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“None but
ourselves can free
our minds.”

BOB MARLEY



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INSIDE



'Karnataka govt. ready to arrest Union Minister'

KALABURGI
Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramanah said his government would not hesitate to arrest the Union Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy in a case of illegal approval of a lease for iron ore mining. » PAGE 3

Bengal Governor meets family of murdered doctor

KOLKATA
Twelve days after the rape and murder of a doctor at the R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata, West Bengal Governor C. V. Ananda Bose visited the residence of the victim and met her family. » PAGE 4

PDP ready for pre-poll alliance with Congress

Srinagar
The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) on Wednesday kept its doors open to engage the Congress for talks on a pre-poll coalition for the Assembly election in Jammu and Kashmir. » PAGE 5

Bangladesh set to cancel Hasina-era MPs' passports

DHAKA
The interim government of Bangladesh has decided to revoke all diplomatic passports issued to the members of parliament who served during the Sheikh Hasina government, the Home Ministry's security branch said. » PAGE 14

Champai Soren says he will form new political party, raise voice for Dalits

Amit Bhelekar
PATNA

Champai Soren, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha leader and former Jharkhand Chief Minister, on Wednesday announced that he would form a new political party. "I have decided that I will not retire from politics and will form my own political party. Along with it, if I find a friend who talks about the interests of tribal people and Dalits, I will move forward with them. Everyone knows that when I was not going, I used to raise my voice for the rights of the tribal people and Dalits. I would like to fight for them," Mr. Champai said, addressing a gathering in his home district of Seraikela-Kharsawan. In a social media post on Sunday, Mr. Champai alleged that he had felt insulted by the JMM, while describing the events that

Crumbling hills



Broken and battered: A damaged road after a massive landslide triggered by heavy rain at Balugan in Shimla on Wednesday. As many as 55 roads are reportedly blocked in Himachal Pradesh following landslides and floods. PTI

Champai Soren says he will form new political party, raise voice for Dalits

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Past attempts

Other than enumeration of SCs and STs, the caste-wise count of population as part of the Census has not been done in Independent India. In 2011, the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) conducted the first-ever caste count, separate from the Census exercise, but the findings were never made public. In 2015, the Congress government in Karnataka commissioned a caste census, the report of which has not been made public. Bihar was one of the first States to conduct and publish a caste census report in 2023.



Court that the caste data enumerated in the Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC) of 2011 was fraught with "mistakes and inaccuracies". Assuming that some castes may bifurcate into

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17 workers killed as fire breaks out after 'reactor blast' at A.P. pharma plant

Harish Gilal
ANAKAPALLI

At least 17 workers were killed and 200 sustained burns in a fire that broke out reportedly after a reactor blast in a plant that manufactures intermediate chemicals and pharmaceutical ingredients in the Special Economic Zone at Achutapuram in Anakapalli of Andhra Pradesh on Wednesday. The death toll is likely to go up as bodies of several workers were found trapped under the rubble of the slab from the first floor of the 10-storey building housing Escientia Advanced Sciences Private Ltd. Body parts of some workers were thrown to some distance on the company premises. Thick smoke engulfed the area. Ten fire tenders from Anakapalli and Visakhapatnam, apart from a few from various pharma units, rushed to the spot. Two teams of the National Disaster Response Force were deployed. The policemen rescued workers stuck on the third floor. As many as 381 workers have been working in two shifts in the company. The blast took place around 2.15 p.m., during shift change. Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu ordered a high-level inquiry.



An ambulance coming out of the pharma company in Anakapalli on Wednesday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Management slammed

A large number of workers from surrounding pharma companies, residents of Lalam Koduru, Maturu Colony, members of various workers' unions, leaders from the CITU district vice-president Ganisetti Satyanarayana said such a major accident had not occurred in recent times. He said 12 fire tenders were engaged in battling the fire for over six hours, but still the firemen were not able to bring the situation under control. CPTM) Anakapalli district secretary K. Lokanadharam said repeated accidents had been occurring due to alleged negligence and apathy of the management. The previous governments had not bothered and failed to take stringent measures. It had been several years since a safety audit was conducted.

Minister expresses grief

IT Minister Nara Lokesh expressed grief over the incident and assured complete support to the family members of the victims. Former Chief Minister S.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy expressed shock and grief over the incident. "Extending his condolences to the bereaved families, the YSRCP president urged the government to ensure that the injured received the best possible medical treatment."

End to speculation

With his announcement of a separate political party, the speculation of him joining the BJP also seems to have taken a back seat. Mr. Champai pointed out that he would hold discussions with well-wishers and supporters, and within one week, everything would be clear. When Mr. Champai landed in New Delhi on Sunday, there was speculation that he would join the BJP. Reacting to the rumours, he told presspersons at his village that he had gone to the national capital to meet his daughter and grandchildren. Mr. Champai took charge as Chief Minister on February 2, after Mr. Hemant resigned from the post before he was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate in a money laundering case. Mr. Hemant later got bail.

Growth of e-commerce a matter of concern: Goyal

Aaron Deep
NEW DELHI

Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Wednesday hit out at e-commerce pricing policies and e-commerce players such as Amazon, signalling that the sharp growth of online retail could cause a huge "social disruption" by eating into the prospects of 100 million small stores that create jobs across India. Although e-commerce is here to stay, he said its growth must be "orderly" and "citizen-centric". "I don't see it as a matter of pride that half our market could be driven by e-commerce 10 years from now. It's a matter of concern," he said. FULL REPORT ON » PAGE 12

Centre plans to take caste count during Census

A column on caste in the survey form is being considered, says a top government source; move comes amid persistent demands from Congress and other parties; the Census, last held in 2011 and scheduled to be completed in two phases, remains indefinitely delayed; demand to conduct caste census one of the reasons for the delay, says the source

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

The Union government is yet to take a call on conducting the next Census, but active discussion is on to expand the data collection to include caste enumeration, a top government source told *The Hindu*.

“Discussions are on to include a column to record the caste of people during the next Census exercise. No decision has been taken yet,” the source said.

The move comes amid persistent demands by the Congress and other political parties, including partners in the ruling National Democratic Alliance, to record caste.

“One of the reasons that has indefinitely delayed the Census is also the demand by political parties to conduct a caste census. Any wrong narrative can upset the whole exercise,” the source said.

Other than enumerating the Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST), a caste-wise count of population as part of the Census has not been done in Independent India.

In 2011, the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) conducted the first-ever caste count, separate from the Census exercise, but the findings were never made public.

In 2021, the Union government submitted an affidavit in the Supreme

Past attempts

Other than enumeration of SCs and STs, the caste-wise count of population as part of the Census has not been done in Independent India

■ In 2011, the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) conducted the first-ever caste count, separate from the Census exercise, but the findings were never made public

■ In 2015, the Congress government in Karnataka commissioned a caste census, the report of which has not been made public



■ Bihar was one of the first States to conduct and publish a caste census report in 2023

Court that the caste data enumerated in the Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC) of 2011 was fraught with “mistakes and inaccuracies”.

The total number of

castes, according to the 1931 Census, was 4,147 and the SECC compiled more than 46 lakh castes, sub-castes and names.

“Assuming that some castes may bifurcate into

sub-castes, the total number cannot be exponentially high to this extent,” the affidavit read, adding that the data cannot be relied on for reservation in education, employment or elections to local authorities.

The Census, last held in 2011, was scheduled to be undertaken in two phases: houselisting and housing schedule in 2020 and population enumeration in 2021, but it was indefinitely delayed, initially due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The National Population Register (NPR) is also to be updated simultaneously with the first phase of the Census.

The next Census will also be the first digital Cen-

sus where respondents will have the option to fill the questionnaire on their own.

Lapsed deadline

The deadline to freeze administrative boundaries of districts, tehsils, towns and municipal bodies, among others, lapsed on June 30 this year. The order to freeze the boundaries, usually issued three months before the first phase of Census, has been extended 10 times since 2019.

Bihar was one of the first States to conduct and publish a caste census report in 2023. Collected in offline and digital modes, the enumerators were given a list of 215 categories,

from which people had to choose their caste.

Earlier in 2015, the Congress government in Karnataka commissioned a caste census, the report of which has not been made public so far.

The 31 questions for the first phase – houselisting and housing schedule – were notified on January 9, 2020.

As many as 28 questions have been finalised for the second phase – population enumeration – but are yet to be notified. The final set of questions for both the phases were asked during a pre-test exercise in 2019 in 76 districts in 36 States and Union Territories, covering a population of more than 26 lakh.

The first synchronous census was taken in 1881, by W.C. Plowden, Census Commissioner of India. Since then, censuses have been undertaken uninterruptedly once every ten years.

The Census of India Act of 1948 provides the legal framework for carrying out the Census however, it does not mention its timing or periodicity.

- The 10-year frequency is followed in many countries (Ex. the US and the UK) but some countries like **Australia, Canada, Japan conduct it every five years.**

Population census is listed in **Union List (entry 69)** of Seventh Schedule in Indian Constitution.

Census is conducted under the provisions of the **Census Act, 1948**.

