinated peacebuilding approaches.



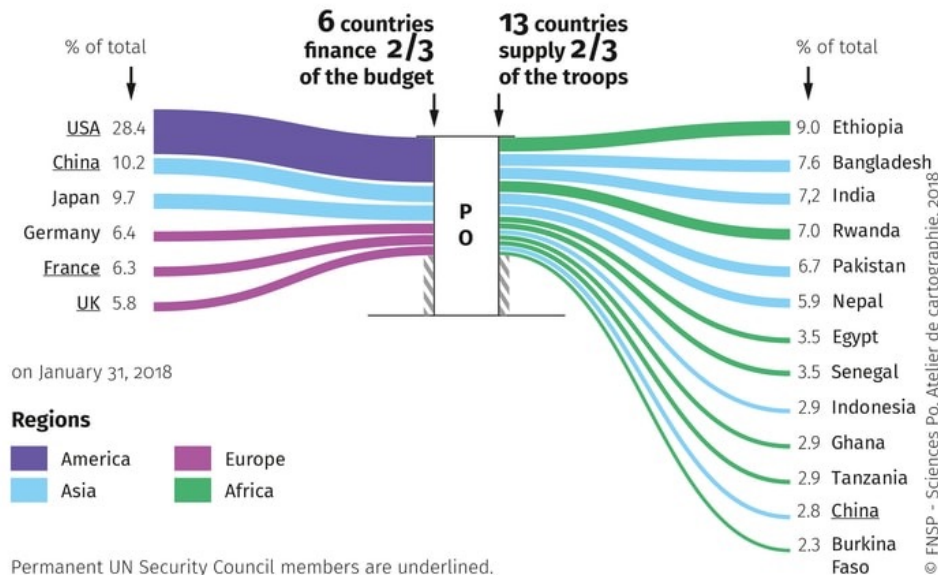
7. INDIA'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO UN PEACEKEEPING

Historical Role

- India is a **founding member** of the UN Peacebuilding Commission.
- Over **200,000 Indian personnel** have participated in **49 of 71 UN missions** since 1948.

Current Contributions

- 6,000 Indian personnel are deployed across missions in regions such as Abyei, Central African Republic, Lebanon, and South Sudan.
- India has lost nearly 180 peacekeepers, the highest among troop-contributing nations.





Key Contributions

- **Financial Support:** Contributions to the Peacebuilding Fund.
- **Women in Peacekeeping:**
 - o First country to deploy an all-women contingent in 2007.
 - o Deployment of Female Engagement Teams (FETs) and Female Formed Police Units (FFPUs).
 - o Women staff officers and observers serve across multiple missions.
- **Training Initiatives:**
 - o **Centre for UN Peacekeeping (CUNPK):** Trains 12,000 troops annually and conducts international courses.
 - o CUNPK also dispatches Mobile Training Teams for capacity building in friendly countries.

- 4. **Policy Shaping:** Influences global policies on conflict prevention, reconstruction, and resilience-building.
- 5. **UNSC Reform:** Strengthens India's bid for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council.

9. ROLE OF THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL IN PEACEKEEPING

Structure and Authority

- Composed of **15 members:**
 - o 5 Permanent Members: USA, Russia, China, UK, and France.
 - o 10 Non-permanent Members (elected for 2-year terms).

Key Responsibilities

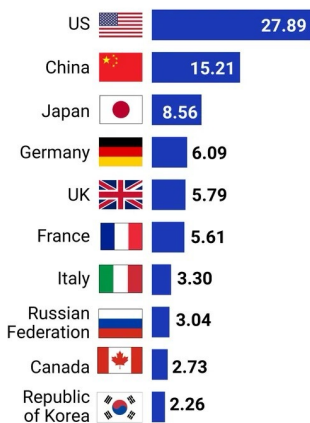
- Maintaining international peace and security.
- Authorizing sanctions or use of force, if necessary.
- Deploying and monitoring peace operations.

Challenges

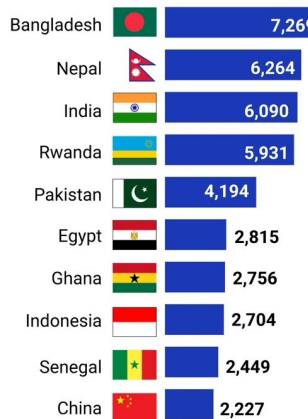
- Resource gaps and funding constraints.
- Over-reliance on international actors and neglect of local needs.
- Political challenges due to geopolitical interests.

Biggest contributors to UN peacekeeping

Top financial contributors
As of 2020-2021, %



Top personnel contributors
As of 2023, total personnel



8. INDIA'S STRATEGIC ROLE IN PEACEBUILDING

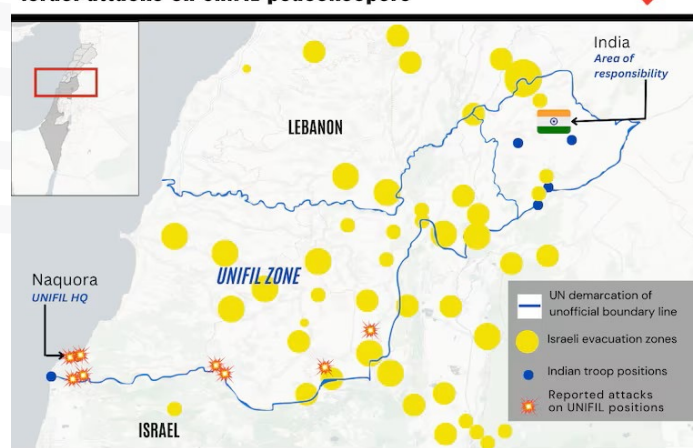
Significance of Re-Election

1. **Global Peace Efforts:** Reinforces India's active role in global peace and security.
2. **Soft Power:** Enhances India's diplomatic influence on international platforms.
3. **Local Initiatives:** Advocates for local voices and solutions in post-conflict recovery.

10. CHALLENGES TO UN PEACEBUILDING ARCHITECTURE

1. **Resource and Funding Constraints:** Insufficient funds for timely implementation of programs.
2. **Neglect of Local Needs:** Larger projects often sideline community-level priorities.
3. **Underrepresentation in UNSC:** Absence of regions like Africa undermines global inclusivity.
4. **Operational Issues:** Lack of a Permanent UN Military Force hampers quick deployment.
5. **Political Challenges:** Geopolitical interests obstruct progress in conflict zones.
6. **Systemic Issues:** Failure to address root causes like poverty, inequality, and governance deficits.

Israel attacks on UNIFIL peacekeepers



11. WAY FORWARD

1. **UNSC Reforms:** Increase representation, particularly permanent members, to enhance inclusivity.
2. **Local Ownership:** Strengthen grassroots participation and prioritize community-driven projects.
3. **Enhanced Coordination:** Improve collaboration across UN entities for cohesive peacebuilding strategies.
4. **Conflict Prevention:** Invest in intelligence gathering, special envoys, and diplomacy.





- 5. Sustainable Funding:** Ensure consistent financial support for peacebuilding operations.
- 6. Political Commitment:** Secure strong political backing for peace initiatives.

CONCLUSION

India's re-election to the UN Peacebuilding Commission underscores its longstanding commitment to global peace, stability, and conflict resolution. As a key player

in peacekeeping, India continues to advocate for inclusive, community-driven, and sustainable peacebuilding efforts, while championing reforms in the UN system.

India's strategic contributions through personnel, training, and financial support further solidify its role in shaping the future of international peacekeeping and strengthening its bid for global leadership.

MINORITY RIGHTS AND INDIA-BANGLADESH RELATIONS

CONTEXT: The arrest of Chinmoy Krishna Das in Bangladesh, amid rising communal tensions, concerns over minority rights, and constitutional reforms, has strained India-Bangladesh relations, sparked protests in Indian border states, and raised fears of instability in the region, impacting diplomatic and economic ties.

and similar activist monks had been removed from their positions.

- ISKCON denied any involvement in the alleged murder of an assistant public prosecutor.



BACKGROUND: Minority Communities in Bangladesh

- 1. Demographics**
 - o Bangladesh has an ancient Hindu and Buddhist population, alongside a growing Christian community in recent decades.
- 2. Unity Under BHBCOP**
 - o Minorities were brought together under the Bangladesh Hindu Bouddho Christian Oikyo Parishad (BHBCOP) during Khaleda Zia's tenure as Prime Minister in 1991.
- 3. Increasing Discrimination**
 - o Analysts highlight rising discrimination and violence against minorities, including attacks on temples and shrines.
 - o Successive governments have failed to address these issues, leading to growing frustration among younger community members.
- 4. Emergence of Leaders Like Chinmoy Krishna Das**
 - o Leaders such as Chinmoy Krishna Das have emerged, advocating for minority rights amid the escalating persecution.

CONCERNS OVER MINORITY RIGHTS

- 1. Government's Assurance**
 - Chief Adviser Mr. Yunus emphasized the government's commitment to fairness and religious harmony.
- 2. Government Failures**
 - Despite assurances, recurring attacks on temples and minority communities highlight the failure to maintain law and order in Bangladesh's pluralistic society.

CONCERNS OVER CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS IN BANGLADESH

- 1. Push for Reform**
 - The interim government is revisiting the validity of the 15th amendment of the 2011 Constitution, which reinstated secularism in Bangladesh.
 - 'Secularism' was first incorporated in the Constitution in 1972.
- 2. Attorney General's Remarks**
 - The Attorney General argued that socialism and secularism do not align with Bangladesh's demographic reality, where 90% of the population is Muslim.
- 3. Fears of Dismantling Secularism**
 - These remarks have heightened fears that the interim government may dismantle Bangladesh's secular constitutional framework, alienating minority communities.

CHARGES AGAINST CHINMOY KRISHNA DAS AND STAKEHOLDER POSITIONS

Charges Against Das

- Former leader of Pundarik Dham and previously associated with ISKCON, Das gained prominence after the fall of Sheikh Hasina's government on August 5.
- He held rallies across Dhaka, Chittagong, and Rangpur advocating for minority rights, drawing political attention.
- A case was filed against him for allegedly raising a saffron flag above the Bangladesh national flag during a rally in Chittagong, seen as disrespectful.

INDIA-BANGLADESH TENSIONS OVER MINORITY RIGHTS

- 1. India's Stand**
 - India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) criticized the arrest and denial of bail for Chinmoy Krishna Das, calling it "unfortunate."
 - MEA expressed concern over attacks on minorities and urged Bangladesh to ensure their safety.



2. Bangladesh's Response

- Bangladesh accused India of “misrepresenting facts” and criticized the remarks as detrimental to bilateral relations.

IMPACT ON INDIAN BORDER STATES

Protests in India

- Protests occurred in border states like West Bengal and Tripura in support of ISKCON and minority rights.
 - Demonstrations were held outside Bangladesh's Assistant High Commission in Agartala.
 - Aggressive protests took place in Kolkata, including the burning of an effigy of Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus.

COMMUNAL TENSIONS AND EXODUS CONCERNS

- Rising communal tensions in Bangladesh have sparked fears of a mass exodus of minorities into Indian border states.
- States like West Bengal, Assam, and Tripura are particularly vulnerable due to their proximity and cultural ties.

INTERNAL CHALLENGES FOR THE INTERIM YUNUS GOVERNMENT

1. Political Instability

- The Yunus government faces poor ties with international leaders, including Donald Trump.

2. Jamaat-e-Islami Resurgence

- The resurgence of Jamaat-e-Islami, a banned anti-India party, adds to the government's instability.

3. Uncertain Future

- Internal challenges and political volatility make the Yunus government's future uncertain, further destabilizing the region.

IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF INDIA-BANGLADESH RELATIONS

1. Strained Bilateral Ties

Political Setback

- The fall of Sheikh Hasina's government, which maintained strong ties with India, has created a significant political challenge for India's Bangladesh policy.
- Bangladesh has openly criticized India for allegedly providing refuge to Sheikh Hasina during her political exile, fuelling tensions between the two nations.

Diplomatic Challenges

- India maintains a formal stance of non-intervention in Bangladesh's internal matters. However, Sheikh Hasina's vocal criticism of the interim government while residing in India has added diplomatic strain.
- These developments have complicated India's engagement with the interim government, which perceives India's role as aligned with Hasina's interests.

2. Impact on India-Backed Projects

Review of Projects

- India-backed initiatives, including the Adani Group's Godda Power Plant, are under review by Bangladesh's interim government.
- The decision to hire a consultancy firm to assess the feasibility of such projects adds uncertainty to bilateral economic cooperation.

Bilateral Cooperation

- Infrastructure and energy projects that were progressing smoothly under Hasina's leadership now face delays, jeopardizing long-term collaboration.

- This uncertainty highlights growing risks for India's economic interests and its strategic investments in Bangladesh.

3. Historical and Strategic Ties

- India and Bangladesh share deep-rooted historical, cultural, and economic bonds, cemented during Bangladesh's liberation in 1971.
- Under Sheikh Hasina, relations flourished with strong cooperation in areas such as:
 - **Bilateral Trade:** Cross-border trade agreements and increased exports.
 - **Energy Cooperation:** India invested in energy infrastructure, including power plants and transmission lines.
 - **Security:** Collaborative efforts to curb cross-border terrorism, insurgency, and illegal migration.
- The rise of a politically unstable and less pro-India government threatens this relationship. Anti-India rhetoric may resurface, reversing years of progress and goodwill.

4. Impact of Minority Rights Issues

- The persecution of religious minorities in Bangladesh, particularly Hindus, has a direct impact on India due to shared cultural and religious ties.
- Escalating communal unrest in Bangladesh raises concerns of:
 - **Border Security:** Heightened tensions at the India-Bangladesh border.
 - **Migration Pressures:** Fears of a mass exodus of minorities seeking refuge in Indian border states like West Bengal, Assam, and Tripura.
- India is under pressure to take a strong stance on minority rights while balancing diplomatic relations with Bangladesh.

5. Geopolitical Challenges

- A deteriorating relationship between India and Bangladesh could allow regional powers like China to expand their influence in Dhaka.
- China's growing economic investments and strategic initiatives in Bangladesh pose a challenge to India's regional dominance.
- India faces a dual challenge:
 - Maintaining diplomatic neutrality in Bangladesh's internal politics.
 - Protecting its long-term geopolitical and economic interests in the region.

6. Economic Ramifications

- India-backed projects, such as the Godda Power Plant, face disruptions under the interim government.
- Delays in infrastructure development and energy cooperation could weaken India's economic footprint in Bangladesh.
- Reduced bilateral cooperation may provide an opening for competitors like China to gain strategic leverage in key sectors, further diminishing India's influence.

CONCLUSION

The arrest of Chinmoy Krishna Das and rising communal tensions in Bangladesh have strained India-Bangladesh relations, destabilized internal politics, and impacted economic cooperation. India faces the dual challenge of addressing minority rights concerns while maintaining



diplomatic neutrality. Continued instability in Bangladesh, coupled with anti-India rhetoric and the resurgence of Jamaat-e-Islami, could hinder regional harmony and lead to significant repercussions for India, particularly in border states.

A sustained, balanced diplomatic approach emphasizing minority safety, economic collaboration, and regional stability will be crucial for India to safeguard its strategic interests in Bangladesh.

FRENCH DEMOCRACY UNDER STRAIN: GOVERNMENT COLLAPSES IN SHOCK VOTE

CONTEXT: The recent collapse of the French government, triggered by a no-confidence vote, marks a significant political crisis. This unprecedented event, resulting from a fragile coalition and the government's attempt to bypass parliamentary scrutiny, has plunged France into uncertainty, with potential implications for the country's economic stability and its role within the European Union.



I. THE FALL OF THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT

- **No-Confidence Vote:** The French government collapsed after a no-confidence vote was passed by a coalition of left-wing and far-right lawmakers.
- **Austerity Budget:** This vote was triggered by Prime Minister Michel Barnier's use of Article 49.3 to bypass parliamentary approval of a controversial austerity budget.
- **Political Instability:** The collapse plunged France into political uncertainty, raising concerns about economic stability and the ability to pass crucial legislation.

II. KEY FEATURES OF THE FRENCH POLITICAL SYSTEM

A. The French Political System: A Blend of Presidentialism and Parliamentarism

- **Semi-Presidentialism:** France operates under a unique semi-presidential system, a hybrid of presidential and parliamentary systems. This system, established by the Fifth Republic's constitution in 1958, aims to combine the stability of presidentialism with the responsiveness of parliamentarism.
- **Dual Executive:** The system features a dual executive, with both the President and the Prime Minister holding significant powers. This division of power allows for a check and balance within the executive branch.
- **President's Powers:** The President holds considerable authority, including:
 - **Head of State:** Representing France on the international stage.
 - **Commander-in-Chief:** Leading the armed forces.
 - **Foreign Policy:** Primarily responsible for foreign policy and national defense.

- **Appointment Power:** Appointing the Prime Minister.
- **Dissolution of Parliament:** The President has the power to dissolve the National Assembly, although this power is used sparingly.
- **Prime Minister's Role:** The Prime Minister is responsible for:
 - **Domestic Policy:** Leading the government's domestic agenda, including economic policy, social issues, and internal security.
 - **Government Action:** Directing the work of government ministries and implementing policies.
 - **Parliamentary Accountability:** The Prime Minister is accountable to the National Assembly and can be removed through a vote of no confidence.

B. The French Parliament: A Bicameral Legislature

- **National Assembly:** The lower house of parliament, elected directly by the people through a two-round majority voting system. It holds primary legislative power and plays a crucial role in government formation.
- **Senate:** The upper house, indirectly elected by an electoral college, primarily representing local authorities. It has limited legislative powers compared to the National Assembly.

C. Elections and Government Formation

- **Presidential Elections:**
 - Direct election of the President by popular vote in two rounds.
 - Requires an absolute majority in the first round or a runoff between the top two candidates.
- **Appointment of the Prime Minister:**
 - The President appoints the Prime Minister, typically choosing a figure who can command a majority in the National Assembly.
 - This process can lead to "cohabitation," a situation where the President and Prime Minister belong to different political parties.
- **Government Formation:**
 - The Prime Minister proposes the composition of the government (Cabinet) to the President.
 - The government must present a policy statement to the National Assembly and may seek a vote of confidence.

D. Key Features of the French Democratic System:

- **Strong Executive:** The President's significant powers, including the ability to dissolve parliament, give the French presidency considerable influence.
- **Balance of Power:** The semi-presidential system aims to balance the powers of the President and the Parliament, ensuring checks and balances within the executive branch.
- **Role of Political Parties:** Political parties play a crucial role in French politics, shaping government formation,



policy debates, and electoral outcomes.

- **Direct Democracy:** The direct election of the President and the active role of citizens in the electoral process contribute to the democratic nature of the system.

E. ANALYSIS:

The French political system is a unique blend of presidential and parliamentary systems. While it provides for a strong executive, it also incorporates checks and balances to prevent the abuse of power. However, the recent political crisis highlights the inherent complexities and challenges of this system, particularly in times of political fragmentation and divided government.

III. Comparison with the Indian Democratic System

- **Parliamentary System:** India operates under a parliamentary system, where the Prime Minister is the head of government and is accountable to the Parliament.
- **Role of the President:** The Indian President's role is largely ceremonial, with limited executive powers.
- **Party System:** India has a multi-party system, while France has seen a rise in multi-polar politics.

- **Coalition Governments:** Both countries experience coalition governments, though their formation and stability can vary significantly.

IV. Implications of the French Government's Fall

- **Political Uncertainty:** The collapse creates significant political uncertainty in France, potentially impacting economic stability and social cohesion.
- **Challenges for the EU:** The crisis adds to the challenges facing the European Union, which is already grappling with other political and economic uncertainties.
- **Repercussions for Macron:** The collapse could weaken President Macron's political standing and complicate his agenda for the remainder of his term.

CONCLUSION:

The fall of the French government highlights the complexities of the country's political system and the challenges of governing in an era of political fragmentation. This event serves as a reminder of the importance of effective governance, parliamentary cooperation, and maintaining political stability in a democratic society.

THE GLOBAL SHIFT AWAY FROM THE US DOLLAR AND POTENTIAL TRADE CONFLICTS

CONTEXT: As BRICS nations explore alternatives to the US dollar in global trade, the United States faces growing challenges to its financial dominance. Recent threats of 100% tariffs by President-elect Donald Trump highlight the intensifying geopolitical tensions over economic sovereignty and the emergence of multipolar financial systems.

TRUMP THREATENS TARIFFS ON BRICS NATIONS

• The Threat:

President-elect Donald Trump has warned BRICS nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) of imposing 100% tariffs if they attempt to create a new currency or support alternatives to the US dollar.

• US Justification:

Trump asserted that such moves undermine the dollar's dominance, which the US economy cannot tolerate.

WHY ARE COUNTRIES MOVING AWAY FROM THE US DOLLAR?

1. Weaponization of the Dollar:

- The US uses its financial dominance for geopolitical leverage, imposing sanctions and cutting off countries like Iran and Russia from SWIFT.
- Such actions have led to fears of economic weaponization against sovereign nations.

2. Reducing Dependence on the US:

- The US dollar accounts for 88% of global forex turnover (BIS 2022).
- Heavy reliance on the dollar exposes countries to US-centric monetary policies, causing global economic repercussions.

3. Economic Sovereignty:

- De-dollarization shields nations from external influence, reducing exposure to dollar fluctuations and US political pressures.

4. Trade Efficiency:

- Bilateral trade agreements promote local currency

settlements, bypassing the dollar.

- Examples include China's yuan and other regional payment mechanisms.

5. Rise of Multipolarity:

- Emerging economies like China, India, and Brazil seek a decentralized financial system reflecting global power shifts.

6. US Debt and Inflation:

- Concerns over growing US debt and inflation are prompting countries to explore more stable alternatives.

7. Avoiding Transaction Costs:

- Trading in local or regional currencies reduces high conversion and transaction costs associated with the dollar.

INDIA'S EFFORTS: INTERNATIONALIZATION OF THE RUPEE

1. What Is It?

- Promoting the Indian Rupee (INR) for cross-border transactions and global trade settlements.

2. Steps Taken:

- In July 2022, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) introduced mechanisms for invoicing and settling trade in rupees.
- In December 2022, India conducted its first rupee trade settlement with Russia.
- Over 19 countries, including the UK, UAE, and Malaysia, have been approved for rupee-based trade settlements.

3. Challenges:

- Limited Global Usage: The rupee constitutes only 1.6% of global forex turnover.
- India-Russia Trade Imbalance: Vast imports from Russia outweigh exports, leaving Russia with underutilized rupee reserves.

Lessons from Russia-China Trade in Domestic Currencies

- Over 90% of their bilateral trade (\$240 billion in 2023) was settled in roubles and yuan.
- This success stems from balanced trade and reduced



E

UNDERSTANDING

DE-DOLLARIZATION

The U.S. dollar has dominated global trade and capital flows for decades.

However, many nations are looking for alternatives to the greenback to reduce their dependence on the U.S.

DE-DOLLARIZATION

The process of substituting the U.S. dollar as the currency used for trading commodities and other goods and services.

TIMELINE OF DOLLAR DOMINANCE

1920s

The dollar begins to displace the pound sterling as an international reserve currency after the First World War. The United States is a significant recipient of wartime gold inflows.

1944

International trade is conducted using the U.S. dollar under the Bretton Woods Agreement.

1971

President Nixon ceases the direct convertibility of U.S. dollars to gold.

1960s

European and Japanese exports become more competitive with U.S. exports. There is a large supply of dollars around the world, making it difficult to back dollars with gold.

1981

After years of hyperinflation, the U.S. dollar loses two-thirds of its purchasing power.

2007-2008

Global financial crisis: investors seek U.S. dollars expecting the currency to retain its value.

2014

Following the annexation of Crimea, Russia prioritizes de-dollarization in response to Western sanctions.

2023

- Brazil and Argentina discuss the creation of a common currency.
- The UAE and India explore the use of rupees to trade non-oil commodities.
- Russia and Iran are working together to launch a cryptocurrency backed by gold.

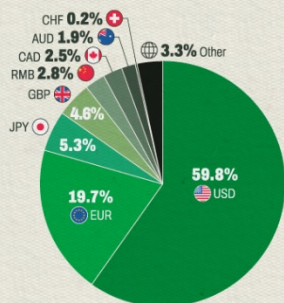
Despite these movements, few expect to see the end of the dollar's global sovereign status anytime soon. Currently, central banks still hold about 60% of their foreign exchange reserves in dollars.

2022

Central banks buy gold at the fastest pace since 1967 as countries diversify their reserves away from the dollar.

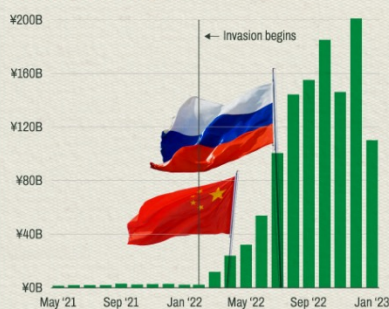
The war in Ukraine results in Western sanctions against Russia. As a result, Russia and China deepen cooperation between their financial systems, with ruble-yuan trade increasing 80x in eight months.

WORLD FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESERVES



Source: Currency Composition of Official Foreign Exchange Reserve - IMF Data, Reuters, Vedmosti

VOLUME OF CHINESE-RUSSIAN TRADE IN YUAN



Source: Atlantic Council

Sources: Congressional Research Service, IMF, Kitco, Reuters, G1, Business Insider, Yahoo, Wikipedia, Atlantic Council

reliance on the US dollar.
RISKS OF IMPOSING 100% TARIFFS ON BRICS NATIONS

- 1. Increased Consumer Costs:**
 - Tariffs could raise the cost of imports, impacting American consumers without restoring manufacturing jobs.
- 2. Shift in Import Sources:**
 - US imports may shift to third countries, bypassing BRICS but not solving trade imbalances.
- 3. Manufacturing Challenges:**
 - High production costs make US manufacturing less competitive, limiting the effectiveness of tariffs.

RBI CLARIFIES STANCE ON DE-DOLLARIZATION: BALANCING RISKS AND GLOBAL REALITIES

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has clarified that its policies focus on diversifying risks rather than fully abandoning the US dollar. De-dollarization, driven by geopolitical tensions and the pursuit of economic independence, aims to reduce reliance on the dollar in trade and reserves. This strategy ensures India's financial stability in a complex global economic landscape.

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das highlighted that initiatives like local currency trade agreements and Vostro accounts aim to lower dependency on the dollar while maintaining its relevance. Vostro accounts, which are foreign bank accounts held in Indian rupees, enable local currency trade and reduce reliance on third-party currencies. Additionally, the RBI has joined other central banks in purchasing gold to diversify reserves, with a record 1,136 tonnes acquired globally in 2022 and substantial purchases continuing in 2023 and 2024. These moves are motivated by global uncertainties, such as the Ukraine war and secondary sanctions fears.

India is also exploring domestic currency trade with partners like Russia and the UAE to mitigate risks. However, challenges such as limited rupee trade due to trade deficits remain significant



barriers. Globally, the dollar's dominance in foreign reserves is declining, with alternatives like the Chinese yuan gaining prominence.

Within the BRICS bloc, discussions about a shared currency face challenges from economic and geographical diversity. India has resisted using the Chinese yuan for Russian oil imports, citing sovereignty concerns. In South Asia, rising oil prices and shrinking dollar reserves have caused unrest in countries like Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, although India has maintained robust reserves.

India's strategic approach seeks to balance reduced dollar reliance with global trade stability. By increasing gold reserves and promoting the rupee for international trade, the RBI is navigating risks while protecting national interests. However, challenges like trade deficits and transaction costs remain barriers to comprehensive de-dollarization.

GLOBAL RESERVE CURRENCY: DEFINITION

- A reserve currency is a currency widely recognized and held in large quantities by central banks worldwide as part of their foreign exchange reserves.
- It plays a key role in international trade and financial stability.

WHY IS THE USD A GLOBAL RESERVE CURRENCY?

1. Historical Legacy:

- The US dollar became the principal reserve currency after World War II.

2. Global Usage:

- The dollar is the most widely used currency for international trade and financial transactions.

3. Advantages for the US:

- High demand for dollars enables the US to borrow at lower costs.
- The dollar can be leveraged as a diplomatic tool in global affairs.

WHY IS THE US DOLLAR LOSING ITS DOMINANCE GLOBALLY?

1. Geopolitical Sanctions:

- US sanctions on countries like Iran and Russia have led to the exploration of alternatives to the dollar.

2. Economic Sovereignty:

- Nations seek to reduce dependency on US monetary policies and shield their economies from external influences.

3. Emergence of Regional Currencies:

- Alternatives such as the yuan and other regional mechanisms are gaining traction.

4. Desire for Financial Stability:

- Countries aim to minimize exposure to economic instability linked to dollar fluctuations.

RISKS OF IMPOSING 100% TARIFFS ON BRICS NATIONS

1. Higher Consumer Costs:

- Tariffs would increase the cost of imported goods for American consumers.

2. Shift in Import Sources:

- Imports to the US could move to non-BRICS nations, failing to address trade imbalances.

3. Manufacturing Limitations:

- High US production costs make tariffs ineffective in bringing back manufacturing jobs.

4. Economic Backfire:

- Retaliatory measures by BRICS nations could harm the global economy and US interests.

THE WAY FORWARD

1. Balanced BRICS Frameworks:

- India should ensure BRICS currency initiatives do not disproportionately favour China.

2. India's Strategic Approach:

- Diplomatic Engagement: Clarify to the US that diversifying trade mechanisms ensures financial stability.
- Leadership Role: Promote India's digital currency (CBDC) and platforms like UPI to lead BRICS reforms.

3. Global Financial Diversification:

- While diversification is underway, the US dollar remains dominant, with gradual shifts toward alternative currencies.

CONCLUSION

The global shift away from the US dollar reflects growing aspirations for economic sovereignty and a multipolar financial system. While BRICS nations and emerging economies like India explore alternatives, challenges such as trade imbalances and geopolitical tensions persist. A balanced approach that promotes diversification without destabilizing global trade is crucial. For India, leveraging its economic strengths and strategic diplomacy will be key to navigating this evolving financial landscape while safeguarding national interests.

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INDIA-KUWAIT ELEVATE TIES TO STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

CONTEXT: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visit to Kuwait marked a historic milestone in bilateral relations, elevating India-Kuwait ties to a strategic partnership with strengthened cooperation in defence, trade, and regional security. The visit, which included the signing of key agreements and a focus on mutual development goals, underscores India's growing influence in the Gulf region and sets the stage for deeper collaboration in various sectors.



PRIME MINISTER MODI'S HISTORIC VISIT TO KUWAIT: KEY HIGHLIGHTS

1. Significance of the Visit

- **Historic Milestone:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Kuwait marked a pivotal moment, elevating bilateral relations to a "strategic" level. This is the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister in 43 years, since Indira Gandhi's visit in 1981.
- **Recognition of Leadership:** Kuwait honoured PM Modi with its highest civilian award, 'The Order of Mubarak Al-Kabeer,' in recognition of his efforts to strengthen India-Kuwait ties.

2. Background of India-Kuwait Relations

- **Historical Ties:** India and Kuwait have had friendly relations for decades, dating back to India's early diplomatic recognition of Kuwait post-independence in 1961.
- **Economic Partnership:** Kuwait is India's sixth-largest crude oil supplier, contributing 3% of India's energy needs. Indian exports to Kuwait surpassed \$2 billion for the first time, and investments from the Kuwait Investment Authority in India exceed \$10 billion.

3. Key Engagements During the Visit

- **Leadership Meetings:** Modi held bilateral meetings with Kuwait's Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-

Sabah, Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, and Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

- **Defence Cooperation:** A comprehensive defence agreement was signed, focusing on personnel exchange, joint military exercises, and defense technology research.
- **Trade and Economic Relations:** Bilateral trade between the nations stands at \$10.47 billion (2023-24). Modi invited the Kuwaiti Investment Authority to explore further opportunities in energy, pharmaceuticals, food parks, and infrastructure in India.

4. Expanding Strategic Cooperation

- **Strategic Areas:** The partnership aims to deepen collaboration in sectors like pharmaceuticals, IT and fintech, infrastructure, and security.
- **Vision 2035 Alignment:** Modi congratulated Kuwait on its Vision 2035 initiatives and expressed mutual commitment to advancing shared goals through enhanced cooperation.

5. Regional and Global Implications

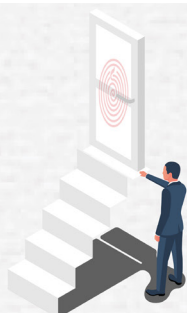
- **People-to-People Ties:** The 1 million-strong Indian community in Kuwait was recognized for their significant contributions to the nation's development.
- **Collaboration with the GCC:** India expressed interest in intensifying ties with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), leveraging Kuwait's presidency, and focusing on concluding the India-GCC Free Trade Agreement to further boost trade volumes.
- **Shared Vision for West Asia:** Both countries emphasized ensuring peace and stability in West Asia, condemning terrorism, and committing to dismantling terrorist networks.

6. Additional Agreements

- **MoUs Signed:** Three memoranda of understanding (MoUs) were signed in the fields of sports, culture, and solar energy, further deepening bilateral cooperation.

CONCLUSION : Prime Minister Modi's visit to Kuwait has significantly strengthened the India-Kuwait partnership, marking a new era of strategic collaboration. With expanded defence ties, increased trade, and mutual commitments to regional stability and development, this partnership is poised to benefit both nations and the broader Gulf region. The historic visit, underscored by awards, agreements, and shared aspirations, sets the stage for a more dynamic and robust future relationship.

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INDIA, SAUDI ARABIA EXPLORE JOINT VENTURES IN DEFENCE SECTOR

CONTEXT: India and Saudi Arabia are exploring joint ventures in the defence sector, with a focus on sharing Indian-made defence technologies and leveraging their respective “Make in India” and “Vision 2030” initiatives for mutual benefit.

INDIA-SAUDI ARABIA: DEEPENING DEFENSE TIES

- **Focus on Joint Ventures:** Defence industrial cooperation is a key focus area between India and Saudi Arabia, with both countries exploring joint ventures and collaborations.
- **Shared Vision:**
 - Saudi Arabia’s “Vision 2030” (localizing 50% of defense spending) aligns with India’s “Make in India” initiative.
- This creates significant investment opportunities in India’s defense sector.
- **Strong Bilateral Relationship:**
 - Deep-rooted trust and confidence underpin the defense cooperation between India and Saudi Arabia.
 - India is keen to share its localized defense technologies with Saudi Arabia.
- **Areas of Interest:**
 - Saudi defense companies are interested in partnerships in shipbuilding, electronics, and emerging technologies like AI and cybersecurity.
- **Emphasis on Localization:**
 - Both India and Saudi Arabia are transitioning from being major defense importers to localizing production.
 - India has made significant progress in localizing defense production and aims to share these advancements with close allies like Saudi Arabia.

ANALYSIS

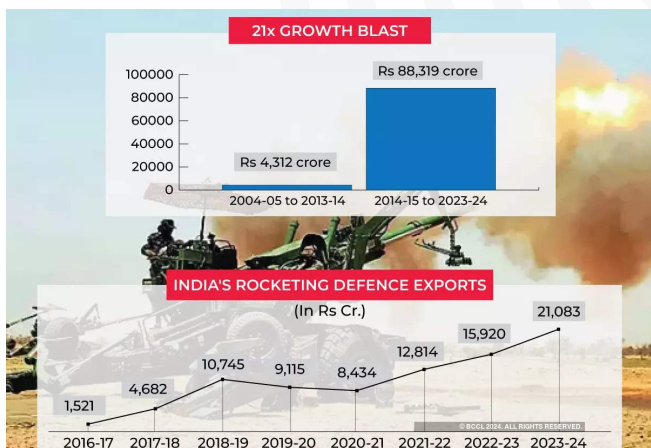
WHY SAUDI ARABIA IS INCREASING ITS DEFENSE ASSOCIATION WITH INDIA:

- **Diversification of Defense Partners:** Saudi Arabia is seeking to diversify its defense partnerships away from traditional reliance on Western suppliers. This reduces dependence on a single source and provides greater leverage in negotiations.
- **“Vision 2030” and Economic Diversification:** Saudi Arabia’s “Vision 2030” aims to reduce dependence on oil revenue and diversify its economy. Defense manufacturing and technology are key sectors for this diversification, and India, with its growing defense industry, offers a valuable partner.
- **“Make in India” Alignment:** India’s “Make in India” initiative aligns perfectly with Saudi Arabia’s goal of localizing defense production. This creates opportunities for joint ventures, technology transfer, and co-production, benefiting both countries.
- **Emerging Technologies:** Both countries are interested in emerging defense technologies like AI, cybersecurity, and shipbuilding. Collaborating in these areas allows them to gain a technological edge and address future security challenges.
- **Countering Regional Threats:** Both countries face similar security challenges, including terrorism and regional instability. Enhanced defense cooperation can help them counter these threats more effectively.
- **Political and Economic Ties:** India and Saudi Arabia enjoy strong political and economic ties. Defense cooperation further strengthens this relationship, fostering mutual trust and understanding.