CENSUS 2011

15TH CENSUS OF INDIA SINCE 1872

Cost	₹ 22,000 Mn
Cost per person	₹ 18.19
No. of census functionaries	2.7 Mn
No. of languages in which schedules were canvassed	16
No. of languages in which training manuals were prepared	18
Paper utilised	8,000 MTs
Material moved	10,500 MTs

The population of India at 1210.2 million is almost equal to the combined population of USA, Indonesia, Brazil, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Japan

The population has grown by more than 181 million during the decade 2001-2011

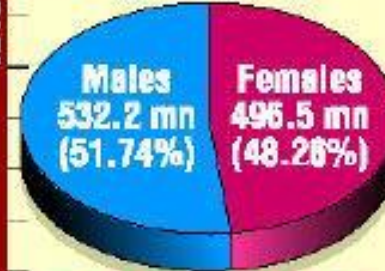
2001-2011 is the first decade (with the exception of 1911-1921) which has added lesser population compared to the previous decade

Overall sex ratio at the national level has increased by 7 points since Census 2001 to reach 940

GENDER COMPOSITION

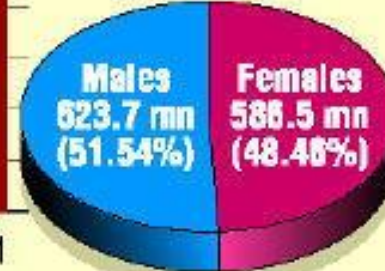
Census 2001

Sex ratio: 933



Census 2011

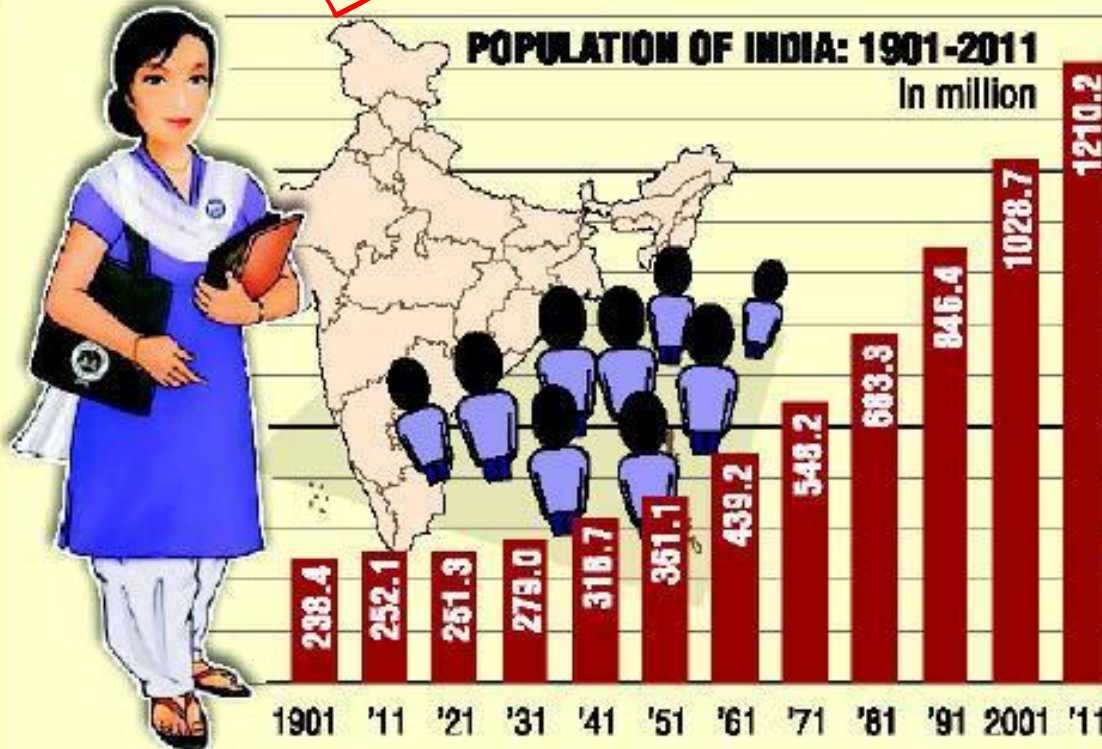
Sex ratio: 940



KBK Infographics

POPULATION OF INDIA: 1901-2011

In million



2011 population figures are provisional

Historical Context:

The last Census was held in 2011, and it included a separate caste count, the findings of which were never made public.

The most recent attempt at a caste census was in 2021, but the data from the Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC) of 2011 was deemed inaccurate by the government.




- **Past Attempts and Challenges:**

- In 2011, the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) conducted a caste count separately from the Census, but the findings were never released.


- In 2021, the government submitted an affidavit to the Supreme Court citing that the SECC data was full of mistakes and inaccuracies.

- The number of recorded castes in the 1931 Census was 4,147, while the SECC compiled more than 46 lakh castes, sub-castes, and names, leading to concerns about data reliability.





- **Ongoing Delays:**

- The upcoming Census, initially planned for ~~2020~~, has been indefinitely delayed, partly due to the demand for a caste count and the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - The deadline to freeze administrative boundaries, a prerequisite for conducting the Census, has been extended 10 times since 2019.
- 




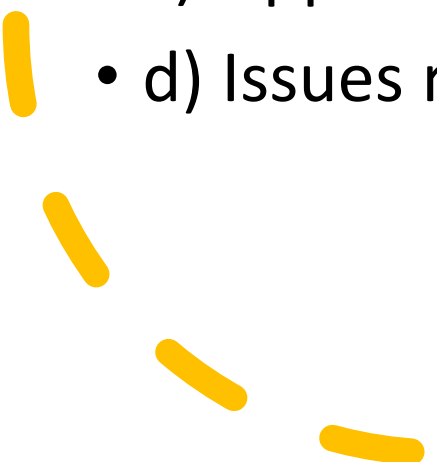
- **Current Considerations:**

- The government is discussing the possibility of adding a column to record caste, but no final decision has been made yet.
- The next Census is also expected to be the first digital Census, with an option for respondents to fill out the questionnaire on their own.



- **Regional Initiatives:**

- Bihar was one of the first states to conduct and publish a caste census report in 2023, setting a precedent for other states.
- 
- 
- 

- 
- What is one of the primary reasons for the delay in conducting the next Census in India?
 - a) Lack of technological infrastructure.
 - b) The COVID-19 pandemic and the demand for a caste census.
 - c) Opposition from international bodies.
 - d) Issues related to funding and resources.
- 

PM begins Poland visit, says it will help forge more vibrant relations

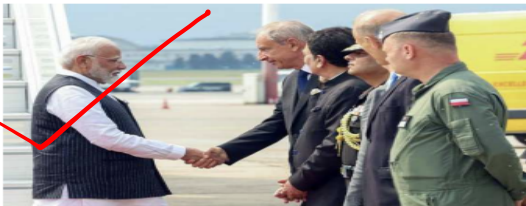
It is the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister in 45 years. Modi interacts with the Indian diaspora in Warsaw; pays homage to Jam Saheb of Nawanager at his memorial and to Indian and Polish soldiers who fought in the Second World War

Dinakar Peri
WARSAW

Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Warsaw on Wednesday, the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister to Poland in 45 years.

Mr. Modi expressed confidence that the visit will see as a "natural continuation of extensive contacts" between the two countries and help create the foundation for stronger and more vibrant relations in the years ahead. He will visit Ukraine next.

"My visit to Poland comes as we mark 70 years of our diplomatic relations. Poland is a key economic partner in Central Europe. Our mutual commitment to democracy and pluralism further reinforces our relationship. I look forward to meeting my friend Prime Minister Donald Tusk and President Andrzej Duda to further advance our partnership. I will also engage with the members of the Indian community in Poland," Mr. Modi said in a statement before he embarked for Poland.



Warm welcome: Prime Minister Narendra Modi being received by Poland's Deputy Foreign Minister Wladyslaw T. Bartoszewski on his arrival in Warsaw on Wednesday. ANI

Mr. Modi landed in Warsaw around 2 p.m. and was welcomed by members of the Indian community as he arrived at the hotel. However, a surprise performance by an Indo-Polish group, "Dobrego Maharadzy" or "Good Maharaja Square" or "Good Maharaja Square". Mr. Modi later paid homage at the monument for the Battle of Monte Cassino. The monument honours Indian and Polish

Digvijaysinhji Ranjitsinhji Jadhav of Nawanager, Gujaraat who provided sanctuary to over 1,000 Polish students in the 1940s. The Prime Minister's performance by an Indo-Polish group, "Dobrego Maharadzy" or "Good Maharaja Square" or "Good Maharaja Square". Mr. Modi later paid homage at the monument for the Battle of Monte Cassino. The monument honours Indian and Polish

soldiers who fought in the battle that took place in Italy against the Axis forces, said Krzysztof Iwanek, an Indologist and Asia Coordinator at the Warsaw-based Foundation Institute for Eastern Studies. "It is remembered as one of the glorious moments in the history of Polish military. Altogether, I think it is a good place for India's PM to pay his respects," he told *The Hindu*.

On the significance of Mr. Modi's visit to Poland, Mr. Iwanek observed that this visit, as he understands, will have main two angles. "New Delhi's balancing act between the West and the East is being indicated that Mr. Modi's decision to travel to Poland and Ukraine has now been appreciated in Washington. I am delighted about this visit and I think it is an important visit," Mr. Verma said, speaking at the press conference on "The United States and India: A Partnership of Progress and Promise", held at the Delhi regarding a possible investment deal and a separate FTA deal," he added.

Delighted by Modi's visit to Kyiv, says U.S. official in charge of Ukraine economic recovery

Suhassini Haldar
NEW DELHI

Expressing "delight" at Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "important visit" to Kyiv this week, a senior U.S. official, who is visiting an Indologist and Asia Coordinator at the Warsaw-based Foundation Institute for Eastern Studies.

U.S. Deputy Secretary of State and former U.S. Ambassador to India Richard Verma was given additional charge as the U.S.'s Special Representative for Ukraine's Economic Recovery last week, and had travelled to India and Nepal for meetings. His comments came weeks after a series of critical remarks from the U.S. State Department over Mr. Modi's visit to Moscow and Ukraine, indicating that Mr. Modi's decision to travel to Poland and Ukraine has now been appreciated in Washington.

"I am delighted about this visit and I think it is an important visit," Mr. Verma said, speaking at the press conference on "The United States and India: A Partnership of Progress and Promise", held at the Delhi regarding a possible investment deal and a separate FTA deal," he added.



Richard Verma

Recent developments in the bilateral relationship. "What we have witnessed over the last two-and-a-half years is an attempt by Russia to destabilise the global order, to spread the post-World War system," he added, accusing Russia of annexing Ukrainian territory in contravention of international law.

"We understand India's long relationship with Russia, and India has to make its own determination of where it wants to be on the scale," Mr. Verma said, while praising Mr. Modi's leadership. "We are fortunate to have an extradition agreement with the Government of India that allows for extradition between our countries. His (Rana's) lawyers filed an appeal that was saw was rejected by the courts," U.S. Embassy spokesperson Chris Edms said, speaking at the same event.

covered a number of areas where Indian and U.S. ties have grown in the past few years, making a special mention of joint projects in climate change, advanced technologies, space and cancer research.

Rana extradition
Meanwhile, in response to a question about the long-pending Indian request for the extradition of Tahaqwur Hussain Mirza, who acted as a co-conspirator in the 2008 Mumbai attack, a U.S. Embassy official confirmed that a U.S. court had rejected his appeal. "We're fortunate to have an extradition agreement with the Government of India that allows for extradition between our countries. His (Rana's) lawyers filed an appeal that was saw was rejected by the courts," U.S. Embassy spokesperson Chris Edms said, speaking at the same event.

He added that the "case continues to proceed in the legal system of the United States", but didn't furnish details over how much longer it could take for Rana, who has been in custody in Los Angeles jail since 2020, to be handed over to India.

Trial in Senthilbalaji money laundering case has begun: ED

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Wednesday informed the Madras High Court that the trial in the money laundering case against former Minister V. Senthilbalaji had commenced before the Principal District and Sessions Court in Chennai, and that one of the prosecution witnesses had already been examined.

A Division Bench of Justices S.M. Subramanian and V. Sivagnanam recorded the submission made by Additional Solicitor-General (ASG) M.L. Sundaresan, assisted by ED Special Public Prosecutor N. Ramesh, and adjourned to August 28 a criminal revision petition filed by the Minister to

discharge him from the case.

The adjournment was granted on the counsel of the petitioner's counsel on record, who sought time for the appearance of a designated senior counsel to argue the case. The judges, however, made it clear that the trial could proceed without any impediment related to the pendency of the present revision petition.

Opposing the plea for discharge, the ASG said that the question of discharge would not arise after the commencement of trial. Concurring with him, the judges told that the petitioner's counsel that there would be no point in hearing the discharge petition once the trial had started.

No let-up in protests across Kolkata; Governor meets family of victim

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

Twelve days after the rape and murder of a girl, the R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital, there has been no let-up in protests, with over a dozen rallies organised across Kolkata on Wednesday. West Bengal Governor C. V. Ananda Bose visited the residence of the victim and met her family. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had visited the residence of the victim on August 12.

As political parties, particularly the BJP, took to the streets demanding the resignation of the Chief Minister, doctors marched to Swastha Bhavan, headquarters of the State Health department. Among those protesting and bringing out processions were sports personalities, engineers, and journalists.



Former sportspersons stage a protest in Kolkata on Wednesday demanding justice for the victim. DEBASISH BHADRAJ

Court demanding an investigation by the former principal. Justice Rajarshi Bhattacharya granted permission to Mr. All to file the petition, and deputy superintendent of the hospital Akhtar Ali moved the Calcutta High

against Dr. Ghosh.

While the Kolkata Police had arrested a civic police volunteer, Sanjay Roy, in connection with the crime, the former principal of the college has remained in the net of the law. Several allegations have been raised against him. The State Criminal Government has set up a Special Investigation Team to probe the alleged financial irregularities and has issued a summons to the principal on charges of graft.

The Finance Department leadership has also raised questions on the CBI investigation. During the day, senior officials of the CBI arrived at the medical college and held meetings with the police and hospital authorities on deployment of Central forces on the premises.

Rajnath to go to U.S. as mega defence deals near closure

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh is set to visit the U.S. from August 23 to 26. The visit comes as several high-level defence deals between India and U.S. are in the final stages of conclusion. The visit comes as several high-level defence deals are lined up as also friction over issues like Prime Minister's visit to added, saying later that he "looked forward to the outcomes" of Mr. Modi's Kyiv visit. In his talk, Mr. Verma

"The visit comes in the backdrop of the growing momentum in India-U.S. relations and engagements at multiple levels. The visit is expected to broaden the India-U.S. comprehensive global strategic partnership," the Defence Ministry said in a statement. During the visit, Mr. Singh will hold a bilateral meeting with his U.S. counterpart Secretary of Defense Austin and will also meet with U.S. Special Representative for India Affairs, U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary Jake Sullivan. Mr. Singh will also chair a high-level round-table meeting with the U.S. defence industry on the ongoing and future defence collaborations. He will also interact with the Indian community during visit, the statement added.

Social media firms told to remove posts naming victim

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Electronics and Information Technology Ministry on Wednesday ordered social media platforms to remove posts naming the victim of the alleged rape and murder at a Kolkata hospital on August 9.

The order to platforms comes as an enforcement of Supreme Court directions issued on Tuesday, after two lawyers approached the court regarding the wide circulation of the victim's name and images of her body after the incident.

The trainee doctor's identity has been spread on social media, in spite of laws that forbid the disclosure of the identity of sexual assault victims. The Ministry also directed social media companies to submit a compliance report.

Dalit, tribal organisations protest against SC's sub quota decision

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI/PATNA/BHOPAL

Coalition groups representing more than 21 Dalit and Adivasi associations on Wednesday held protest marches and road blockades against the Supreme Court's judgment on the sub-categorisation of Scheduled Castes. The Centre clear its stand on sub-categorisation, bring a law to "nullify" the judgment, and conduct caste census to reveal the "real situation" of different castes.

Earlier in the day, Union Minister Chirag Paswan joined a host of prominent Opposition leaders from across parties to support the peaceful protests against the Supreme Court's judgment allowing sub-categorisation of the SC quota, saying on Wednesday that he and his party - the Lok Janshakti Par-



Bhim Army chief Chandra Shekhar Aazad with others during a protest at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi on Wednesday. PTI

outfits take out protest marches in several districts. Many protesters alleged violence by the police in Uttar Pradesh. As the protests continued through the day, the central leaderships of principal Opposition parties - the Congress and the Samajwadi Party - expressed support for the protests while also maintaining their ambiguity on the core issue of sub-categorisation

of SC and ST quotas; whereas smaller parties like the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), Azad Samaj Party, and Bharat Adivasi Party wholeheartedly opposed sub-categorisation, with many prominent Bahujan leaders in the North too supporting the Centre's stand.

"Congress leader Pawan Khera, in a statement, said, 'People from SC/ST/OBC are always being kept apart from the rest of the other and this anxiety about the Centre's intent is there amongst them and it is their right to protest peacefully against what they consider incorrect.' Meanwhile, Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal told presspersons that the Centre had already clarified its stand on the SC/ST/OBC observations of some judges, reiterating the government's stand that the order was meant for the States. (With inputs from PTI)

SC makes suo motu move to reform advocates' bodies

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday called for suggestions to usher in reforms at Bar associations and Bar Councils across the country.

Taking suo motu cognisance, a Special Bench of Justices Surya Kant and Dhananjay Datta pointedly criticised the Bar associations run by candidates during Bar bodies' elections and the arbitrary criteria for admissions and poor facilities on offer.

The Court said it would comprehensively examine various aspects affecting Bar bodies, including complaints filed by advocates on criminal antecedents end some judges, reiterating as office-bearers. "Maybe there should be an independent arbitrator. Please identify the is-

ssues that need to be addressed," Justice Kant said. The Bench appointed Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association president, advocate Vipin Nair, as nodal counsel to collate suggestions from the associations across the country.

Senior advocate S. Prabhakar was appointed nodal counsel to collect recommendations from State Bar Councils.

The Court had earlier imputed the Bar Council of India (BCI), various State Bar Councils, the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA), the Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association (SCAORA) and various Bar associations across High Courts as parties.

The suo motu case was initiated after a young lawyer levelled an allegation against the Madras Bar Association.

Spurious liquor claims two lives in Odisha

The Hindu Bureau
BHUBANESWAR

Two persons died after allegedly consuming spurious liquor in Odisha's Ganjam district on Wednesday.

Another 18 persons are undergoing treatment at the government-run MKCG Medical College Hospital in south Odisha.

The 18 victims have been identified as Jura Behera and Loknatha Behera. All the affected persons were believed to have consumed illicit liquor sold near Moudra village. According to locals, the liquor was locally brewed in a forest, and villagers used to consume it on a regular basis. Six persons have been arrested in this connection. The Biju Janata Dal (BJD) raised the issue in the Assembly and demanded a high-level inquiry.

Rajnath to go to U.S. as mega defence deals near closure

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NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh is set to visit the U.S. from August 23 to 26. This comes as several high-end defence deals between India and U.S. are in the final stages of conclusion.

The visit comes as several high end defence deals are lined up as also friction over issues like Prime Minister's visit to Russia and the Pannun episode. In addition, a key concern for the Defence Ministry at the moment is delay in deliveries from General Electric (GE) of the F404 engines for the indigenous Light Combat Aircraft-Mk1A which has held up deliveries of the jets by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited to the Indian Air Force.

“The visit comes in the backdrop of the growing momentum in India-U.S. relations and defence engagements at multiple levels. The visit is expected to broaden the India-U.S. comprehensive global strategic partnership,” the Defence Ministry said in a statement.

During the visit, Mr. Singh will hold a bilateral meeting with his U.S. counterpart Secretary Lloyd Austin and will also meet the U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan. Mr. Singh will also chair a high-level round-table meeting with the U.S. defence industry on the ongoing and future defence collaborations. He will also interact with the Indian community during visit, the statement added.