In essence, the increasing defense association between India and Saudi Arabia is driven by a confluence of factors:

- **Diversification of partnerships.**
- **Economic diversification goals.**
- **Technological advancement.**
- **Shared security interests.**
- **Strong bilateral relations.**

CONCLUSION: This strategic partnership is mutually beneficial, offering both countries opportunities for economic growth, technological advancement, and enhanced security.



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INDIA-SRI LANKA DIPLOMATIC ENGAGEMENT: KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM PRESIDENT AKD'S VISIT

CONTEXT: The recent visit of Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Disسانayake to India marked a significant step in bilateral relations, focusing on addressing security concerns, advancing development cooperation, and fostering connectivity, energy, and defense partnerships. The discussions underscored mutual efforts to strengthen ties while navigating sensitive issues like Tamil minority rights and regional geopolitics.



KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM SRI LANKAN PRESIDENT ANURA KUMARA DISSANAYAKE'S (AKD) VISIT TO INDIA

1. Assurance on Anti-India Activities

- President AKD assured Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi that Sri Lanka's territory would not be used for any activities detrimental to India's interests.
- This commitment specifically addresses India's concerns over Chinese "research vessels" visiting Sri Lankan ports, which have been a point of contention.
- AKD's stance is significant as he is perceived to be pro-China, yet he reaffirmed Sri Lanka's neutral position on matters concerning India.

2. Divergent Views on the Tamil Minority Issue

- AKD resisted India's push for the full implementation of the 13th Amendment to the Sri Lankan Constitution, which would grant more powers to the Tamil minority.
- He opposed further investigations into alleged war crimes related to the LTTE-Sri Lankan military conflict.
- Indian Prime Minister Modi emphasized the importance of "reconciliation and reconstruction" and urged Sri Lanka to fulfill its constitutional commitments, including holding provincial council elections.

3. Focus on Unity and Development

- While AKD did not commit to specific actions on the Tamil issue, he underscored the importance of unity, social protection, and sustainable development.
- AKD emphasized the value of diversity as a core principle of democracy, signaling a commitment to peaceful coexistence.

4. Sri Lanka's Evolving Diplomatic Stance

- AKD's strong parliamentary mandate has empowered him to adopt a more assertive and independent diplomatic approach, both toward India and China.
- He demonstrated a firm stance on domestic policies, notably enforcing the "Clean Sri Lanka" campaign, which includes holding officials accountable for corruption.

5. Bilateral Cooperation Focus

- The joint statement emphasized shared development goals, with both nations reaffirming their commitment to mutual growth and regional stability.

Key Projects Discussed:

- o Development Cooperation: Indian Housing Project Phases III and IV, Hybrid Renewable Energy Project, and High-Impact Community Development Projects.
- o Connectivity & Energy: Discussions on LNG supply, offshore wind power, and high-capacity power grid interconnection.
- o Digital Collaboration: Implementation of Aadhaar and UPI systems in Sri Lanka.
- o Physical Connectivity: Resumption of ferry services between Nagapattinam and Kankesanthurai, with further exploration of Rameswaram-Talaimannar services.
- o Defense and Security: Framework agreements on defense cooperation, joint military exercises, and maritime surveillance.

6. Strategic Continuity

- Despite the change in leadership, both nations' strategic interests remain aligned. India views Sri Lanka's stability as essential to its own security, while AKD seeks to ensure that Sri Lanka remains a stable and prosperous neighbor.

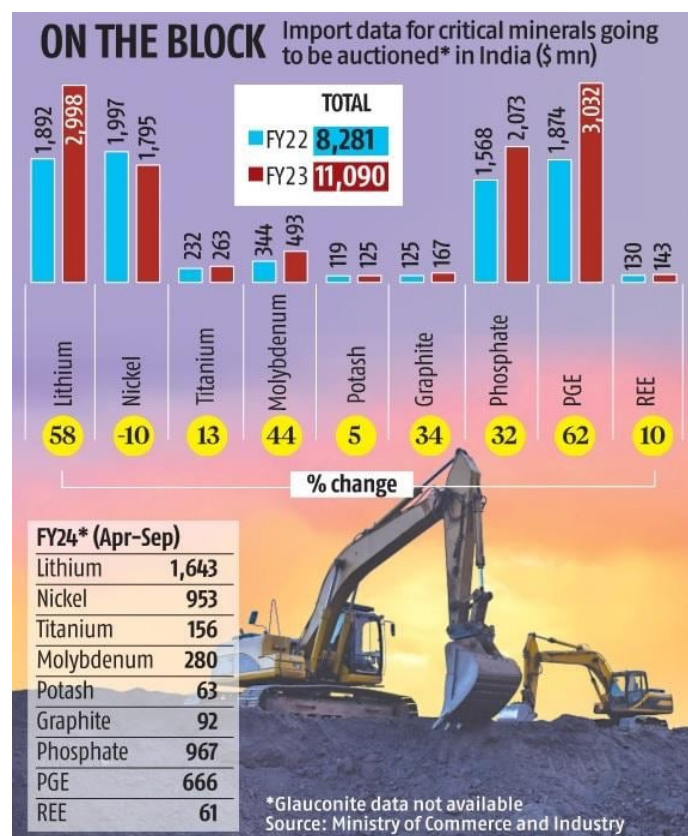
CONCLUSION : President Anura Kumara Disسانayake's visit to India marked a critical moment for Sri Lanka's diplomatic relations, balancing both regional concerns and domestic priorities. The discussions not only highlighted areas of potential cooperation, including development, defense, and connectivity, but also revealed the evolving confidence of Sri Lanka under AKD's leadership. His firm stance on sensitive issues like the Tamil minority and external influences reflects his strategic intent to assert Sri Lanka's independence while fostering stronger ties with India for mutual benefit.



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INDIA'S DEPENDENCY ON CHINA FOR CRITICAL MINERALS

CONTEXT: India faces significant challenges due to its heavy dependence on China for critical minerals essential for sectors like electronics, energy, and defense. Despite possessing valuable mineral resources, India struggles with mining technology, processing capabilities, and policy barriers, prompting the government to implement strategies such as securing overseas assets, fostering international partnerships, and promoting recycling to reduce this reliance and ensure long-term economic and national security.



- o Strategic investments in exploration, with \$19.4 billion spent in 2023, have led to the discovery of 132 new mineral deposits, including 34 large ones.
- **Processing and Refining:**
 - o China dominates global processing and refining:
 - 87% of rare earth processing.
 - 58% of lithium refining.
 - 68% of silicon processing.

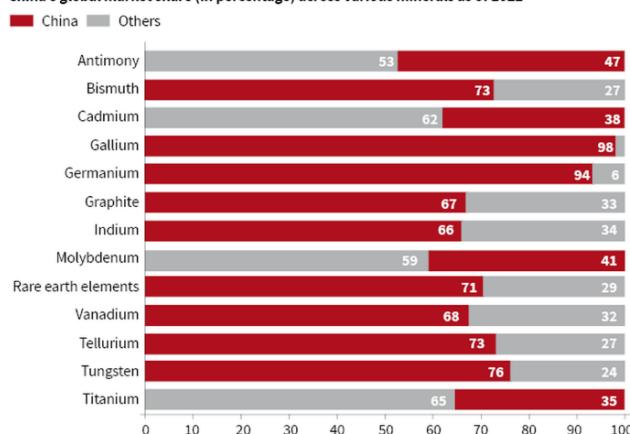
CHINA'S EXPORT CONTROL STRATEGY

- **Strategic Export Restrictions:**
 - o China controls critical mineral exports, particularly those used in semiconductor, battery, and high-tech manufacturing.
 - o Examples include the 2010 rare earth embargo against Japan and recent restrictions on gallium, germanium, and antimony.
 - o China's export controls are carefully calibrated to avoid disrupting its domestic industries.

China, a leading player in critical minerals

China's dominance in critical minerals stems from its vast resource base and strategic investments across the value chain. As the world's largest mining nation, China has discovered 173 types of minerals

China's global market share (in percentage) across various minerals as of 2022



INDIA'S DEPENDENCY ON CHINA FOR CRITICAL MINERALS: CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIC RESPONSES

Introduction

India's increasing reliance on China for critical minerals, essential for its economic growth and national security, poses significant risks. China dominates the global supply of these minerals, making India vulnerable in critical sectors such as electronics, energy, and defense. India is now exploring various strategies to diversify its supply sources and reduce this dependency.

IDENTIFICATION OF CRITICAL MINERALS

- 30 Critical Minerals: In 2023, the Ministry of Mines identified 30 minerals crucial for India's development and security.
- Dependency on China: A major concern highlighted is India's dependence on China for key minerals, which is raising strategic vulnerabilities.

CHINA'S DOMINANCE IN THE GLOBAL MINERAL MARKET

- **Resource Base and Mining Capabilities:**
 - o China controls 40% of global reserves for critical minerals.
 - o It has discovered 173 types of minerals, including copper, lithium, nickel, cobalt, and rare earth elements.

INDIA'S DEPENDENCY ON CHINESE IMPORTS

- **High Dependency on Critical Minerals:**
 - o **Bismuth:** 85.6% (used in pharmaceuticals and chemicals).
 - o **Lithium:** 82% (critical for EV batteries and energy storage).
 - o **Silicon:** 76% (used in semiconductors and solar panels).
 - o **Titanium:** 50.6% (key for aerospace and defense).
 - o **Tellurium:** 48.8% (used in solar and thermoelectric devices).
 - o **Graphite:** 42.4% (vital for EV batteries and steel production).

CHALLENGES BEHIND INDIA'S IMPORT RELIANCE

- **Structural Issues in Mining and Processing:**
 - o Despite having significant mineral resources, India faces technological and infrastructure challenges in mining and processing.
 - o **Investment Gaps:** High-risk investments deter private sector participation.
 - o **Policy Shortcomings:** A lack of incentives and



advanced mining technologies limits domestic production capabilities.

INDIA'S STRATEGY TO REDUCE DEPENDENCY

- **Multi-Pronged Approach:**
 - **KABIL Initiative:** A joint venture of three state-owned companies to secure overseas mineral assets.
 - **International Partnerships:** Collaborations through the Minerals Security Partnership and Critical Raw Materials Club.
 - **Research and Development:** Investments in technological advancements through institutions like the Geological Survey of India (GSI) and CSIR.
- **Focus on Recycling and Circular Economy:**
 - India is promoting recycling and circular economy practices to reduce reliance on fresh mineral extraction.

- **Long-Term Commitment Needed:**
 - Sustained investment and policy reforms are required to build a self-reliant critical mineral ecosystem.

CONCLUSION

India's heavy reliance on China for critical minerals poses significant risks to its economic and national security. However, through strategic initiatives like securing overseas mineral assets, fostering global collaborations, and promoting research and recycling, India is working towards reducing this dependency. While progress is underway, long-term commitment, technological advancements, and policy reforms will be crucial to ensure a secure and sustainable future for India's critical minerals sector.

PAKISTAN AIR STRIKES KILL 46, MOSTLY WOMEN AND CHILDREN, IN AFGHANISTAN, SAY TALIBAN

CONTEXT: Pakistan's airstrikes in eastern Afghanistan have sparked controversy and raised tensions between the two countries. The Taliban government claims the strikes killed 46 civilians, primarily women and children, while Pakistan asserts the targets were insurgents.



- **casualty claims:**
 - the taliban government claimed 46 civilians, mostly women and children, were killed.
 - Pakistani security officials stated the target was an insurgent training facility.
 - the TTP claimed 50 people, including 27 women and children, were killed.
- **conflicting narratives:**
 - discrepancies exist in the reported death tolls. local residents reported 13 deaths.
 - Pakistan has not officially commented on the civilian casualties.
- **humanitarian concerns:** the incident raises concerns about civilian casualties and the humanitarian situation in the region.
- **regional tensions:** the incident has the potential to further strain relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

CONCLUSION:

The Pakistani airstrikes in eastern Afghanistan have generated controversy and heightened tensions between the two countries. the conflicting claims regarding civilian casualties and the lack of official confirmation from Pakistan warrant further investigation. this incident underscores the delicate security situation in the region and the potential for unintended consequences of military operations

KEY POINTS:

- **airstrikes in Afghanistan:** Pakistan conducted airstrikes in the Paktika province of eastern afghanistan.



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“INDIA’S STRATEGIC DIPLOMATIC NAVIGATION IN 2025: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES”

CONTEXT: The evolving global landscape of 2025 presents India with complex foreign policy challenges, requiring a strategic balance between regional stability, global partnerships, and emerging geopolitical tensions, as highlighted by significant diplomatic engagements and pressing international issues.



WHY IN NEWS?

With the commencement of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s third term in June 2024, India’s diplomatic engagements intensified amidst an uncertain global environment. The year was marked by significant regional shifts, including political turbulence in Bangladesh, necessitating a flexible and adaptive approach to foreign policy in 2025.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN INDIA’S EXTERNAL RELATIONS

India-China Relations: Steps Towards De-escalation

One of the most critical diplomatic breakthroughs in 2024 was the disengagement at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China. The first meeting between Prime Minister Modi and President Xi Jinping in five years, held during the BRICS Summit in Kazan, Russia, symbolized a cautious attempt to rebuild trust after prolonged border tensions since 2020.

Deepening Strategic Partnership with France

French President Emmanuel Macron’s participation as the chief guest at India’s Republic Day celebrations underscored growing India-France ties. Their collaboration spans crucial areas like defense, energy, and maritime security. While India aimed to host U.S. President Joe Biden and the Quad summit, Macron’s visit highlighted France’s dependability as a strategic partner.

Advancing Trade Agreements

Early in 2024, India concluded a landmark free trade agreement with the European Free Trade Association, setting a precedent for future trade deals. However, negotiations with Australia, the U.K., and the EU showed limited progress by year-end, reflecting ongoing challenges in aligning economic priorities.

Neighborhood Diplomacy: A Mixed Bag

India extended diplomatic invitations to leaders from most neighboring countries for PM Modi’s swearing-in ceremony, excluding Pakistan. The year saw positive developments, including enhanced engagement with Bhutan, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives, addressing prior strains. However, relations with Bangladesh experienced a significant setback following the political transition there.

CHALLENGES THAT DEFINED 2024

Strained Ties with Bangladesh

The removal of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in August led to a downturn in India-Bangladesh relations. Rising incidents of violence against Hindu minorities and Hasina’s stay in India exacerbated tensions, eroding the strong bilateral partnership established during her tenure.

Deteriorating Relations with Canada

Diplomatic ties with Canada soured after allegations linking India to the killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar. With Canadian PM Justin Trudeau naming Indian officials, including Home Minister Amit Shah, relations plunged further. India responded by freezing diplomatic engagement, hoping for a more conducive political climate in Canada in 2025.

Tensions with the United States

Legal cases involving the Adani Group and allegations surrounding the Pannun assassination plot strained India-U.S. relations. However, the election of U.S. President Donald Trump, known for his pro-India stance, offered renewed prospects for strengthening ties.

Rising Regional Rivalries

China’s growing influence in Nepal and other South Asian nations, combined with the U.S.’s increasing involvement in the region, continued to pose significant challenges to India’s strategic interests.

INDIA’S APPROACH TO GLOBAL CONFLICTS

Neutrality in Russia-Ukraine and Gaza Crises

India maintained a balanced stance, calling for peace amid the Russia-Ukraine war and the Gaza conflict. While PM Modi’s visits to Russia and Ukraine raised speculation about India’s potential mediatory role, India avoided taking sides publicly. Similarly, at the UN, India condemned civilian casualties in Gaza without directly criticizing Israel, reflecting its commitment to strategic neutrality.

Recalibrating West Asia Strategy

With multilateral initiatives like IMEC and I2U2 facing challenges, India shifted its focus to bilateral relationships with West Asian countries. Navigating tensions between Iran and the Israel-U.S. alliance remains a critical test for Indian diplomacy in 2025.

INDIA’S DIPLOMATIC AGENDA FOR 2025

Strengthening U.S.-India Relations

The External Affairs Minister’s engagements with President Trump’s transition team signal an emphasis on U.S. relations. Major upcoming events include Trump’s visit for the Quad Summit and PM Modi’s potential trip to Washington.

Engagement with Iran and Critical Technology

India is set to host a high-level Iranian delegation in early 2025, followed by U.S. NSA Jake Sullivan’s visit for the iCET (Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology) meeting, underscoring India’s focus on technological and strategic advancements.

High-Profile Visits

Key diplomatic engagements include hosting Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto as the Republic Day guest and welcoming Russian President Vladimir Putin to Delhi – his first visit since the onset of the Russia-Ukraine



conflict.

ANALYSIS

India's foreign policy in 2025 reflects a careful balancing act between strengthening traditional partnerships and addressing emerging challenges. Relations with China remain delicate but show potential for cautious optimism. The U.S. relationship, bolstered by Trump's presidency, provides opportunities to deepen economic and technological ties, albeit amidst legal controversies.

The deteriorating situation in Bangladesh underscores the complexities of neighborhood diplomacy, as political instability directly impacts India's regional security and economic interests. Simultaneously, growing Chinese influence in South Asia demands enhanced regional outreach and strategic countermeasures.

India's neutral stance in global conflicts aligns with its principle of strategic autonomy. However, this approach also demands greater diplomatic agility to mediate or de-escalate tensions when required.



CONCLUSION

In a rapidly shifting geopolitical landscape, 2025 presents both opportunities and challenges for Indian diplomacy. By leveraging strategic partnerships, maintaining a balanced approach in global conflicts, and addressing regional instability, India can navigate its complex foreign policy terrain effectively. The focus on adaptability, bilateral cooperation, and multilateral engagements will be critical in cementing India's role as a global leader in the coming years.



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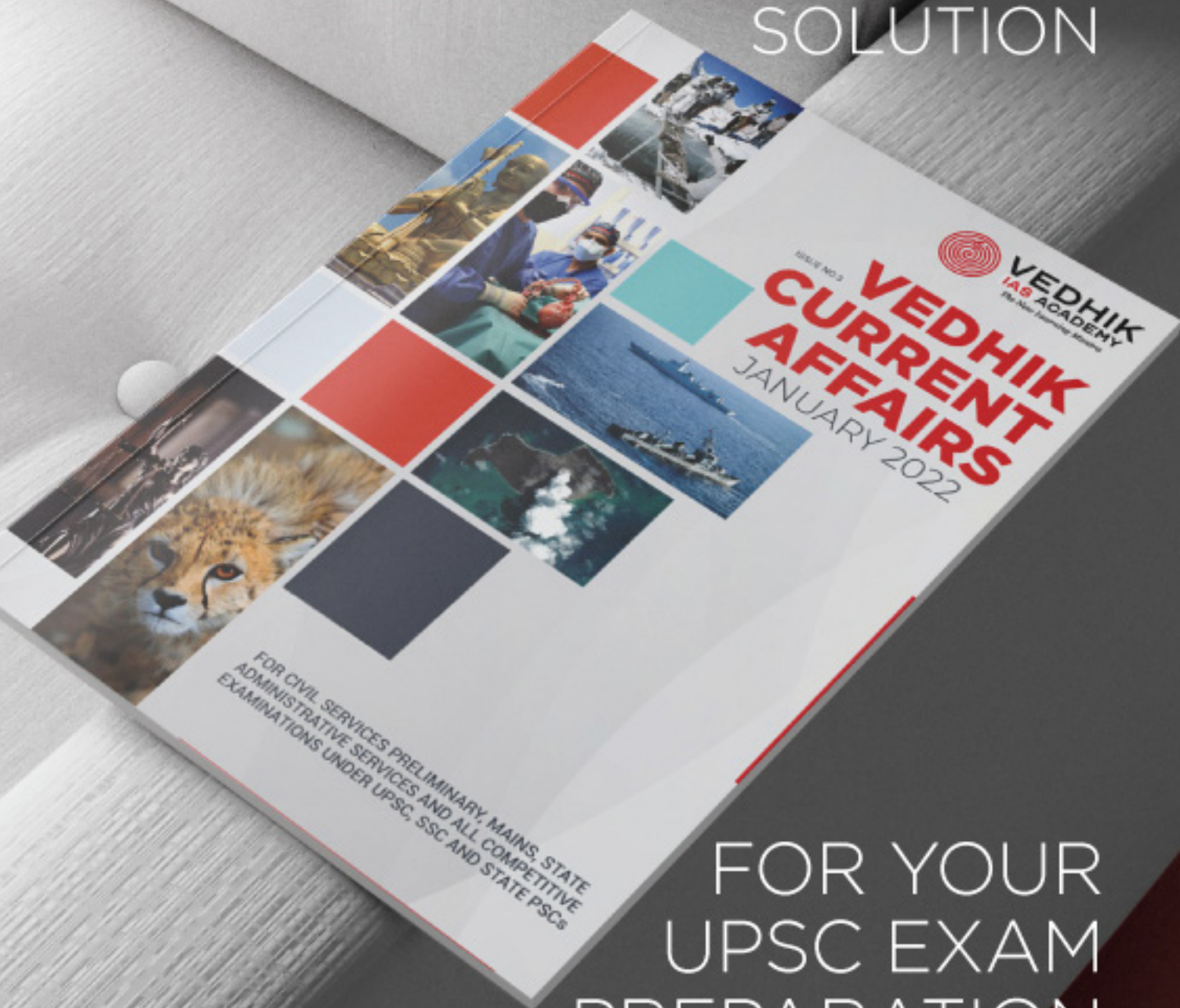


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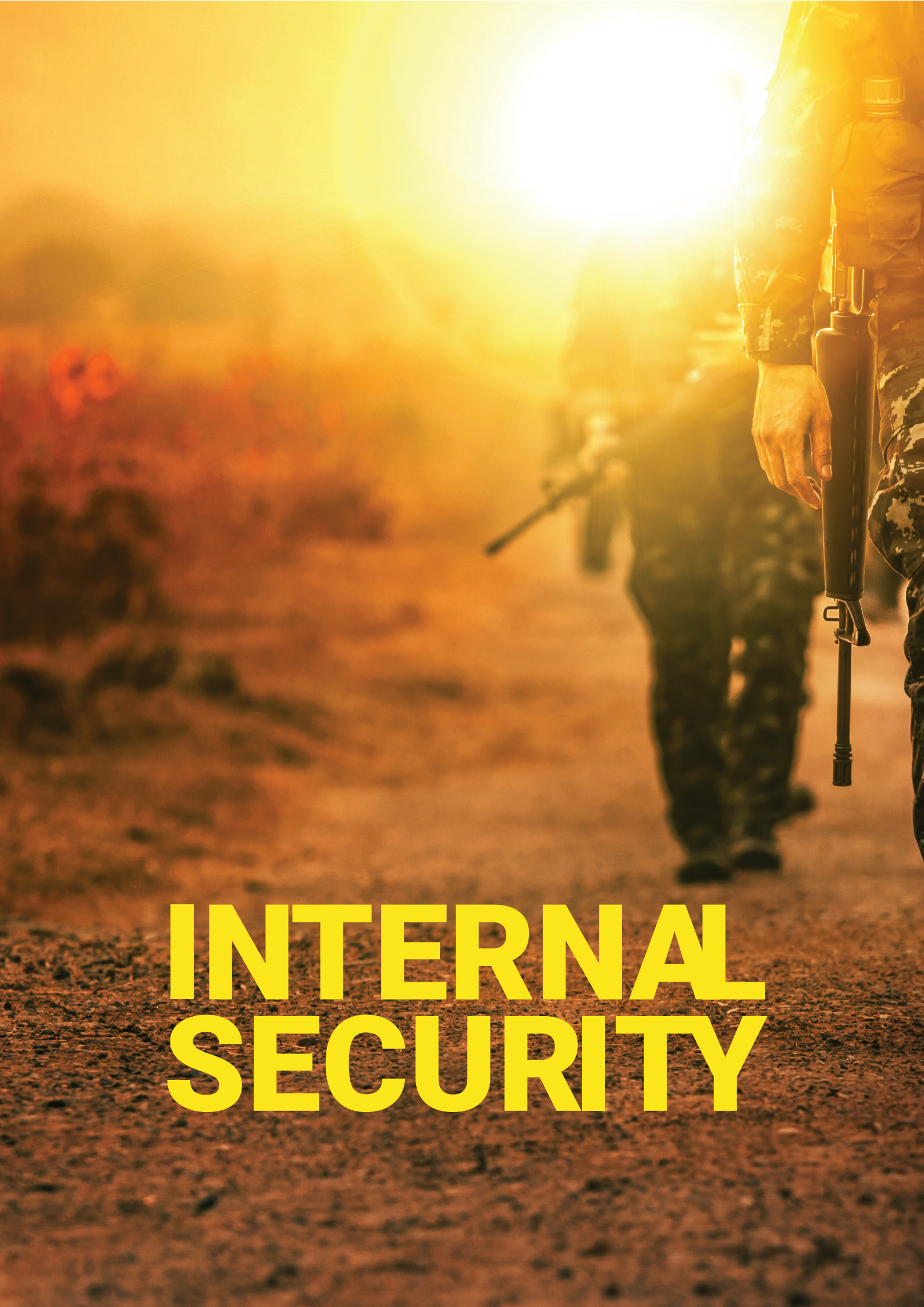
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INTERNAL SECURITY



INS TUSHIL COMMISSIONED IN RUSSIA

SMUGGLING IN INDIA REPORT, 2023-24

**VORONEZH RADAR: INDIA-RUSSIA
RADAR DEAL**

**INDIAN NAVY LAUNCHES SAMPARK 4.0
INITIATIVE**

**INS NIRDESHAK: SURVEY SHIP
COMMISSIONED**

**INDIA HOSTS 2ND LAND FORCES SUMMIT
2024**

**INDIA AND VIETNAM COAST GUARD
JOINT EXERCISE**

**BD475-2: INDIA'S BIGGEST AND
ADVANCED CRAWLER DOZER**



INS TUSHIL COMMISSIONED IN RUSSIA

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh is set to commission the Indian Navy's latest frigate, INS Tushil, at Yantra Shipyard in Kaliningrad, Russia. Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi, Chief of Naval Staff, will attend the ceremony.

India food delivery

Commissioning of INS Tushil

INS Tushil is a multi-role stealth-guided missile frigate that enhances India's naval capabilities. The commissioning marks a milestone in India's naval expansion. The frigate features advanced technology and combat systems.

Meeting with Russian Officials

Singh will co-chair the 21st meeting of the India-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission. The meeting focuses on military and military-technical cooperation. Singh and his Russian counterpart, Andrey Belousov, will review defence relations. They will explore military and industrial collaboration.

The leaders will discuss various aspects of defence relations. Topics include joint exercises, technology transfer, and procurement. They will also address regional and global security issues. The aim is to strengthen strategic ties between India and Russia.

Paying Respects at the Tomb

Singh plans to visit the 'Tomb of the Unknown Soldier' in Moscow. This visit is to honour Soviet soldiers from World War II. It reflects India's respect for historical sacrifices. The gesture signifies the importance of bilateral relations.

The Defence Minister will meet members of the Indian community in Russia. This engagement aims to boost ties with expatriates. It demonstrates India's commitment to its citizens abroad. The visit encourages goodwill and cultural exchange.

- **INS TUSHIL:** INS Tushil is a multi-role stealth-guided missile frigate. It enhances India's naval capabilities. The frigate features advanced technology and combat systems for modern warfare.
- **YANTRA SHIPYARD:** Yantra Shipyard is located in Kaliningrad, Russia. It is known for constructing naval vessels. The shipyard plays important role in India's defence manufacturing collaboration with Russia.
- **TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER:** The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is in Moscow. It commemorates Soviet soldiers who died in World War II. The site symbolises national remembrance and respect for sacrifices.

SMUGGLING IN INDIA REPORT, 2023-24

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) will mark its 67th Foundation Day on December 4, 2024, will take place in New Delhi. Senior officials from Indian law enforcement and the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) will attend. DRI will release the annual report titled 'Smuggling in India Report 2023-24', will detail its activities and trends in anti-smuggling and commercial fraud

Background of DRI

The DRI was established on December 4, 1957, and operates under the CBIC of the Government of India, located in New Delhi. DRI comprises 12 zonal units, 35 regional units, and 15 sub-regional units. Over 900 officials work within the agency.

DRI's Role in Combating Smuggling

DRI is India's leading agency against smuggling and focuses on preventing and detecting illegal activities. Key targets include narcotic drugs, gold, diamonds, wildlife products, arms, and counterfeit currency. DRI also investigates customs duty evasion and commercial fraud.

DRI engages in international customs cooperation, collaborates with other countries through Customs Mutual Assistance Agreements (CMAA). These agreements facilitate information sharing and best practice learning. The aim is to enhance the prevention and investigation of customs offences.

Foundation Day Activities

As part of the Foundation Day celebrations, DRI will host the Regional Customs Enforcement Meeting (RCEM). This

meeting will gather customs organisations and international agencies. Notable participants include the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the International Narcotics Control Bureau (INCB). The focus will be on discussing enforcement challenges and strategies.

The 'Smuggling in India Report 2023-24' will provide vital information about DRI's operations. It will highlight achievements and emerging trends in smuggling. The report serves as a key resource for understanding the agency's impact on national security and economic integrity.

- **CMAA – Customs Mutual Assistance Agreements (CMAA)** enhance international cooperation. They enable customs agencies to share information. They also promote best practices to combat customs offences effectively.
- **RCEM – The Regional Customs Enforcement Meeting (RCEM)** encourages collaboration among customs organisations. It addresses enforcement challenges. It involves discussions with international agencies like UNODC and INCB for effective strategies.
- **INCB – The International Narcotics Control Bureau (INCB)** monitors drug control. It oversees the implementation of drug treaties. INCB promotes international cooperation to combat drug trafficking and abuse.
- **RILO-AP – The Regional Intelligence Liaison Office-Asia Pacific (RILO-AP)** facilitates intelligence sharing. It focuses on customs enforcement in the Asia-Pacific region. RILO-AP aids in combating transnational smuggling issues.



VORONEZH RADAR: INDIA-RUSSIA RADAR DEAL

India and Russia are finalising a defence agreement that involves installing a Voronezh ballistic missile warning radar in Chitradurga, Karnataka. The radar is valued at approximately US \$4 billion, developed by Almaz-Antey, this system enhances missile detection capabilities.

Voronezh Radar Overview

The Voronezh radar system detects ballistic missile launches, stealth aircraft, and space objects, and employs phased array technology for rapid beam steering. This technology makes it more efficient than older radar systems. It is compact, energy-efficient, and quicker to build.

Types of Voronezh Radars

There are various Voronezh radar models, each with unique capabilities. The Voronezh-M focuses on long-range detection. The Voronezh-DM offers higher resolution for smaller targets. More advanced models, like the Voronezh-SM and Voronezh-VP, track ballistic missiles and low-flying objects from great distances.

The Chitradurga radar will primarily be a Voronezh-M model, will provide early warning against missile threats from China and Pakistan. This radar can detect targets beyond the line of sight via high-frequency signals. It covers larger areas than traditional systems.

Existing Voronezh Systems in Russia

Russia has deployed several Voronezh-M radars in strategic locations. These include the Leningrad Region, Irkutsk Region, and Altai Territory. They monitor threats from Europe, Asia, and North America. Recently, Ukraine reportedly

targeted a Voronezh radar in Orsk.

India's local manufacturing plans

India plans to manufacture at least 60 percent of the radar system locally. Over 50 Indian partners, including startups, will participate. The project will be managed by the Electronics and Radar Development Establishment (LRDE) under DRDO. This initiative will generate employment opportunities.

India requires advanced missile warning and counter-stealth capabilities. Despite possible pressure from the US, India is likely to proceed with the deal. The radar system is intended for defensive purposes, reinforcing national security.

- **VORONEZH RADAR SYSTEM:** The Voronezh radar system detects ballistic missiles and stealth aircraft. It employs phased array technology for rapid beam steering, enhancing efficiency and coverage compared to older systems.
- **ALMAZ-ANTEY:** Almaz-Antey is a major Russian defence company. It specializes in air defence systems, including radars and missile defence technologies. The company plays important role in modernising Russia's military capabilities.
- **ELECTRONICS AND RADAR DEVELOPMENT ESTABLISHMENT (LRDE):** LRDE is part of India's Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO). It focuses on developing advanced radar systems. LRDE will manage the local manufacturing of the Voronezh radar system.

INDIAN NAVY LAUNCHES SAMPARK 4.0 INITIATIVE

The Indian Navy is set to launch the fourth edition of 'SAMPARK' on December 16, 2024, which aims to enhance healthcare access for Naval Veterans, Veer Naris, and their families in Maharashtra. The initiative reflects the Navy's dedication to the well-being of veterans, particularly those residing in remote regions.

Purpose of SAMPARK 4.0

SAMPARK 4.0 focuses on creating a direct line of communication between veterans and the Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS). The initiative seeks to encourage a supportive community among veterans and ensure they receive the necessary healthcare services.

Locations covered

The programme will take place across various locations in Maharashtra. Key cities include Thane, Nasik (Deolali), Aurangabad, Ahmednagar, Solapur, Kolhapur, and Pune. The outreach will span ten days, allowing for extensive interaction with veterans.

A dedicated team comprising one officer and five sailors will facilitate the sessions. This team is responsible for engaging with veterans, addressing their concerns, and

providing information about healthcare services.

The sessions aim to strengthen trust between veterans and ECHS. They will offer a platform for veterans to discuss their healthcare needs and challenges. The initiative seeks to ensure that veterans and their families feel supported and valued.

Awareness and Guidance

SAMPARK 4.0 will raise awareness about the healthcare services available through ECHS. Veterans will receive guidance on accessing medical services and understanding the benefits and procedures involved.

The programme will also focus on addressing grievances related to healthcare. Veterans will have the opportunity to voice their concerns, ensuring they receive the attention and care they deserve.

- **SAMPARK:** SAMPARK is an outreach programme by the Indian Navy. It aims to enhance healthcare access for veterans and their families. The fourth edition launches on December 16, 2024.
- **VEER NARIS:** Veer Naris are war widows of Indian Armed Forces personnel. They receive support and benefits from



various government schemes. Their welfare is a priority in veterans' outreach initiatives.

- **ECHS:** ECHS stands for Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme. It provides healthcare services to retired

military personnel and their families. ECHS aims to ensure comprehensive medical support for veterans.

INS NIRDESHAK: SURVEY SHIP COMMISSIONED

The Indian Navy is set to commission its new survey ship, INS Nirdeshak, on December 18, 2024, will take place at the Naval Dockyard in Visakhapatnam, featuring the Hon'ble Raksha Rajya Mantri, Shri Sanjay Seth, as the Chief Guest. This event marks a milestone in India's naval capabilities.

Specifications

INS Nirdeshak measures 110 metres in length and weighs approximately 3,800 tons. It is powered by two diesel engines, ensuring efficient performance at sea. The ship is equipped with advanced technology designed for hydrographic and oceanographic surveys.

Constructed by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) in Kolkata, over 80 % of Nirdeshak's components are made in India. This achievement aligns with the Indian Navy's objective of self-reliance in defence manufacturing.

Operational role

INS Nirdeshak is the second vessel in the Survey Vessel (Large) Project. Its primary functions include mapping sea floors, aiding maritime navigation, and supporting various naval operations. The ship is expected to enhance the Navy's operational capabilities.

This new vessel continues the legacy of the original Nirdeshak, which served the Indian Navy for 32 years before its decommissioning in 2014. The new ship embodies advancements in design and technology, reflecting the Navy's

evolution.

Endurance and Performance

INS Nirdeshak has a range of over 25 days at sea and can reach speeds exceeding 18 knots. These attributes will enable the ship to conduct extensive surveys and enhance India's maritime presence, particularly in the Indian Ocean Region.

With the commissioning of INS Nirdeshak, the Indian Navy aims to boost its capabilities in maritime operations. This ship will play important role in international cooperation for marine surveys and support India's strategic interests in the region.

- **NIRDESHAK:** The INS Nirdeshak is a new survey ship of the Indian Navy. It measures 110 metres long and weighs around 3,800 tons. It is designed for advanced hydrographic surveys.
- **SURVEY VESSEL (LARGE) PROJECT:** The Survey Vessel (Large) Project includes the INS Nirdeshak. It aims to enhance the Indian Navy's capabilities in maritime navigation and operational support through advanced survey technology.
- **INDIAN OCEAN REGION:** The Indian Ocean Region is crucial for maritime security. INS Nirdeshak will enhance India's presence there. It supports international cooperation for marine surveys and strategic interests in the region.