Air

- 28 AH-64 *Apache* combat helicopters (22 delivered)
- 1,354+ AGM-114 *Hellfire* anti-tank missiles
- 245 *Stinger* portable surface-to-air missiles
- 12 APG-78 *Longbow* combat helicopter radars
- 6 spare helicopter turboshafts
- 15 CH-47 *Chinook* transport helicopters
- 13 C-130 *Hercules* transport aircraft
- 11 C-17 *Globemaster III* heavy transport aircraft
- 2 MQ-9A *Reaper* UAVs (two-year lease in 2020)
- 512 CBU-97 guided bombs
- 234 aircraft turboprops (228 delivered)
- 147 aircraft turbofans (48 delivered)

Sea

- 1 *Austin*-class amphibious transport dock
- 24 MH-60R *Seahawk* naval helicopters (6 delivered)
- 12 P-8I *Poseidon* patrol and anti-submarine warfare (ASW) aircraft
- 48 Mk-54 ASW torpedoes (32 delivered)
- 6 S-61 *Sea King* ASW helicopters
- 53 *Harpoon* anti-ship missiles
- 1 *Harpoon* Joint Common Test Set (accepted)
- 24 naval gas turbines (6 delivered)

Land

- 12 *Firefinder* counterbattery radars
- 145 M-777 towed 155 mm howitzers
- 1,200+ M-982 *Excalibur* guided artillery shells
- 72,400+ SIG Sauer SIG716 assault rifles



- **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's Visit to the U.S.:**





- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh is scheduled to visit the U.S. from August 23 to 26.

- The visit comes as several high-end defence deals between India and the U.S. are nearing finalization.

- **Context of the Visit:**


- The visit is set against the backdrop of growing momentum in India-U.S. relations and defence engagements.

- The Defence Ministry emphasized that the visit aims to broaden the India-U.S. comprehensive global strategic partnership.







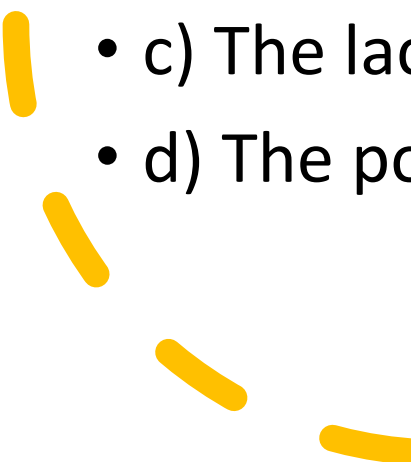
- **Key Issues and Concerns:**

- The visit coincides with other diplomatic issues such as Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Russia and the Pannun episode.
 - A significant concern for the Defence Ministry is the delay in deliveries of General Electric (GE) F404 engines for the indigenous Light Combat Aircraft Mk1A. This delay has affected the delivery of jets by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited to the Indian Air Force.
- 



1.Planned Meetings and Interactions:

1. During the visit, Mr. Singh will hold a bilateral meeting with U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin.
 2. He will also meet U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan.
 3. Mr. Singh will chair a high-level round-table meeting with the U.S. defence industry to discuss ongoing and future defence collaborations.
 4. Additionally, he will interact with the Indian community during his visit.
- 

- 
- What is one of the main concerns for the Defence Ministry mentioned in the article regarding Rajnath Singh's visit to the U.S.?
 - a) The cancellation of defence deals with the U.S.
 - b) The delay in the delivery of General Electric F404 engines for Light Combat Aircraft Mk1A.
 - c) The lack of diplomatic relations with the U.S.
 - d) The potential imposition of sanctions on India.
- 

We didn't do anything different between ODI, T20I WCs: Dravid

CRICKET

Press Trust of India

MUMBAI

Former India head coach Rahul Dravid on Wednesday said the support staff strived to carry the energetic “team atmosphere” from the ODI World Cup in 2023 to the T20 showpiece, and the approach helped the Men in Blue end a barren run in ICC tournaments.

Dravid masterminded India's triumph in the ICC T20 World Cup in the Americas before signing off from his role as the head coach in June this year.

“Honestly, I didn't want to do anything different. I think we ran a fantastic campaign in the ODI World Cup... Rohit and the team, and everyone involved in that World Cup,” said Dravid at the CEAT Awards.

India had suffered a heartbreaking defeat to Australia in the ODI World Cup final at Ahmedabad in November last year.

“There's nothing we could have done more in terms of preparation, plan-



Special day: Rohit receives the Cricketer of the Year award from Shah and Goenka, chairman, RPG Group. EMMANUEL TOGINI

ning and execution,” said Dravid.

For the T20 campaign, Dravid revealed that there was consensus on what had to be done. “We needed to create the same energy, the same vibe, the same team atmosphere and hope that on the day, we will have a bit of luck,” he said.

The CEAT awards:

Lifetime Achievement: Rahul Dravid.
Men's International Cricketer of the Year: Rohit Sharma;
Men's ODI batter of the year: Virat Kohli;
Men's ODI bowler of the year: Mohammad Shami;
Men's Test batter of the year: Yashasvi Jaiswal;
Men's Test bowler of the year: R. Ashwin.
Men's T20I batter of the year: Phil Salt;
Men's T20I bowler of the year: Tim Southee.
Domestic Cricketer of the



Dravid with the Lifetime Achievement Award.

year: Sai Kishore;
Women's Indian batter of the year: Smriti Mandhana;
Women's Indian bowler of the year: Deepti Sharma.
Excellence in Sports Administration: Jay Shah.
Special recognition: Most matches as captain in Women's T20Is: Harmanpreet Kaur;
Outstanding leadership in IPL 2024: Shreyas Iyer;
Fastest double century in Women's Tests: Shafali Verma.

Every third scooter sold is now an electric one: Ola

Paytm to sell ticketing biz to Zomato for ₹2,048 crore

Trent eyes third wave of growth with Star Bazaar

NEW DELHI, THURSDAY, AUGUST 22, 2024

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IN THE NEWS

ENFORCEMENT STEPS SHOULD BE THE LAST RESORT: FM TO I-T

FINANCE MINISTER NIRMALA SITHARAMAN on Wednesday told income tax officials that enforcement measures should be "a last resort" and there should not be any action against taxpayers that is "disproportionate" to the issue concerned. Speaking at an event to mark the 155th Income Tax Day, she also asked officials to keep the language of I-T notices simple. ■ **PAGE 2**

JULY E-WAY BILLS AT RECORD HIGH OF NEARLY 105 MN

E-WAY BILLS GENERATED in July by businesses for the movement of goods touched a record high of 104.86 million, surpassing the previous high of 103.55 million achieved in March this year, reports **Saikat Neogi**. ■ **PAGE 2**

DEBENTURE TRUSTEE REGULATIONS: SEBI MOOTS CHANGES

SEBI ON WEDNESDAY proposed certain changes to norms related to debenture trustees. A consultation paper has been issued to provide clarity on the term "concurrent relationship" of debenture trustee with the issuer. Stakeholders can submit comments till September 11. ■ **PAGE 3A**

DISBURSALS MAY MORE THAN DOUBLE ₹15K-cr PLI sops likely this fiscal

PRASANNA SAHU, New Delhi, August 21

THE GOVERNMENT MAY double the disbursements under production-linked incentive (PLI) schemes this fiscal to nearly ₹15,000 crore. This would double the amount of ₹6,800 crore disbursed to various sectors in FY 24.

The combined investment under the PLI schemes has hit ₹1.3 lakh crore at the end of May, according to official estimates.

The PLI schemes were launched in 2021, covering many as 14 sectors. However, only ₹9,721 crore or 5% of the ₹1.95 lakh-crore incentives announced for them was disbursed till March 21, 24.

The government is undertaking a revamp of the PLI schemes by relaxing the norms for the release of funds by accepting applications for the release of incentives every quarter, compared to the earlier norm of annual releases of funds.

Of the ₹14,837 crore estimated release of incentives in FY 25, the large-scale electronics manufacturing sector, mainly mobile manufacturers, will account for a lion's share of ₹6,041 crore or 41% of the total disbursements.

Telecom and networking product firms are estimated to get ₹3,454 crore or 23%, followed by pharma firms at about ₹2,000 crore or 13%. Four sectors — automobiles and auto components, advance chemistry cell, textile products, and speciality steel — may receive some incentives for the first time in FY 25.

Under PLI, firms would have to meet multiple criteria like investment, production, localisation and incremental sales to qualify for the incentives.

Another issue that is hurting the PLI schemes is the cumbersome procedure to claim incentives. For example, in the auto and



telecom equipment PLI, the products will be tested against mandatory benchmarks by the administrative departments, which are ill-equipped to handle these issues, officials said. Experts at CRIIL observed that sectors with a higher investment-to-sales ratio and relatively straightforward rules for payouts such as mobile handsets may see the most payouts by fiscal 2028. However, at least eight sectors would see incentive payouts stretch until fiscal 2030.

Continued on Page 9

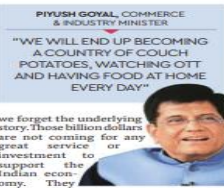
E-commerce boom in India a matter of time: Goyal

Minister accuses Amazon, others of predatory pricing

MUKESH JAOGTA, New Delhi, August 21

COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY minister Piyush Goyal on Wednesday questioned the business practices of global e-commerce giants like Amazon in India, accusing them of using corporate structures to circumvent rules and indulging in predatory pricing while taking on huge losses.

"When Amazon says we will be investing ₹1 billion in India and we celebrate,



made a billion-dollar loss in their balance sheet that year. They have to fill in the loss from discounted sales," the minister said at the release of a report called Net Impact of e-commerce on Employment and Consumer Welfare in India.

"The loss of ₹6,000 crore a year smells of predatory pricing," Goyal said.

"And how did that loss get caused? They paid ₹1,000 crore to professionals. I do not know who these professionals are... I would love to know which chartered accountants, professional lawyers get ₹1,000 crore unless you are paying all the top lawyers to take the case against you," the Union minister added.