INDIA HOSTS 2ND LAND FORCES SUMMIT 2024

General Upendra Dwivedi, Chief of Army Staff of the Indian Army, recently attended the 2nd Land Forces Summit (LFS) 2024, which took place with participation from Army Chiefs and senior generals from Japan, the US, Australia, and the Philippines. The summit brought into light India's strategic role in the Indian Ocean Region and emphasised the importance of multinational defence cooperation.

Focus on security and cooperation

The discussions at the summit centred on India's security and strategic contributions. Leaders from various nations shared insights on promoting a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific region. The emphasis was on ensuring peaceful coexistence among nations in the region.

Involvement of QUAD Grouping

The summit featured key members of the QUAD grouping, which includes India, the US, Australia, and Japan. One of QUAD's primary objectives is to enhance maritime security. The partner countries collaborate to improve maritime awareness and uphold a free and open Indo-Pacific.

India maintains friendly relations with the Philippines, which have evolved since the introduction of the Look East Policy in 1992. This policy aimed to strengthen ties with ASEAN countries, including the Philippines. The relationship has further developed with the Act East Policy initiated in 2014, expanding cooperation in security, trade, and cultural exchanges.

Importance of Multinational Defence

The summit tells the necessity of multinational defence initiatives. By encouraging collaboration among nations, the summit aimed to address shared security challenges. This cooperation is vital for maintaining stability in the Indian Ocean Region and beyond.

The discussions at the summit reflect a collective commitment to regional stability. The collaborative efforts among participating nations signify a proactive approach to security in the Indo-Pacific region.

- **LFS:** The 2nd Land Forces Summit (LFS) 2024 aimed to enhance defence cooperation. It gathered military leaders



to discuss security strategies in the Indo-Pacific region.

- **QUAD:** The QUAD grouping includes India, the US, Australia, and Japan. Its main goal is to boost maritime security and ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific region.
- **LOOK EAST POLICY:** Introduced in 1992, India's Look East Policy aimed to strengthen ties with ASEAN nations.

This policy improved relations with countries like the Philippines.

- **ACT EAST POLICY:** Launched in 2014, the Act East Policy expanded India's engagement with the Asia-Pacific. It focuses on enhancing security, trade, and cultural exchanges with regional partners.

INDIA AND VIETNAM COAST GUARD JOINT EXERCISE



The Vietnam Coast Guard Ship CSB 8005 departed Kochi after a successful visit that enhanced cooperation between the Vietnam Coast Guard (VCG) and the Indian Coast Guard (ICG). This four-day visit included various activities aimed at improving maritime security collaboration.

Purpose of the Visit

The primary goal of the visit was to encourage coordination between the VCG and ICG. Officials brought into light the importance of joint efforts in addressing maritime security challenges.

Sea Exercise – Sahayog Hop Tac

An aspect of the visit was the sea exercise named Sahayog Hop Tac, which took place off the coast of Kochi. This exercise addressed critical maritime security issues and featured a Pollution Response Demonstration.

During the demonstration, ICG ships and aircraft showcased their capabilities in responding to oil spills and environmental hazards. This exercise aimed to enhance preparedness for potential maritime disasters.

Simulated Operations

The exercise also included simulated operations targeting illegal activities at sea. This encompassed inspections of suspicious vessels and counter-narcotics operations to combat drug trafficking.

ICG helicopters and aircraft conducted Search and Rescue drills as part of the exercise. They performed Pollution Response demonstrations, External Fire Fighting simulations, and Medical Evacuation exercises to demonstrate operational readiness.

Joint Training and Learning

Members of both Coast Guards participated in joint training sessions. They observed each other's practices from their respective ships, facilitating knowledge exchange and skill enhancement.

The visit also included crew exchanges, allowing personnel to learn about each other's ships and operational procedures. A beach clean-up event and a friendly volleyball match encouraged camaraderie among the crews.

Following the sea exercise, the Indian Coast Guard provided a ceremonial farewell to the VCG ship. ICG personnel escorted CSB 8005 out of Indian territorial waters, marking the end of a productive visit.

- **CSB 8005:** CSB 8005 is a Vietnam Coast Guard ship. It recently visited Kochi, enhancing cooperation with the Indian Coast Guard through joint exercises and community engagement activities.
- **SAHAYOG HOP TAC:** Sahayog Hop Tac is a maritime exercise. It focuses on security issues, including pollution response and drug trafficking, enhancing operational capabilities of the participating Coast Guards.
- **POLLUTION RESPONSE DEMONSTRATION:** This demonstration showcased the Indian Coast Guard's readiness. It involved responding to oil spills and environmental hazards, emphasizing the importance of preparedness for maritime disasters.
- **FORT KOCHI:** Fort Kochi is a coastal area in India. It hosted community activities during the visit, such as a beach clean-up and a volleyball match, encouraging camaraderie between crews.



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BD475-2: INDIA'S BIGGEST AND ADVANCED CRAWLER DOZER

BEML Ltd has recently revealed the BD475-2 Dozer, marking a milestone in India's engineering capabilities. This crawler dozer, the largest and most advanced in the country, showcases India's commitment to self-reliance in manufacturing.

Key Specifications

The BD475-2 Dozer is powered by a robust 950 HP Cummins QST30 engine. Weighing 100 tons, it delivers exceptional performance with 950 FHP at 2100 rpm. The engine complies with EPA Tier-II emission standards, ensuring efficiency and reduced environmental impact.

Design and Development

Developed entirely by BEML's in-house team, the dozer reflects a blend of expertise from seasoned professionals and fresh talent. The design process took place at BEML's main facility in Kolar Gold Fields, near Bangalore, denoting local manufacturing capabilities.

The dozer is equipped with a 25.6 cubic meter semi-U blade, ideal for heavy-duty mining tasks. It includes advanced features such as a planetary power shift transmission and a torque converter with a lockup clutch. These innovations enhance fuel efficiency and durability.

Operator Comfort and Safety

The operator's cabin prioritises safety and comfort. It features an acoustically refined interior and pneumatic suspension seating. A modern electronic monitoring system

provides enhanced control, ensuring a better operational experience.

Commitment to Sustainability

The BD475-2 Dozer sets a new benchmark in the mining sector, aligning with the Aatma Nirbhar Bharat vision. This dozer is designed to meet the demands of both domestic and international markets. It's advanced engineering positions it as a competitive option in the global heavy machinery landscape.

- **BD475-2 DOZER:** The BD475-2 Dozer is India's largest crawler dozer. It showcases advanced engineering and self-reliance, powered by a 950 HP Cummins engine, meeting global standards.
- **KOLAR GOLD FIELDS (KGF):** KGF is located near Bangalore. It was historically for gold mining. Today, it represents local manufacturing capabilities and innovation in heavy machinery.
- **AATMA NIRBHAR BHARAT:** Aatma Nirbhar Bharat is India's self-reliance initiative. It aims to boost local manufacturing and reduce dependency on imports. The initiative supports sustainable industrial growth across various sectors.
- **EPA TIER-II:** EPA Tier-II refers to emission standards set by the Environmental Protection Agency. These standards aim to reduce air pollution from heavy machinery, promoting eco-friendly practices in manufacturing.





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ECONOMICS





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SANJAY MALHOTRA, THE NEXT RBI GOVERNOR

Sanjay Malhotra has been appointed as the new Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for a three-year term, succeeding Shaktikanta Das. Malhotra has extensive experience in various sectors, including finance and taxation.

Background and Education

Malhotra is an Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer from the 1990 batch. He graduated with a degree in Computer Science from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur and also holds a master's degree in Public Policy from Princeton University.

Professional Experience

He has over 33 years of experience in government roles. Malhotra has served in both state and central governments. His career spans sectors such as finance, taxation, power, IT, and mining. Before his current role, he was Secretary of the Department of Financial Services.

Role as Revenue Secretary

Since December 2022, Malhotra has been the Revenue Secretary in the Ministry of Finance. He has been instrumental in shaping both direct and indirect tax policies. His efforts have boosted tax collections, essential for India's economic growth.

As Secretary to the GST Council, he balanced the tax requirements of states with national interests. He also managed non-tax revenue sources, including income from loans and dividends from public sector units. His work has enhanced the efficiency of tax administration in India.

Leadership at REC Ltd.

Malhotra previously served as Chairman and Managing Director of REC Ltd. He led the company through a period of growth. His leadership skills have been recognised across various sectors.

As the new RBI Governor, Malhotra is expected to influence monetary policy and banking regulations. His extensive experience positions him well to tackle upcoming economic challenges.

- **GST COUNCIL:** The Goods and Services Tax Council is a constitutional body in India. It is responsible for making recommendations on GST rates and policies. The council comprises state and central government representatives.
- **REC Ltd:** Rural Electrification Corporation Limited is a public sector financial company in India. It funds power sector projects, primarily focusing on rural electrification. REC plays a vital role in enhancing energy access.

WOMEN'S WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION IN INDIA

India has witnessed a notable increase in women's participation in the workforce, particularly in rural regions, from 2017 to 2023. Government initiatives have played an important role in this development. The Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister conducted a study denoting these changes.

Government Initiatives

Various government programmes have been instrumental in boosting rural women's employment. Key initiatives include 'Mudra' loans, which provide financial support, the 'Drone Didi' initiative for technology training, and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) under the 'Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana' aimed at economic empowerment.

Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR)

The Female Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) measures the employment status of women aged 15 and above. Nationally, rural women's LFPR rose from 24.6 % to 41.5 %, reflecting a growth of about 69 %. Urban areas experienced a more modest increase from 20.4 % to 25.4 %.

Regional Variations

The study reveals substantial regional disparities in LFPR. Rural Jharkhand saw an astounding increase of over 230 %, while Bihar's rate improved six fold. In the Northeast, Nagaland's rural LFPR surged from 15.7 % to 71.1 %. Urban areas generally showed minor improvements, though Gujarat's urban LFPR increased considerably.

Married women in rural areas exhibited the highest participation growth, particularly in states like Rajasthan and Jharkhand. Conversely, northern states such as Punjab and Haryana continue to report low LFPR. Rural Bihar has shown remarkable progress, especially among married women.

Age and Marital Status Effects

The study indicates that women's LFPR peaks between ages 30 and 40, then declines sharply. In contrast, men's LFPR remains high until age 50. Marriage positively affects men's LFPR but negatively impacts women's, especially in urban settings. The presence of children under 14 further diminishes women's participation, particularly for younger women.

The research marks the complex interplay of gender, age, and marital status in influencing women's workforce participation. About these dynamics is vital for developing effective policies aimed at improving women's employment opportunities.

- **MUDRA LOANS:** Mudra loans are financial support initiatives aimed at micro and small enterprises. They empower women entrepreneurs in rural areas, enhancing economic independence and encouraging entrepreneurship.
- **DRONE DIDI INITIATIVE:** The Drone Didi initiative trains women in drone technology. It aims to improve agricultural productivity and create job opportunities for women in



rural regions through technological advancement.

- **DEENDAYAL ANTYODAYA YOJANA:** The Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana focuses on poverty alleviation. It promotes self-help groups, enhancing women's economic empowerment and encouraging sustainable livelihoods in rural communities.

- **FEMALE LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE (LFPR):** The Female Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) measures women's employment status. It indicates growth in rural areas, reflecting changing gender dynamics in the Indian workforce.

RECORD COAL PRODUCTION IN 2023-24T

India's coal production reached unprecedented levels in the fiscal year 2023-24, totalling 997.826 million tonnes. This marked an impressive increase of 11.71% from the previous year's output of 893.191 million tonnes. By mid-December 2023, India had already supplied approximately 963.11 million tonnes of coal, reflecting robust demand and efficient supply chains.

Factors Contributing to Increased Production

The surge in coal production can be attributed to several key factors. The government's 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' initiative aims to enhance self-reliance in coal production. This initiative encourages investment in mining technologies and infrastructure. Additionally, the demand for coal in various sectors, including power generation and steel manufacturing, has driven production levels higher.

Domestic Raw Coking Coal Production

In 2023-24, domestic raw coking coal production reached 66.821 million tonnes. This type of coal is essential for steel production and is critical for the country's industrial growth. The Ministry of Coal anticipates that production will increase, projecting a target of 140 million tonnes over the next five years.

Future Projections and Initiatives

Looking ahead, the Ministry of Coal is optimistic about continued growth in coal production. The strategic initiatives

under the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' programme are expected to yield substantial increases in both coking and thermal coal output. Investments in new technologies and sustainable mining practices will play important role in achieving these targets.

The increase in coal production is vital for India's energy security. As the country seeks to meet its rising energy demands, coal remains a primary source of electricity generation. Ensuring a stable supply of coal will help mitigate potential energy crises and support economic development.

- **ATMANIRBHAR BHARAT:** This initiative aims for self-reliance in various sectors. It encourages local production and investment. It focuses on enhancing domestic capabilities and reducing dependency on imports.
- **COKING COAL:** Coking coal is crucial for steel production. It undergoes a specific carbonisation process. Its quality affects steel's properties and is essential for industrial growth.
- **ENERGY SECURITY:** Energy security ensures a stable energy supply. It is vital for economic growth and development. India aims to balance energy sources for sustainable progress.

GST COUNCIL IMPLEMENTS "TRACK AND TRACE MECHANISM"

The GST Council has recently made updates to enhance tax compliance and clarity in the tax framework, aim to reduce tax evasion, and simplify tax processes for businesses and consumers.

Track and Trace Mechanism

The Council approved a new "Track and Trace Mechanism" for goods susceptible to tax evasion and will employ unique identification marks on products and packaging. It will enable tracing throughout the supply chain, thus improving accountability.

Tax Rate Adjustments

Several tax rate changes were announced. The GST on fortified rice kernels (FRK) has been reduced from 18% to 5%. Additionally, gene therapy will now be exempt from GST. These adjustments aim to make essential goods more affordable.

Exemptions for Imports and Supplies

The Council introduced exemptions for imports of equipment and samples for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) under specific conditions. Furthermore, the compensation cess has been lowered to 0.1% for supplies to merchant exporters, easing their tax burden.

Contributions to the Motor Vehicle Accident Fund by general insurance companies are now exempt from GST. This fund is crucial for providing compensation and cashless treatment to road accident victims, enhancing public welfare.

Vouchers and Goods Definition

Transactions involving vouchers will no longer attract GST, as they do not qualify as goods or services. The definition of "pre-packaged and labelled" goods has been clarified, now covering retail items up to 25 kg or 25 litres.



Clarifications on Penal Charges

There will be no GST on penal charges collected by banks or financial institutions for loan non-compliance. This change aims to alleviate the tax burden on financial services. The Council is working to simplify GST rules for specific cases. The pre-deposit requirement for appealing penalty-related orders has been reduced. Circulars will be issued to address legal ambiguities and disputes, promoting greater clarity.

- **TRACK AND TRACE MECHANISM:** This system uses unique identification marks to monitor goods in the supply chain. It aims to enhance accountability and reduce tax evasion.

- **FORTIFIED RICE KERNELS (FRK):** FRK is a nutritional supplement designed to combat malnutrition. The GST on FRK was reduced from 18% to 5%, making it more accessible to consumers.
- **INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY (IAEA):** The IAEA promotes peaceful nuclear energy use. GST exemptions for its imports support international cooperation in nuclear safety and technology development.
- **MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENT FUND:** This fund provides compensation for road accident victims. Exempting contributions from GST enhances funding for cashless treatment and victim support services.

RBI TIGHTENS BANKING SYSTEM LIQUIDITY AHEAD OF TAX PAYMENTS

Liquidity in the banking system is tightening as mid-month payments for GST and advance taxes approach, which has led to increased demand for funds at the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) variable rate repo (VRR) auction. The recent VRR auction saw banks submitting bids exceeding the RBI's offered amount.

VRR Auction

In a two-day VRR auction, banks submitted bids totalling ₹ 62,877 Cr. The RBI had only announced ₹ 25,000 Cr. for the auction. Ultimately, the RBI accepted bids worth ₹ 25,005 Cr. at an average rate of 6.65%. This reflects heightened liquidity needs among banks.

Previous Auction Data

On December 9, an overnight VRR auction recorded bids of ₹40,630 Cr., matching the RBI's notified amount. The average rate for this auction was 6.53%. These figures indicate a consistent demand for liquidity support from the banking sector.

RBI's Policy Adjustments

Former RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das brought into light that while current liquidity is sufficient, it may tighten due to tax payments, increased currency circulation, and volatile capital flows. In response, the RBI announced a reduction in the cash reserve ratio (CRR) for banks to 4% of net demand

and time liabilities (NDTL). This adjustment will occur in two phases of 25 basis points each, starting on December 14 and December 28, 2024.

Expected Impact of CRR Reduction

The CRR reduction will restore the ratio to its pre-April 2022 level, releasing ₹1.16 lakh Cr. into the banking system. This move aligns with the RBI's neutral policy stance and aims to alleviate liquidity pressures.

The RBI will actively manage liquidity to maintain stable interest rates and support the economy's needs. Continuous monitoring and adjustments are essential to address the evolving liquidity landscape in the banking sector.

- **VRR (VARIABLE RATE REPO):** VRR is a monetary policy tool used by the RBI. It allows banks to borrow funds at a variable interest rate, responding to liquidity needs.
- **CRR (CASH RESERVE RATIO):** CRR is the percentage of a bank's total deposits that must be held in reserve with the RBI. Changes in CRR affect liquidity and credit availability in the economy.
- **NDTL (NET DEMAND AND TIME LIABILITIES):** NDTL refers to the total liabilities of banks, including demand deposits and time deposits. It is crucial for calculating CRR and liquidity management.

YUVA SAHAKAR: COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE SUPPORT AND INNOVATION SCHEME

The "Yuva Sahakar: Cooperative Enterprise Support and Innovation Scheme" was recently introduced by the National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC). This initiative aims to encourage innovative cooperative societies across India and specifically targets young entrepreneurs looking to establish cooperative ventures.

Objectives of the Scheme

The primary objective is to support newly formed cooperative societies. These societies must have been

operational for at least three months. The scheme encourages the development of fresh ideas and innovative projects within the cooperative sector.

Loan Details

The scheme provides long-term loans with a tenure of up to five years. These loans are intended to assist with various project activities. Borrowers can benefit from a 2% interest subsidy on the applicable loan interest rate.



Eligibility Criteria

To qualify, cooperatives must be newly established and operational for a minimum of three months. The scheme is open to cooperative societies formed by young entrepreneurs across India.

Eligible cooperatives can combine the loan with other government subsidies. This allows for enhanced financial support and increased project viability.

Regional Participation

Despite the scheme's potential, no proposals have yet been submitted from eligible cooperatives in Himachal Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh. This lack of participation marks an opportunity for increased awareness and engagement in these regions.

Cooperative societies play important role in promoting economic development. They encourage collective

ownership and democratic management. The scheme aims to revitalise this sector by empowering young entrepreneurs with necessary financial resources.

- **NCDL:** The National Cooperative Development Corporation promotes cooperative societies in India. It provides financial assistance and support to enhance cooperative growth and development across the nation.
- **YUVA SAHAKAR:** This scheme aims to encourage innovation among young entrepreneurs. It supports newly formed cooperatives with loans and interest subsidies to encourage their growth and sustainability.
- **INTEREST SUBSIDY:** The scheme offers a 2 % interest subsidy on loans. This financial incentive makes it easier for cooperatives to access necessary funds for their projects.

INDIA'S WATER RESOURCES ASSESSMENT - 2024

The Central Water Commission (CWC) has released its latest study, titled Assessment of Water Resources of India 2024, which estimates India's average annual water availability at 2,115.95 billion cubic meters (BCM) from 1985 to 2023. The assessment incorporates various factors such as precipitation, land use, and soil conditions.

Major River Basins and Their Water Availability

The Brahmaputra, Ganga, and Godavari basins have the highest water availability. Specifically, the Brahmaputra basin offers 592.32 BCM, the Ganga basin provides 581.75 BCM, and the Godavari basin contributes 129.17 BCM. Conversely, the Sabarmati, Pennar, and Mahi basins show lower availability, with figures of 9.87 BCM, 10.42 BCM, and 13.03 BCM, respectively.

Methodological Changes in Assessments

The current estimate of 2,115.95 BCM surpasses previous assessments, including the 2019 figure of 1,999.2 BCM. This increase is attributed to methodological improvements. The study now includes Bhutan's contribution to the Brahmaputra basin and Nepal's full contribution to the Ganga basin, which were not fully accounted for before.

Water Scarcity Context

About water availability is essential for sustainable management amid challenges like urbanisation and climate change. The average annual per capita water availability in 2021 was 1,486 cubic meters, categorising the country as experiencing water stress. The updated estimate for 2024

slightly improves this to 1,513 cubic meters, still below the critical threshold of 1,700 cubic meters.

Utilisation of Water Resources

Total water availability does not equate to utilisable water. In 2019, despite an average water availability of 1,999.2 BCM, only 690 BCM of surface water was deemed utilisable. Smaller river basins tend to have a higher proportion of utilisable water compared to larger basins like the Brahmaputra, which presents challenges in managing India's water resources effectively.

- **CWC:** The Central Water Commission is responsible for the management of water resources in India. It conducts assessments and provides data for sustainable water management and policy formulation.
- **BCM:** Billion cubic meters is a unit of measurement for water volume. It is crucial for understanding water availability in large-scale assessments of river basins and water resources.
- **BRAHMAPUTRA:** The Brahmaputra River basin has the highest water availability in India. It contributes to the country's water resources, with an estimated 592.32 BCM available annually.
- **WATER STRESS:** Water stress occurs when per capita water availability falls below 1,700 cubic meters. India's per capita availability was 1,513 cubic meters in 2024, indicating ongoing water scarcity challenges.



INDIA'S LARGEST ONLINE IAS COACHING ACADEMY



WOMEN-OWNED MSMEs

In recent years, India has witnessed a remarkable increase in women-led businesses. Over 2.2 Cr. women-owned Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) have been registered through various government initiatives, which has been boosted by the updated MSME definition introduced on July 1, 2020.

Registration Statistics

On November 30, 2024, there are 2,20,73,675 women-owned MSMEs registered on the Udyam Registration Portal (URP) and Udyam Assist Platform (UAP). In Rajasthan's Tonk and Sawai Madhopur districts, women-led MSMEs constitute 13% of all local businesses. Valsad district in Gujarat boasts 11,942 women-led enterprises, accounting for 18.24% of its total businesses.

Government Initiatives

The government has implemented several initiatives to promote women's entrepreneurship. Special registration drives aim to facilitate the formal registration of women-led enterprises. The revised 2018 Public Procurement Policy mandates that 3% of annual purchases by Central Ministries and Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) must be sourced from women entrepreneurs, enhancing their market access.

Financial Support

Financial assistance has been a priority for women-led businesses. The Credit Guarantee Scheme for Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) offers a 10% discount on guarantee fees for women, with 90% coverage compared to 75% for male

counterparts. The Prime Minister Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) provides credit-linked subsidies, with women receiving 25% in urban areas and 35% in rural areas, exceeding the rates available to other entrepreneurs.

Skill Development Programs

Various skill development initiatives support women artisans. The 'Skill Upgradation and Mahila Coir Yojana' focuses on training, while the Procurement and Marketing Support Scheme fully subsidises participation in trade fairs. The 'Yashasvini Campaign,' launched in June 2024, further aids women entrepreneurs by offering resources for formalisation, credit access, capacity building, and mentorship.

- **URP:** The Udyam Registration Portal facilitates the registration of MSMEs in India. It aims to simplify processes and enhance accessibility for women entrepreneurs.
- **UAP:** The Udyam Assist Platform supports women-led businesses. It provides resources and guidance for entrepreneurs to navigate challenges and improve their business operations.
- **PMEGP:** The Prime Minister Employment Generation Programme offers credit-linked subsidies. It aims to promote self-employment and entrepreneurship, particularly among women in urban and rural areas.
- **YASHASVINI CAMPAIGN:** Launched in June 2024, the Yashasvini Campaign supports women entrepreneurs. It focuses on formalisation, credit access, capacity building, and mentorship for sustainable business growth.

UNION BUDGET 2025: INDIA'S FISCAL DEFICIT CHALLENGES

India is currently grappling with hurdles in its efforts to reduce the fiscal deficit to 4.5% of GDP by the fiscal year 2025-26 which peaked at 9.5% of GDP during the pandemic, and has seen slow recovery. Analysts expressed scepticism about the feasibility of achieving this ambitious target amidst a sluggish economic growth environment.

About Fiscal Deficit

A fiscal deficit occurs when a government's expenditures exceed its revenues. This situation necessitates borrowing or printing money, potentially leading to inflation. High deficits can adversely impact long-term economic stability and growth.

Fiscal Glide Path Concept

The fiscal glide path is a structured approach to gradually reduce the deficit over time. Introduced by the NK Singh Committee, it aimed for a deficit reduction to 3% of GDP by 2020, with subsequent targets for 2021 and 2023. The pandemic disrupted these timelines, complicating the fiscal landscape.

India's economy is currently growing at a slower pace, creating pressure on the government to increase spending.

This need for expenditure complicates the adherence to deficit reduction plans. Tax collections have also dropped, further straining fiscal targets.

Flexibility in Targets

The NK Singh Committee's recommendations included provisions for flexibility. The government may exceed the 4.5% target by up to 0.5% of GDP during extraordinary circumstances, such as economic crises. This allows for a balance between fiscal discipline and necessary economic support.

Consequences of High Deficits

High fiscal deficits can lead to inflation if financed by excessive money printing or borrowing. This inflation diminishes consumer purchasing power and discourages business investment. Increased market borrowing can elevate interest rates, making loans more expensive and hindering economic activity.

Achieving the 4.5 % deficit target by 2025-26 demands meticulous planning and difficult policy decisions. The government's ability to balance fiscal responsibility with economic support will be vital for sustaining India's economic



growth and stability in the years ahead.

- **FISCAL GLIDE PATH:** A fiscal glide path is a structured method to reduce a deficit gradually. It aims to mitigate risks associated with high deficits while ensuring responsible budgeting.
- **NK SINGH COMMITTEE:** The NK Singh Committee was established to propose measures for fiscal discipline. It recommended specific deficit targets, which were disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic and economic challenges.

- **FISCAL DEFICIT:** A fiscal deficit occurs when a government's expenditures surpass its revenues. This situation often leads to borrowing or money printing, potentially causing inflation and economic instability.
- **ECONOMIC SUPPORT vs. DISCIPLINE:** Balancing economic support with fiscal discipline is challenging. The government's approach to managing deficits will influence India's long-term economic stability and growth prospects.

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY AND BUDGET MANAGEMENT (FRBM) ACT, 2003

The Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act, enacted in 2003, aims to maintain fiscal discipline in India, introduced by Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha in 2000 and became effective on July 5, 2004. The Act mandates the government to manage its finances responsibly, reducing the fiscal deficit and ensuring financial stability.

Key Financial Documents Required

The FRBM Act requires the government to present specific documents to Parliament alongside the Union Budget. These documents include the Medium-Term Fiscal Policy Statement, the Macroeconomic Framework Statement, and the Fiscal Policy Strategy Statement. They provide projections for fiscal deficit, revenue deficit, and tax revenue as percentages of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Exceptions to Fiscal Targets

The Act allows for exceptions to fiscal targets under special circumstances, such as emergencies. For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, fiscal targets were temporarily suspended due to increased government expenditure and decreased revenue. This flexibility helps the government respond effectively to unforeseen economic challenges.

Long-term Fiscal Goals

The government introduced a plan in the 2021-22 budget to reduce the fiscal deficit to below 4.5% by 2025-26. This goal reflects the government's commitment to restoring

fiscal health post-pandemic while balancing economic growth.

The FRBM Act promotes transparency in financial practices. It encourages realistic budgeting and accountability in government spending. The Act also aims to establish a framework for sustainable debt management, preventing financial strain on the economy.

Over the years, the FRBM Act has undergone several amendments to adapt to changing economic conditions. These changes ensure that the Act remains relevant and effective in promoting fiscal responsibility in India. The Act also provides the Reserve Bank of India with the flexibility to manage inflation effectively.

- **FRBM ACT:** The Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act was enacted in 2003. It promotes fiscal discipline, transparency, and accountability in India's financial practices and management.
- **MEDIUM-TERM FISCAL POLICY STATEMENT:** This document outlines the government's fiscal strategy over the medium term. It includes projections for fiscal and revenue deficits as percentages of GDP.
- **COVID-19 PANDEMIC EXCEPTIONS:** During the COVID-19 pandemic, fiscal targets were suspended. This allowed increased government spending to address economic challenges and support recovery efforts in India.

RBI RELEASES HANDBOOK OF STATISTICS ON INDIAN STATES 2023-24

The Reserve Bank of India has published the latest edition of the Handbook of Statistics on Indian States for 2023-24, which presents crucial data on the regional economies of India. It includes vital information about demographics, health, and economic indicators. The data spans from 1951 to 2024, providing a historical context for analysis.

Key Updates in the Publication

The new edition updates prior data and introduces new metrics, features the Gender Parity Index for school enrolment. Additionally, it includes Gross State Value Added and afforestation statistics. New insights on state-wise cold and heat wave days are also provided. The report details

power supply positions and school management facilities.

Economic Contributions of States

In the 2023-24 fiscal year, Telangana's net state domestic product reached ₹13.61 lakh Cr. This marks a 15% increase from the previous year. Telangana is now ranked seventh among states of India in economic contribution. Maharashtra remains the top contributor with ₹35.24 lakh Cr. Other contributors include Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, and Rajasthan.

Wage Disparities Among States

The report reveals notable wage differences across states. Kerala has the highest rural wages, often double the



national average. A male construction worker in Kerala earns ₹894 per day. In contrast, Madhya Pradesh offers the lowest wages at ₹292 per day. However, states like Madhya Pradesh and Odisha are narrowing the wage gap with rapid growth.

Trends in Wage Growth

Wage disparities have changed over the years. In 2023-24, Kerala's construction wages were three times higher than Madhya Pradesh's. This compares to a 4.5 times difference in 2014-15. The data indicates that poorer states are improving their wage structures.

The publication provides valuable vital information about India's socio-economic development. It marks progress in reducing regional inequalities. This data serves as an

essential tool for policymakers and researchers.

RBI: The Reserve Bank of India regulates monetary policy. It also oversees banking operations, ensuring financial stability and economic growth across the country.

- **GENDER PARITY INDEX:** This index measures gender equality in education. It evaluates school enrolment rates, denoting disparities between male and female students across regions.
- **GROSS STATE VALUE ADDED:** Gross State Value Added reflects a state's economic performance. It measures the value of goods and services produced, excluding taxes and subsidies.

NEW AGRICULTURE INITIATIVES

The Government of India has recently launched several programs aimed at revitalizing the agriculture sector, which focus on enhancing farm production, increasing farmer incomes, and promoting sustainable practices. The Union Cabinet's approval puts stress on the commitment to agricultural improvement.

Clean Plant Programme (CPP)

The CPP was approved on August 9, 2024, and has a budget of ₹1,765.67 Cr., aiming to enhance horticultural productivity. It provides disease-free plants and promotes climate-resistant crop varieties. This initiative ensures higher yields and sustainable farming practices.

Digital Agriculture Mission

Approved on September 2, 2024, this mission has a budget of ₹2,817 Cr. The central government contributes ₹1,940 Cr. The mission focuses on integrating digital solutions into farming. It includes developing digital infrastructure and implementing crop estimation surveys. IT tools will assist farmers in decision-making.

Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF) Expansion

On August 28, 2024, the Cabinet approved the AIF expansion. It now encompasses community farming assets and integrated processing units. The fund will also connect with PM-KUSUM-A projects. This aims to support comprehensive agricultural growth.

National Mission on Edible Oils: Oilseeds (NMEO-Oilseeds)

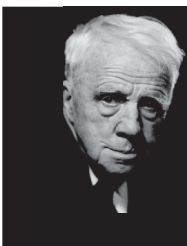
Launched on October 3, 2024, the NMEO-Oilseeds has a budget of ₹10,103 Cr. The mission aims to boost oilseed

production in India. It seeks to reduce reliance on imports. This initiative will run from 2024 to 2031.

National Mission on Natural Farming (NMNF)

Introduced on November 25, 2024, the NMNF has a budget of ₹2,481 Cr., promotes natural farming methods. This initiative encourages eco-friendly agricultural practices. These programmes reflect the government's dedication to building a robust agricultural system. They aim to equip farmers with essential tools and support for success.

- **CLEAN PLANT PROGRAMME (CPP):** Launched on August 9, 2024, with a budget of ₹1,765.67 Cr. It enhances horticultural productivity through disease-free plants and climate-resistant varieties.
- **DIGITAL AGRICULTURE MISSION:** Approved on September 2, 2024, with ₹2,817 Cr. allocated. It integrates digital solutions into farming, improving infrastructure and assisting farmers with IT tools for decision-making.
- **NATIONAL MISSION ON EDIBLE OILS: OILSEEDS (NMEO-OILSEEDS):** Launched on October 3, 2024, with a budget of 10,103 Cr. It aims to increase oilseed production and reduce import dependence until 2031.
- **NATIONAL MISSION ON NATURAL FARMING (NMNF):** Introduced on November 25, 2024, with ₹2,481 Cr. budgeted. It promotes eco-friendly farming practices, encouraging sustainability and natural methods in agriculture.



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



INDIA'S ECONOMIC GROWTH FORECAST - 2024

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recently revised its growth forecast for 2024-25 and estimate stands at 6.6 %. In contrast, S & P Global maintains a slightly higher projection of 6.8 %, marking differing perspectives on India's economic trajectory.

Current Economic Landscape

India's economy grew by 8.2% in the previous financial year. However, growth slowed to 5.4% in the July-September quarter of 2024. This slowdown has prompted several agencies to adjust their annual growth forecasts downwards. The government views the weaker second-quarter performance as a temporary setback.

S&P Global's Forecast

S&P Global anticipates steady growth in 2025. The agency cites strong urban consumption and growth in the services sector as key drivers. Ongoing infrastructure investments will also contribute positively. Their growth predictions are 6.8% for 2024-25 and 6.9% for 2025-26.

Monetary Policy Committee

The next meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) is scheduled for February. This will be the first meeting under new Governor Sanjay Malhotra. Experts expect potential interest rate cuts after 11 consecutive meetings

without change. A slight easing of monetary policy might occur in 2025, especially if inflation trends downward.

Risks to Economic Growth

Several risks could impact the 6.8% growth forecast. Challenges in the manufacturing sector present concerns. Weak agricultural growth and lingering pandemic effects on finances are additional risks. These factors could hinder overall economic performance.

Improvements in urban infrastructure and technology are vital. Enhanced job quality could attract more individuals into the workforce. Stronger public and household finances will also support economic growth. These elements combined could lead to a more robust economic recovery in the coming years.

- **MPC:** The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) sets key interest rates in India. Its decisions impact inflation and economic growth. The MPC meets periodically to review economic conditions.
- **S&P GLOBAL:** S&P Global is a credit rating agency. It provides financial market insights and forecasts. Its ratings influence investment decisions globally, including those in emerging markets like India.

CONSUMER CONFIDENCE SURVEY (CCS)

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) conducted a survey, Consumer Confidence Survey, from November 2-11, 2024, indicating concerns about the economy, employment, income, and spending. Expectations for rising inflation further contribute to this sentiment.

Survey Overview

The RBI's survey gathered insights from 19 major cities and focused on consumer perceptions regarding the economy, jobs, inflation, income, and spending. The survey assessed both current views and future expectations.

Current Situation Index (CSI)

The CSI experienced a decrease of 0.7 points, falling to 94 in November 2024. This is a decline from 94.7 in September 2024. The drop reflects weaker sentiments about the economy, despite stable household spending.

Future Expectations Index (FEI)

The FEI showed a slight improvement, rising by 0.5 points to 121.9. This indicates a degree of optimism for the upcoming year. Consumers anticipate increased spending on essential and non-essential items.

Current inflation perception rose to 8.4 %, an increase of 0.3 % from the last survey. Although expectations for inflation over the next three months decreased slightly to 9.1 %, the one-year outlook rose to 10.1 %.

RBI's Monetary Policy Update

On December 6, the RBI updated its inflation forecast for the financial year 2025. The new estimate is 4.8%, up from the previous 4.5%. The forecast for the third and fourth quarters of FY2025 was also increased.

Increased expectations for rising prices are linked to higher food and housing costs. More consumers foresee inflation impacting their purchasing power in the coming year.