Continued on Page 9

iPhones ring in record mobile exports

\$6.49-bn phones shipped from India in April-July

RISHI RAJ, New Delhi, August 21

MOBILE PHONE EXPORTS from India continue to grow at a rapid pace. Led by iPhones, mobile phone exports for the first four months of the current fiscal — April-July — have touched \$6.49 billion, a jump of 30% over the same period last fiscal.

Mobile phone exports also saw an increase of 15% over FY 23, showing a steady growth after the announcement of the smartphone PLI scheme.

In FY 23, mobile exports for the first four months totalled \$2.5 billion, while in FY 24, they reached \$4.67 billion.



mobile exports clocked in \$951 million for the month.

Apple's iPhone exports exceeded \$1 billion for the fourth month running in the current fiscal. This is the first time since the launch of the PLI scheme that Apple's iPhone exports have continuously crossed the \$1-billion mark each month.

With total iPhone exports from India for the first four months hitting \$4.5 billion, iPhone exports alone constitute close to 70% of the total mobile exports from India during the four-month period.

According to industry figures, Samsung has contributed close to 23% and the remaining 7% is from other sources, including a small fraction from Pudget.

Continued on Page 9

FE SPECIALS

DETECTIVE DOTSON

Detective Dotson: Can it be India's 1st video game hit?

The story-driven game allows players to collect clues and solve cases.

■ **EFE, P11**

Why the IPO journey needs to be smoother

The IPO filing process can be made more efficient without compromising on the essentials.

■ **EXPLAINER, P11**

Alcohol, gambling ads on Meta from Aug 27

PALLABI DEY PURKAYASTHA, Mumbai, August 21

ALCOHOL COMPANIES AND real money gambling operators have a reason to cheer. Meta has announced that starting August 27, it will permit the promotion and marketing of alcohol and real-money gambling on its WhatsApp Business platform.

"We are excited to announce that starting August 27, 2024, businesses in India (APAC, Asia Pacific), and LATAM (Latin America) can onboard the WhatsApp platform for messaging in the following verticals: a) alcohol; b) over-the-counter products (prescription drugs and medical devices are still prohibited); c) real money gambling," read a company statement being circulated on social media.

While Meta is yet to announce the details, industry experts say most of communication will happen one-on-one between brands and their audiences.

Meta's move is surprising, given that the government is preparing to introduce sweeping rules that will expand the ban on surrogate

advertising that liquor brands have used to market their products. Advertising alcoholic beverages is banned in India as per the Cable Television Network (Regulation) Amendment Bill, which came into effect in June 2000. In June 2022, the Central Consumer Protection Authority of India banned surrogate advertising under its Guidelines for Prevention of Misleading Advertisements and Endorsements for Misleading Advertisements, 2022.

Also, the transparency section on the Meta website states: "Ads that promote or reference alcohol must comply with all applicable local laws, required or established by government agencies, licences and approvals, and include age and country targeting criteria consistent with Meta's targeting requirements and applicable local laws. Note that our policies prohibit ads promoting or referencing alcohol in some countries, based on local law."

Efforts to contact multiple officials at Meta did not receive a response till the time of going to press.

Continued on Page 9

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Size of online market less than 1% of total meat & seafood business

Meat startups take slow-cooking route to expand offline presence

S SHANTHI, Bengaluru, August 21

ENCOURAGED BY the massive size of the wet market in India, online meat and seafood delivery startups have started taking the offline route. But just like slow-cooked meat which tastes better, the online players are adopting a slow and steady approach for their offline foray.

According to industry estimates, the size of the online meat and seafood industry at ₹2,500-3,000 crore is less than 1% of the overall meat and seafood market. The overall mood among online players seems to be that while an offline foray is inevitable, cracking a highly unorganised market would be a time-consuming process.

The leader in the segment, Licious, currently has one offline store and will be opening the second store by the end of this month. However, it is looking to scale that up to 25 offline stores by the end of FY 25, mostly in Bengaluru. "The objective to do offline is not to do it very fast. We want to go slow and steady and ride on consumer experience," co-founder Vivek Gupta told FE. As of today, over 80% of Licious' sales

happen on its company-owned D2C channel and the rest come from marketplaces and quick-commerce platforms.

Additionally, the company believes that the offline category comes with certain nuances such as selection, cold chain, service experience, customer experience, and inventory management, among others, that they need to master first.

"It has taken eight years to perfect online and get to a stage where we are ready to decentralise. So, we believe we need to do



this for a long time ourselves," Abhay Hanjura, co-founder, Licious, added.

Licious' competitor, FreshToHome made an offline foray in 2021 with five offline category comes with certain nuances, it currently has more than 45 stores across the country. It has raised over \$200 million to date, including its \$100-million Series D round led by Amazon Southbay Venture Fund last year.

Continued on Page 9

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Govt plans to boost oilseeds output, cut imports

SANDIP DAS
New Delhi, August 21

IN AN ATTEMPT to reduce India's high dependence on edible oil imports, the government is looking to boost the domestic production of oilseeds. The plan is to increase yields, expand the area under cultivation and introduce a dynamic import duty structure so that domestic prices are not impacted by cheaper imports.

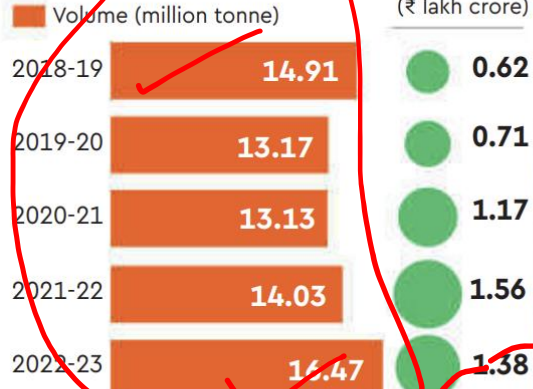
The government is also making arrangements for the assured procurement of oilseeds such as mustard, soybean and groundnut at the minimum support price (MSP) from farmers as promised by agriculture minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan.

Sources told *FE* that the agriculture ministry has identified 600 clusters across 347 districts in 20 states to boost the production of oilseeds, especially mustard, groundnut, soybean, sesame, and niger seeds. "Through the introduction of high-yielding seed varieties and creation of seed hubs and storage facilities, we expect to boost oilseeds yield from 13.5 quintal/hectare currently to 21.1 quintal/hectare by 2030," an official said.

In addition, the expansion of oilseed cultivation in traditional areas and non-traditional areas

RAISING DOMESTIC SUPPLY

India's edible oil imports



Source: SEA, oil year (Nov-Oct)



India's import of edible oils — palm, soybean and sunflower — rose 17% on year to a record 16.47 MT in the 2022-23 oil year

Currently, India meets about 44% of its edible oil demand with domestic production

such as rice-fallow or potato-fallow and through intercropping is being worked out. India is the world's second-largest consumer and biggest importer of vegetable oil. It meets about 58% of its consumption needs of around 24 million tonne (MT) annually through imports. Trade sources estimate that domestic consumption is likely to increase to around 30 MT in the next three-to-four years.

According to an official note, a lower import duty structure on cooking oil ensures that farmers find it less profitable to grow oilseeds due to

lower selling prices compared to imported prices.

Currently, crude palm, soybean, and sunflower oil imports attract only a 5% agri infra cess and a 10% education cess, resulting in a total tax incidence of 5.5%. Because of record imports, domestic prices of edible oil varieties such as mustard and soybean have been impacted.

Sources said that despite having a record mustard production of 13.16 MT in 2023-24 crop year (July-June), the mandi prices were ruling below the MSP and the government agencies have purchased

1.2 MT of mustard from the farmers in key producing states of Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh this season.

Earlier, the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP), which recommends the minimum support price for the 23 crops to the government, had suggested extending the national mission on edible oils to major oilseeds such as mustard, soybean, sunflower and groundnut, and ensure higher participation of the private sector in procurement operations of oilseeds.

The country is aiming to increase

domestic palm oil production from the current level of 0.4 MT to 2.5 MT by 2032 under the national oil palm mission by adding at least 0.1 million hectare of new plantation annually in the five-to-six years.

To boost domestic supplies, the government has extended the lower import duty structure for palm, soybean and sunflower oils by a year till March 31, 2025, which the industry had stated would adversely impact processing and prices of domestic oilseeds.

India's import of edible oils — palm, soybean and sunflower — rose 17% on year to a record 16.47 MT in the 2022-23 oil year (November-October), helped by lower import tariffs of only 5.5% on crude oil imports. The import of edible oil last oil year was valued at ₹1.38 lakh crore.

Currently, India produces about 44% of its domestic edible oil consumption requirement.