- **CURRENT SITUATION INDEX (CSI)** The CSI measures consumer sentiment regarding the economy. A decrease indicates growing pessimism. It dropped to 94 in November 2024, reflecting economic concerns.
- **FUTURE EXPECTATIONS INDEX (FEI)** The FEI gauges consumer optimism about future economic conditions. It rose to 121.9, suggesting improved expectations. Consumers anticipate increased spending on essentials and non-essentials.
- **RESERVE BANK OF INDIA (RBI)** The RBI is India's central banking institution. It regulates monetary policy and manages inflation. It raised its inflation forecast for FY2025 to 4.8 % on December 6.
- **INFLATION PERCEPTION** Current inflation perception rose to 8.4%. This reflects consumer concerns about rising prices. Expectations for inflation over the next year increased to 10.1%, impacting purchasing power.



INDIA SKILLS REPORT - 2025

The India Skills Report 2025, published by Wheebox and other notable organisations, reveals that Kerala has a 71% employability rate, placing it fifth among states of India

Key Findings of the Report

The report surveyed 6.50 lakh youths across India and found that 54.81% of respondents possess the necessary skills for employment. Kerala's figures stand out, especially among younger job seekers.

Young Workforce Employability

For individuals aged 22-25, Kerala's employability rate is an impressive 87.47%. This statistic puts stress on the state's focus on skill development. Additionally, it ranks highest for experienced professionals aged 26-29, with a rate of 68.82%.

Female Employment Opportunities

Kerala ranks third in female employability, is actively creating job opportunities for women. This focus on inclusion is a factor in its high employability rates.

The state shows a strong interest in internships. A remarkable 96.05% of respondents expressed a desire for internship opportunities. This reflects the youth's proactive approach towards gaining experience.

Skills Proficiency

Kerala excels in English proficiency. Approximately 59.72% of its workforce is skilled in the language. The state also demonstrates strong numerical aptitude, with 58.90%

showing proficiency.

Digital skills are essential in the job market. In Kerala, 37.34% of the workforce is tech-ready. This positions the state well for the growing demand for tech professionals.

Role of Additional Skill Acquisition Programme

The Additional Skill Acquisition Programme (ASAP) has been very important. It has enhanced Kerala's employability landscape. ASAP partnered in the study, denoting its impact on skill development.

- **Wheebox:** Wheebox is an online assessment platform. It collaborates with various educational institutions. The organisation focuses on improving employability through skill assessments and training programmes.
- **ASAP:** The Additional Skill Acquisition Programme aims to enhance skills. It supports youth in Kerala with vocational training. ASAP plays an important role in improving employability rates in the state.
- **INDIA SKILLS REPORT:** The India Skills Report evaluates employability across states. It surveys youths to assess skill levels. The report provides vital information about workforce readiness and educational effectiveness.
- **EMPLOYABILITY RATE:** Employability rate indicates workforce readiness for jobs. It reflects the percentage of individuals with necessary skills. Higher rates suggest effective education and training systems in place.

PM SURYA GHAR MUFT BIJLI YOJANA

The PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana (PMSGMBY) launched on February 15, 2024, has a budget of ₹ 75,021 Cr., which aims to establish 10 million rooftop solar plants by March 2027. The scheme has already seen over 638,000 installations, generating nearly 2 GW of power.

Financial Support Details

Financial assistance ranges from ₹30,000 to ₹48,000, which applies to solar plants with a capacity of up to 3 kW. The government offers 10-year bank loans at a 7% interest rate.

Installation Progress

By March 2025, the government aims for one million installations. This number is expected to double every six months thereafter. In the last week of November, 18,423 rooftop plants were installed, indicating strong momentum.

Gujarat and Maharashtra dominate installations, contributing over 65%. When including Uttar Pradesh and Kerala, this figure exceeds 80%. Some installations in Gujarat predate the scheme but were later counted.

Registration vs. Installation

14.5 million individuals have registered for the scheme. However, only 2.65 million have applied. Just

680,000 installations have been completed, revealing a gap. Approximately 75% of applicants have yet to install their systems.

The scheme lacks specific quality and safety standards. There are over 10,000 service providers without oversight. This raises concerns about the reliability of installations.

Accessibility for the Poor

The programme's effectiveness for the ultra-poor is uncertain. The average size of installed solar plants is believed to exceed 3 kW. This suggests that the neediest may not be benefiting from the scheme.

To improve outreach, community solar projects may be introduced. These projects could provide free power to low-income households. Adjustments are essential to ensure the scheme meets its intended goals.

- **PMSGMBY:** The PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana was launched on February 15, 2024. It aims to establish 10 million rooftop solar plants by March 2027.
- **COMMUNITY SOLAR PROJECTS:** Proposed community solar projects may provide free power to low-income households. These projects would have a capacity of 3-5



MW, improving accessibility for the poor.

- **GEOGRAPHICAL DISPARITIES:** Gujarat and Maharashtra account for over 65 % of installations. Including Uttar

Pradesh and Kerala, this figure exceeds 80 %, denoting geographical imbalances in the scheme.

RBI TACKLES UNCLAIMED DEPOSITS IN INDIA

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has initiated measures to address the growing issue of unclaimed deposits, arising from inactive savings or current accounts, as well as unclaimed term deposits. The RBI aims to safeguard depositor interests while facilitating the reclamation of these funds.

Definition of Unclaimed Deposits

Unclaimed deposits refer to funds in accounts that have not seen any activity for over ten years. This includes savings accounts with balances and term deposits that remain unclaimed after maturity.

Various factors contribute to unclaimed deposits. Accounts may remain open without closure, fixed deposits can go unclaimed, or heirs may not claim funds from deceased account holders.

Growth of Unclaimed Deposits

Data from 2018 to 2022 indicates a steady increase in unclaimed deposits, with savings accounts accounting for 73 % of the total. The RBI's Depositor Education and Awareness (DEA) Fund rose from ₹ 62,224.89 Cr. in 2022-23 to ₹ 78,212.53 Cr. in 2023-24.

Initiatives for Claiming Deposits

To assist depositors and heirs, the RBI mandates banks to publish lists of unclaimed deposits on their websites. These lists include names and addresses but omit sensitive information like account numbers.

In May 2023, the RBI launched the 100 Days 100 Pays campaign to expedite the settlement of unclaimed deposits. This initiative targets the top 100 unclaimed deposits in each district and has been extended until April 1, 2024.

The UDGAM portal, introduced in August 2023, allows individuals to search for unclaimed deposits across

multiple banks. Users can search using the account holder's name and bank details.

New Rules for Inactive Accounts

In January 2024, the RBI established new regulations for identifying inactive accounts. Banks must review accounts annually and notify account holders about inactivity through various communication methods.

Banking Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024

This bill permits up to four nominees for bank deposits and locker items, establishing a hierarchy for nominations. The State Bank of India has requested rule changes, suggesting that non-financial activities should keep accounts active, particularly those linked to government payments. The RBI continues to push for the reduction of inactive accounts while promoting easier updates for customer details through digital platforms.

- **UDGAM PORTAL:** The UDGAM portal, launched in August 2023, enables users to search for unclaimed deposits across multiple banks using the account holder's name and bank details.
- **DEA FUND:** The Depositor Education and Awareness (DEA) Fund, managed by RBI, grew by 26% from ₹ 62,224.89 Cr. in 2022-23 to ₹78,212.53 Cr. in 2023-24, reflecting rising unclaimed deposits.
- **100 DAYS 100 PAYS:** The 100 Days 100 Pays campaign, initiated in May 2023, aims to resolve unclaimed deposits by settling the top 100 unclaimed deposits in each district.
- **BANKING LAWS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2024:** The Banking Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024, allows up to four nominees for bank deposits and items in lockers, establishing rules for prioritising nominations.

UTTAR PRADESH BECOMES FIRST STATE TO FULLY IMPLEMENT GeM

Uttar Pradesh became the first in India to fully implement the central government's e-marketplace (GeM) system, which aims to eliminate corruption and ensure fair competition among suppliers.

Transition to GeM System

The Uttar Pradesh government has entirely replaced its old tendering system. All suppliers must now adhere to GeM's guidelines, which includes a wide range of products, from basic items to vehicles. Non-compliance may result in a ban from future contracts.

Cancellation of Old Procurement Rules

On November 26, 2024, the state cancelled over 33 outdated procurement rules. These rules were hindering the

effective use of GeM. Established in 2016, they led to confusion and raised concerns about misuse. The cancellation aligns Uttar Pradesh with the central government's standards.

Benefits of the New System

The adoption of GeM is expected to save Uttar Pradesh over ₹ 2,000 Cr. annually. The new system provides a streamlined process for procurement. It enhances transparency and efficiency in purchasing goods and services. Successful Implementation in Education Sector

The Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board recently utilised GeM for procurement. They acquired materials for 18 Atal Residential Schools. These schools support children orphaned during the COVID-19 pandemic.



The materials included furniture and IT equipment, delivered promptly and at competitive rates.

The shift to the GeM system sets a precedent for other state of India's, which demonstrates the potential for technology to improve governance. Enhanced procurement processes can lead to better resource allocation and public service delivery.

- **GeM:** The Government e-Marketplace (GeM) is an online platform for public procurement. It aims to enhance transparency and efficiency in government purchasing processes across India.

- **BUILDING AND OTHER CONSTRUCTION WORKERS WELFARE BOARD:** This board aims to support construction workers in India. It provides welfare schemes and services, enhancing the lives of workers in the construction sector.
- **PROCUREMENT RULES CANCELLATION:** The cancellation of outdated procurement rules was essential for adopting GeM. It streamlined processes and eliminated confusion, aligning Uttar Pradesh with modern procurement practices.

FARMER IDS: GUJARAT LEADS IN DIGITAL FARMER IDENTIFICATION

In September 2024, Gujarat initiated the Digital Agriculture Mission and introduced "Farmer IDs" for 25 % of its farmers. It is an advancement toward a digital agriculture ecosystem, part of the Government of India's Agri Stack programme.

What is a Farmer ID?

A Farmer ID is a unique digital identity, which links to a farmer's Aadhaar number and the state's land records. The ID updates automatically with any changes in land records. This ensures accuracy and real-time information.

Benefits of Farmer IDs

Farmer IDs facilitate access to government benefits. Farmers can obtain quicker crop loans. They receive direct transfers of subsidies. The IDs also provide personalised farming advice. Improved market access and enhanced financial inclusion are additional advantages. Policymakers can use this data to create better solutions for farmers.

Other States Participating

Gujarat is the first state to implement this initiative. Other states are also creating Farmer IDs. Madhya Pradesh has reached 9%, while Maharashtra has 2%. Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, and Rajasthan are also involved.

Registration Methods

The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare offers various registration methods. Farmers can use Self Mode to register via mobile phones. In Sahayak Mode, trained workers assist farmers. Camp Mode involves special registration camps. Common Service Centres (CSC Mode) also provide registration support.

The initiative is supported by agreements between state and central governments. Financial incentives are provided to encourage the creation of a comprehensive farmer database. This collaboration aims to enhance the digital agriculture framework across India.

- **AGRI STACK:** The Agri Stack initiative aims to integrate technology into agriculture. It facilitates data-driven solutions for farmers. This enhances productivity and sustainability in the agricultural sector.
- **FARMER ID:** A Farmer ID links a farmer's Aadhaar to land records. This unique digital identity updates automatically. It simplifies access to government benefits for farmers.
- **COMMON SERVICE CENTRES (CSC):** CSCs provide various government services to rural areas. They serve as registration points for Farmer IDs. This enhances accessibility to digital agriculture initiatives.

SAMARTH CENTRES

The Ministry of Heavy Industries (MHI) has established four Smart Advanced Manufacturing and Rapid Transformation Hub (SAMARTH) Centres, aiming to enhance competitiveness in the Indian capital goods sector. The centers are strategically located in Pune, Delhi, and Bengaluru, focusing on Industry 4.0 technologies.

Overview of SAMARTH Centres

The SAMARTH Centres include the Centre for Industry 4.0 (C4i4) Lab in Pune, IITD-AIA Foundation for Smart Manufacturing at IIT Delhi, I-4.0 India @ IISc in Bengaluru, and the Smart Manufacturing Demo & Development Cell at CMTI, Bengaluru. These centers will support the development and implementation of advanced manufacturing practices across India.

C4i4 Pune has created a Model Factory showcasing Industry 4.0 solutions. CMTI Bengaluru has established a production-based Smart Factory and over 50 use-cases of Industry 4.0 solutions have been compiled to aid implementation, along with the creation of an Industry 4.0 Maturity Model (I4MM) for assessing manufacturing readiness.

Digital Maturity Assessments

C4i4 Pune has conducted over 100 Digital Maturity Assessments for automotive companies. They have identified more than 500 improvement initiatives and trained over 500 Digital Champions to lead transformation efforts within their organisations.



Development of Smart Technologies

I-4.0 India @ IISc Bengaluru has developed six Smart Technologies, five Smart Tools, and 14 solutions for various industries. These innovations aim to facilitate the adoption of advanced manufacturing practices.

CMTI Bengaluru has trained around 5,000 professionals in Smart Manufacturing and Industry 4.0 concepts. The IITD-AIA Foundation collaborates with academic institutions to create tailored Industry 4.0 solutions for MSMEs.

Services Offered by SAMARTH Centres

The centres offer awareness workshops, training, and consultancy in IoT, software development, and data analytics. They also provide incubation services for startups.

However, no financial assistance is available for MSMEs under this initiative.

- **C4i4:** The Centre for Industry 4.0 Lab in Pune focuses on advanced manufacturing. It has completed over 100 Digital Maturity Assessments, helping automotive companies identify improvement initiatives.
- **I-4.0 India:** Located at IISc. Bengaluru, I-4.0 India has developed six Smart Technologies and 14 solutions. Its innovations support the integration of Industry 4.0 practices across various sectors.
- **CMTI:** The Centre for Manufacturing Technology and Innovation in Bengaluru has trained around 5,000 professionals. It plays important role in promoting Smart Manufacturing and Industry 4.0 concepts.

NEW CREDIT GUARANTEE SCHEME (CGS)

The Government of India has launched a new Credit Guarantee Scheme (CGS) to support small farmers, introduced by Union Food and Consumer Affairs Minister Prahlad Joshi, which allocates ₹1,000 Cr. to facilitate easier access to loans for small and marginal farmers after harvest.

Purpose of the Scheme

The CGS seeks to prevent distress selling among farmers and allows them to store their produce and obtain loans using electronic warehouse receipts (e-NWRs) as collateral. This system enables farmers to wait for better market prices before selling their crops.

Mechanism of e-NWRs

Electronic warehouse receipts are issued by registered warehouses. These receipts serve as a guarantee for banks, allowing them to lend money to farmers. By using e-NWRs, farmers can secure immediate funding without having to sell their produce at lower prices.

Impact on Agricultural Credit

The scheme aims to enhance access to agricultural credit. Currently, most loans are granted to traders or larger farmers, leaving small farmers at a disadvantage. The CGS is designed to encourage banks to support smaller agricultural operations more effectively.

Minister Joshi emphasised the initiative's role in promoting sustainable farming practices. He also noted that

the government is maintaining low urea prices for farmers, despite the rising costs of global fertilisers, further supporting agricultural sustainability.

Future Goals and Expansion

The current post-harvest lending through e-NWRs stands at ₹4,000 Cr., with a potential target of ₹ 5.5 lakh Cr. over the next decade. The government plans to improve coordination between banks and warehouses to achieve this goal.

Efforts will focus on educating farmers about pledge financing. The government aims to simplify processes on platforms like e-Kisan Upaj Nidhi and increase the number of registered warehouses, which currently number 5,800.

- **CREDIT GUARANTEE SCHEME (CGS):** The CGS supports small farmers by providing ₹1,000 Cr. for easier loan access. It aims to prevent distress selling and enhance agricultural sustainability.
- **ELECTRONIC WAREHOUSE RECEIPTS (e-NWRs):** e-NWRs serve as collateral for loans. They are issued by registered warehouses, allowing farmers to secure funding without immediate sales at low prices.
- **e-KISAN UPAJ NIDHI:** e-Kisan Upaj Nidhi is a platform aimed at simplifying agricultural financing. It focuses on educating farmers about pledge financing and improving access to loans.



ECOLOGY





WORLD DROUGHT ATLAS 2024

NANO BUBBLE TECHNOLOGY

GRIHA SUMMIT 2024

**GLOBAL THREAT OF DRYING
LANDS**

**FIRST INTEGRATED WASTE
MANAGEMENT CITY**

**CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO
THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL
DIVERSITY**

**CHAMPIONS OF THE EARTH
AWARD**

**ASSESSMENT OF WATER
RESOURCES OF INDIA 2024**

INDIA'S E-WASTE SURGE

**INDIA STATE OF FOREST REPORT
2023**

LION-TAILED MACAQUE

MONARCH BUTTERFLIES

MARbled DUCK

**SONAI RUPAI WILDLIFE
SANCTUARY**

EURASIAN LITTLE GULL



WORLD DROUGHT ATLAS 2024

CONTEXT: The World Drought Atlas 2024 report, published jointly by UNCCD and the European Commission's Joint Research Centre, highlights global drought trends.

BACKGROUND: With record-breaking droughts becoming increasingly common, the UNCCD and European Commission's JRC released a comprehensive global report on drought risks and solutions, urging world leaders and citizens to take immediate action against this escalating crisis.

Major Findings in the Report

- **Centralised Piped Systems vs Local Wells:** Centralised systems with reservoirs or deep groundwater are reliable, unlike wells impacting 50-90% in Africa and Southeast Asia.
- **Droughts and Agriculture:** Droughts, the largest natural risk to crops, threaten achieving Zero Hunger by 2030, requiring systemic transformations globally.
- **Irrigation Growth:** Irrigated land expanded from 110 million hectares (1950) to 350 million hectares (2021), doubling water withdrawals to 2800 km³/year (2020), with unsustainable practices in water-stressed regions.
- **Drought Effects on Energy:** Drought reduces hydropower generation, with stored water reservoirs less affected, but economic and environmental consequences arise when offsetting with thermoelectric energy sources.
- **Low Flow Index and Drought Impact:** The Low Flow Index assesses drought's effect on navigation, with significant drought events causing up to 50% cargo reduction.
- **Drought Risks and Ecosystem Vulnerability:** Drought alters ecosystems by reducing biodiversity, disrupting carbon cycles, and threatening ecosystem services, exacerbated by human activities.
- **Land Degradation Drivers and Impact:** About 20% of global vegetated land is degraded, with water erosion (56%) and wind erosion (38%) as major causes.

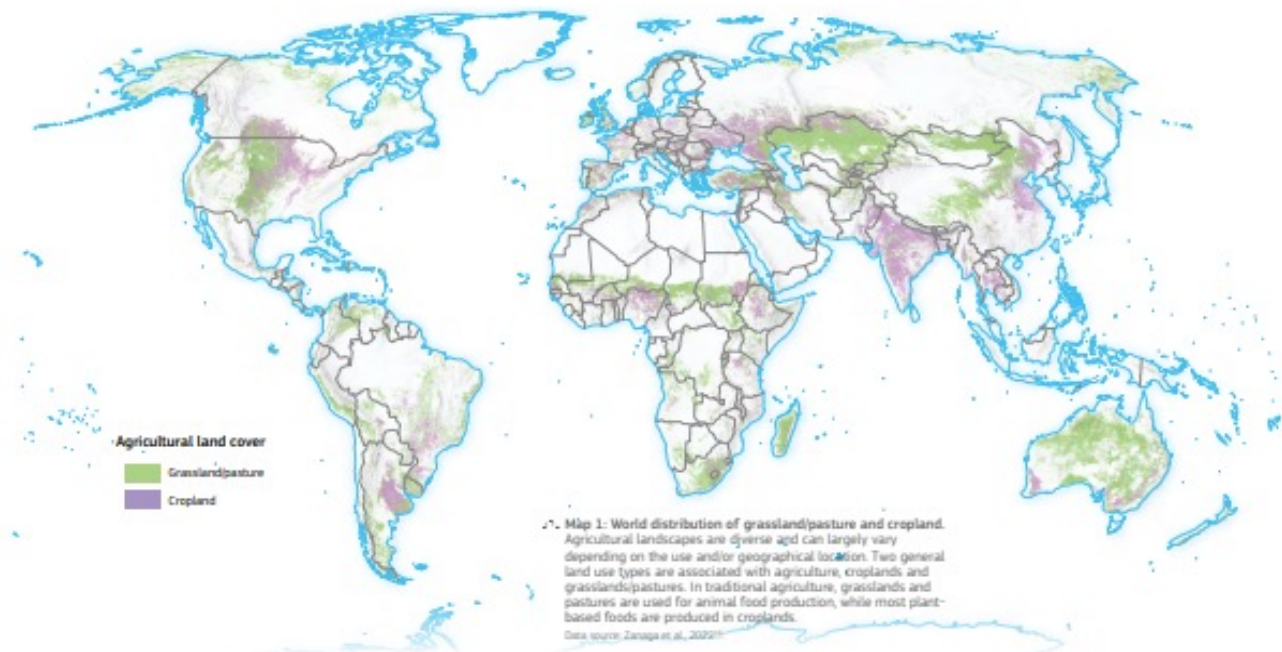


Figure: World distribution of grassland/pasture and cropland. Agricultural landscapes are diverse and can largely vary depending on the use and/or geographical location.

The World Drought Atlas highlights the interconnected risks of drought, emphasizing its impacts on water supply, agriculture, energy, and ecosystems. It underscores the

importance of promoting biodiversity and addressing disparities in water access to build resilience and mitigate drought effects.



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NANO BUBBLE TECHNOLOGY

CONTEXT: The Union Minister launched 'Nano Bubble Technology' for water cleaning and purification at the National Zoological Park, Delhi.

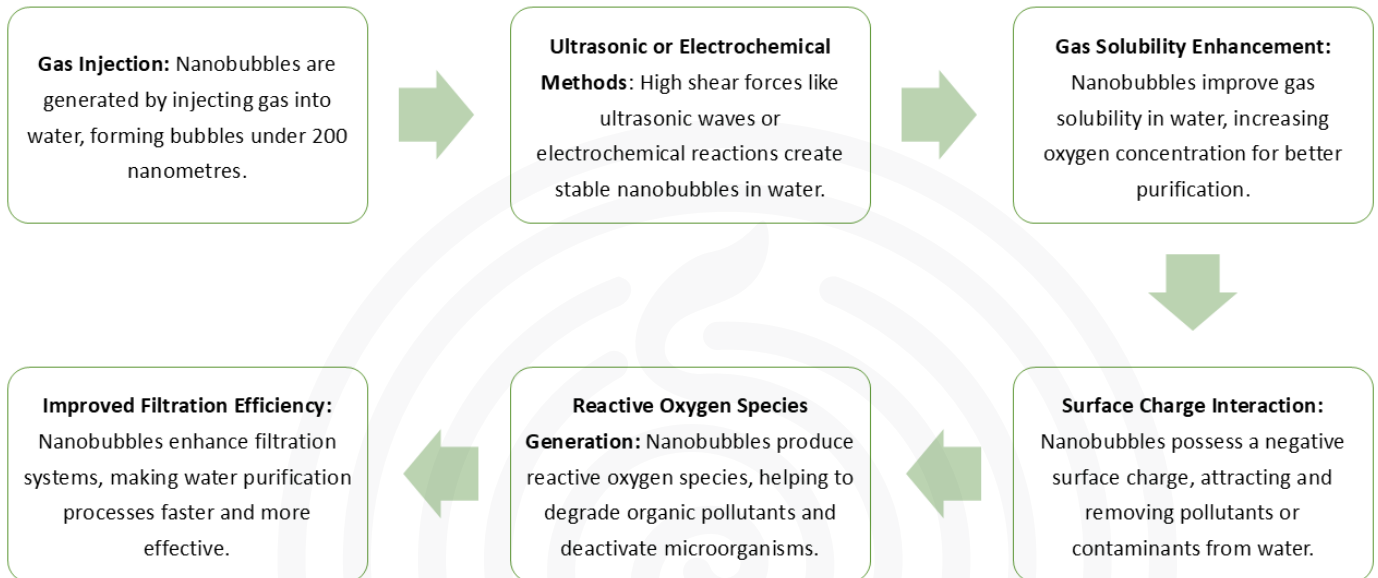
BACKGROUND: The Delhi Zoo initiated a trial of nano bubble technology to enhance aquatic animal health and purify pond water, which is frequently contaminated by algae and other impurities. The trial was launched by the Union Minister of

State for Environment.

What is Nanobubble technology (NBT)?

Nanobubble technology (NBT) involves the generation of bubbles smaller than 100 nanometres in size. These ultrafine bubbles enhance water properties, improving processes like cleaning, oxygenation, and pollutant removal in various applications.

Nanobubble Technology for Water Purification



The Union Minister launched the 'Nano Bubble Technology' for water purification at the National Zoological Park, Delhi. The technology aims to improve aquatic animal health and clean contaminated pond water, particularly affected by algae and other impurities.

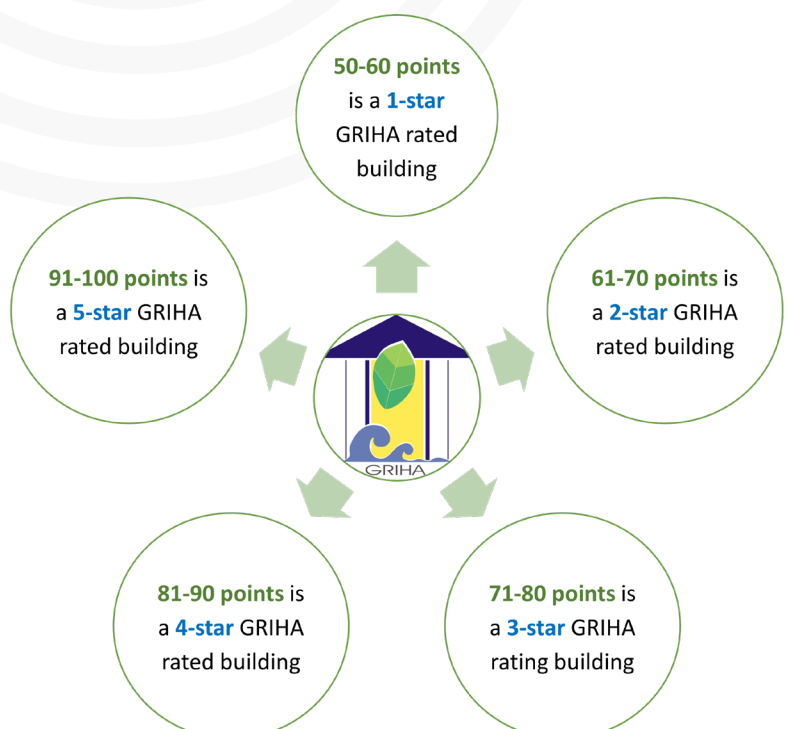
GRIHA SUMMIT 2024

CONTEXT: The 16th GRIHA Summit took place on December 4-5, 2024, at the India Habitat Centre, New Delhi.

BACKGROUND: The 16th GRIHA Summit took place on December 4-5, 2024, at the India Habitat Centre in New Delhi. Focused on "Accelerating Climate Action in the Built Environment," the summit brought together industry leaders, policymakers, and sustainability experts.

What is GRIHA Summit?

The GRIHA Summit is an annual event organized by the Green Rating for Integrated Habitat Assessment (GRIHA) Council, focusing on sustainable building practices, green architecture, and environmental consciousness in the construction industry.





About Green Rating for Integrated Habitat Assessment (GRIHA)

- **GRIHA Overview:** GRIHA evaluates buildings' environmental performance over their entire life cycle, from inception to operation.
- **Pre-construction Stage:** Assesses site issues like proximity to transport, soil type, flora, and land features before construction.
- **Building Planning and Construction Stage:** Focuses on resource conservation, demand reduction, efficiency, reuse, and occupant health during construction.
- **Key Resources Considered:** Land, water, energy, air, and green cover are primary resources evaluated during building planning and construction.

- **Operation and Maintenance Stage:** Evaluates building system operations, energy consumption monitoring, occupant well-being, and environmental impact during use.
- **Holistic Evaluation:** GRIHA assesses buildings across all stages to ensure sustainability and environmental responsibility, providing a 'green building' standard.

Green building designs offer numerous benefits, including reduced energy and water consumption, minimized environmental impact, improved health through less pollution, and enhanced productivity. These designs also promote sustainability, conserve natural resources, and improve marketability and image.

GLOBAL THREAT OF DRYING LANDS

CONTEXT: The UN's report, The Global Threat of Drying Lands, released at COP16 in Riyadh, highlights rising aridity and its impact on global agriculture.

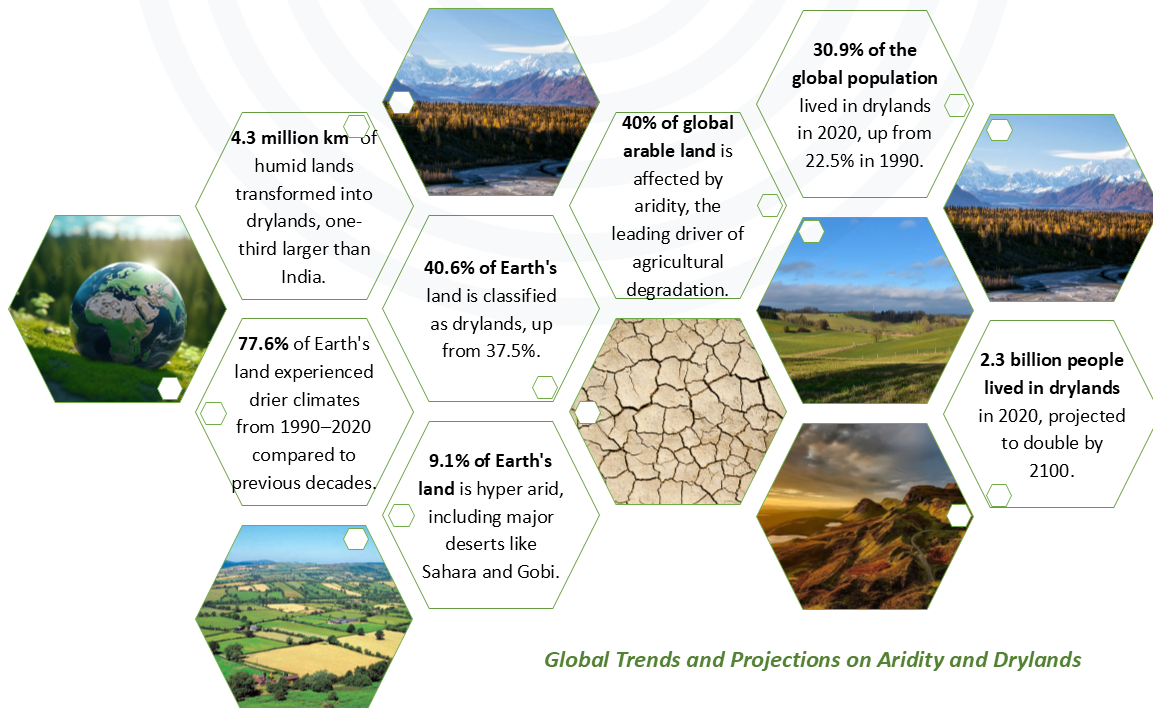
BACKGROUND: UN scientists warned in a new analysis that while water-related disasters like floods and storms intensified globally, over 77% of Earth's land became permanently drier in recent decades. This finding is part of a landmark report from the UNCCD.

Report Highlights

- **Expansion of Drylands:** Drylands expanded by 4.3 million square kilometres, covering 40.6% of Earth's land.
- **Land Transition:** 7.6% of global lands transitioned into

drylands, an area larger than Canada.

- **Impact on Landscapes:** Most transitions are from humid areas to drylands, affecting agriculture and ecosystems.
- **Future Projections:** Failure to curb emissions could add another 3% of humid areas to drylands by 2100.
- **High Emission Scenarios:** Expanding drylands forecast in areas like the Midwestern United States, southern Africa, and southern Australia.
- **Implications for Agriculture:** Dryland expansion threatens agriculture, ecosystems, and livelihoods in transitioning regions.



Global Trends and Projections on Aridity and Drylands

Rising Aridity and Its Global Impacts

- **Ecosystem Transformations:** Rising aridity may cause abrupt ecosystem changes, affecting 20% of global land and causing extinctions.

- **Agricultural Degradation:** Aridity is the largest driver of agricultural land degradation, impacting 40% of Earth's arable land.
- **Economic Decline:** Aridity contributed to a 12% GDP



decline in African countries from 1990-2015.

- **Water Scarcity:** Over two-thirds of land is projected to store less water by century's end due to rising aridity.
- **Health and Migration:** Aridity exacerbates poverty, water scarcity, food production, and migration, impacting global health, especially women and children.

The report highlights the aridity crisis as an existential threat, driven by human-caused climate change. Greenhouse gas emissions from various sectors intensify warming, disrupting rainfall, evaporation, and plant life, leading to increased aridity worldwide.

FIRST INTEGRATED WASTE MANAGEMENT CITY

CONTEXT: Uttar Pradesh will host India's first Integrated Waste Management City, aiming for sustainable waste management solutions.

BACKGROUND: India's first Integrated Waste Management City-cum-Learning Centre established in **Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh**. The initiative aims to make the city garbage-free and promote sustainable waste management through a circular economy model.

Why India need Integrated Waste Management City?

India needs an Integrated Waste Management City-cum-Learning Centre to promote sustainable waste management practices, educate communities, enhance recycling, reduce landfill dependency, and foster innovation in waste reduction technologies.

Integrated Waste Management City: Key Aspects

- **Waste Segregation:** Waste is separated into categories like organic, recyclable, and non-recyclable for efficient processing.

- **Collection and Transportation:** Waste is collected using specialized vehicles and transported to processing or disposal sites.
- **Recycling and Resource Recovery:** Recyclable materials are processed to recover resources, reducing the need for raw materials.
- **Composting of Organic Waste:** Organic waste is converted into compost, reducing landfill waste and enriching soil.
- **Energy Recovery:** Non-recyclable waste is converted into energy through processes like waste-to-energy plants, reducing environmental impact.

India needs an Integrated Waste Management City to efficiently handle increasing waste, reduce pollution, promote recycling, and conserve resources. This approach will improve public health, create sustainable urban environments, and support economic growth through resource recovery.

CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

CONTEXT: The 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 16) held in Cali, Colombia, from October 21 to November 1, 2024.

BACKGROUND: The 2024 United Nations Biodiversity Conference (CBD COP16) took place in Cali, Colombia, from October 21 to November 1, 2024. The conference focused on addressing the biodiversity crisis and advancing the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF).

Major Outcomes of the Meeting

- **Conference Overview:** Sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 16) held.
- **Resource Mobilization Strategy:** Aimed at securing \$200 billion annually for biodiversity by 2030 and reducing harmful incentives by \$500 billion per year.

- **Global Financing Instrument:** Potential establishment of a global funding instrument to mobilize and distribute biodiversity financing effectively.
- **Current Funding Sources:** Includes bilateral arrangements, private funds, philanthropic sources, Global Environment Facility, Global Biodiversity Framework Fund, and Kunming Biodiversity Fund.
- **Monitoring and Reporting Framework:** Finalizing tools for measuring progress against KMGBF's 23 targets and incorporating non-state actors' commitments.
- **Financial Mechanism:** Parties to endorse GEF achievements, encourage further contributions to GBFF, and provide guidance for upcoming replenishment negotiations.
- **National Reporting Template:** Focus on finalizing the template with headline indicators for national biodiversity progress reporting.



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





Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework



GBF Goals: Aims to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030, ensuring nature's recovery.

2020 UN BIODIVERSITY COP 15 / CP-MOP Ecological Civilization-Building a Sustainable Future KUNMING – 12 OCTOBER 2022

CBD Adoption: Adopted at COP15 in December 2022, a legally binding treaty with 196 nations.



Sustainable Use: Promotes sustainable use of biodiversity and encourages sustainable consumption choices globally.



Key Targets: Includes reducing global food waste by half and significantly reducing overconsumption and waste generation.



International Effort: The framework guides global efforts to protect and restore biodiversity effectively.

CHAMPIONS OF THE EARTH AWARD

CONTEXT: Indian ecologist Madhav Gadgil was honoured with the UNEP's 2024 Champions of the Earth Lifetime Achievement Award.

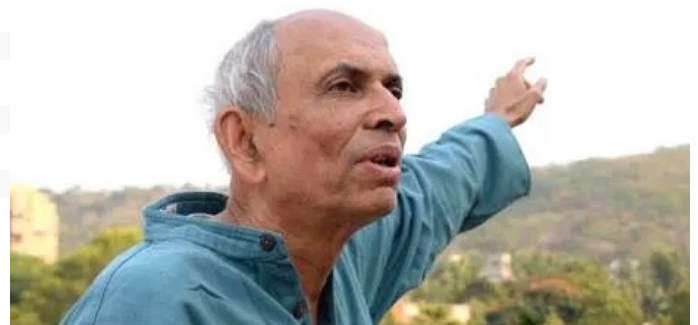
BACKGROUND: The Champions of the Earth Award, the UN's highest environmental honour, recognizes individuals and organizations with a transformative environmental impact. Gadgil's work has influenced policy and public opinion on natural resource protection, earning him multiple honours, including the Padma Shri and Padma Bhushan.

Contributions of Madhav Gadgil to Ecological Conservation

- **Ecological Leadership:** Founded the Centre for Ecological Sciences at Indian Institute of Science, collaborating with communities and policymakers.
- **Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve:** Established India's first biosphere reserve in 1986, now the largest protected area in India.
- **Community-led Conservation:** Promoted community-led conservation efforts to preserve land and biodiversity in

the Western Ghats region.

- **Policy Involvement:** Contributed to the creation of India's Biological Diversity Act and the Forest Rights Act.
- **Biodiversity Registers:** Helped forest communities establish registers to monitor and manage local biodiversity and forest products.
- **Environmental Action:** Led efforts to combat toxic chemicals in rivers and supported legal battles against harmful practices.



ASSESSMENT OF WATER RESOURCES OF INDIA 2024

CONTEXT: The Central Water Commission's Assessment of Water Resources of India 2024 estimates India's average annual water availability.

BACKGROUND: The Central Water Commission (CWC) study, "Assessment of Water Resources of India 2024," estimates India's average annual water availability from 1985 to 2023 at 2,115.95 billion cubic meters (BCM).

Water Availability in Indian Basins: CWC Report Insights

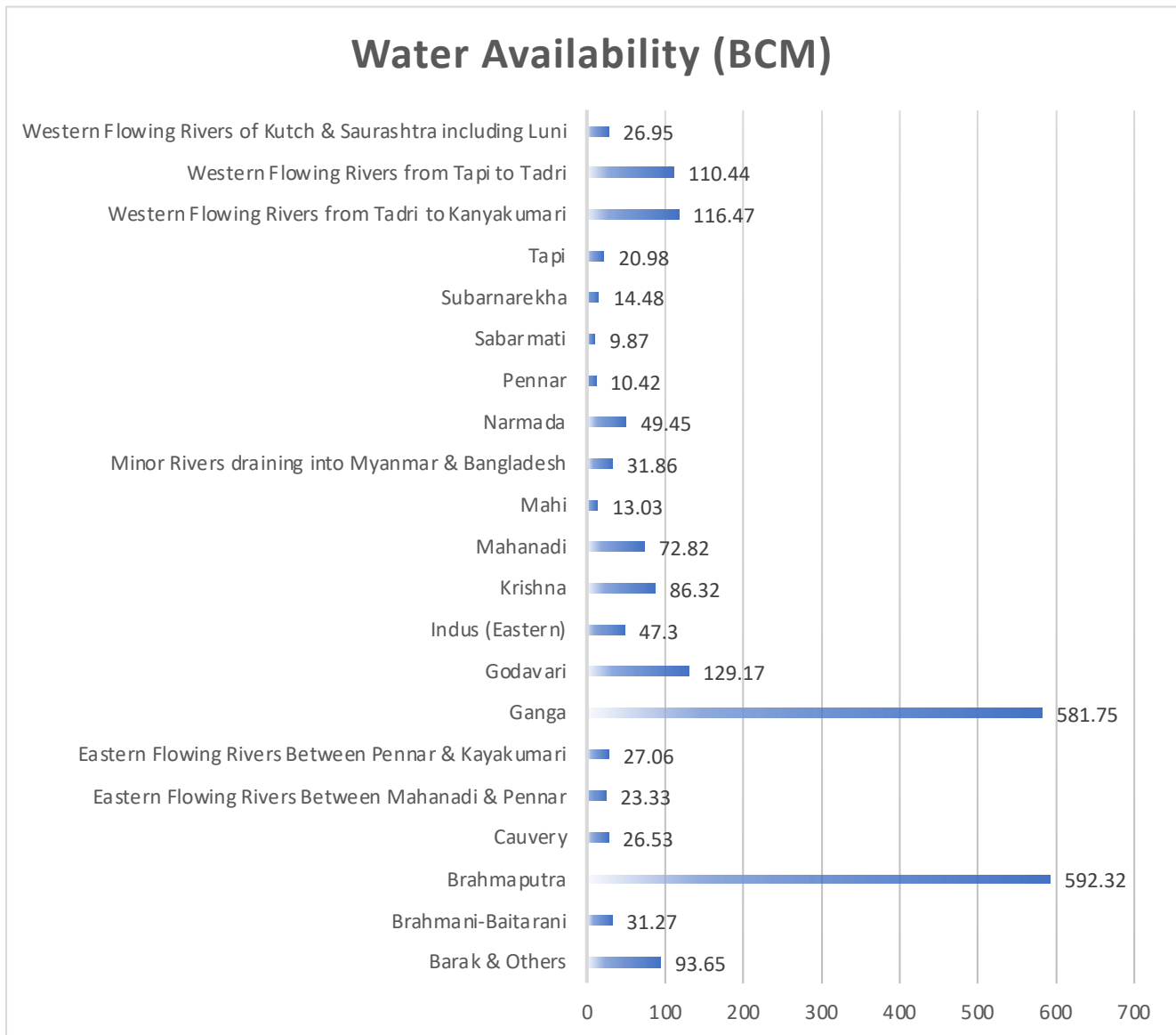
- **Top Basins:** Brahmaputra (592.32 BCM), Ganga (581.75 BCM), and Godavari (129.17 BCM) have the highest water

availability.

- **Bottom Basins:** Sabarmati (9.87 BCM), Pennar (10.42 BCM), and Mahi (13.03 BCM) have the least water availability.
- **Total Water Availability:** The current water availability is 2,115.95 BCM, up from the previous estimate of 1,999.2 BCM in 2019.
- **Earlier Estimates:** Previous assessments, including one from 1901-03, reported lower water availability, with 1,443.2 BCM.



- Assessment Methodologies:** The CWC report included several water availability assessments using diverse methodologies over time.
- Growth in Availability:** The water availability has steadily increased in recent years, reflecting improvements in the estimates and data.



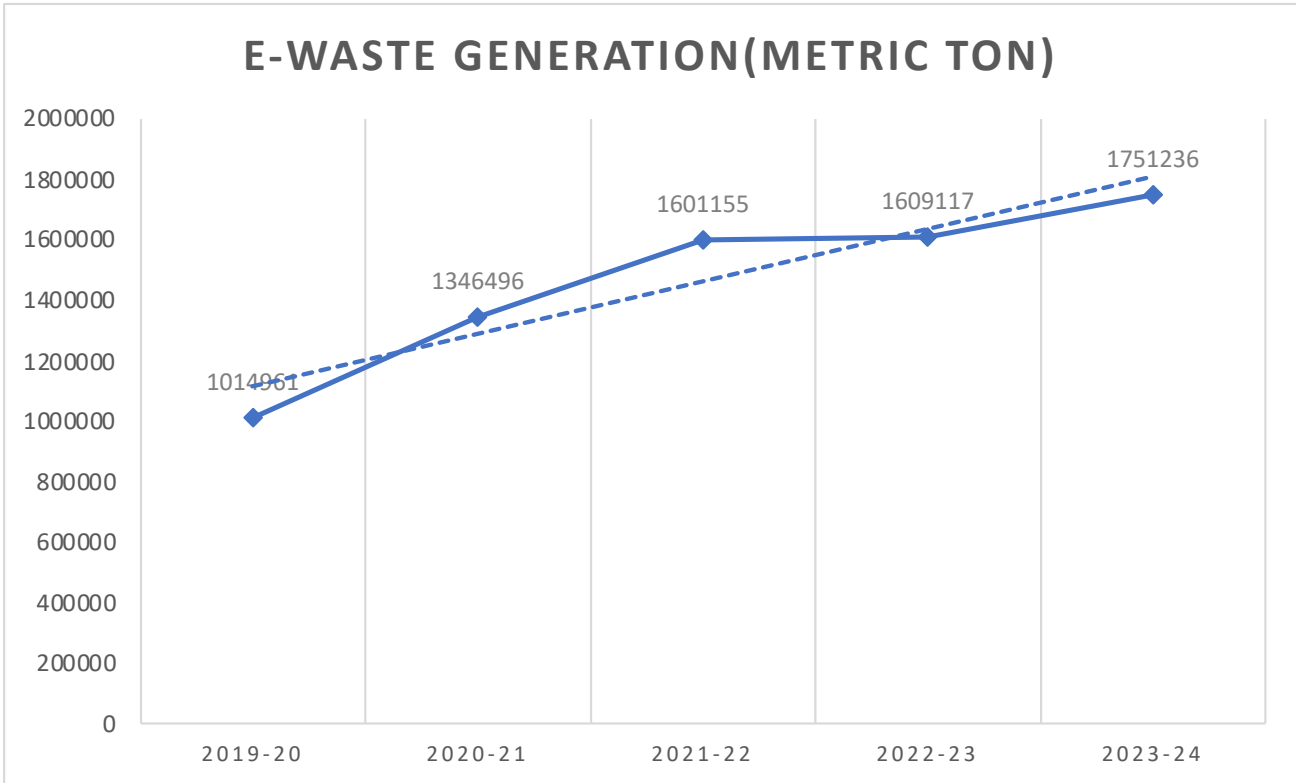
INDIA'S E-WASTE SURGE

CONTEXT: India has seen a rise in electronic waste (e-waste) generation over the past five years, according to data presented in the Rajya Sabha.

BACKGROUND: India has seen a significant increase in electronic waste (e-waste) over the past five years, growing from 1.01 million metric tonnes (MT) in 2019-20 to 1.751 million MT in 2023-24, according to data shared in the Rajya Sabha. E-Waste Management and Extended Producer Responsibility in India

- E-Waste Data:** Data for 106 EEE items will be available from FY 2023-24, reflecting national-level figures from 21 items (2019-2023).
- E-Waste Rules:** E-Waste (Management) Rules, 2022 came into effect on April 1, 2023, to streamline recycling.

- Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR):** Under EPR, producers are accountable for recycling based on the quantity of e-waste generated or products sold.
- Recycling Targets:** Producers must meet annual recycling targets by purchasing EPR certificates from registered recyclers.
- Certificates for Recycling:** EPR certificates are issued based on the quantity of recycled products sold in the market.
- Government's Efforts:** The government focuses on accountability, proper disposal, and promoting authorized recyclers to manage e-waste efficiently.



INDIA STATE OF FOREST REPORT 2023

CONTEXT: The Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change released the India State of Forest Report 2023 at the Forest Research Institute, Dehradun.

BACKGROUND: The Forest Survey of India (FSI) releases the India State of Forest Report (ISFR) biennially since 1987, based on Remote Sensing satellite data and the National Forest Inventory (NFI). The 2023 report marks the 18th edition in the series.

Forest and Tree Cover Findings in India

- **Total Forest and Tree Cover:** 8,27,357 sq km (25.17%) of India's geographical area, consisting of 7,15,343 sq km forest and 1,12,014 sq km tree cover.
- **Increase in Cover:** 1445 sq km increase in forest and tree cover, with 156 sq km forest cover and 1289 sq km tree cover increase.
- **Top States by Increase:** Chhattisgarh (684 sq km), Uttar Pradesh (559 sq km), Odisha (559 sq km), Rajasthan (394 sq km) show maximum increases.
- **Top States by Forest Cover Increase:** Mizoram (242 sq km), Gujarat (180 sq km), and Odisha (152 sq km) show maximum forest cover increases.
- **States with Largest Forest and Tree Cover:** Madhya Pradesh (85,724 sq km), Arunachal Pradesh (67,083 sq km), and Maharashtra (65,383 sq km) have the largest

cover.

- **Percentage of Geographical Area:** The combined forest and tree cover represents 25.17% of the country's total geographical area.

Forest and Mangrove Cover, Carbon Stock, and Timber Potential in India

- **Mangrove Cover:** The total mangrove cover in India is 4,992 sq km.
- **Growing Stock:** Total growing stock of 6,430 million cubic meters includes 4,479 million cubic meters inside forests and 1,951 million cubic meters outside.
- **Bamboo Area:** 1,54,670 sq km is the bamboo-bearing area, showing an increase of 5,227 sq km since 2021.
- **Timber Production Potential:** Annual timber production potential from trees outside forests is estimated at 91.51 million cubic meters.
- **Carbon Stock:** India's total carbon stock in forests is 7,285.5 million tonnes, with an increase of 81.5 million tonnes.
- **Carbon Sequestration:** India has achieved 2.29 billion tonnes additional carbon sink, nearing its 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes target by 2030.



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Illustration: Forest and Mangrove Cover, Carbon Stock, and Timber Potential in India

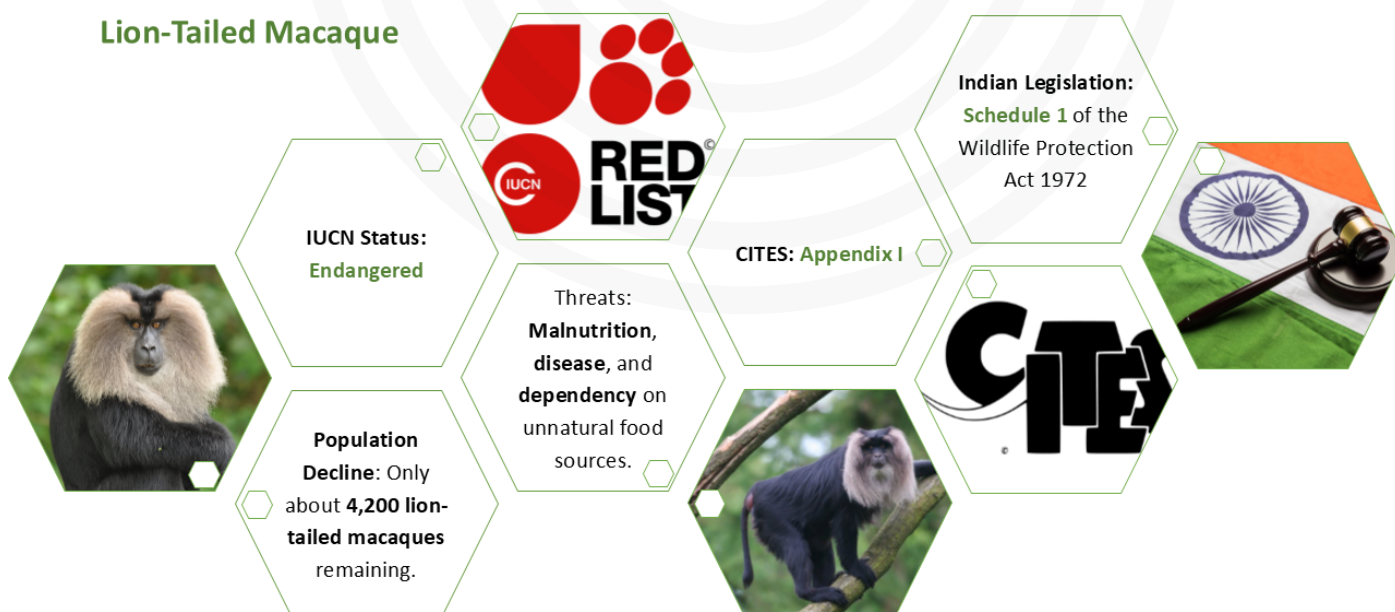
LION-TAILED MACAQUE

CONTEXT: Human interactions pose a threat to the endangered lion-tailed macaque, jeopardizing its survival.

BACKGROUND: Human-wildlife conflict, particularly with non-human primates, is increasing as roads and plantations

encroach on natural habitats. A recent study highlights the rising threat to the critically endangered lion-tailed macaque in the Western Ghats due to growing human interactions.

Lion-Tailed Macaque





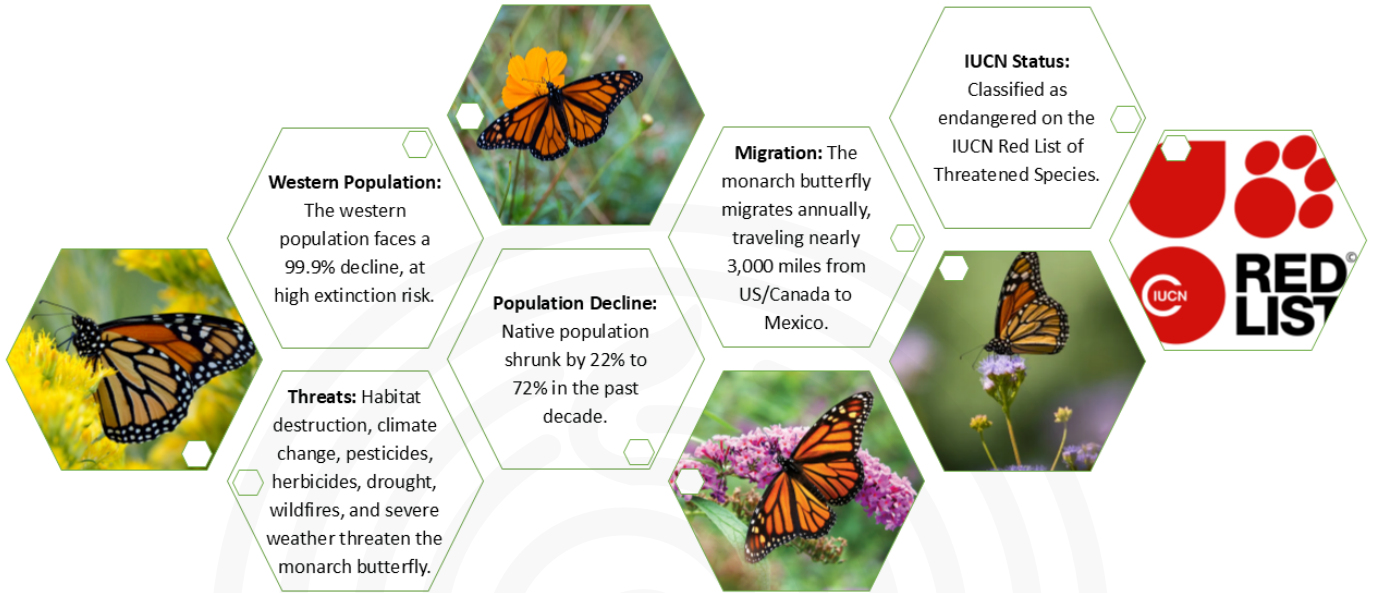
MONARCH BUTTERFLIES

CONTEXT: Monarch butterflies are set to be classified as a threatened species in the United States.

BACKGROUND: U.S. wildlife officials have decided to extend federal protections to monarch butterflies, following years of

environmentalist warnings about declining populations and concerns that climate change may threaten the survival of this beloved pollinator.

Monarch Butterfly (*Danaus plexippus plexippus*)



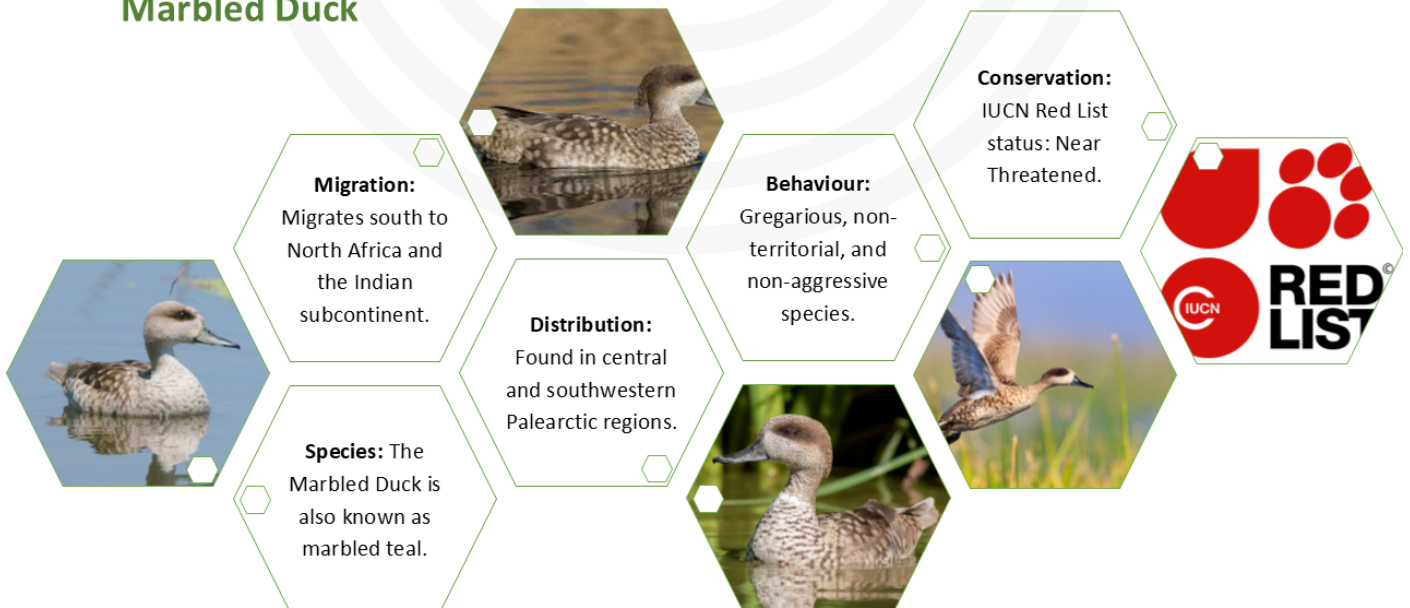
MARBLED DUCK

CONTEXT: The Marbled Duck was spotted at Sultanpur Park after a gap of 30 years.

BACKGROUND: Bird enthusiasts were excited when a marbled duck, a rare winter migrant, was spotted at Sultanpur

National Park. The species, last seen in 1990, was observed by the park's bird guide, Sanjay Singh, at the Ramsar site.

Marbled Duck



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





SONAI RUPAI WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

CONTEXT: Photographic evidence confirms the presence of the Royal Bengal Tiger in Assam's Sonai Rupai Sanctuary.

BACKGROUND: The Assam Forest Department confirmed the presence of Royal Bengal Tigers in the Sonai-Rupai Wildlife Sanctuary, with the first photographic evidence obtained from the Sonitpur district, marking a significant milestone in wildlife monitoring.



Encroachment and Impact on Sonai Rupai Wildlife Sanctuary

- **Encroachment:** Half of Sonai Rupai Wildlife Sanctuary's 220 sq km area is encroached by about 12,000 illegal settlers.
- **Wildlife Decline:** Once home to one-horned rhinos, leopards, and tigers, the sanctuary now faces diminished wildlife populations.
- **Migration and Settlement:** Migration from Bodoland Territorial Areas Districts since the 1980s led to illegal settlement in the sanctuary.
- **Land Patta and Development:** Settlers were granted land pattas, and public infrastructure like schools and roads was built within the sanctuary.
- **Impact on Ecosystem:** Illegal settlements and encroachments have disrupted the sanctuary's natural ecosystem and wildlife conservation efforts.

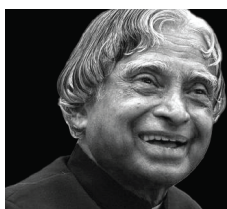
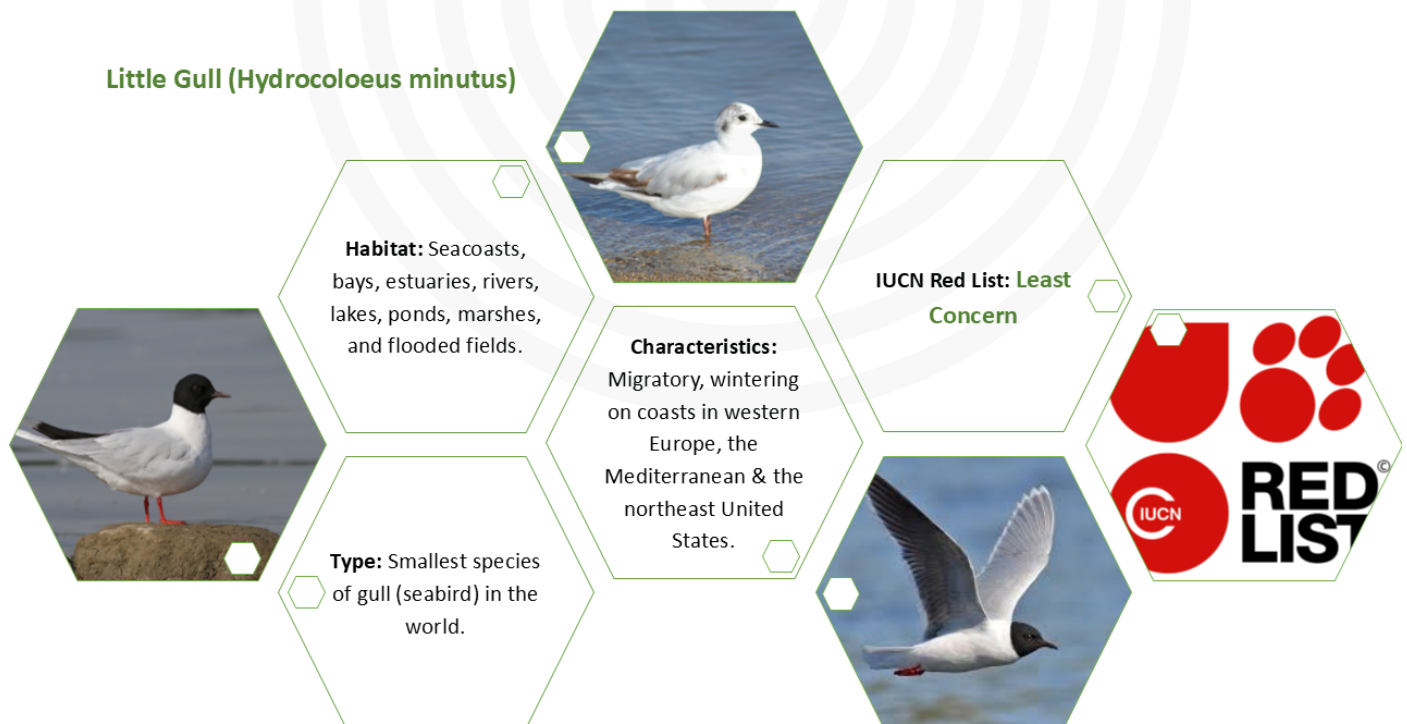
EURASIAN LITTLE GULL

CONTEXT: The Little Gull, native to the Eurasian region, was spotted for the first time in the NCR.

BACKGROUND: The Little Gull, a rare species native to

Eurasia, was spotted for the first time in the NCR. With only about 10 recorded sightings in India, it typically migrates from West Asia or Europe, breeding in marshy wetlands.

Little Gull (*Hydrocoloeus minutus*)



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

- A. P. J. ABDUL KALAM



SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



HYPERLOOP TRACK

BHARAT ANTARIKSHA STATION

AFRICAN SWINE FEVER

DIABETES BIOBANK

**CRIME AND CRIMINAL TRACKING
NETWORK AND SYSTEMS**

GenCast AI

SORA

DHARANI

INDIA INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM

Boltz-1

HUMAN RATED LVM3

SAMARTH UDYOG BHARAT 4.0

INDIA'S FIRST ANALOG SPACE MISSION

AIMC SYSTEM

GHOST GUNS



HYPERLOOP TRACK

CONTEXT: IIT Madras successfully tested India's first Hyperloop track, marking a significant milestone in futuristic transportation development.

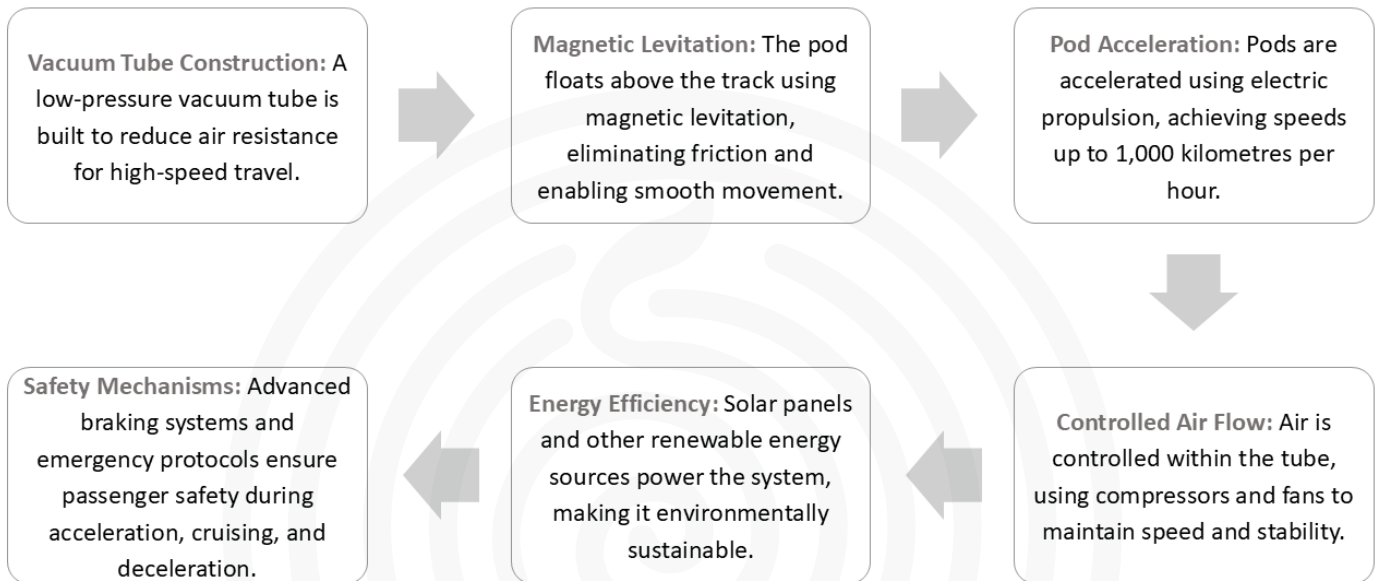
BACKGROUND: IIT Madras achieved a significant milestone in transportation by completing India's first 410-meter Hyperloop test track. The announcement, shared by the Union Railway Minister on social media, included a video of the newly

constructed track.

What is a hyperloop track?

A hyperloop track is a sealed, low-pressure tube system that enables high-speed pod transportation using magnetic levitation or air propulsion, minimizing friction for efficient and rapid travel.

Hyperloop Track Working Process



Mumbai-Pune Hyperloop: A Revolutionary Transportation Project

- **Hyperloop Project:** The Mumbai-Pune corridor is identified as India's first full-scale Hyperloop project site.
- **Travel Time:** The system could reduce travel time between Mumbai and Pune to just 25 minutes, faster than air travel.
- **Cargo System Launch:** Quintrans Hyperloop plans to launch its first operational hyperloop cargo system by 2027-28.
- **Inter-city Connectivity:** The hyperloop system will connect major Indian cities like Mumbai, Pune, Chennai, Bengaluru, Delhi, and Chandigarh.
- **Ticket Price:** A one-way ticket price for the journey is expected to range between Rs 1,000 to Rs 1,500, half the cost of a flight.

BHARAT ANTARIKSHA STATION

CONTEXT: The Union Minister outlined India's plans to establish its own space station and land an Indian on the Moon.

BACKGROUND: India's ambitious plans for a space station, named 'Bharat Antariksha Station,' are expected to begin by 2035. Union Minister Jitendra Singh announced that India will be among the first countries, following the U.S., to have its own space station.

What is a Space Station?

A space station is a large, artificial satellite that orbits Earth, providing a habitable environment for astronauts to

conduct scientific research, experiments, and technology development in microgravity.

Significance of Space Station for India

- **Advancement in Space Research:** Space stations offer opportunities for India to conduct advanced scientific experiments in microgravity.
- **Technological Development:** Developing space station technology boosts India's capabilities in engineering, materials science, and space exploration.
- **International Collaboration:** Participation in space



station missions fosters collaboration with global space agencies, enhancing knowledge sharing.

- **Space Industry Growth:** A space station promotes the growth of India's space industry, creating jobs and fostering innovation.
- **Strategic Benefits:** A space station strengthens India's

position in space exploration, providing geopolitical and security advantages.

- **Astronaut Training:** Space stations offer valuable platforms for training astronauts, preparing India for future manned missions.

Countries Owning the Present Space Station: Latest Updates



United States: The United States, through NASA, is the primary owner and operator of the International Space Station.



Russia: Russia owns and operates the Russian segment of the International Space Station, contributing key modules.



European Union: The European Space Agency, representing several European countries, owns portions of the space station and conducts research.



Japan: Japan, through the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency, owns and operates key modules of the space station.



Canada: Canada contributes ownership of advanced robotic systems, including the Canadarm2, used for space station operations.



Private Sector: Companies like SpaceX and Axiom Space are working towards building commercial space stations in the near future.

AFRICAN SWINE FEVER

CONTEXT: The government culled 310 pigs in Kerala to control the outbreak of African Swine Fever.

BACKGROUND: The Centre reported that approximately 310 pigs were culled in Kerala's Thrissur district following an African Swine Fever (ASF) outbreak in Madakkatharan Panchayath. The state's Animal Husbandry Department took immediate action to control the situation.

What is African Swine Fever?

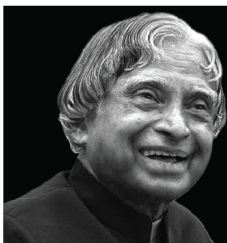
African Swine Fever (ASF) is a highly contagious viral disease affecting pigs, causing high mortality rates. It spreads through direct contact, contaminated feed, and wildlife, with no vaccine available.

African Swine Fever: Key Facts

- **Global Impact:** The disease has spread to over 50 countries, significantly affecting global pork production

and trade.

- **Economic Consequences:** In China, ASF led to the death of approximately 40% of its swine population, causing substantial economic losses.
- **Transmission:** ASF is transmitted through direct contact with infected pigs, contaminated feed, and fomites, making control challenging.
- **Control Measures:** There is no vaccine or specific treatment for ASF; control relies on strict biosecurity, culling infected animals, and movement restrictions.
- **Recent Developments:** In July 2024, Vietnam reported 660 ASF outbreaks, leading to the culling of 42,400 infected pigs, indicating a resurgence of the disease.



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

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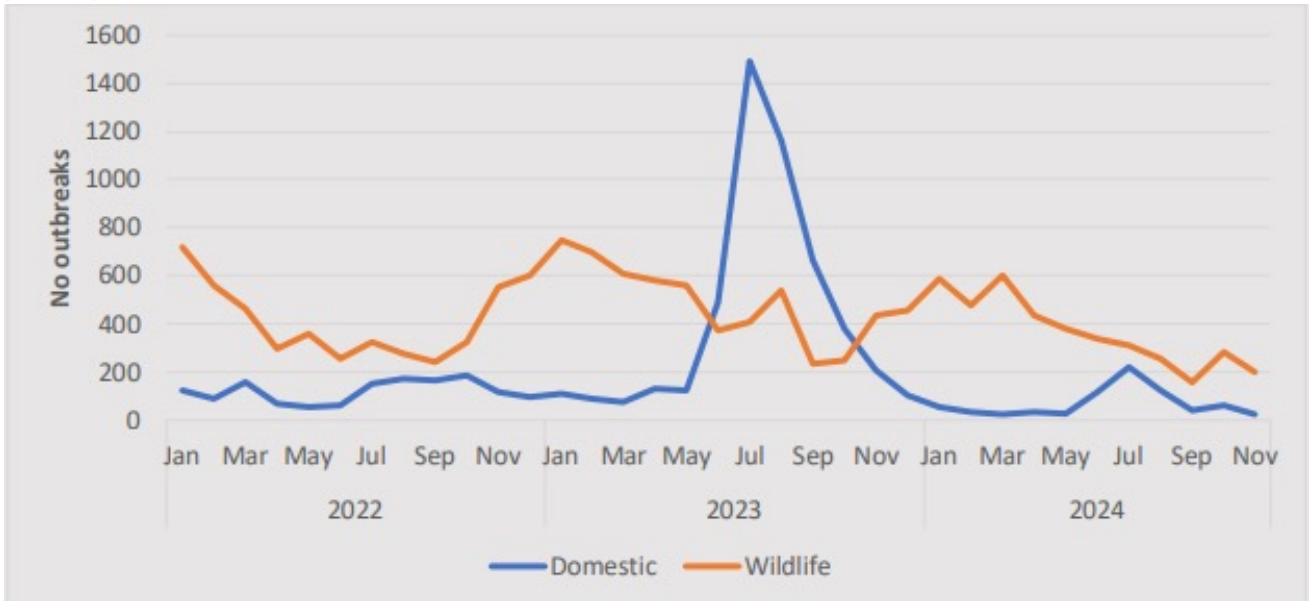


Illustration: Trends in the monthly reported ASF outbreaks in domestic and wild animals (Jan 2022 – Nov 2024), excluding endemic areas, via WAHIS early warning.