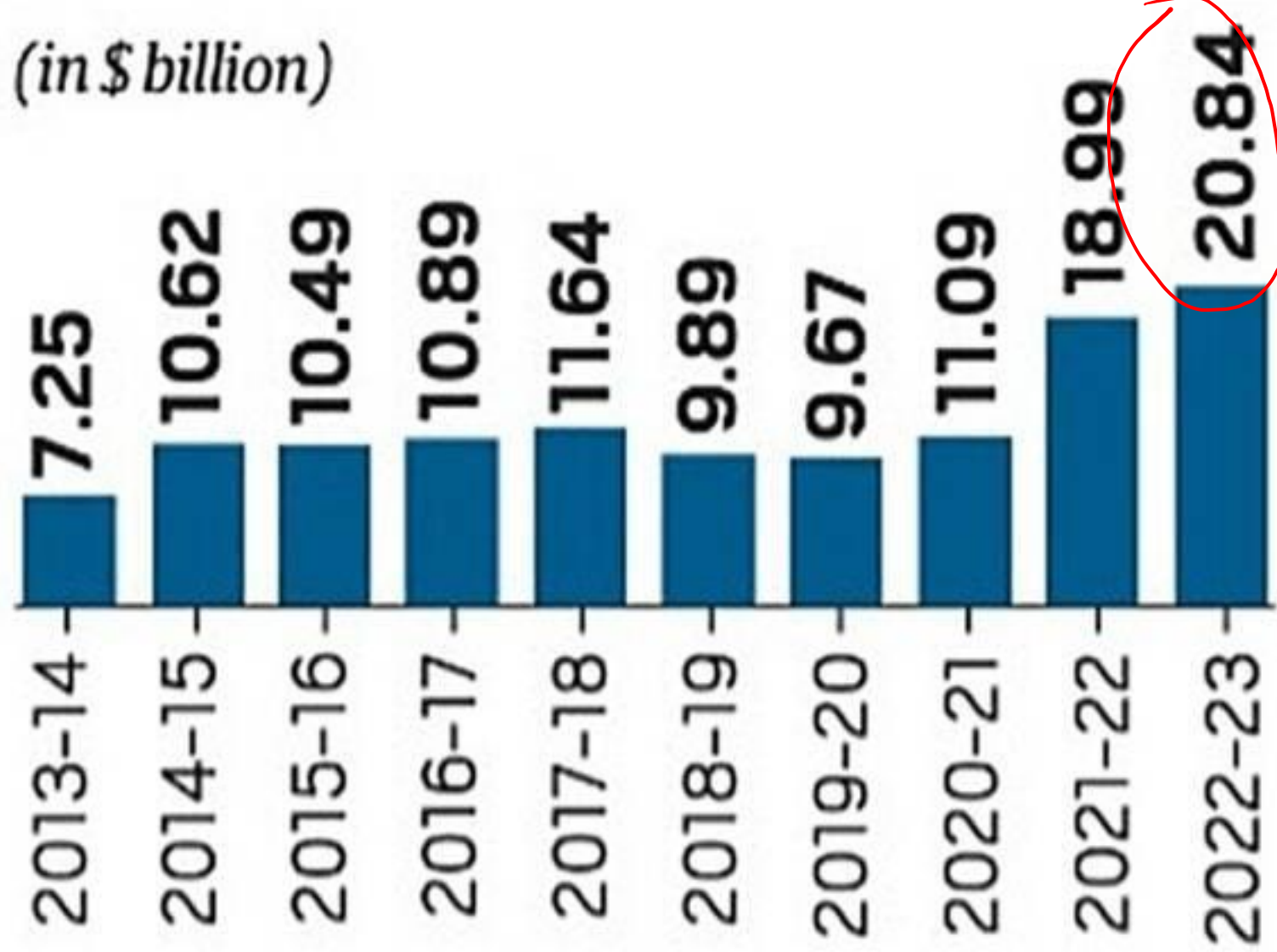
In the domestic production of edible oils, mustard has a share of 40%, soybean 24% and groundnut 7%. India's annual imports are around 13-14 MT. Around 9 MT of palm oil is imported from Indonesia and Malaysia, while others such as soya and sunflower come from Argentina, Brazil, Ukraine and Russia.

Expected outcome on production and import

	2021-22	2025-26	2030-31
Oilseeds area (lakh ha)	287.6	322.8	338.1
Oilseeds production (lakh tonne)	385	541	602.2
Oilseeds productivity (kg/ha)	1,339	1,676	1,781
Edible oil requirement (lakh tonne)	267.1	280	300
Production of edible oils (lakh tonne)	126.4	185	228
Import quantity (lakh tonne)	140.7	95	72
Import dependency (%)	52	36	23
Import value (₹ cr)	1,40,000	95,000	70,000

IMPORTS OF VEGETABLE OILS

(in \$ billion)



Production, import & consumption of edible oils in last 5 years *(in lakh tonnes)*


Source	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Annual oilseeds	73.6	74.3	79.2	84.7	90.9
Domestic production					
Oil palm	2.2	2.7	2.8	2.8	2.7
Coconut	6.0	5.9	6.0	6.0	6.0
TBOs & SEO	5.0	4.8	5.0	5.0	5.0
Rice bran	10.7	10.7	10.7	10.7	10.9
Cotton seed	12.6	11.2	12.7	12.2	10.9
Total domestic oil	110.1	109.5	116.3	121.3	126.4
Imported					
Palm oil	95.2	89.3	85.8	74.9	80.5
Soybean	31.5	31.8	33.1	36.4	38.9
Sunflower	22.4	25.8	25.0	21.8	20.7
Other oil	0.5	0.3	0.1	0.4	0.6
Total imported oil	154.0	150.0	144.6	133.5	140.7
Total oil consumed	264.1	259.5	260.9	254.8	267.1

Source: Oilseeds Division, Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare

TBO: Tree-borne oilseeds; SEO: Solvent extracted oil








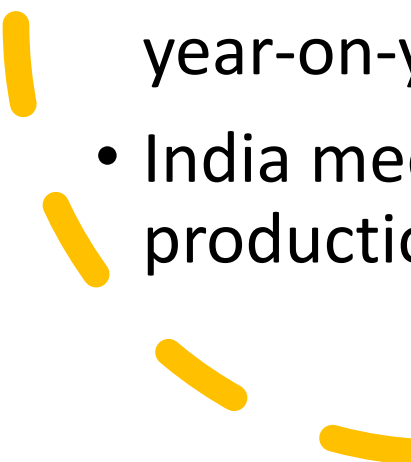
- **Government's Plan to Boost Oilseeds Production:**



- The Indian government is aiming to reduce its high dependence on edible oil imports by boosting domestic production of oilseeds.
 - The strategy involves increasing yields, expanding the area under cultivation, and introducing a dynamic import duty structure to prevent domestic prices from being undercut by cheaper imports.
- 



- **Assured Procurement and Cultivation Plans:**


- The government is making arrangements for assured procurement of oilseeds like mustard, soybean, and groundnut at the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for farmers.
 - The agriculture ministry has identified 60 clusters across 347 districts in 20 states to boost oilseed production, especially mustard, groundnut, soybean, sesame, and niger seeds.
 - High-yield seed varieties and the creation of seed hubs and storage facilities are expected to boost oilseed yields to 21.1 quintal/hectare by 2030.
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- 
- **Expansion of Cultivation and Non-Traditional Areas:**
 - Expansion of oilseed cultivation in traditional and non-traditional areas like rice-fallow or potato-fallow land is being worked out.
 - **Current Edible Oil Import Scenario:**
 - India's import of edible oils (palm, soybean, sunflower) rose 17% year-on-year to a record 16.47 million tonnes in the 2022-23 oil year.
 - India meets about 44% of its edible oil demand with domestic production.
- 

- 
- Despite a record mustard production of 13.16 MT in the 2023-24 crop year, lower selling prices due to imported oils have affected domestic prices.
 - The government has extended the lower import duty structure for palm, soybean, and sunflower oils by a year till March 31, 2025.
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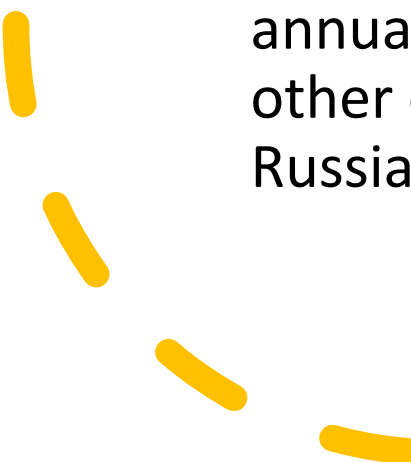








- **Impact of Import Duty Structure:**

- The current import duties on crude palm, soybean, and sunflower oil attract only a 5% agri infra cess and a 10% education cess, resulting in a total tax incidence of 5.5%.
 - Record imports have impacted the domestic prices of edible oil varieties such as mustard and soybean.
- 



1.Future Projections:

1. The country aims to increase domestic palm oil production from 0.4 MT to 2.5 MT by 2025 under the national oil palm mission.
 2. India's oil consumption is likely to increase to around 30 MT in the next three to four years.
 3. India's domestic production of edible oils contributes to around 13-14 MT annually, with 9 MT of palm oil imported from Indonesia and Malaysia, and other oils like soybean and sunflower from Argentina, Brazil, Ukraine, and Russia.
- 
- 

- 
- What is one of the key strategies mentioned in the article for boosting oilseed production in India?
 - a) Increasing subsidies on imported edible oils.
 - b) Introducing a dynamic import duty structure to protect domestic prices. ✓
 - c) Reducing the area under oilseed cultivation to focus on other crops.
 - d) Banning the import of palm oil from Indonesia and Malaysia.
- 
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Zomato to acquire Paytm ticketing biz for ₹2,048 cr

FE BUREAU
New Delhi, August 21

PAYTM ON WEDNESDAY said that it has signed a definitive agreement to sell its entertainment ticketing business to foodtech major Zomato in an all-cash deal of ₹2,048 crore. The deal was approved by the boards of Paytm and Zomato.

As part of the deal, around 280 employees from Paytm's entertainment ticketing business will join Zomato. The move will allow Paytm to focus on its core payments and financial services distribution business, the company said.

Paytm's combined entertainment ticketing business achieved ₹297 crore in revenue and ₹29 crore in adjusted Ebitda in FY24. The company said that it had built its movie ticketing business from the ground up and acquired Insider and TicketNew for ₹268 crore between 2017 and 2018. The company's entertainment ticketing business, including movies, sports, and events will remain available on the Paytm app during a transition period of up to 12 months.

"This transaction generates significant profits for Paytm, and the cash proceeds will further strengthen the balance sheet. With a strong focus on long-term value

DEAL BOOK

■ Around **280 employees** from Paytm's entertainment ticketing business will **join Zomato**

■ The move will allow Paytm to focus on its **core payments and financial services distribution business**



creation, the company remains confident in substituting revenue from its entertainment ticketing business by expanding core business areas of payments and financial service distribution," Paytm said.