DIABETES BIOBANK

CONTEXT: ICMR has established India's first diabetes biobank in Chennai to support research on the condition. (MDRF).

BACKGROUND: India's first diabetes biobank, designed to support scientific research with population-based biological samples, has been established in Chennai. The initiative is a collaboration between the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and the Madras Diabetes Research Foundation

What is a Biobank?

A biobank is a collection of biological samples, such as blood, tissues, or DNA, along with associated health data, used for research purposes to study diseases, genetics, and treatment outcomes.

Status of Diabetes in India

Diabetes Prevalence and Awareness in India



Prevalence of Diabetes: India has the second highest number of diabetic patients globally, expected to rise from 77 million in 2019 to 134 million by 2045.



Regional Distribution: South India has the highest prevalence at 9.39%, followed by eastern India at 6.81%, and western India at 6.58%.



Wealth and Prevalence: The wealthiest class in India shows a 9.79% diabetes prevalence, highlighting the role of income.



Age and Risk: Older adults face an increased risk of diabetes, with higher prevalence among senior citizens.



Awareness and Treatment: 45.8% of diabetics are aware of their condition, 36.1% are on treatment, and 15.7% have it under control.



Undiagnosed and Prediabetes: 57% of diabetics remain undiagnosed, while 15.3% of the population may have pre-diabetes.

ICMR has established India's first diabetes biobank in Chennai to advance research on diabetes. The biobank will aid in understanding the disease's genetic, environmental, and metabolic factors, contributing to better prevention and treatment strategies.



CRIME AND CRIMINAL TRACKING NETWORK AND SYSTEMS

CONTEXT: All 17,130 police stations across the country are now connected through a centralized online platform.

BACKGROUND: After nearly 15 years, all 17,130 police stations in India are now connected through the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS), a centralized online platform for filing FIRs, chargesheets, and investigation reports, accessible by law enforcement nationwide.



About Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS)

- **Objective:** The Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems, initiated in 2009 by the **Ministry of Home Affairs**, aims to create a comprehensive and integrated system for enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of policing in India.
- **Scope:** The project seeks to **interlink approximately 15,000 police stations** and an additional 5,000 offices of supervisory police officers across the country, facilitating seamless data sharing and coordination.
- **Data Digitization:** CCTNS involves the **digitization of data** related to First Information Report registration,

investigation, and charge sheets in all police stations, aiming to standardize, integrate, and harmonize the **country's criminal justice system**.

- **National Database:** The system is designed to develop a national database of crime and criminals, enhancing the **ability to track and analyse criminal activities** across the nation.
- **Citizen Services:** CCTNS includes the establishment of a **central citizen portal, linked with state-level portals, to provide various citizen-friendly services**, thereby promoting transparency and accountability in the police force.
- **Budget and Implementation:** Launched with a **total approved outlay of ₹2,000 crore**, the project aims to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of policing in India through e-Governance.

All 17,130 police stations in India are now linked through a centralized online platform, enhancing coordination, data sharing, and efficiency. This initiative aims to strengthen law enforcement, improve crime-solving, and ensure better public safety nationwide.



START YOUR JOURNEY WITH THE BEST

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INDIA'S LARGEST ONLINE IAS COACHING ACADEMY



GenCast AI

CONTEXT: Google's GenCast AI highlights the emergence of powerful new weather forecasters using advanced technology.

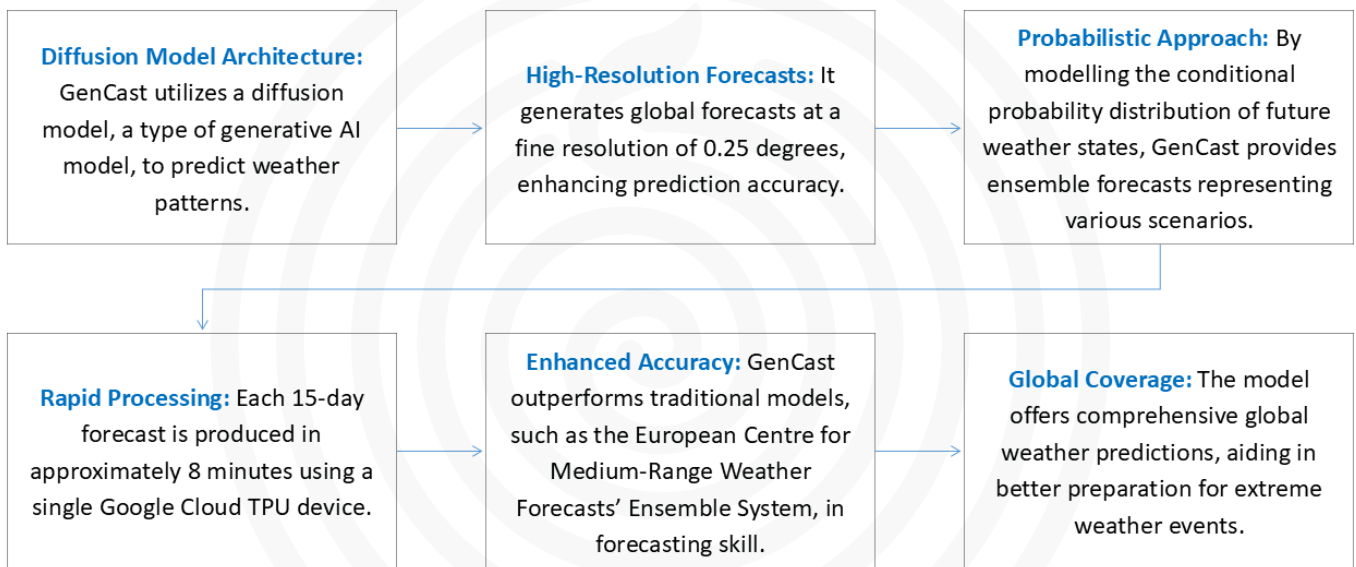
BACKGROUND: Google DeepMind introduced GenCast, an AI model claimed to offer superior weather forecasting capabilities, including longer-term predictions. The details of the model were published in a peer-reviewed paper in the journal Nature.

Google's GenCast: AI-Driven Weather Forecasting Breakthrough

- **Ensemble Forecasting with AI:** Google's GenCast uses AI models for ensemble forecasting, trained on 40 years of reanalysis data (1979-2019).

- **Training Process:** GenCast was trained in two phases, taking 3.5 days for step I and 1.5 days for step II using 32 TPU v5 instances.
- **TPU v5p Specifications:** TPU v5p has 8,960 chips, with 4,800 Gbps bandwidth/chip, costing \$4.2 per chip-hour on demand.
- **Performance Comparison:** GenCast outperforms ENS in 97.2% of 1,320 targets, including extreme weather and tropical cyclone tracks.
- **Advanced Prediction Accuracy:** GenCast is 99.8% more accurate than ENS when predicting weather beyond 36 hours.

Understanding GenCast: Revolutionizing Weather Forecasting



Google's GenCast AI showcases the rise of advanced weather forecasting technology, leveraging artificial intelligence to provide more accurate and timely predictions. This innovation is poised to improve weather-related decision-making and enhance disaster preparedness globally.

SORA

CONTEXT: Microsoft-backed OpenAI has launched its video generation model, Sora, expanding capabilities in AI-driven video creation.

BACKGROUND: OpenAI, backed by Microsoft, launched Sora, a video generation model that creates new videos from text, image, and video inputs. Available as a standalone service on its own website, Sora operates separately from ChatGPT.

About OpenAI's Sora

- **Video Generation Options:** Premium subscribers can create videos in 1080p, 20 seconds long, in widescreen, vertical, or square aspect ratios.
- **Input Flexibility:** Sora accepts text, images, and videos as input prompts, allowing users to remix and blend content.

- **Storyboarding Tool:** The Sora interface includes a storyboard tool, enabling users to specify inputs for each frame precisely.
- **Subscription Features:** ChatGPT Plus offers 720p videos up to 5 seconds, with a limit of 50 videos.
- **Pro Subscription Benefits:** Pro subscribers get 20-second videos, 500 creations, five concurrent generations, and watermark-free downloads.

Microsoft-backed OpenAI has launched Sora, an advanced video generation model, enhancing AI-driven video creation. This innovation broadens the potential for automated content production, transforming industries such as entertainment, education, and marketing.



DHARANI

CONTEXT: IIT Madras unveiled the world's first 3D high-resolution images of the human foetal brain.

BACKGROUND: IIT Madras, through its Sudha Gopalakrishnan Brain Centre, has released the world's most detailed 3D high-resolution images of the human foetal brain. The pioneering DHARANI dataset offers groundbreaking insights into brain development, advancing global neuroscience research.

What is 3D high-resolution human foetal brain images?

3D high-resolution human foetal brain images are detailed, three-dimensional visualizations of the developing foetal brain, created using advanced imaging technologies to study brain structure, growth, and development in utero.

Advancements in 3D High-Resolution Human Foetal Brain Imaging

- **IIT Madras Breakthrough:** In December 2024, the Indian Institute of Technology Madras released the world's first 3D high-resolution images of the human Foetal brain.
- **Detailed Atlas Creation:** Researchers at IIT Madras developed a comprehensive cell-resolution atlas of

the human Foetal brain during the second trimester, identifying over 500 brain regions.

- **Advancements in Brain Mapping:** The project positions India at the forefront of brain mapping science, contributing to the global understanding of Foetal brain development.
- **Potential Applications:** The high-resolution Foetal brain images have promising applications in enhancing current Foetal imaging techniques, potentially enabling earlier diagnosis and treatment of developmental disorders.
- **Future Implications:** This pioneering work is expected to pave the way for new scientific discoveries, allowing quantification of neurodevelopmental disorders and advances in Foetal medicine.

The development of 3D high-resolution human foetal brain images marks a significant advancement in neuroscience. This technology enables detailed insights into brain development, aiding research on neurological disorders and improving prenatal care and early diagnosis.

INDIA INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM

CONTEXT: The Union Minister of State for Electronics & Information Technology inaugurated the Fourth Edition of the India Internet Governance Forum.

BACKGROUND: The India Internet Governance Forum (IIGF) 2024 took place at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi. Supported by MeitY and NIXI, the event aimed to explore key Internet governance issues, promote dialogue, and showcase India's leadership in the global digital landscape.

Key Highlights of IIGF 2024: Advancing a Secure, Inclusive, and Sustainable Digital Ecosystem

- **Empowering Connections:** IIGF 2024 will focus on enhancing access, inclusion, and digital rights to bridge the digital divide.

- **Legal and Regulatory Frameworks:** The forum will explore growth-oriented policies to strengthen Internet governance through balanced legal frameworks.
- **Responsible AI:** Responsible AI discussions will emphasize ethical and effective use of artificial intelligence for societal benefits.
- **Building a Greener Internet:** Sustainable Internet practices will focus on energy efficiency and environmental sustainability in the digital domain.
- **Trust and Safety:** The forum will address cybersecurity and build user confidence through better online trust and safety measures.

About Internet Governance Forum (IGF)

- **Internet Governance Forum:** The Internet Governance Forum (IGF) is a multistakeholder platform for discussing public policy issues.
- **India's Internet Culture:** With 1.4 billion citizens, 1.2 billion mobile users, and 900 million Internet users, India's Internet culture is growing rapidly.
- **E-Governance & National Security:** E-Governance and National Security have become critical, especially with enhanced cyber space in India.
- **India IGF (IIGF):** The India IGF (IIGF) facilitates discussions among intergovernmental organizations, private companies, and civil society organizations.
- **Multistakeholder Model:** The multistakeholder model allows open, inclusive policy dialogues and has contributed to the Internet's success globally.



Boltz-1

CONTEXT: MIT scientists introduced Boltz-1, an open-source AI model set to transform biomedical research and drug development.

BACKGROUND: MIT scientists introduced Boltz-1, an open-source AI model set to transform biomedical research and drug development. Competing with Google DeepMind's AlphaFold3 in predicting protein structures, Boltz-1 offers a more accessible alternative for the global scientific community.

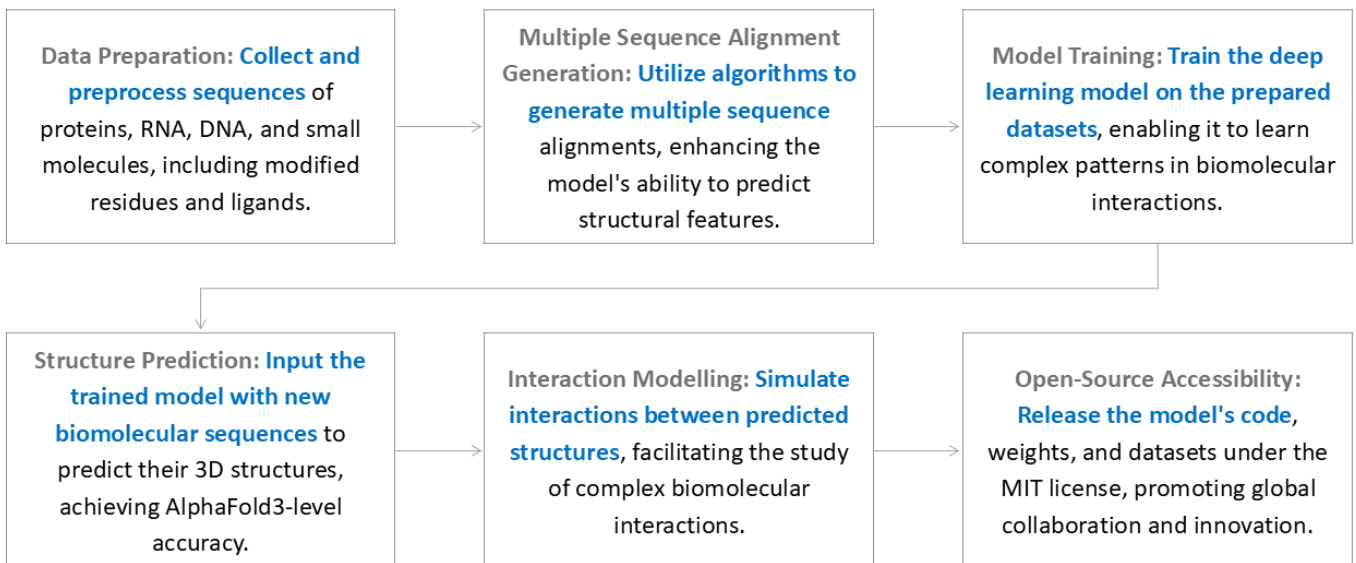
Key Features of Boltz-1: Advancing Biomolecular Interaction Modelling

- **Open-Source Accessibility:** Boltz-1 is the first fully open-source model to achieve AlphaFold3-level accuracy in predicting 3D structures of biomolecular complexes.
- **Comprehensive Biomolecular Modelling:** It accurately models interactions among proteins, RNA, DNA, and small molecules, including modified residues, covalent ligands,

and glycans.

- **Pocket-Conditioned Generation:** Boltz-1 can condition the generation of structures based on specified pocket residues, enhancing the precision of interaction modelling.
- **High-Resolution Predictions:** The model provides high-resolution 3D structure predictions, facilitating detailed analysis of biomolecular interactions.
- **User-Friendly Interface:** Boltz-1 offers an intuitive interface for both training and inference, accommodating various input formats and simplifying the modelling process.
- **Community Collaboration:** By releasing the model under the MIT license, Boltz-1 encourages global collaboration, allowing researchers to build upon and enhance its capabilities.

Understanding the Working of Boltz-1: A Step-by-Step Overview



MIT scientists have introduced Boltz-1, an open-source AI model designed to revolutionize biomedical research and drug development. Competing with AlphaFold3, Boltz-1 offers a more accessible tool for the global scientific community in predicting protein structures.

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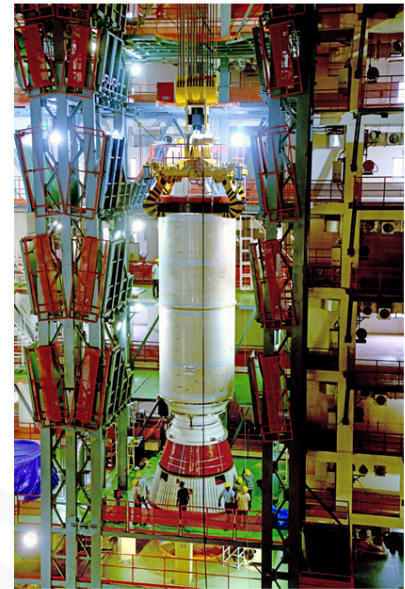

HUMAN RATED LVM3

CONTEXT: The Gaganyaan-G1 launch campaign begins, with the assembly of the Human Rated LVM3 for India's first uncrewed flight at SDSC.

BACKGROUND: The Indian Space Research Organisation has begun assembling the Human Rated Launch Vehicle Mark-3 (HLVM3) for the Gaganyaan mission's first uncrewed flight. The assembly is underway at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, with the flight scheduled for early next year.

Human-Rated Launch Vehicle

- **Human-Rated Launch Vehicle:** HLVM3 is derived from LVM3 with enhanced reliability and Crew Escape System for human safety.
- **CES for Crew Safety:** Crew Escape System ensures safe ejection of Crew Module during adverse situations from launch to separation.
- **Vehicle Specifications:** HLVM3 is 53 meters tall, weighs 640 tonnes, with a 10-tonne payload capacity to LEO.
- **LVM3-X/CARE Mission Objective:** The mission aimed to validate atmospheric flight and Crew Module re-entry into Earth's atmosphere.
- **Mission Achievements:** Validated LVM3 flight, booster synchronization, Vikas engines performance, and complex separation mechanisms.



- **CARE Experiment Success:** Demonstrated re-entry aerodynamics, thermal protection, parachute deceleration, and recovery logistics, offering key insights for future developments.

The Gaganyaan-G1 launch campaign has commenced with the assembly of the Human Rated LVM3 rocket at SDSC, marking a significant step towards India's first uncrewed flight. This mission paves the way for future human space exploration.

SAMARTH UDYOG BHARAT 4.0

CONTEXT: The Ministry of Heavy Industries has established four SAMARTH Centres under the "Enhancement of Competitiveness in the Indian Capital Goods Sector" scheme.

BACKGROUND: SAMARTH Udyog brings together manufacturers, vendors, and customers as key stakeholders.

To promote Industry 4.0 awareness, five experiential and demonstration centres have been sanctioned, each with a unique identity to enhance branding and educate Indian manufacturing industries.

Five CEFC (Common Engineering Facility Center) Projects





INDIA'S FIRST ANALOG SPACE MISSION

CONTEXT: ISRO launched India's first analog space mission in Leh, simulating space conditions for research and preparation.

BACKGROUND: ISRO announced the launch of its first analog space mission to study extraterrestrial conditions for future space exploration. The mission, featuring a compact inflatable habitat named Hab-1, is being conducted in Leh, Ladakh, simulating life in an interplanetary habitat.

India's Hab-1 Mission for Future Space Exploration

- **Mission Overview:** Hab-1, an inflatable habitat in Leh, Ladakh, simulates life in an interplanetary habitat.
- **Self-Sustaining Environment:** Equipped with hydroponics farm, kitchen, and sanitation facilities, it supports long-duration missions to Moon and Mars.
- **Collaboration:** The mission is a collaboration between

ISRO, AAKA Space Studio, University of Ladakh, and IIT Bombay.

- **Ladakh Location:** Chosen for its Martian and lunar-like landscapes, cold, arid conditions, and high altitude for testing technologies.
- **Research Focus:** The mission will test technologies, robotics, mobility, and power generation, while studying human health effects.

What is analog space mission?

An analog space mission simulates real-life space conditions on Earth, using controlled environments to study astronaut behaviour, technology, and challenges, preparing for future space exploration missions and long-duration stays.

Global Analog Space Missions: International Initiatives



United States: NASA conducts analog missions in extreme environments like deserts and Arctic regions to simulate space conditions.



Austria: The Austrian Space Forum organizes Mars analog missions, such as AMADEE-20, to test exploration technologies.



India: The Indian Space Research Organisation initiated its first analog space mission in Leh, Ladakh, to simulate extraterrestrial life conditions.



Brazil: Habitat Marte, located in Rio Grande do Norte, serves as Brazil's Mars analog station for research and training.



Israel: The Desert Mars Analog Ramon Station in Israel's Negev Desert hosts analog missions to study Mars exploration scenarios.



International Collaboration: Over 200 researchers from 25 countries participated in the AMADEE-20 mission, highlighting global cooperation in analog space research.

ISRO launched India's first analog space mission in Leh, simulating space conditions for research and preparation. This mission aims to enhance understanding of the challenges astronauts face, supporting future human space exploration and mission planning.

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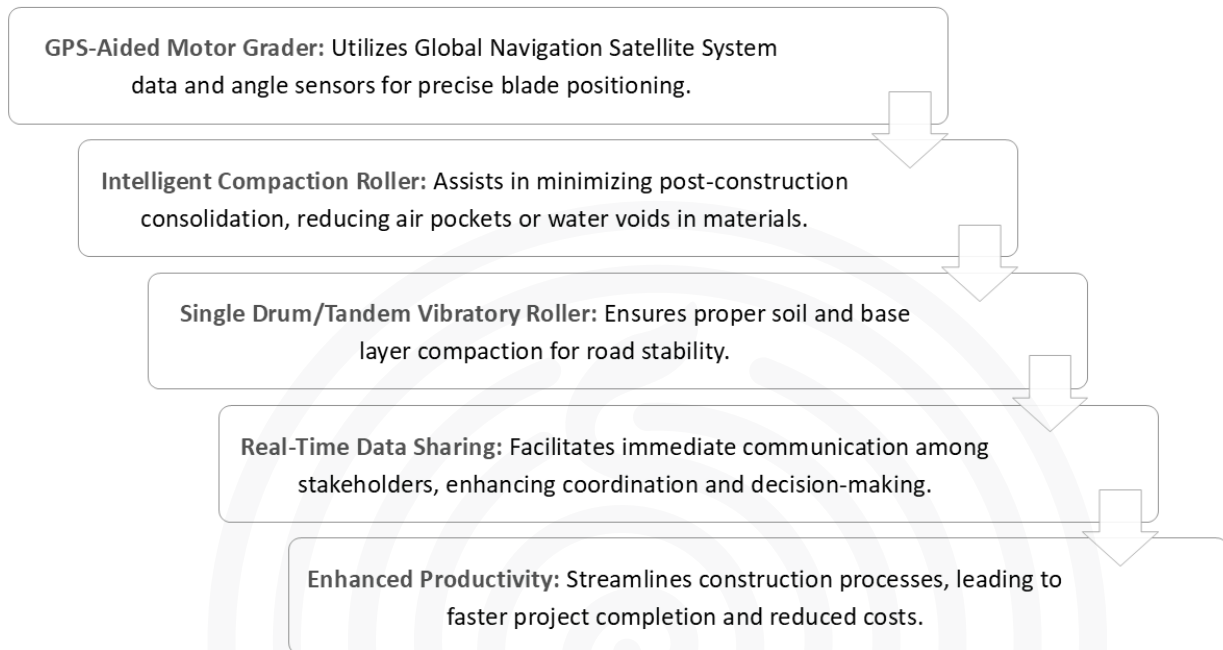
AIMC SYSTEM

CONTEXT: To address delays in National Highway projects, MoRTH has accelerated the use of the Automated & Intelligent Machine-aided Construction (AIMC) system.

BACKGROUND: The Ministry of Road Transport & Highways (MoRTH) has fast-tracked the use of the Automated &

Intelligent Machine-aided Construction (AIMC) system for National Highway projects. This system provides real-time data on project status, with continuous surveys throughout the construction process.

Automated and Intelligent Machine-aided Construction (AIMC) System



Intelligent Road Construction Machines in India

- **AI Revolution:** The rise of intelligent road construction machines enhances durability, longevity, and productivity of roads.
- **Pilot Project:** The 63-km Lucknow-Kanpur Expressway uses GPS-aided motor grader, intelligent compactor, and stringless paver.
- **Automation Benefits:** Automated machines help meet precise schedules and work 24/7, including night-time construction.
- **Nationwide Adoption:** Based on the pilot, NHAI plans countrywide adoption of AIMC for National Highway construction.
- **Machine Function:** Unlike AI machines, these machines require project-specific data, reducing manpower and expediting construction.

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GHOST GUNS

CONTEXT: U.S. law enforcement reported a weapon found in Luigi Mangione's backpack, linked to UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson's killing.

BACKGROUND: Luigi Mangione, charged in the killing of UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson, reportedly used a 3D-printed pistol, an untraceable weapon that can be manufactured at home, raising concerns about the accessibility of such firearms.

What are Ghost Guns?

Ghost guns are untraceable firearms assembled from kits or 3D-printed parts, lacking serial numbers, making them difficult to regulate and posing security challenges due to their anonymity.

Ghost Guns: Key Facts and Concerns

- **Assembly Process:** Kits include unfinished frames or receivers, requiring basic tools and assembly skills to construct a functioning firearm.

- **Legality Issues:** Ghost guns often bypass regulations since they are not classified as firearms until fully assembled.
- **Traceability Concerns:** Absence of serial numbers makes them untraceable, posing challenges to law enforcement and criminal investigations.
- **Public Safety Risks:** Unregulated access to ghost guns increases risks of misuse in criminal activities and undermines firearm laws.
- **Global Attention:** Governments are exploring stricter regulations, including requiring background checks and serial numbers for firearm kits.

Ghost guns, untraceable firearms often assembled from kits or 3D-printed parts, pose significant security challenges. Their lack of serial numbers hinders law enforcement efforts, raising concerns about illegal use, public safety, and the need for regulatory measures.

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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.

CSAT



**CSAT 2024: SOLVED PREVIOUS
YEAR QUESTIONS – LOGICAL
REASONING AND QUANTITATIVE
APTITUDE**



1. What is the least possible number of cuts required to cut a cube into 64 identical pieces ?

- (a) 8
- (b) 9
- (c) 12
- (d) 16

Answer:

3 cuts along length, 3 cuts along breadth and 3 cuts along height.i.e., total 9 cuts are required.

Hence, option (b) is correct.

2. In the expression $5 * 4 * 3 * 2 * 1$, * is chosen from +, -, × each at most two times. What is the smallest non negative value of the expression ?

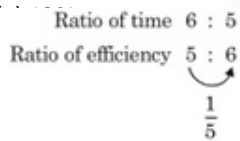
- (a) 3
- (b) 2
- (c) 1
- (d) 0

Answer:

$$5 * 4 * 3 * 2 * 1 = 5 - 4 - 3 + 2 \times 1 = 5 - 7 + 2 = 7 - 7 = 0$$

Hence, option (d) is correct.

3. A certain number of men can complete a piece of work in 6k days, where k is a natural number. By what percent should the number of men be increased so that the work can be completed in 5k days ?



$$\Rightarrow \frac{1}{5} = 20\%$$

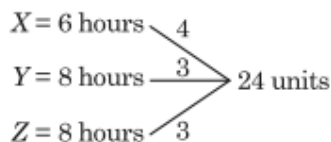
efficiency is inversely proportional to

Hence, option (c) is correct.

4. X, Y and Z can complete a piece of work individually in 6 hours, 8 hours and 8 hours respectively. However, only one person at a time can work in each hour and nobody can work for two consecutive hours. All are engaged to finish the work. What is the minimum amount of time that they will take to finish the work ?

- (a) 6 hours 15 minutes
- (b) 6 hours 30 minutes
- (c) 6 hours 45 minutes
- (d) 7 hours

Answer:



According to the question, Work will be done in the pattern 4, 3, 4, 3, 4, 3, ... So, in this manner work done in 6 hours = 21 units

Now rest work = 24 - 21 = 3 units

To minimise time, X has to do this 3 units work. X can do 3 unit work in 3/4 hours i.e., 45 minutes.

So, total time required = 6 hours 45 minutes.

Hence, option (c) is correct

5. How many consecutive zeros are there at the end of the integer obtained in the product $1^2 \times 2^4 \times 3^6 \times 4^8 \times \dots \times 25^{50}$?

- (a) 50
- (b) 55
- (c) 100
- (d) 200

Answer: We need to check number of fives (5's) here to check the number of zeros.

$$\text{So, } 5^{10} \times 10^{20} \times 15^{30} \times 20^{40} \times 25^{50}$$

$$= 5^{10} \times (5 \times 2)^{10} \times (5 \times 3)^{20} \times (5 \times 4)^{40} \times (5^2)^{50} = 5^{10} \times 5^{20} \times 5^{30} \times 5^{40} \times 5^{100}$$

Sum of power of 5 = 10 + 20 + 30 + 40 + 100 = 200.

So, number of zeros = 200. Hence, option (d) is correct.

6. On January 1st, 2023, a person saved Rs. 1. On January 2nd 2023, he saved Rs. 2 more than that on the previous day. On January 3rd, 2023, he saved Rs 2 more than that on the previous day and so on. At the end of which date was his total savings a perfect square as well a perfect cube?

- (a) 7th January, 2023
- (b) 8th January, 2023
- (c) 9th January, 2023
- (d) Not possible

Answer :

The given series is 1 + 3 + 5 + 7 + 9 + ... So, total 8 term will be required.

1 + 3 + 5 + 7 + 9 + 11 + 13 + 15 = 64 Thus, this number can be achieved at the end of 8th January, 2023.

Hence, option (b) is correct.

7. $222^{333} + 333^{222}$ is divisible by which of the following numbers ?

- (a) 2 and 3 but not 37
- (b) 3 and 37 but not 2
- (c) 2 and 37 but not 3
- (d) 2, 3 and 37

Answer: We know that, $(222)^{333}$ is an even number and $(333)^{222}$ is an odd number. The given sum of even number and an odd number will be an odd number. So, it is not divisible by 2. And 222 and 333 both are divisible by 111. Thus, the sum is divisible by 111 and we know $111 = 3 \times 37$ Hence, option (b) is correct.

8 What percent of water must be mixed with honey so as to gain 20% by selling the mixture at the cost price of honey ?

- (a) 20%
- (b) 10%
- (c) 5%
- (d) 4%

Answer : Let C be the cost price per unit of honey. The amount of honey used is 100 units.

The total cost price of the honey is $C \times 100$.

We want to sell the mixture at a 20% profit, so the selling price of the mixture should be: $1.20 \times C \times 100$

The total selling price is also given by: $(100 + W) \times C$

Where W is the amount of water.

$$1.20 \times C \times 100 = (100 + W) \times C$$

$$1.20 \times 100 = 100 + W$$

$$120 = 100 + W$$

$$W = 120 - 100 = 20$$

So, the amount of water to mix is 20 units.

The percentage of water is: $(20 / 100) \times 100 = 20\%$



9. What is the rightmost digit preceding the zeros in the value of 30^{30} ?

- (a) 1
- (b) 3
- (c) 7
- (d) 9

Answer:

$$30^{30} = 3^{30} \times 10^{30}$$

Since 10^{30} results in a 31-digit number with 30 zeros at the end, the rightmost digit preceding the zeros will be the unit digit of 3^{30} .

$$3^1 = 3 \text{ (last digit is 3)}$$

$$3^2 = 9 \text{ (last digit is 9)}$$

$$3^3 = 27 \text{ (last digit is 7)}$$

$$3^4 = 81 \text{ (last digit is 1)}$$

The last digits of powers of 3 repeat in a cycle: 3, 9, 7, 1. This cycle has a length of 4.

$$\text{Since } 30 \div 4 = 7 \text{ remainder } 2$$

$$\text{We have, } 3^{30} = 3(4 \times 7 + 2)$$

Therefore, the last digit of 3^{30} corresponds to the second position in the cycle, which is 9.

The rightmost digit preceding the zeros in 30^{30} is 9.

10. 421 and 427, when divided by the same number, leave the same remainder 1. How many numbers can be used as the divisor in order to get the same remainder 1?

- (a) 1
- (b) 2
- (c) 3
- (d) 4

Answer :

We need to find factors of difference of given the numbers excluding 1. Difference of the given numbers

$$= 427 - 421 = 6. \text{ Factors of } 6 = 1, 2, 3, 6.$$

Hence, option (c) is correct.

11. A can X contains 399 litres of petrol and a can Y contains 532 litres of diesel. They are to be bottled in bottles of equal size so that whole of petrol and diesel would be separately bottled. the bottle capacity in terms of litres is an integer. How many different bottle sizes are possible?

- (a) 3
- (b) 4
- (c) 5
- (d) 6

Answer : We need to find the factors of HCF of the given numbers.

$$\text{HCF of } (399, 532) = 133.$$

$$\text{Factors of } 133 = 1, 7, 19, 133 \text{ i.e., } 4$$

Hence, option (b) is correct.

12. Consider the following statements in respect of the sum $S = x + y + z$, where x , y and z are distinct prime number each less than 10 :

1. The unit digit of S can be 0.
2. The unit digit of S can be 9.
3. The unit digit of S can be 5.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only

- (b) 2 and 3 only

- (c) 1 and 3 only

- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: Prime numbers less than 10 are 2, 3, 5, 7. Possible sum of any 3 can be

$$2 + 3 + 5 = 10, 2 + 3 + 7 = 12$$

$$3 + 5 + 7 = 15, 2 + 5 + 7 = 14$$

So, unit digits of possible sum of any 3 numbers can be 0, 2, 4, 5.

Hence, option (c) is correct

13. Consider the sequence:

A _ BCD _ BBCDABC _ DABC _ D

that follows a certain pattern. Which one of the following completes the sequence ?

- (a) B, A, D, C

- (b) B, A, C, C

- (c) A, A, C, D

- (d) A, A, D, C

Answer : Required pattern = AABCD | ABBCD | ABCCD | ABCDD Hence, option (c) is correct.

14. Two persons P and Q enter into a business. P puts Rs. 14,000 more than Q, but P has invested for 8 months and Q has invested for 10 months. If P's share is Rs. 400 more than Q's share out of the total profit of Rs. 2,000, what is the capital contributed by P ?

- (a) Rs. 30,000

- (b) Rs. 26,000

- (c) Rs. 24,000

- (d) Rs. 20,000

$$\frac{x \times 8}{(x - 14000) \times 10} = \frac{1200}{800}$$

$$800 \times 8x = 12000(x - 14000)$$

$$\text{So, } x = 30,000$$

15. P's salary is 20% lower than Q's salary which is 20% lower than R's salary. By how much percent is R's salary more than P's salary ?

- (a) 48.75%

- (b) 56.25%

- (c) 60.50%

- (d) 62.25%

Answer:

$$\text{Let R's salary} = 100$$

$$\text{Q's salary} = 100 - 20\% \text{ of } 100 = 80$$

$$\text{P's salary} = 80 - 20\% \text{ of } 80 = 64$$

$$\text{R's salary} - \text{P's salary} = 100 - 64 = 36$$

$$\text{Percentage increase} = (36/64) \times 100\% = 56.25\%$$

16. A number is mistakenly divided by 4 instead multiplying by 4. What is the percentage change in the result due to this mistake ?

- (a) 25%

- (b) 50%

- (c) 72.75%

- (d) 93.75%

Let the original number is 4.

According to the question,



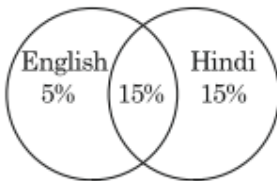
True result = $4 \times 4 = 16$
 Mistakenly got result $4/4=1$
 Percentage change in the result
 $15/16 \times 100 = 93.75\%$.
 Hence, option (d) is correct.

17. In an examination, 80% of students passed in English, 70% of students passed in Hindi and 15% failed in both the subjects. What is the percentage of students who failed in only one subject ?

- (a) 15%
- (b) 20%
- (c) 25%
- (d) 35%

Answer:

Let us draw the diagram of failed students.



So, 5% students failed in English only and 15% students failed in Hindi only.

Thus, percentage of students who failed only in one subject = $5\% + 15\% = 20\%$

Hence, option (b) is correct.

18. A father said to his son, "n years back I was as old as you are now. My present age is four times your age n years back". If the sum of the present ages of the father and the son is 130 years, what is the difference of their ages ?

- (a) 30 years
- (b) 32 years
- (c) 34 years
- (d) 36 years

Answer:

Let the father's age be F and the son's age be S. From the equations

$$F - n = S \quad (F = 4(S - n)) \quad \text{and} \quad (F + S = 130)$$

We find that $(S = 50)$ and $(F = 80)$

Therefore, the age difference is $(F - S = 80 - 50 = 30)$ years.