Earlier this month, Zomato had announced the launch of 'District', a new app consolidating 'going-out' business, including dining and ticketing (movies and events), an expansion beyond its core food delivery services and hyper commerce.

This move, unveiled by CEO Deepinder Goyal in a letter to shareholders, marked Zomato's entry

into a broader array of lifestyle services, encompassing dining out, movies, sports ticketing, live performances, shopping, staycations, and more — all within a single platform.

For Zomato, the segment was operating at a run-rate of over \$500 million annualised gross order value and was already profitable.

Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu India provided transaction advisory and valuation, while Morgan Stanley assisted Paytm with fairness opinion on the transaction. Luthra & Luthra acted as legal counsel to Paytm on the transaction.

WAY OUT
Committee will look into farmers' woes: SC
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ALERT MODE
189 high-risk glacial lakes in Himalayas
NEWS > PAGE 6

COURT RULING
Ramil found guilty of 'unlawful conduct'
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MOVING AHEAD
Reforms and concerns in the 2024 Waqf Bill
Positive changes need to be welcomed
EDITORIAL > PAGE 8

RIGHT START
Challengers get past Patriots in opener
SPORT > PAGE 16

INSIDE

Produce entire Hema report, says Kerala HC
Kochi
A Division Bench of the Kerala High Court on Thursday directed the State government to produce a copy of the entire report of the Justice K. Hema committee in a sealed cover before it. > PAGE 3

Modi's Ukraine visit to put focus on defence ties
Noida
The symbolism and balancing act aside, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Ukraine will focus on cooperation in defence, with India operating a large inventory of military equipment of both Russian and Ukrainian origin. > PAGE 4

Opposition rails against the Waqf (Amendment) Bill
New Delhi
Parliament's Joint Committee on the Waqf (Amendment) Bill began consultations on Thursday. Opposition members rallied against many provisions in the Bill, including "excessive interference" by government and the move to ask for "deed records" for Waqf properties. > PAGE 5

Tim Walz accepts Vice-Presidential nomination
Chicago
Tim Walz introduced himself to millions of Americans on a star-studded night at the Democratic National Convention on Wednesday, as he accepted Kamala Harris' White House running mate nomination. > PAGE 14

Bangladesh floods not due to Tripura dam: MEA

Protesters in Bangladesh blame India for the deluge. MEA says floods in common rivers a shared problem and the Dumbur dam in Tripura is 'auto releasing' water owing to heavy rain; the dam is built on Gumti river that flows through both countries; Indian envoy meets Bangladesh counterpart over security of High Commission and staff

Jacob Koshiy Kallol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI / DHAKA
The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Thursday denied that floods in eastern districts of Bangladesh were caused due to the opening of the Dumbur dam in Tripura. The clarification comes after protesters in Bangladesh blamed India for floods in eastern districts, triggering security threats for the Indian High Commission in Dhaka. Later in the day, Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Pranay Verma met Chief Adviser to the interim government of Bangladesh, Mohammad Yunus, in Dhaka and expressed "concern" about the heightened security threats to the Indian mission and personnel based there. "We have seen concerns



Common concern: People wading through floodwaters in Feni, Bangladesh, on Thursday. AP

being expressed in Bangladesh that the current situation of flood in districts on the eastern borders of Bangladesh has been caused by opening of the Dumbur dam upstream of the Gumti river in Tripura. This is factually not correct," the MEA said in a statement. "Auto release" of water from Tripura and parts of Bangladesh have been inundated with rain in the last few days. This was largely responsible for the flooding in downstream Bangladesh. The Dumbur dam, a hydropower project, had been "auto releasing" water as a consequence of the rainfall, the MEA statement noted. "The Dumbur dam is built on the Gumti river which flows through India and Bangladesh. Tripura has witnessed heavy rain, with 'extremely heavy' rainfall being reported over southern and western parts from August 19 to 22, the India Meteorological Department said. "We would like to point out that the catchment areas of Gumti river that flows through India and Bangladesh have witnessed heaviest rains of this year over the last few days. The flood in Bangladesh is primarily due to waters from these large catchments downstream of the dam," the MEA statement emphasised. Rainfall has been continuing since August 21 in the whole of Tripura and adjoining districts of Bangladesh. "In the event of heavy inflow, automatic releases from the dam, which had been observed from the dam," their communication noted.

communicated the rising water level trends to Bangladesh up to 3 p.m. on August 21, 2024. However, a power outage had disrupted this flow of information from 6 p.m. though India had been communicating flood data to Bangladesh "through other means," the MEA said. Floods on the common rivers between India and Bangladesh were a shared problem inflicting "suffering" to people on both sides, and required close mutual cooperation towards resolving them. India and Bangladesh shared 54 common cross-border rivers and river water cooperation was an important part of bilateral engagement. "We remain committed to resolving issues and mutual concerns in water resources and river water management through bilateral consultations and technical discussions," the communication noted. In Dhaka, Indian High Commissioner Mr. Verma, during his introductory meeting with Prof. Yunus, expressed "concern" about the heightened security threats to the Indian High Commission and personnel based there, a senior Government of Bangladesh official informed on Wednesday. **Street protests** The information was shared during a press briefing held after the Indian envoy met Prof. Yunus as some of the persisting anti-Hasina protests — both online as well as on the streets — also threatened to spill over into multiple eastern districts of Bangladesh were swept by a ferocious flood. The agitators blamed upon India. **12 KILLED IN TRIPURA** > PAGE 8

Food for thought



Risky generosity: Unmindful of the health hazard, a young girl feeds pigeons in the rain at Anand Nagar, in Ahmedabad on Thursday. Studies have indicated that continuous exposure to pigeons can lead to chronic lung diseases. VIKAS SONIA

Congress, National Conference announce pre-poll alliance for J&K Assembly election

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR
The Congress and the National Conference (NC) have decided to forge a pre-poll alliance for the coming Assembly election in Jammu and Kashmir. Congress leaders Mullikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi met NC President Farooq Abdullah and vice-president Omar Abdullah in Srinagar on Thursday to formalise the alliance. "The alliance is on track. It will work successfully. The CPDM, NTR, Targam is also part of it. Seat-sharing has been finalised. It is for all 90 seats of J&K. People of J&K suf-

The Congress and the NC have been having seat-sharing discussions for the past few days. Both have been bargaining hard for the maximum share from the 47 seats in the Kashmir Valley of the total 90 seats. Addressing party workers here, Mr. Gandhi said the Congress was firm on the call for "restoration of Statehood to J&K as soon as possible". "The Assembly election, the first to be held in J&K after it was made a Union Territory, will be held on September 18, September 25, and October 1. **EC OBSERVERS** > PAGE 5

Doctors in capital call off 11-day strike as SC brokers peace

Krishnadass Rajagopal
NEW DELHI
Following the Supreme Court's appeal on Thursday, doctors across many States called off their strike against the brutal rape and murder of a trainee doctor at a Kolkata hospital. During the day-long hearing, Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud spoke about patients waiting for hours for a few minutes of medical care in public hospitals, and bystanders spending nights on the bare floor. "Because I too had to sit on the floor in a night hospital where a relative had been admitted... Doctors cannot come back to duty. How will public health infrastructure run without them?" he told the assembled lawyers. The three-judge Bench also comprised Justices J.B. Pardiwala and Manoj Misra. "Judges cannot evict justice standing outside the court complex. Like that, doctors cannot treat patients outside hospitals... Justice and medicine cannot go on strike. Get back to work now," the Chief Justice urged doctors' associations and bodies that had moved the court. Agreeing with the Bench, medical professionals who had approached the top court said they were apprehensive about hospital authorities resorting to legal action against them once they join duty before as that everybody has come back to work. Once it is established that yes, they are back to work, we will assist them. "The final action will be taken against you... We will protect you,"

No problem can be solved on battlefield, says Modi

Dinakar Peri
WARSAW
The ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and West Asia are a pressing concern for the global community and the loss of innocent lives in agrar crisis has become the biggest challenge for humanity. Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Thursday as India and Poland announced the elevation of ties to a strategic partnership. "This is India's firm belief that no problem can be solved on the battlefield. In any crisis, the loss of lives of innocent people has become the biggest challenge for the whole of humanity. We support dialogue and diplomacy for the early restoration of peace and stability," Mr. Modi said in remarks after the bilateral meeting with his Polish counterpart Donald Tusk. "For this, India is ready to provide all possible support." Earlier in the day, Mr. Modi was received by Mr. Tusk and was presented a guard of honour. In a joint statement issued after the talks, the leaders expressed their "deepest concern" over the war raging in Ukraine. They reiterated the need for a "comprehensive, just, and lasting peace" in line with international law, consistent with the principles of the UN Charter, including respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity. "They also stated the negative impacts of the war in Ukraine with regard to global food and energy security," the statement said. **FIVE-YEAR PLAN** > PAGE 4

Delhi Police bust 'terror network'

Samidhi Tewari
NEW DELHI
The Delhi Police on Thursday said they busted an "Al-Qaeda inspired" terror network that was active in the States of Rajasthan, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh, and detained 14 suspects in the case. The Delhi Police said the "intelligence-based operation" was coordinated and conducted by its Special Cell in association with police forces of the States. The suspects were trained at various locations to use weapons, an official said. **FULL REPORT** > PAGE 6

Bangladesh floods not due to Tripura dam: MEA

Protesters in Bangladesh blame India for the deluge; MEA says floods in common rivers a shared problem and the Dumbur dam in Tripura is 'auto releasing' water owing to heavy rain; the dam is built on Gumti river that flows through both countries; Indian envoy meets Yunus, expresses concern over security of High Commission and staff

Jacob Koshy
Kallol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI / DHAKA

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Thursday denied that floods in eastern districts of Bangladesh were caused due to the opening of the Dumbur dam in Tripura.

The clarification comes after protesters in Bangladesh blamed India for floods in eastern districts, triggering security threats for the Indian High Commission in Dhaka.