19 Consider the following :

1. 1000 litres = 1 m³

2. 1 metric ton = 1000 kg

3. 1 hectare = 10000 m²

Which of the above are correct ?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer:

1. 1000 litres = 1 m³

This is correct. One cubic meter (m³) is equal to 1000 liters

2. 1 metric ton = 1000 kg

This is correct. A metric ton, also known as a tonne, is defined as 1000 kilograms.

3. 1 hectare = 10000 m²

This is correct. A hectare is a unit of area equal to 10,000

square meters.

Since all three statements are correct, the answer is: d) 1, 2 and 3

20 Let X be a two-digit number and Y be another two-digit number formed by interchanging the digits of X. If (X + Y) is the greatest two-digit number, then what is the number of possible values of X ?

- (a) 2
- (b) 4
- (c) 6
- (d) 8

Answer : Let $X = ab = 10a + b$ and $Y = ba = 10b + a$

$$X + Y = 10a + b + 10b + a = 11(a + b)$$

According to the question,

$$11(a + b) = 99$$

$$\text{Thus, } a + b = 9$$

This equation have 8 solution i.e., 18,

27, 36, 45, 54, 63, 72, 81.

So, possible value of $X = 8$

Hence, option (d) is correct

21 Consider the following :

Weight of 6 boys = Weight of 7 girls =

Weight of 3 men = Weight of 4 women.

If the average weight of the women is 63 kg, then what is the average weight of the boys ?

- (a) 40 kg
- (b) 42 kg
- (c) 45 kg
- (d) 63 kg

Answer:

$$\text{So } 6B = 7G = 3M = 4W \text{ (given)}$$

According to the question,

$$6B = 4 \times 63 \text{ kg. So, } B = 42 \text{ kg}$$

Hence, option (b) is correct.

22. How many times the hour hand and the minutes hand coincide in a clock between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. (same day) ?

- (a) 3 times
- (b) 4 times
- (c) 5 times
- (d) 6 times

Answer Coincidence from 10 am to 11 am \checkmark once

Coincidence from 11 am to 1 pm \checkmark once

Coincidence from 1 pm to 2 pm \checkmark once

So, coincidence from 10 am to 2 pm

$$= 1 + 1 + 1 = 3 \text{ times}$$

Hence, option (a) is correct.

23. The calendar for the year 2025 is same for

- (a) 2029
- (b) 2030
- (c) 2031
- (d) 2033

Answer : Calendar of 2025 will be repeated after

6 years.

$$\text{So, } 2025 + 6 = 2031.$$

Hence, option (c) is correct.



24. Let p, q, r and s be distinct positive integers. Let p, q be odd and r, s be even.

Consider the following statements :

1. $(p - r)2(qs)$ is even.
2. $(q - s)q2s$ is even.
3. $(q + r)2(p + s)$ is odd.

Which of the statements given above are correct ?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: Since 's' is even.

So, 1, 2 will be even because of multiplication with s. And 3 will be odd because $(q + s)$ is odd and $(p + s)$ is also odd number. So, their product will also be an odd number. Hence, option (d) is correct.

25. What is the angle between the minute hand and hour hand when the clock shows 4:25 hours ?

- (a) 12.5°
- (b) 15°
- (c) 17.5°
- (d) 20°

Answer:

Angle between hands of the clock

$$= \left| \frac{11M - 60H}{2} \right|^\circ$$

$$= \left| \frac{11 \times 25 - 60 \times 4}{2} \right|^\circ = 17.5^\circ.$$

Hence, option (c) is correct

26. What is the number of fives used in numbering a 260-page book ?

- (a) 55
- (b) 56
- (c) 57
- (d) 60

Answer : 5 will appear 20 times from 1 to 100 and 20 times from 101 to 200 and 16 times from 201 to 260.

So, total number of fives
 $= 20 + 20 + 16 = 56.$

Hence, option (b) is correct.

27. What is the sum of the first 28 terms in the following sequence ?

1, 1, 2, 1, 3, 2, 1, 4, 3, 2, 1, 5, 4, 3, 2, ...

- (a) 83
- (b) 84
- (c) 85
- (d) 86

Answer:

Let us rewrite the given sequence as,

1, 1, 2, 1, 2, 3, 1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, ...

(given)

1	1+2	1+2+3	1+2+3+4	1-5	1-6	1-7
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
1	3	6	10	15	21	28

Sum of the first 28 terms = $1 + 3 + 6 + 10 + 15 + 21 + 28 = 84.$
 Hence, option (b) is correct.

28. A person buys three articles P, Q and R for Rs. 3,330. If P costs 25% more than R and R costs 20% more than Q, then

what is the cost of P ?

- (a) Rs. 1,000
- (b) Rs. 1,200
- (c) Rs. 1,250
- (d) Rs. 1,350

Answer:

According to the question,
 $P + Q + R = 370 = 3330 \div 9$ times
 So, $P = 150 \times 9 = \text{Rs. } 1350.$
 Hence, option (d) is correct.

29. If the sum of the two-digit numbers AB and CD is the three-digit number 1CE, where the letters A, B, C, D, E denote distinct digits, then what is the value of A ?

- (a) 9
- (b) 8
- (c) 7
- (d) Cannot be determined due to insufficient data

Answers :

Possible values for A = 0 or 9.
 But a number cannot start with 0.
 So, A = 9.
 Hence, option (a) is correct.

30. Three numbers x, y, z are selected from the set of the first seven natural numbers such that $x > 2y > 3z$.

How many such distinct triplets (x, y, z) are possible ?

- (a) One triplet
- (b) Two triplets
- (c) Three triplets
- (d) Four triplets

Answer :

Possible triplets :
 $(5, 2, 1), (6, 2, 1), (7, 2, 1), (7, 3, 1)$ i.e., 4.
 Hence, option (d) is correct.

31. The total cost of 4 oranges, 6 mangoes and 8 apples is equal to twice the total cost of 1 orange, 2 mangoes and 5 apples.

Consider the following statements :

1. The total cost of 3 oranges, 5 mangoes and 9 apples is equal to the total cost of 4 oranges, 6 mangoes and 8 apples.
2. The total cost of one orange and one mango is equal to the cost of one apple.

Which of the statements given above is/ are correct ?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer :

According to the given statements:
 $4 \text{ oranges} + 6 \text{ mangoes} + 8 \text{ apples} = 2(1 \text{ orange} + 2 \text{ mangoes} + 5 \text{ apples})$
 $1 \text{ orange} + 1 \text{ mango} = 1 \text{ apple}$



Statement-1: 3 oranges + 5 mangoes + 9 apples = 4 oranges + 6 mangoes + 8 apples

Statement-2: 1 orange + 1 mango = 1 apple

Here, both the statements are represent the same. So, both the statements are correct. Hence, option (c) is correct.

32. $32^5 + 2^{27}$ is divisible by

- (a) 3
- (b) 7
- (c) 10
- (d) 11

Answer :

$$= 2^{25} + 2^{27} = 2^{25}[1 + 2^2] = 2^{25} \times 5$$

$$= 10 \times 2^4$$

Hence, option (c) is correct.

33. Let p and q be positive integers satisfying $p < q$ and $p + q = k$. What is the smallest value of k that does not determine p and q uniquely ?

- (a) 3
- (b) 4
- (c) 5
- (d) 6

Sol. If $k = 5$.

So, $p, q = (1, 4)$ and $(2, 3)$

Thus, we cannot determine the value of p and q uniquely.

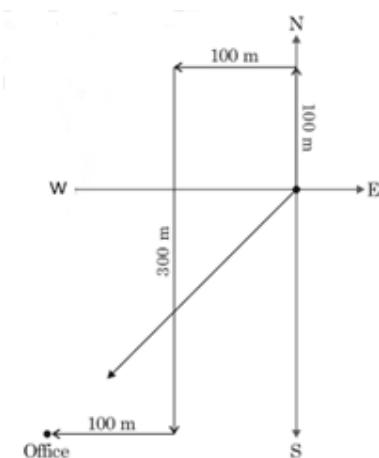
Hence, option (c) is correct.

34. A person walks 100 m straight from his house, turn left and walks 100 m, again turns left and walks 300 m, then turns right and walks 100 m to reach his office. In which direction does he walk initially from his house if his office is exactly in the North-East direction ?

- (a) North-West
- (b) West
- (c) South
- (d) South-West

Answer

The given diagram is 180° twisted than the question data. So, the direction of initial walk is South

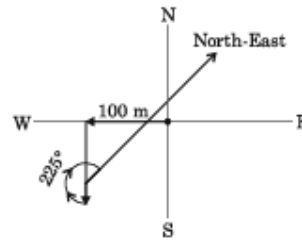


35. A person walks 100 m Westward, then turns left and walks 100 m. He then takes 225° turn clockwise. In which direction is he walking now ?

- (a) South-West
- (b) South-East
- (c) North-West

(d) North-East

Answer:



So, he is walking in the North-East direction. Hence, option (d) is correct

36. A Statement is given followed by two Conclusions number 1 and 2. Consider the Statement and the Conclusions.

Consider the Question and the Statements. Statement: India is the world's largest producer of milk.

Conclusion-1: India is the world's largest exporter of milk.

Conclusion-2: India does not import milk.

Which one of the following is correct ?

- (a) Only conclusion-1 follows.
- (b) Only conclusion-2 follows
- (c) Both conclusion-1 and conclusion-2 follow.
- (d) Neither conclusion-1 nor conclusion-2 follows.

Answer :

According to the given information we cannot say anything from Conclusion-1 and 2. Hence, option (d) is correct.

37. A Question is given followed by two Statements 1 and 2. Consider the Question and the Statements. Question: What are the values of m and n, where m and n are natural numbers ? **Statement-1:** $m + n > mn$ and $m > n$.

Statement-2: The product of m and n is 24

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above Question and the Statements ?

- (a) The Question can be answered by using one of the Statements alone, but cannot be answered using the other Statement alone.
- (b) The Question can be answered by using either Statement alone.
- (c) The Question can be answered by using both the Statements together, but cannot be answered using either Statement alone.
- (d) The Question cannot be answered even by using both the Statements together.

Answer :

Using both the Statements together, we can say $m = 24, n = 1$. Hence, option (c) is correct.

38. A Question is given followed by two Statements 1 and 2. Consider the Question and the Statements. Question: What are the unique values of x and y, where x, y are distinct natural numbers ?

Statement-1: x/y is odd.

Statement-2: $xy = 12$.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above Question and the Statements ?

- (a) The Question can be answered by using one of the Statements alone, but cannot be answered using the other Statement alone.



(b) The Question can be answered by using either Statement alone.

(c) The Question can be answered by using both the Statements together, but cannot be answered using either Statement alone.

(d) The Question cannot be answered even by using both the Statements together together received.

Answer :

From Statement II, the possible pairs are (1, 12), (2, 6), and (3, 4).

Applying Statement I (x/y is odd) to each pair:

(1, 12): $1/12$ is not an integer, so this pair is invalid.

(2, 6): $2/6 = 1/3$ is not an integer, so this pair is invalid.

(12, 1): $12/1 = 12$ (Even)

(6, 2): $6/2 = 3$ (Odd)

(4, 3): $4/3$ is not an integer.

Valid Pair: (6, 2) since $6/2 = 3$ is an odd integer.

Conclusion: Using both statements together, the unique values are $x = 6$ and $y = 2$.

Therefore, option c is the correct choice.

39. A Question is given followed by two Statements 1 and 2. Consider the Question and the

Statements. A certain amount was distributed among X, Y and Z. Question: Who received the least amount ?

Statement-1: X received $4/5$ of what Y and Z together received.

Statement-2: Y received $2/7$ of what X and Z together received.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above Question and the Statements ?

(a) The Question can be answered by using one of the Statements alone, but cannot be answered using the other Statement alone.

(b) The Question can be answered by using either Statement alone.

(c) The Question can be answered by using both the Statements together, but cannot be answered using either Statement alone.

(d) The Question cannot be answered even by using both the Statements together.

Answer :

Using both the Statements together, we can say $X = 4$, $Y = 2$, $Z = 3$. Hence, option (c) is correct.

40. A Question is given followed by two Statements 1 and 2. Consider the Question and the Statements.

Question: If the average marks in a class are 60, then what is the number of students in the class ?

Statement-1: The highest marks in the class are 70 and the lowest marks are 50.

Statement-2: Exclusion of highest and lowest marks from the class does not change the average.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above Question and the Statements ?

(a) The Question can be answered by using one of the Statements alone, but cannot be answered using the other Statement alone.

(b) The Question can be answered by using either Statement alone.

(c) The Question can be answered by using both the

Statements together, but cannot be answered using either Statement alone.

(d) The Question cannot be answered even by using both the Statements together.

Answer:

This Question cannot be answered even by using both the Statements together. We can have (50, 60, 70), (50, 60, 60, 60, 70) and so on. So, the various combinations are possible. Hence, option (d) is correct.

41. Question is given followed by two Statements 1 and 2. Consider the Question and the Statements. There are three distinct prime numbers whose sum is a prime number.

Question: What are those three numbers ? Statement-1: Their sum is less than 23.

Statement-2: One of the numbers is 5.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above Question and the Statements ?

(a) The Question can be answered by using one of the Statements alone, but cannot be answered using the other Statement alone.

(b) The Question can be answered by using either Statement alone.

(c) The Question can be answered by using both the Statements together, but cannot be answered using either Statement alone.

(d) The Question cannot be answered even by using both the Statements together.

Answer :

According to the Statement-1, we can say the three prime numbers are (3, 5, 11). But according to the Statement-2, we can have various combinations i.e., (3, 5, 11), (5, 7, 17), (5, 11, 17) and so on. So, the Question can be answered by using one of the Statements alone, but cannot be answered using the other Statement alone. Hence, option (a) is correct.

42. A Question is given followed by two Statements 1 and 2. Consider the Question and the Statements. Question: Is $(x + y)$ an integer ?

Statement-1: $(2x + y)$ is an integer.

Statement-2: $(x + 2y)$ is an integer.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above Question and the Statements ?

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above Question and the Statements ?

a) The Question can be answered by using one of the Statements alone, but cannot be answered using the other Statement alone

b) The Question can be answered by using either Statement alone

c) The Question can be answered by using both Statements together, but cannot be answered using either Statement alone

d) The Question cannot be answered even by using both the Statements together.

Answer:

Let $2x + y = A$ (where A is an integer).

Let $x + 2y = B$ (where B is an integer).

Multiply equation (1) by 2:

$4x + 2y = 2A$

Subtract equation (2):



$$3x = 2A - B$$

$$x = (2A - B)/3$$

Substitute x back:

$$y = A - 2x = A - 2(2A - B)/3 = (-A + 2B)/3$$

Therefore:

$$x + y = (2A - B)/3 + (-A + 2B)/3 = (A + B)/3$$

For (x + y) to be integer, A + B must be divisible by 3.

Using Statement I Alone: Knowing 2x + y is integer (A) doesn't guarantee x + y is integer.

Using Statement II Alone: Knowing x + 2y is integer (B) doesn't guarantee x + y is integer.

Using Both Statements Together: Even with both A and B known, x + y = (A + B)/3 is not guaranteed to be integer unless A + B is divisible by 3, which isn't assured. Even with both statements, there's insufficient information to determine whether (x + y) is an integer. The Question cannot be answered even by using both the Statements together.

43. A Question is given followed by two Statements 1 and 2. Consider the Question and the Statements. A person buys three articles p, q and r for Rs. 50. The price of the article q is Rs. 16 which is the least.

Question: What is the price of the article p? Statement-1: The cost of p is not more than that of r. Statement-2: The cost of r is not more than that of p. Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above Question and the Statements?

- (a) The Question can be answered by using one of the Statements alone, but cannot be answered using the other Statement alone.
- (b) The Question can be answered by using either Statement alone.
- (c) The Question can be answered by using both the Statements together, but cannot be answered using either Statement alone.
- (d) The Question cannot be answered even by using both the Statements together.

Answer :

Total Cost:

$$p + q + r = 50$$

Given q = 16 (the least),

$$p + r = 34$$

Statement I: $p \leq r$

Possible pairs (p, r):

$$p = 16, r = 18$$

$$p = 17, r = 17$$

Conclusion: p can be 16 or 17. Statement I alone insufficient.

Statement II: $r \leq p$

Possible pairs (p, r):

$$p = 17, r = 17$$

$$p = 18, r = 16$$

Conclusion: p can be 17 or 18. Statement II alone insufficient.

Using Both Statements Together:

$$p \leq r \text{ and } r \leq p \text{ imply } p = r$$

$$\text{Thus, } p = r = 17$$

Conclusion: p is uniquely determined as 17 using both statements. The Question can be answered by the Statements using both together, but cannot be answered using either Statement alone.

44. If a + b means a - b; a - b means a × b; a × b means a ÷ b; a ÷ b means a + b; then what is the value of 10 + 30 - 100 × 50 25 ? (Operations are to be replaced simultaneously)

a) 15

b) 0

c) -15

d) -25

Answer :

The given expression can be rewritten as, $10 - 30 \times 100 \div 50 + 25 = 10 - 30 \times 2 + 25 = 10 - 60 + 25 = 35 - 60 = -25$ Hence, option (d) is correct.

45. If in a certain code, 'ABCD' is written as 24 and 'EFGH' is written as 1680, then how is 'IJKL' written in that code ?

(a) 11880

(b) 11240

(c) 7920

(d) 5940

Answer:

Numbers corresponding to the alphabets are being multiplied here. For example, $ABCD = 1 \times 2 \times 3 \times 4 = 24$. Similarly, $EFGH = 5 \times 6 \times 7 \times 8 = 1680$. So, $IJKL = 9 \times 10 \times 11 \times 12 = 11880$. Hence, option (a) is correct.

46. If in a certain code, 'POT' is written as ATOP and 'TRAP' is written as APART, then how is 'ARENA' written in that code ?

(a) AARENA

(b) AANREA

(c) AANEAR

(d) AANERA

Answer :

$POT = ATOP$ $TRAP = APART$ $ARENA = AANERA$ Hence, option (d) is correct.

47. What will come in place of * in the sequence 3, 14, 39, 84, *, 258 ?

(a) 150

(b) 155

(c) 160

(d) 176

Answer : The given sequence is $13 + 12 + 1, 23 + 22 + 2, 33 + 32 + 3, 43 + 42 + 4, 53 + 52 + 5, \dots$ So, required factor = $53 + 52 + 5 = 155$. Hence, option (b) is correct.

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ETHIC





ETHICS IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION: THE PILLAR OF GOOD GOVERNANCE



ETHICS IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION: THE PILLAR OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

In the field of public administration, ethics plays a critical role in maintaining the integrity and efficiency of government institutions. Public administration, which involves the management of public resources and the implementation of government policies, is vital for the functioning of democratic societies. In this context, the ethical conduct of public administrators not only ensures transparency, accountability, and justice, but also fosters public trust in the government. Ethics in public administration is not merely a set of rules; it is a comprehensive approach to governing that influences decision-making processes, policy implementation, and citizen interaction.

Good governance refers to the efficient, accountable, and transparent management of public affairs, driven by ethical principles. Ethics in public administration ensures that leaders and bureaucrats in government make decisions that are not only lawful but morally sound, contributing to the common good and the prosperity of society as a whole. This essay explores the role of ethics in public administration and how it serves as the foundation for good governance.

Defining Ethics in Public Administration:-

Ethics in public administration refers to the moral principles that guide the behavior of public officials, administrators, and organizations in the public sector. It involves making decisions that reflect fairness, justice, transparency, and respect for the rule of law. In the context of public administration, ethics addresses issues like corruption, abuse of power, discrimination, conflicts of interest, and public trust. By following ethical standards, public administrators ensure that their actions serve the public interest and promote the well-being of society.

Public administration ethics is also linked to the concept of public service ethics, which prioritizes the idea that public administrators should act in the service of the common good. In this sense, ethics in public administration is not only about personal conduct but also about the culture of the public sector as a whole. Ethical behaviour and governance principles form the backbone of effective and just public administration.

The Connection Between Ethics and Good Governance:-

Good governance encompasses several principles that foster a democratic, accountable, and efficient government. These principles include transparency, accountability, participation, responsiveness, and rule of law. Ethics is integral to all of these principles. The presence of ethical conduct in public administration enhances the legitimacy of government institutions and enables the effective delivery of public services.

1. Transparency

Transparency is the cornerstone of good governance.

It ensures that government actions, decisions, and policies are visible to the public and can be scrutinized. Ethical standards in public administration promote transparency by encouraging openness in decision-making processes. When public administrators adhere to ethical guidelines, they are more likely to provide clear, understandable, and accessible information to the public. Transparency in the allocation of resources, the hiring of employees, and the awarding of contracts helps to reduce corruption and build trust in public institutions.

2. Accountability

Accountability is another essential element of good governance, ensuring that public officials are answerable for their actions. Ethical conduct requires public administrators to take responsibility for their decisions and actions. This includes accepting the consequences of mistakes and seeking to correct any harm caused. Public officials must be accountable not only to their superiors but also to the citizens they serve. Accountability mechanisms, such as audits, reviews, and oversight committees, are strengthened when public administrators embrace ethical standards.

3. Rule of Law

The rule of law is a fundamental principle of democratic governance, ensuring that all individuals, including public officials, are subject to the law. Ethical behavior in public administration supports the rule of law by ensuring that government actions are lawful and consistent with constitutional and legal norms. Public administrators who act ethically respect legal frameworks and the rights of citizens, contributing to a just and orderly society.

4. Participation

Good governance promotes the active participation of citizens in political and decision-making processes. Ethical public administrators respect the rights of citizens to be involved in government decisions, consult the public on key issues, and encourage civic engagement. By adhering to ethical standards, public officials create an environment where the voices of all citizens are heard and considered in the formulation of policies and programs.

5. Responsiveness

Responsiveness refers to the ability of public institutions to meet the needs and concerns of the public. Ethical public administrators recognize the importance of responding promptly and effectively to the needs of the people they serve. This requires listening to citizens, addressing their concerns, and ensuring that policies and services are designed to improve the quality of life for all members of society.

The Role of Ethical Leadership in Public Administration:-

Ethical leadership is central to fostering good governance in public administration. Leaders who demonstrate high ethical standards serve as role models for their subordinates



and create a culture of integrity within government institutions. Ethical leaders are not only committed to following the rules but also to making decisions that align with the values of justice, fairness, and the common good.

1. Leading by Example

Ethical leaders in public administration lead by example. They exhibit honesty, transparency, and fairness in their interactions with subordinates, the public, and other government agencies. Their conduct sets a standard for others to follow, creating an environment in which ethical behavior is encouraged and rewarded. When public leaders act with integrity, they inspire trust and confidence in their leadership, which in turn strengthens public institutions.

2. Promoting Ethical Culture

Leaders in public administration have the responsibility to cultivate a culture of ethics within their organizations. This involves creating ethical codes of conduct, providing ethics training to employees, and establishing systems for reporting unethical behavior. Ethical leaders also ensure that violations of ethical standards are addressed promptly and fairly. A culture of ethics within public administration is critical for fostering an environment of good governance.

3. Balancing Conflicting Interests

Ethical leaders in public administration are often faced with difficult decisions that require balancing competing interests. They must weigh the needs of the public, the interests of political stakeholders, and the demands of public service. Ethical decision-making helps leaders navigate these conflicts in a way that prioritizes the well-being of society and upholds the principles of fairness and justice.

Challenges to Ethics in Public Administration:-

While ethics is foundational to good governance, public administrators often face several challenges in adhering to ethical standards. These challenges can arise from internal and external pressures that may compromise ethical behavior.

Some of the main challenges include:

1. Corruption

Corruption is one of the most significant ethical challenges in public administration. It undermines public trust, distorts decision-making processes, and wastes public resources. Corruption can take many forms, including bribery, nepotism, embezzlement, and favoritism. Addressing corruption requires strong ethical leadership, clear anti-corruption policies, and robust accountability mechanisms.

2. Political Influence

Public administrators often operate in a political environment where decisions may be influenced by political considerations. While political leaders have a role in shaping public policy, ethical administrators must resist undue political interference and remain committed to serving the public interest rather than political agendas. Maintaining impartiality and

independence is crucial for ensuring ethical decision-making.

3. Lack of Resources

In many cases, public administrators face resource constraints that make it difficult to uphold ethical standards. Limited funding, staff shortages, and pressure to deliver results can lead to compromises in ethics. For example, administrators may be tempted to cut corners or engage in unethical behavior to meet performance targets. It is important for public institutions to allocate sufficient resources and provide support to public administrators to enable them to carry out their duties ethically.

4. Conflicts of Interest

Conflicts of interest are a common ethical challenge in public administration, particularly when public officials have personal or financial interests that may influence their professional decisions. Public administrators must disclose any potential conflicts of interest and recuse themselves from decision-making when necessary. Ethical frameworks and transparent processes help mitigate the risks of conflicts of interest.

5. Cultural and Organizational Norms

The ethical climate in an organization can be influenced by its culture and prevailing norms. In some cases, unethical behavior may be tolerated or even rewarded within certain government departments or institutions. Leaders must actively work to create an ethical organizational culture and hold individuals accountable for unethical actions, no matter their position.

Ethics in public administration is essential for achieving good governance. By promoting transparency, accountability, participation, and the rule of law, ethical behavior in public administration fosters trust in government institutions and enhances the delivery of public services. Ethical leadership is vital in creating a culture of integrity within public organizations, where decision-makers prioritize the public good over personal gain. While there are numerous challenges to ethical behavior in public administration, including corruption, political influence, and resource constraints, ethical principles remain the cornerstone of effective and just governance.

Ultimately, ethics is not just a theoretical ideal; it is a practical necessity for the functioning of democratic governments. Public administrators, leaders, and citizens must all play a role in ensuring that ethics remains at the heart of public service. Only through ethical conduct in public administration can governments truly serve the interests of the people and promote the values of justice, fairness, and equality.

TOPICS OF THE MONTH





JOY IS THE SIMPLEST FORM OF GRATITUDE
- DR. Alexander Jacob IPS

**REALITY DOES NOT CONFORM TO THE IDEAL,
BUT CONFIRMS IT**

-DR. Babu Sebastian

**THE COST OF BEING WRONG IS LESS THAN
THE COST OF DOING NOTHING**
-DR. G. Prasanna Kumar IAS

**TECHNOLOGY AS THE SILENT FACTOR IN
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

-Santhosh Taneja



Joy is the Simplest Form of Gratitude

The human experience is a tapestry of emotions, thoughts, and actions, all woven together to create meaning and connection. Among these emotions, joy and gratitude stand out as profound forces that not only enrich our lives but also deepen our understanding of the world and our place within it. The statement “Joy is the simplest form of gratitude” encapsulates a powerful idea: the expression of joy is an intrinsic acknowledgment of life’s blessings, a testament to our appreciation for the moments that uplift and sustain us. This essay explores the profound interplay between joy and gratitude, examining their psychological, philosophical, and societal dimensions.

The Interconnection of Joy and Gratitude

Joy and gratitude are intrinsically linked, each feeding into and amplifying the other. Joy is a spontaneous emotion, a response to something that delights or uplifts us. Gratitude, on the other hand, is a reflective state of thankfulness for the good in our lives. When we experience joy, it often stems from a recognition of something valuable – a loved one’s presence, an accomplishment, or the beauty of nature. In such moments, joy becomes an outward manifestation of our inner gratitude. Consider a simple scenario: a child receiving a gift. The child’s joy is immediate and unfiltered, a direct expression of gratitude for the gesture of kindness. Similarly, in adult life, moments of joy often arise from appreciating the intangible – a kind word, a supportive community, or the serenity of a sunset. In essence, joy serves as a natural and effortless way to express gratitude, bypassing the need for elaborate words or gestures.

Psychological Insights into Joy and Gratitude

Psychological research provides valuable insights into the connection between joy and gratitude. Studies in positive psychology indicate that gratitude fosters a positive outlook, enhancing overall well-being and increasing the likelihood of experiencing joy. When individuals cultivate a habit of gratitude – whether through journaling, mindfulness, or expressing thanks – they tend to become more attuned to life’s blessings. This heightened awareness makes them more likely to experience joy in everyday moments.

Neuroscience also supports this relationship. Gratitude activates brain regions associated with reward and positive emotion, such as the prefrontal cortex and the anterior cingulate cortex. These regions overlap with those activated during moments of joy, suggesting a shared neural basis. By practicing gratitude, individuals effectively prime their brains to experience joy more frequently and intensely.

Moreover, joy and gratitude are antidotes to negative emotions such as envy, resentment, and despair. When we focus on what we are grateful for, we shift our perspective from scarcity to abundance, creating a fertile ground for joy to flourish. This perspective shift not only improves mental health but also enhances resilience, enabling individuals to navigate life’s challenges with a sense of hope and optimism.

Philosophical Perspectives

Philosophical traditions across cultures have long recognized the relationship between joy and gratitude. In ancient Greek philosophy, Epicurus emphasized the importance of appreciating simple pleasures as a path to happiness. He argued that gratitude for life’s fundamental joys – such as friendship, nourishment, and peace – is key to attaining a fulfilled life.

Similarly, in Eastern philosophy, gratitude is often seen as a cornerstone of spiritual practice. Buddhism teaches mindfulness and appreciation for the present moment, fostering a state of joy that arises from gratitude for life’s impermanence and interconnectedness. The Zen saying “A single cup of tea can hold the universe” reflects this ethos, emphasizing how simple joys can evoke profound gratitude.

Religious traditions also highlight the interplay between joy and gratitude. Christianity, for instance, encourages believers to “rejoice always” and give thanks in all circumstances (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18). This dual emphasis underscores the idea that joy and gratitude are not merely responses to favorable conditions but intentional practices that enrich the human spirit.

Societal Implications of Joy as Gratitude

The expression of joy as gratitude has far-reaching implications for society. When individuals share their joy, they create a ripple effect, inspiring others to recognize and appreciate the positive aspects of their own lives. This collective acknowledgment of life’s blessings fosters a sense of community and interconnectedness.

Consider acts of celebration, whether personal milestones like birthdays or collective events like festivals. These occasions are not only opportunities for joy but also moments to express gratitude for shared experiences, cultural heritage, and the bonds that unite us. In this way, joy as gratitude becomes a unifying force, bridging differences and strengthening social cohesion.

Moreover, organizations and institutions can benefit from fostering a culture of gratitude. Workplaces that encourage employees to express appreciation for one another often report higher levels of job satisfaction, productivity, and collaboration. Similarly, educational institutions that integrate gratitude practices into their curricula help students develop emotional intelligence, empathy, and a sense of purpose.

Practical Ways to Cultivate Joy and Gratitude

Cultivating joy and gratitude in daily life does not require grand gestures; rather, it is about embracing simple, consistent practices that nurture these emotions. Some practical approaches include:

1. Gratitude Journaling: Writing down things you are grateful for each day helps focus attention on positive experiences and primes the mind for joy.
2. Mindfulness Practices: Engaging in meditation or mindful observation enhances awareness of the present moment, fostering appreciation for life’s small pleasures.



3. Acts of Kindness: Helping others can evoke joy and gratitude, creating a virtuous cycle of giving and receiving.
4. Celebrating Achievements: Taking time to acknowledge personal or collective accomplishments reinforces gratitude and joy.
5. Nature Connection: Spending time outdoors and appreciating the natural world can evoke feelings of wonder and gratitude.

By integrating these practices into daily routines, individuals can cultivate a mindset that embraces joy as a natural expression of gratitude.

Challenges and Opportunities

While the relationship between joy and gratitude is profound, it is not without challenges. Modern lifestyles, characterized by busyness, materialism, and digital distractions, often obscure the simple joys of life. Additionally, societal pressures to achieve and compete can create a sense of discontent, making it difficult to cultivate gratitude.

However, these challenges also present opportunities for growth. By consciously prioritizing gratitude and joy,

individuals can counteract these negative influences and reclaim a sense of balance and fulfillment. For instance, embracing minimalism or practicing digital detox can help shift focus from external validations to internal contentment. Similarly, gratitude practices can serve as powerful tools for navigating adversity, enabling individuals to find joy even in difficult circumstances.

Conclusion

Joy, as the simplest form of gratitude, is a profound expression of our appreciation for life's blessings. It transcends words and actions, embodying the essence of thankfulness in its purest form. By cultivating a mindset that embraces gratitude and joy, we can enhance our well-being, deepen our connections with others, and contribute to a more compassionate and harmonious society. As we navigate the complexities of life, let us remember that the simplest expressions of joy often hold the deepest gratitude, reminding us of the beauty and abundance that surround us each day.

REALITY DOES NOT CONFORM TO THE IDEAL, BUT CONFIRMS IT

The interplay between reality and ideals has long been a subject of philosophical, political, and social discourse. Ideals represent the highest aspirations and values of humanity, often guiding us toward what we perceive as perfection or a better state of existence. However, reality—with its complexities, imperfections, and constraints—rarely aligns perfectly with these ideals. Yet, rather than invalidating ideals, reality often affirms their significance by highlighting the necessity of striving toward them. This dynamic relationship underscores the enduring relevance of ideals in shaping human progress and societal transformation.

Understanding Ideals and Reality

Ideals are abstract principles or visions that define what is morally, ethically, or functionally perfect. They serve as benchmarks against which actions, institutions, and societies are measured. Justice, equality, freedom, and truth are examples of enduring ideals that have inspired humanity across generations.

Reality, on the other hand, encompasses the practical and tangible circumstances of existence. It is shaped by human behavior, societal structures, natural laws, and historical contingencies. Reality often deviates from ideals due to constraints such as limited resources, human fallibility, and conflicting interests.

The apparent gap between ideals and reality has been a source of skepticism. Critics argue that lofty ideals are impractical or utopian. However, this perspective overlooks the critical role of ideals in providing direction and meaning. Even when reality falls short, the persistent aspiration for ideals confirms their validity and necessity.

Historical Context: Ideals as Catalysts for Change

Throughout history, ideals have driven transformative movements and societal progress. Consider the struggle for freedom and equality during the abolition of slavery. The

ideal of universal human dignity clashed with the grim reality of oppression and exploitation. Though emancipation did not immediately achieve full equality, the ideal persisted, fueling subsequent civil rights movements and shaping modern democracies.

Similarly, the concept of **justice** has evolved over centuries, often confronting entrenched systems of inequality and privilege. The ideal of justice inspired the establishment of constitutional democracies, legal frameworks, and international institutions such as the United Nations. While injustices persist globally, the enduring relevance of justice as an ideal confirms its importance as a guiding principle.

The Gap Between Ideals and Reality

The divergence between ideals and reality is inevitable due to the inherent limitations of human societies:

1. **Human Imperfection:** Individuals and institutions are influenced by biases, selfish interests, and errors in judgment. These imperfections hinder the realization of ideals.
2. **Structural Constraints:** Economic, political, and cultural systems often resist change, perpetuating inequalities and limiting the scope for idealistic interventions.
3. **Conflicting Priorities:** Different groups may prioritize competing ideals, such as liberty versus security, leading to compromises and trade-offs in governance and decision-making.
4. **Resource Limitations:** Practical constraints, such as scarcity of resources or technological inadequacies, often impede the implementation of ideal solutions.

Despite these challenges, the persistent pursuit of ideals highlights their enduring relevance. The acknowledgment of the gap between ideals and reality underscores the need for continuous effort and innovation to bridge it.



Reality Confirms the Importance of Ideals

Reality's failure to conform to ideals does not invalidate them; rather, it emphasizes their necessity as benchmarks for progress. This affirmation occurs in several ways:

- 1. Ideals as Aspirational Goals:** Ideals provide a vision for a better future, motivating individuals and societies to strive for improvement. For example, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) represent an idealistic framework for global well-being. While achieving these goals entirely may seem improbable, they guide policies, investments, and actions that bring humanity closer to their realization.
- 2. Critique and Reform:** The disparity between ideals and reality generates critical reflection and reform. For instance, the gap between the ideal of gender equality and the reality of gender-based discrimination has spurred movements like feminism, leading to legal and social reforms worldwide.
- 3. Resilience in Adversity:** Ideals provide hope and resilience during times of crisis. In the face of war, poverty, or pandemics, ideals such as solidarity and compassion inspire collective action and innovation, demonstrating their enduring relevance.
- 4. Guidance in Ethical Dilemmas:** Ideals serve as moral compasses, guiding decisions in complex scenarios. The principle of non-violence, championed by leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, continues to influence peaceful resistance movements, even in situations where violence appears inevitable.

Case Studies: Ideals in Action

1. Democracy and Governance

The ideal of democracy envisions governance based on participation, equality, and accountability. While democratic systems often face challenges like corruption, voter apathy, and authoritarian tendencies, the aspiration for democratic ideals has driven reforms and revolutions worldwide. Reality's deviations from democratic principles reaffirm the need for vigilance and advocacy to uphold these ideals.

2. Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability

The ideal of environmental sustainability seeks harmony between human development and ecological balance. Despite the reality of environmental degradation and climate change, the commitment to sustainability has spurred global initiatives like the Paris Agreement. These efforts highlight how ideals inspire action even in the face of daunting challenges.

3. Social Justice Movements

The civil rights movement in the United States exemplifies the power of ideals. The ideal of racial equality confronted systemic racism and segregation. Although progress has been uneven, the continued relevance of this ideal confirms its significance in shaping policies and societal attitudes.

The Dynamic Relationship Between Ideals and Reality

The relationship between ideals and reality is dynamic and reciprocal. Ideals influence reality by providing direction and purpose, while reality shapes the interpretation and evolution of ideals. For instance, the ideal of equality has expanded over time to encompass not only race and gender but also issues like disability, LGBTQ+ rights, and economic equity. This evolution reflects how reality informs and enriches our understanding of ideals.

Challenges in Upholding Ideals

- 1. Cynicism and Complacency:** The perception that ideals are unattainable may lead to cynicism or complacency, undermining efforts toward progress.
- 2. Misuse of Ideals:** Ideals can be misused to justify oppressive or exclusionary practices, as seen in instances where nationalism or religious ideals are distorted to promote divisive agendas.
- 3. Balancing Competing Ideals:** Striking a balance between conflicting ideals, such as individual freedom and collective security, requires careful deliberation and compromise.

Moving Forward: Bridging the Gap

To bridge the gap between reality and ideals, several strategies can be adopted:

- 1. Incremental Progress:** Recognize that achieving ideals is a gradual process. Incremental steps, informed by evidence and inclusive dialogue, can lead to meaningful change.
- 2. Education and Awareness:** Promote education that fosters critical thinking and empathy, enabling individuals to engage constructively with ideals and their practical implications.
- 3. Institutional Accountability:** Strengthen institutions to uphold ideals through transparency, inclusivity, and accountability.
- 4. Collaborative Efforts:** Encourage collaboration among governments, civil society, and individuals to address shared challenges and pursue common ideals.

CONCLUSION

The tension between reality and ideals is not a failure but a testament to the enduring significance of human aspirations. Ideals may never be fully realized, but their presence guides humanity toward a more just, equitable, and compassionate world. Reality, with its imperfections and challenges, confirms the necessity of ideals by highlighting their relevance in shaping progress and resilience. As we navigate the complexities of the modern world, the interplay between reality and ideals will remain a driving force for innovation, transformation, and hope.



THE COST OF BEING WRONG IS LESS THAN THE COST OF DOING NOTHING

The concept of regret has been an integral part of human existence, often playing a pivotal role in decision-making processes and personal growth. Whether it is the regret of an action taken in the past or the regret of inaction, this emotional response has been explored extensively in psychology, philosophy, and culture. People frequently face the dilemma of whether their actions or inaction will result in future pain or missed opportunities. The idea that “the cost of being wrong is less than the cost of doing nothing” suggests that inaction could lead to even greater losses than making a mistake. This essay delves into this concept, analyzing both the costs of inaction and the implications of being wrong, particularly in the context of decision-making in individual lives and organizational leadership.

Understanding Regret and the Dilemma of Inaction vs. Action

At the heart of this discussion lies the human tendency to regret. Regret arises when one feels dissatisfied with the outcomes of their decisions, particularly when hindsight reveals a better course of action. This feeling can stem from an action taken in the past or, more poignantly, from a missed opportunity – when one chose not to act. The regret of inaction is often seen as more profound because it involves missed opportunities that cannot be revisited.

However, it is not always clear whether it is better to act or remain patient. While it may seem obvious in retrospect that certain actions should have been taken, these realizations often come only after the experience has passed. The crux of the matter lies in deciding when to act and when to wait, especially in uncertain situations where the outcomes are unpredictable.

This dilemma is not exclusive to individuals. In the realm of leadership and governance, leaders frequently face decisions about whether to act decisively or to wait for more information. The cost of hasty actions can be significant, and the consequences of inaction can be just as detrimental. This is particularly relevant in crisis situations, where the stakes are high, and the margin for error is slim. Should a leader act quickly to address an immediate threat, or should they wait to understand the situation more fully?

The Cost of ‘Doing Nothing’

The argument for taking action, even if it could be wrong, is based on the notion that time and opportunities are limited and often beyond human control. Once an opportunity is missed, it may never return, and the consequences of failing to act can be irreversible. Inaction, therefore, is often perceived as the greater of two evils. This perception is deeply ingrained in many cultures, particularly in Western societies, where action is valued over inaction.

A study published in the *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* in 2021 found that participants not only evaluated actions more favorably than inactions but also chose to engage in actions more than inactions. This aligns with the Protestant work ethic, as described by German sociologist

Max Weber in his seminal work *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Weber argued that values such as hard work and productivity, central to Protestantism, played a critical role in the development of modern capitalism. The emphasis on hard work, efficiency, and decisiveness is deeply embedded in the ethos of Western cultures, where inaction is often seen as a sign of laziness or lack of conviction.

In the context of both individuals and organizations, incremental action can yield tangible results. The fear of indecision and the paralysis that comes with it can be more damaging than the mistakes made by taking the wrong action. In moments of crisis or uncertainty, quick thinking and prompt action have been instrumental in turning situations around, whether in a battlefield, a corporate setting, or a hijacking scenario. History has shown that being paralyzed by indecision can have far-reaching consequences, whereas swift action – though flawed – can sometimes salvage the situation.

However, this mindset has its limitations. Not all situations call for immediate action, and in some cases, acting too quickly can lead to regret. In instances where time allows for deliberation and thoughtful decision-making, rushing into an action can exacerbate problems and lead to unintended consequences.

The Cost of ‘Being Wrong’

While the quote suggests that the cost of being wrong is less than doing nothing, this is not always the case. In certain scenarios, the consequences of being wrong can be far more costly than the price of inaction. For example, consider a situation where a world leader, eager to respond to a small-scale border incursion, orders a military response without attempting diplomatic measures. In such a case, the desire for immediate action can escalate tensions and lead to conflict, resulting in loss of lives and resources – an outcome far more severe than inaction or a delayed response.

The wisdom of restraint is exemplified in the teachings of the ancient Chinese strategist Sun Tzu, who famously said, “The wise win before the fight while the ignorant fight to win.” In *The Art of War*, Sun Tzu emphasizes the importance of preparation, patience, and strategy over hasty action. He suggests that victory is not always achieved through direct confrontation but through subtle maneuvers and careful use of resources. In this context, the decision to wait and act only when the time is right can lead to a more favorable outcome than impulsive action.

This principle applies not only in warfare but also in business, where strategic patience can yield long-term benefits. Investors, for instance, are often advised to avoid reacting impulsively to market fluctuations. Instead, they are encouraged to take a patient, long-term approach to investments. In the corporate world, hasty decisions driven by the desire to act quickly can result in poor outcomes, while a more patient and calculated approach can lead to sustained success.



Furthermore, the costs of being wrong can extend beyond immediate tangible consequences. In decision-making processes, especially those involving complex issues with many variables, the wrong action can lead to a cascade of negative effects. These effects can be difficult to reverse, and the consequences may linger long after the decision has been made.

A Balanced Approach: Action vs. Patience

While the cost of being wrong can be substantial, it is important to recognize that inaction is not always the safer option. In many cases, a balanced approach that combines both action and patience can be the most prudent course of action. The key is to assess the situation carefully and decide whether immediate action is necessary or if waiting for more information is a better strategy.

In some circumstances, waiting too long can lead to missed opportunities or allow problems to escalate beyond control. In such cases, taking action, even if imperfect, may be preferable to doing nothing. Conversely, there are times when hasty decisions can result in irreversible damage, and exercising patience is the wiser choice.

TECHNOLOGY AS THE SILENT FACTOR IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

In the context of international relations, technology encompasses a broad range of advancements that influence diplomacy, power dynamics, and global governance. It includes innovations in military systems, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and digital infrastructure, all of which shape the way nations interact and assert influence on the global stage. Historically, technology has played a significant role in shaping the balance of power, from the invention of the printing press and the advent of steam power to the development of nuclear weapons and the rise of the digital age. Each technological advancement has redefined strategic competition, economic leadership, and geopolitical alliances. Today, technology serves as a critical factor in diplomacy, enabling countries to project power through cyber capabilities, artificial intelligence, and advanced military systems. Furthermore, it plays a pivotal role in global governance, as nations seek to regulate emerging technologies like AI, biotechnology, and autonomous systems to address ethical concerns and ensure security. Despite its understated role in traditional diplomacy, technology now underpins virtually every aspect of international relations, influencing policy decisions, national security strategies, and the allocation of resources. As such, understanding the multifaceted impact of technology is essential to comprehending the evolving dynamics of global politics.

Technology as a Driver of Geopolitical Power

Technology plays a pivotal role in shaping geopolitical power, with advancements in military, nuclear, space, and computing domains redefining the global balance of power. Military technology, including hypersonic missiles and autonomous drones, has intensified the arms race, allowing nations to enhance their precision strike capabilities and

The ability to distinguish between when to act and when to wait is a skill that comes with experience. The best leaders, whether in business, government, or personal life, are those who understand the importance of timing. They know when to take decisive action and when to step back and allow events to unfold.

CONCLUSION

The cost of being wrong is less than the cost of doing nothing, but this maxim does not hold true in every situation. While action is often valued over inaction, it is crucial to recognize that both inaction and hasty action carry their own risks and costs. In the end, the most effective approach is one that combines thoughtful deliberation with timely action, balancing the need for decisiveness with the wisdom of restraint. The key to success lies in knowing when to act and when to wait, a skill that comes from experience, self-awareness, and careful judgment. In both personal and organizational decision-making, the ability to navigate the tension between action and inaction can determine the outcome of even the most complex challenges.

maintain strategic superiority. Cyber warfare has emerged as a critical tool, undermining national security by targeting infrastructure, communication systems, and democratic processes, as seen in recent high-profile attacks. Nuclear technology continues to influence geopolitics through deterrence, where nations with advanced arsenals maintain leverage in global negotiations. Space exploration has become a new frontier for dominance, with satellites not only enabling superior surveillance and communication but also asserting strategic control over critical resources like GPS networks. Artificial intelligence and quantum computing further amplify this dynamic, driving competition between superpowers to achieve quantum supremacy and advanced AI capabilities. These technologies revolutionize intelligence gathering, economic forecasting, and encryption systems, granting unparalleled advantages to those who master them. In this race, technological innovation is not just a tool but a determinant of influence, security, and economic competitiveness, making it a cornerstone of modern geopolitics. The strategic pursuit of these technologies underscores the critical nexus between innovation and global power dynamics.

Technology and Economic Influence

Technology has become a critical driver of economic power, reshaping global trade dynamics and deepening dependencies among nations. Control over critical technologies, such as semiconductors, has become a focal point of geopolitical tension, as seen in the US-China competition over chip manufacturing. These tiny but essential components power everything from smartphones to military equipment, making them a strategic asset. Export controls and technological sanctions have emerged as tools of economic warfare, enabling nations to limit their rivals' access to advanced



technology and disrupt supply chains. The rise of digital economies has further transformed global power structures. Tech giants like Google, Amazon, and Alibaba wield influence that rivals nation-states, reshaping industries and dominating global markets. Their control over data and platforms gives them unparalleled economic leverage. Fintech innovations, including block chain and digital currencies, are also disrupting traditional trade mechanisms. Cryptocurrencies enable borderless transactions, challenging conventional banking systems, while central bank digital currencies (CBDCs) are redefining monetary policy and international trade settlements. Together, these advancements underscore the intersection of technology and economics, where control over innovation and digital infrastructure determines global competitiveness. In this evolving landscape, technological leadership has become synonymous with economic dominance, making it a key factor in shaping the world's economic order.

Cybersecurity and Espionage

Cybersecurity has emerged as a critical domain in international conflict, with state-sponsored cyber-attacks and technology-driven espionage redefining the nature of warfare and diplomacy. Attacks on critical infrastructure, such as the Stuxnet worm targeting Iran's nuclear program and the SolarWinds breach infiltrating US government systems, highlight how cyber tools can disrupt nations without conventional military engagement. These attacks expose vulnerabilities in critical sectors like energy, finance, and defense, making cybersecurity a frontline issue in global power dynamics. The rise of technology-driven espionage further complicates this landscape. Advanced spyware like Pegasus enables states to conduct surveillance on individuals, opposition leaders, and even foreign governments, raising significant ethical concerns. While such tools claim to target criminal activities, their misuse for political and strategic purposes has sparked global debates over privacy and sovereignty. The issue of data sovereignty has also taken center stage, as nations grapple with controlling data generated within their borders while ensuring its protection against external exploitation. Balancing security with privacy rights is a contentious challenge, especially as surveillance technologies become increasingly pervasive. In this era of digital espionage and cyber conflict, cybersecurity is no longer just a technical issue—it is a key determinant of national security, sovereignty, and trust in the international order.

Diplomacy in the Digital Age

The digital age has transformed diplomacy, with technology playing a pivotal role in shaping international relations and communication. Social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook have emerged as tools of public diplomacy, enabling leaders and governments to engage directly with global audiences. "Twitter diplomacy," where policymakers share official statements or engage in discussions online, has added transparency but also risks misinterpretation and escalation. These platforms allow nations to shape narratives, counter misinformation, and build soft power, making them critical in modern diplomatic strategy.

Beyond public engagement, technology has enhanced communication in international negotiations. Virtual meetings, secure messaging platforms, and real-time data sharing enable swift coordination and decision-making, especially during crises.

Tech alliances are also reshaping traditional diplomatic frameworks. Initiatives like the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad), comprising the US, India, Japan, and Australia, prioritize tech cooperation to address challenges such as cybersecurity, 5G infrastructure, and emerging technologies. Similarly, nations are forming partnerships to counterbalance the technological dominance of rising powers like China. These alliances foster innovation, standard-setting, and shared security in critical technology domains. In this interconnected world, digital tools and tech-driven collaborations have become integral to diplomacy, redefining how nations engage, compete, and cooperate on the global stage.

Technology and Global Governance

Technology has outpaced global governance frameworks, presenting challenges in regulating emerging innovations like artificial intelligence (AI), biotechnology, and autonomous systems. These technologies hold immense potential but raise ethical and security concerns that transcend national borders. AI, for instance, poses risks of bias, misuse, and job displacement, while biotechnology like CRISPR raises questions about bioethics and unintended consequences. Autonomous systems, especially in military applications, threaten to lower the threshold for conflict escalation. The absence of universally accepted rules has led to fragmented regulations, increasing the urgency for global frameworks that ensure ethical usage, transparency, and accountability while fostering innovation.

The digital divide further complicates the role of technology in global governance. Developed nations often dominate in technological advancements, while developing countries struggle with limited access to digital infrastructure. This inequality influences global power dynamics, as technological access translates to economic and strategic advantages. For example, disparities in internet penetration, digital education, and access to AI tools exacerbate existing inequalities, marginalizing billions. Conversely, technology can also bridge gaps—initiatives like low-cost internet solutions and open-source platforms offer opportunities to empower underserved communities. Addressing these dual challenges requires international collaboration, ensuring that technology becomes a unifying force rather than a divisive one in the quest for equitable global governance.

Technology as a Soft Power Tool

Technology has emerged as a potent instrument of soft power, enabling nations to shape global perceptions and foster goodwill. Cultural influence, driven by technology, has seen an unprecedented global reach. Platforms like YouTube, Netflix, and Spotify facilitate the dissemination of cultural products, such as Hollywood films, K-pop music, and video games, which transcend borders and create cultural affinity.



These digital exports not only generate economic value but also enhance a nation's global image, making technology a critical enabler of cultural diplomacy.

Beyond cultural influence, technology plays a significant role in development aid, strengthening soft power in developing nations. Telemedicine initiatives provide remote healthcare solutions to underserved regions, while e-learning platforms democratize access to education, empowering individuals and communities. For example, India's digital public goods, such as Aadhaar and UPI, have been shared with other nations to foster partnerships and demonstrate technological leadership. Similarly, low-cost internet projects like SpaceX's Starlink aim to connect remote areas, enhancing global inclusivity. By addressing critical needs through technology, nations can build lasting goodwill, fostering partnerships and trust. In a world increasingly defined by digital interconnectedness, technology serves as a bridge, allowing countries to influence hearts and minds while contributing to global progress and equity.

Case Studies in Technology and Geopolitics

The role of technology in shaping global power dynamics is evident in various case studies, with the US-China rivalry being a prime example. This competition spans critical sectors like artificial intelligence (AI), 5G, and semiconductors. The US leads in advanced AI research and chip design, while China aggressively develops its 5G networks and semiconductor production capabilities, aiming for technological self-reliance. The rivalry extends beyond economics, as both nations leverage technology for geopolitical influence, evident in US-imposed export controls and China's Belt and Road Initiative incorporating tech infrastructure projects.

Russia's cyber influence showcases another dimension of technology's impact. Allegations of election interference, such as during the 2016 US Presidential election, highlight the use of cyber tools to destabilize political systems. Campaigns involving misinformation, hacking, and digital espionage reflect how Russia leverages cyber capabilities to assert influence and challenge global norms.

India's role in global tech illustrates how technology can be a soft power tool. Known for its IT prowess, India exports software services and contributes to global digital infrastructure. Initiatives like the Aadhaar system and Unified Payments Interface (UPI) demonstrate India's capacity to create scalable digital public goods, strengthening its reputation as a tech innovator. These case studies underline technology's multifaceted role in global geopolitics.

Challenges and Ethical Dilemmas

The weaponization of technology presents significant challenges and ethical dilemmas, particularly with dual-use technologies that have both civilian and military applications.

These advancements complicate international relations, as nations seek to control potentially destabilizing innovations, such as advanced robotics or surveillance tools, while maintaining strategic superiority. For example, technologies like autonomous drones or cybersecurity tools can be used for both defense and offensive purposes, raising concerns about misuse and escalation.

Additionally, the rise of tech nationalism presents a challenge to global collaboration. While nations strive to safeguard their technological sovereignty, this can lead to fragmented regulations and a lack of unified global standards. Balancing national interests with the need for shared global tech frameworks is crucial for promoting innovation without fostering competition that results in conflicts or inequality.

Ethical dilemmas surrounding artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics further exacerbate these issues. Different nations adopt varying approaches to AI ethics, from transparency and bias mitigation in the West to China's more state-driven, centralized model. These disparities create inconsistencies in global AI governance, where data privacy, algorithmic accountability, and human oversight become contentious points. As nations grapple with the ethical implications of AI, issues like algorithmic decision-making, AI in warfare, and the potential for autonomous systems to outpace human judgment continue to challenge global norms. Addressing these challenges requires interdisciplinary cooperation and the establishment of shared principles to guide the responsible development and deployment of emerging technologies.

In the contemporary landscape of international relations, technology has emerged as a silent yet powerful force shaping diplomacy, power projection, and global governance. From military advancements to economic influence, cybersecurity, and digital diplomacy, technology permeates every facet of global interaction. Its dual-use nature, rapid advancements, and ethical implications present both opportunities and challenges for nations striving to maintain security, foster cooperation, and assert influence on the world stage. While technological competition fosters innovation and strategic dominance, it also risks fragmentation and the exacerbation of inequalities, particularly through the digital divide. As nations increasingly recognize the strategic importance of technology, the need for collaborative approaches to establish global standards and ethical guidelines becomes more pressing. Whether through regulating emerging technologies, fostering tech alliances, or leveraging technology for soft power, the focus must remain on ensuring that technological advancements contribute to peace, equity, and sustainable development. In this evolving context, technology remains a silent yet potent force, shaping the future of global politics and diplomacy.



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MODEL QUESTION PAPER-MCQ





Q1. The “World Drought Atlas 2024” report, which provides insights on global drought trends, was published jointly by which of the following organizations?

- A. UNCCD and the European Commission’s Joint Research Centre
- B. UNEP and the World Bank
- C. WHO and the UNDP
- D. FAO and the World Meteorological Organization

Q2. Consider the following statements regarding ‘Nano Bubble Technology’ often seen in news.

- 1. This technology can be used in water purification by enhancing oxygen levels and accelerating the breakdown of organic pollutants by microbial action.
- 2. This technology is irrelevant for medical applications contradicting its use in targeted drug delivery and medical imaging.

Identify the correct statement/s.

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Q3. The ‘GRIHA’ assessment, often seen in news, is related to which of the following?

- A. Rating of industrial processes for emissions
- B. Evaluation of the sustainability of buildings and habitats
- C. Certification of renewable energy products
- D. Assessment of water quality in urban areas

Q4. With reference to UN’s report, ‘The Global Threat of Drying Lands’ often seen in news, consider the following statements.

- 1. Drylands cover 40.6% of Earth’s land.
- 2. Expanding drylands forecast in areas like the Midwestern United States and southern Australia.
- 3. Aridity contributed to a 12% GDP decline in African countries from 1990-2015.

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

Q5. India’s first Integrated Waste Management City, which was recently launched, is located in which of the following cities?

- A. Surat, Gujarat
- B. Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh
- C. Bengaluru, Karnataka
- D. Chennai, Tamil Nadu

Q6. Which of the following statements correctly describes the Kunming-Montreal Protocol, often seen in the news?

- A. It is a global treaty aiming to regulate and phase out hazardous chemicals contributing to ocean acidification

and coral bleaching.

- B. It is a landmark agreement under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change to limit global warming to 1.5°C.
- C. It is a multilateral agreement aiming to protect biodiversity and ecosystem services, focusing on halting biodiversity loss by 2030.
- D. It is a protocol aimed at phasing out substances that deplete the ozone layer and protect human health and the environment.

Q7. Who among the following has been recognized with the Champions of the Earth Award 2024 for their significant contributions to environmental conservation?

- A. Madhav Gadgil
- B. R K Pachauri
- C. Sunita Narain
- D. Vandana Shiva

Q8. Consider the following statements regarding ‘India State of Forest Report 2023’.

- 1. It is an annual report released by Forest Survey of India (FSI).
- 2. The report shows that there is a significant increase in forest cover as compared to the previous report.
- 3. Mizoram and show maximum forest cover increases.

Select the correct statement/s using the code given

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

Q9. Consider the following statements.

- 1. These tracks are designed for high-speed in a vacuum tube environment.
- 2. These systems use magnetic levitation to keep the pods suspended minimizing friction.

Identify the correct statement/s.

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Q10. With reference to ‘African Swine Fever’ sometimes seen in news, consider the following statements.

- 1. It is transmitted through direct contact with infected pigs and fomites making control challenging.
- 2. There is no vaccine or specific treatment for this Swine Fever.
- 3. The disease has spread to over 50 countries significantly affecting global pork production and trade.

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. Where has India's first diabetes biobank been established?

- A. Mumbai
- B. New Delhi
- C. Chennai
- D. Bengaluru

Q12. Which of the following statements correctly describes the purpose of GenCast AI, often seen in the news?

- A. It is a new AI-based healthcare diagnostic tool developed by Google for predicting genetic disorders.
- B. It is an advanced AI weather forecasting system developed by Google to improve weather prediction accuracy using big data.
- C. It is a global initiative aimed at using AI to combat climate change through renewable energy technology development.
- D. It is a machine learning-based algorithm used to predict stock market trends and guide financial decision-making.

Q13. What is DHARANI, which has been seen in the news recently?

- 1. A satellite launched by ISRO
- 2. A database for land records in India
- 3. The world's first 3D high-resolution images of the human foetal brain
- 4. A new technology for carbon capture

Q14. Which of the following refers to an open-source AI model set to transform biomedical research and drug development, often seen in the news?

- 1. AlphaFold
- 2. Boltz-1
- 3. Watson Health
- 4. DeepMind

Q15. Which of the following statements best describes the concept of an analog space mission?

- A. Analog space missions use virtual reality to simulate space conditions and train astronauts for physical space exploration tasks.
- B. Analog space missions involve replicating real space missions on Earth, simulating space environments like Mars to test human adaptability.
- C. Analog space missions refer to projects that study the historical impact of space exploration on Earth's environment.
- D. Analog space missions involve the development of actual spacecraft that travel to space, functioning as prototypes for future missions.

Q16. Consider the following pairs:

- 1. P waves - Travel through solids and liquids
- 2. S waves - Similar to sound waves
- 3. Surface waves - Most damaging waves

Which of the pairs given above are correctly matched?

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 1 and 3 only
- C. 2 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

Q17. Which of the following points highlight the differences between terrestrial and Jovian planets?

- 1. The sizes of the planets
- 2. The exposure to solar winds
- 3. The presence of land

Select the correct answer using the code provided below:

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 1 and 3 only
- C. 2 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2, and 3

Q18. Consider the following statements:

- 1. The ability of air to hold moisture increases with rising temperatures.
- 2. Relative humidity is high in the Sub-Polar low-pressure belt.

Which of the statements above is/are correct?

- A. Only 1
- B. Only 2
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Q19. Consider the following statements about latitudes and longitudes:

- 1. Latitude measures how far north or south a point is from the equator.
- 2. Both latitude and longitude are measured from the center of the Earth.

Which of the statements above is/are correct?

- A. Only 1
- B. Only 2
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Q20. What is the name of the boundary that separates the upper and lower continental crust?

- A. Mohorovičić discontinuity
- B. Conrad discontinuity
- C. Lithosphere-Asthenosphere boundary
- D. Oceanic-Continental boundary

Q21. What are the primary materials that make up the continental crust?

- A. Silica + Magnesium
- B. Silica + Aluminium
- C. Iron + Nickel
- D. Calcium + Carbon

Q22. What does dynamic metamorphism refer to?

- A. The formation of metamorphic rocks under heat alone
- B. The formation of metamorphic rocks under stress of



pressure

- C. The formation of sedimentary rocks under pressure
- D. The alteration of rocks due to volcanic activity

Q23. What happens during ocean-ocean convergence?

- A. A denser oceanic plate subducts below a less dense oceanic plate.
- B. A continental plate subducts below an oceanic plate.
- C. Both plates move apart.
- D. An oceanic plate collides with another oceanic plate without subduction.

Q24. What term is used for the lowered blocks in block mountains?

- A. Ridges
- B. Grabens
- C. Peaks
- D. Valleys

Q25. Which of the following is an example of a Hawaiian volcano?

- A. Mount St. Helens
- B. Mauna Kea
- C. Mount Fuji
- D. Mount Rainier

Q26. What characteristic of basalt lava contributes to the nature of Hawaiian volcano eruptions?

- A. It is very viscous.
- B. It is very fluid.
- C. It solidifies quickly.
- D. It contains high levels of gas.

Q27. What is a meander?

- A. A straight section of a river
- B. A pronounced curve or loop in the course of a river channel
- C. A waterfall in a river
- D. A type of sediment deposit

Q28. What shape does the deposited material acquire when a stream forms an alluvial fan?

- A. Circular
- B. Conical
- C. Flat
- D. Irregular

Q29. What are the continuous deposits formed by a stream at the foothills called?

- A. Delta
- B. Alluvial fan
- C. Floodplain
- D. Plateau

Q30. What is the adiabatic lapse rate?

- A. The rate of temperature decrease in a stationary air parcel
- B. The rate of temperature change of a rising or falling air parcel without heat exchange
- C. The rate of temperature increase in a descending air parcel
- D. The temperature of the surrounding environment.

Q31. Which of the following statements regarding the impeachment of judges in India is/are correct?

- 1. Impeachment is a process of removing a judge of the Supreme Court or the High Court mentioned in Article 124(4) and Article 218 of the Constitution.
- 2. The concept and procedure of impeachment of judges are laid down in the Constitution of India and the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968.
- 3. The legislature is allowed to discuss allegations of misconduct of judges in contexts other than removal motions.
- 4. A judge of the Supreme Court or High Court can be removed by the President on the grounds of "proved misbehaviour or incapacity" after a successful impeachment process.
- 5. The Supreme Court has not established an in-house procedure allowing judges facing serious allegations to take voluntary retirement, avoiding public impeachment.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below

- A. 1, 2, 4 and 5
- B. 1, 2, and 4 only
- C. 3, 4 and 5 only
- D. 1, 3 and 5 only

Q32. Which of the following best describes the term of office of a High Court judge in India?

- A. 5 years or until the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier
- B. 6 years or until the age of 62 years, whichever is earlier
- C. Until the age of 62 years, with no fixed tenure
- D. Until the age of 65 years, with no fixed tenure

Q33. Which of the following provisions uphold judicial independence in India?

- 1. Fixed tenure and salaries for judges
- 2. Security of tenure, ensuring judges cannot be removed arbitrarily
- 3. Separation of powers between judiciary, executive, and legislature
- 4. Power of the legislature to amend judicial appointments

Select the correct answer using the codes below:

- A. 1, 2, and 3 only
- B. 1, 2, and 4 only
- C. 2, 3, and 4 only
- D. All of the above

Q34. Consider the following statements regarding the "Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana":

- 1. The scheme aims to provide free electricity to households with rooftop solar panels up to 300 units per month.
- 2. The Ministry of Power is the nodal ministry responsible for



the implementation of the scheme.

- The Model Solar Village initiative aims to establish one solar village per district to promote energy self-reliance in rural India.

How many of the above-given statements are correct?

- Only one
- Only two
- All three
- None

Q35. Consider the following statements about the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN):

- It is a central sector scheme providing income support of Rs. 6,000 per year to all farmer families.
- The funds are transferred directly to the bank accounts of beneficiaries in three equal installments.
- Farmers owning more than 10 hectares of land are also eligible for the scheme.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- Only one
- Only two
- All three
- None

Q36. Consider the following characteristics of treasury bills:

- Treasury bills are issued at a discount to their face value.
- The maturity period of treasury bills can be 91 days, 182 days, or 364 days.
- Treasury bills pay periodic interest to the holder during the tenure.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- 1 and 2 only
- 2 and 3 only
- 1 and 3 only
- All of the above

Q37. Consider the following countries:

- Estonia
- Poland
- Belarus
- Lithuania

How many of the above countries border the Baltic Sea?

- Only one
- Only two
- Only three
- All four

Q38. Consider the following statements regarding United Nations Peacekeeping operations:

- It provides security, political and peacebuilding support to help countries make the difficult, early transition from conflict to peace.
- The Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to UN Peacekeepers in 2024 for their contribution to global peace and security.
- The Capstone Doctrine defines the basic principles and

key concepts related to UN Peacekeeping.

How many of the above given statements are incorrect?

- Only one
- Only two
- All three
- None

Q39. Match the following nuclear power plants with their associated countries:

Nuclear Power Plant	Associated Country
Koodankulam	India
Barakah	Saudi Arabia
Fukushima Daiichi	Japan
Bushehr	Iran

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- Only one
- Only two
- Only three
- All four

Q40. Consider the following nuclear-related treaties and their purposes:

Treaty	Purpose
Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)	To promote peaceful use of nuclear energy
Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty	To ban nuclear tests for all purposes
START Treaty	To limit nuclear arms between the USA and Russia
Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG)	To ensure non-proliferation through export controls

Which of the above correctly describe their purposes?

- 1 and 2 only
- 1, 2, and 3 only
- 2, 3, and 4 only
- All of the above

Q41. Consider the following statements:

- Myanmar shares borders with Mizoram, Assam, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh.
- The Department of Border Management is under the aegis of the Ministry of Defence.
- The Free Movement Regime was established between India and Myanmar as part of Treaty of Friendship, 1951.

How many of the above given statements are incorrect?

- Only one
- Only two
- All three
- None

Q42. Consider the following statements:

- Ken-Betwa Link project is the first interlinking of rivers project under the National Perspective Plan.
- Both Ken River and Betwa River are tributaries of the



Yamuna River.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Q43. Consider the following statements regarding India's border with its neighbours:

1. India shares the longest land boundary with Bangladesh.
2. The India-China border includes the McMahon Line in the eastern sector.
3. The Radcliffe Line divides India and Nepal.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- A. Only one
- B. Only two
- C. All three
- D. None

Q43. Match the following border agreements with their respective countries:

Agreement	Country
Indus Waters Treaty	Pakistan
Permanent Court of Arbitration Ruling	China
Land Boundary Agreement (LBA)	Bangladesh
Shimla Agreement	Nepal

How many of the above are correctly matched?

- A. Only one
- B. Only two
- C. Only three
- D. All four

Q43. Consider the following statements about the India-Nepal border:

1. It is an open border allowing unrestricted movement of people.
2. The boundary is demarcated by the Radcliffe Line.
3. The Lipulekh Pass dispute involves India and Nepal.

Which of the statements is/are correct?

- A. 1 and 3 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 2 only
- D. All of the above

Q44. With reference to the India economy, what are the advantages of "Inflation-Indexed Bonds (IIBs)"?

1. Government can reduce the coupon rates on its borrowing by way of IIBs.
2. IIGs provide protection to the investors from uncertainty regarding inflation.
3. The interest received as well as capital gains on IIBs are not taxable.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only

- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

Q45. With reference to foreign-owned e-commerce firms operating in India, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. They can sell their own goods in addition to offering their platforms as market-places.
2. The degree to which they can own big sellers on their platforms is limited.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Q46. Which of the following activities constitute real sector in the economy?

1. Farmers harvesting their crops
 2. Textile mills converting raw cotton into fabrics
 3. A commercial bank lending money to a trading company
 4. A corporate body issuing Rupee Denominated Bonds overseas
- E. 1 and 2 only
 - F. 2, 3 and 4 only
 - G. 1, 3 and 4 only
 - H. 1, 2, 3 and 4

Q47. Which one of the following situations best reflects "Indirect Transfers" often talked about in media recently with reference to India?

1. An Indian company investing in a foreign enterprise and paying taxes to the foreign country on the profits arising out of its investment
2. A foreign company investing in India and paying taxes to the country of its base on the profits arising out of its investment
3. An Indian company purchases tangible assets in a foreign country and sells such assets after their value increases and transfers the proceeds to India
4. A foreign company transfers shares and such shares derive their substantial value from assets located in India
5. With reference to the expenditure made by an organisation or a company, which of the following statements is/are correct?
 1. Acquiring new technology is capital expenditure.
 2. Debt financing is considered capital expenditure, while equity financing is considered revenue expenditure.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2



Q48. With reference to the Indian economy, consider the following statements:

1. A share of the household financial savings goes towards government borrowings.
2. Dated securities issued at market-related rates in auctions form a large component of internal debt.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Q49. With reference to Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission, consider the following statements:

1. Private and public hospitals must adopt it.
2. As it aims to achieve universal health coverage, every citizen of India should be part of it ultimately.
3. It has seamless portability across the country.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

Q50. Consider the following statements:

1. Tight monetary policy of US Federal Reserve could lead to capital flight.
2. Capital flight may increase the interest cost of firms with existing External Commercial Borrowings (ECBs).
3. Devaluation of domestic currency decreases the currency risk associated with ECBS.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

Q51. Consider the following statements:

1. In India, credit rating agencies are regulated by Reserve Bank of India.
2. The rating agency popularly known as ICRA is a public limited company.
3. Brickwork Ratings is an Indian credit rating agency.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only

- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

Q52. With reference to the 'Banks Board Bureau (BBB)', which of the following statements are correct?

1. The Governor of RBI is the Chairman of BBB.
2. BBB recommends for the selection of heads for Public Sector Banks.
3. BBB helps the Public Sector Banks in developing strategies and capital raising plans.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- A. 1, 2 and 3

Q52. Convertible Bonds, consider the following statements:

1. As there is an option to exchange the bond for equity, Convertible Bonds pay a lower rate of interest.
2. The option to convert to equity affords the bondholder a degree of indexation to rising consumer prices.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Q53. In India, which one of the following is responsible for maintaining price stability by controlling inflation?

- A. Department of Consumer Affairs
- B. Expenditure Management Commission
- C. Financial Stability and Development Council
- D. Reserve Bank of India

Q53. With reference to Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs), consider the following statements:

1. They enable the digital representation of physical assets.
2. They are unique cryptographic tokens that exist on a blockchain.
3. They can be traded or exchanged at equivalency and therefore can be used as a medium transactions. of commercial

Which of the statements given above are correct?







- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

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Candidate Sign	<p>INSTRUCTIONS FOR FILLING THE SHEET</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This sheet should not be folded or crushed. 2. Use only blue/black ball point pen to fill the circles. 3. Use of pencil is strictly prohibited. 4. Circles should be darkened completely and properly. 5. Cutting and erasing on this sheet is not allowed. 6. Do not use any stray marks on the sheet. 7. Do not use marker or white fluid to hide the mark. <p>WRONG METHODS CORRECT METHOD</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> </div>																																																																																																																																																
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SPACE FOR ROUGH WORK





**SAMKALP
VEDHIK
CURRENT AFFAIRS
OCTOBER 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 4th Floor,
Ravipuram, Pin - 682 015



VEDHIK
IAS ACADEMY
The New Learning Mantra