Later in the day, Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Pranay Verma met Chief Adviser to the interim government of Bangladesh, Mohammad Yunus, in Dhaka and expressed "concern" about the heightened security threats to the Indian mission and personnel based there.

"We have seen concerns

being expressed in Bangladesh that the current situation of flood in districts on the eastern borders of Bangladesh has been caused by opening of the Dumbur dam upstream of the Gumti river in Tripura. This is factually not correct," the MEA said in a statement.

'Auto release'

Western Tripura and parts of Bangladesh have been inundated with rain in the last few days and this was largely responsible for the flooding in downstream Bangladesh. The Dumbur dam, a hydropower project, had been "auto releasing" water as a consequence of the rainfall, the MEA statement noted.

The Dumbur dam is built on the Gumti river which flows through India and Bangladesh.

Tripura has witnessed heavy rain, with 'extremely heavy' rainfall being reported over southern and



Common concern: People wading through floodwaters in Feni, Bangladesh, on Thursday. AFP

western parts from August 19 to 22, the India Meteorological Department said.

"We would like to point out that the catchment areas of Gumti river that flows through India and Bangladesh have witnessed heaviest rains of this year over the last few days. The flood in Bangladesh is primarily due to waters from these large

catchments downstream of the dam," the MEA statement emphasised,

Rainfall has been continuing since August 21 in the whole of Tripura and adjoining districts of Bangladesh.

"In the event of heavy inflow, automatic releases had been observed from the dam," their communique noted.

Automatic releases are a feature of dams that store water for power generation and meant to ensure that water doesn't exceed a certain level to ensure the reservoir's stability.

Amarpur station is part of a bilateral protocol under which India had been transmitting real-time flood data to Bangladesh.

Indian authorities had

communicated the rising water level trends to Bangladesh up to 3 p.m. on August 21, 2024. However, a power outage had disrupted this flow of information from 6 p.m. though India had been communicating "through other means," the MEA said.

Floods on the common rivers between India and Bangladesh were a shared problem inflicting "sufferings to people on both sides", and required close mutual cooperation towards resolving them.

India and Bangladesh shared 54 common cross-border rivers and river water cooperation was an important part of bilateral engagement.

"We remain committed to resolving issues and mutual concerns in water resources and river water management through bilateral consultations and technical discussions," the

communique noted.

In Dhaka, Indian High Commissioner Mr. Verma, during his introductory meeting with Prof. Yunus, expressed "concern" about the heightened security threats to the Indian High Commission and personnel based there, a senior Government of Bangladesh official informed on Wednesday.

Street protests

The information was shared during a press briefing held after the Indian envoy met Prof. Yunus as some of the persisting anti-Hasina protests – both online as well as on the streets – also threatened Indian interests after multiple eastern districts of Bangladesh were swept by a ferocious flood that the agitators blamed upon India.

12 KILLED IN TRIPURA


» PAGE 6



STATE OF TRIPURA



- **MEA Denies Bangladesh Floods Due to Tripura Dam:**


- The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) of India denied claims that floods in eastern districts of Bangladesh were caused by the opening of the Dambur dam in Tripura.
 - The clarification came after protests in Bangladesh blamed India for the floods, raising security concerns for the Indian High Commission in Dhaka.
- 






- **Dam Built on Gumti River:**

- The Dambur dam is built on the Gumti River, which flows through both India and Bangladesh.


- The MEA stated that the dam's water release was an "auto-release" due to heavy rainfall, not a deliberate action causing floods in Bangladesh.



- 
- **Heavy Rainfall in Tripura and Bangladesh:**
 - Western Tripura and parts of Bangladesh have witnessed heavy rain in recent days, which has been largely responsible for flooding in downstream Bangladesh.
 - The MEA emphasized that the rainfall in the region since August 21 has caused the flood situation, and not the dam's operation.
- 



- **Bilateral Cooperation on Flood Management:**

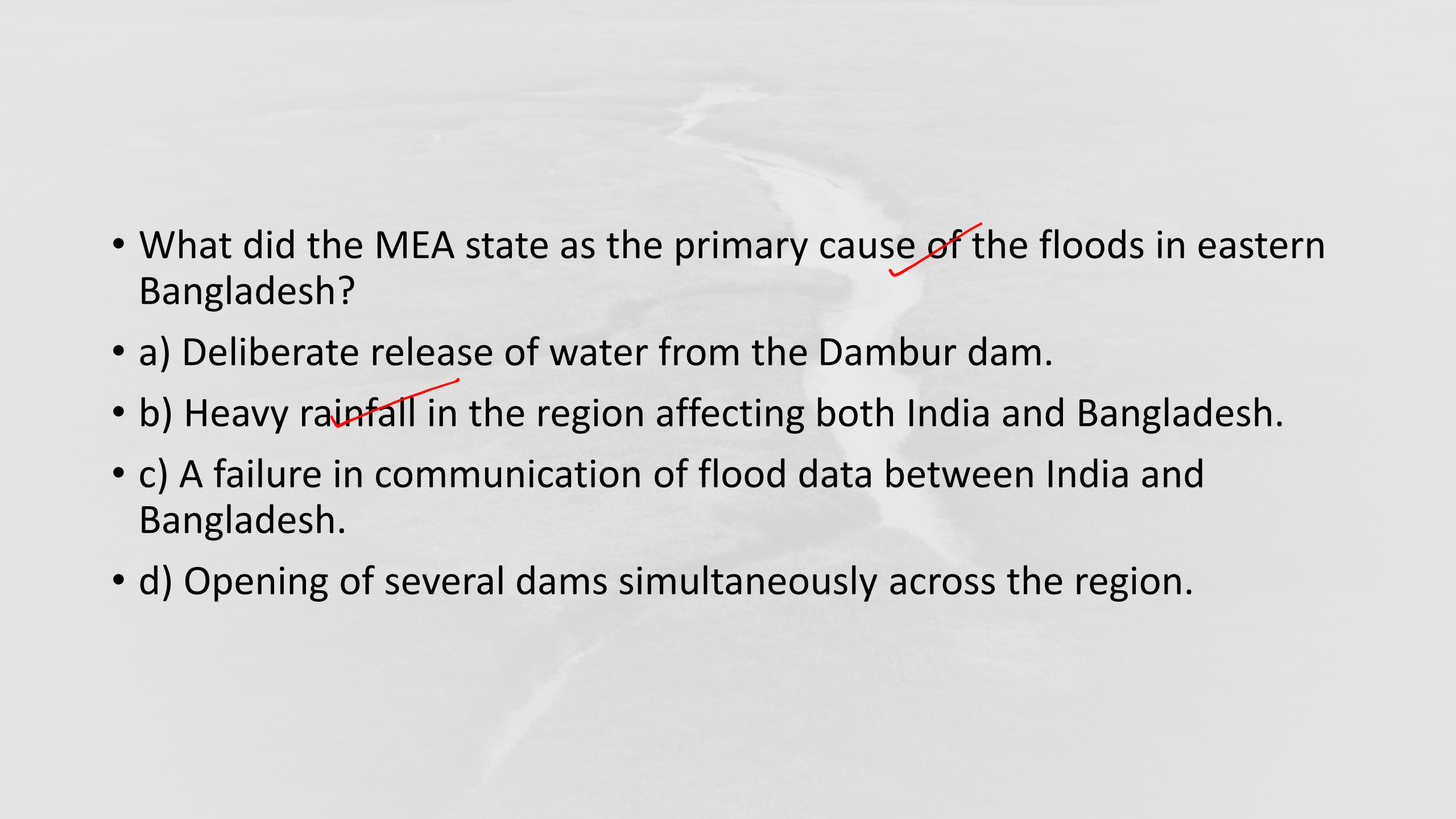
- India and Bangladesh share several common rivers, requiring close cooperation for flood management.
 - Both countries have 54 common cross-border rivers, and water cooperation is a key aspect of their bilateral engagement.
- 



- **Security Concerns for Indian High Commission:**

- Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Pranay Verma expressed concern over heightened security threats to Indian mission personnel in Dhaka.
- The concern arose after protests and anti-India sentiments in Bangladesh due to the floods, which some agitators blamed on India.

- **Technical Communication on Flood Data:**
- Indian authorities communicated rising water levels to Bangladesh up until August 21, 2024, despite a power outage that disrupted the flow of information for a brief period.
- The MEA reiterated its commitment to resolving issues through bilateral consultations and technical discussions.

- 
- What did the MEA state as the primary cause of the floods in eastern Bangladesh?
 - a) Deliberate release of water from the Dambur dam.
 - b) Heavy rainfall in the region affecting both India and Bangladesh.
 - c) A failure in communication of flood data between India and Bangladesh.
 - d) Opening of several dams simultaneously across the region.

Modi's Ukraine visit likely to explore deeper ties in defence manufacturing

India operates a large inventory of military equipment of Ukrainian origin; the Prime Minister, who will be in Kyiv at the invitation of Volodymyr Zelensky, will discuss partnerships in defence trade, which has been affected by the ongoing war

Dinakar Peri
KIVY

The symbolism and balancing act aside, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Ukraine on Friday, the first by an Indian Prime Minister, will focus on cooperation in defence, with India operating a large inventory of military equipment of both Russian and Ukrainian origin. In the three years since the war in Ukraine, India has seen supplies and spares held up for some time and has attempted to diversify and reduce dependence by turning to domestic companies as well as seeking alternative vendors in other countries.

The situation has improved since arms and components and supplies have started coming, though not to the pre-war levels, according to official sources. Both Russia and Ukraine have assured that they would ensure timely deliveries, though some schedules have not been met, the sources said. Ukraine said several contacts relat-



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Volodymyr Zelensky held a bilateral meeting during the G-7 Summit in Italy in June. FILE PHOTO

ed to air defence, armour and artillery as it faced escalation in prices from other countries since spares and sub-assemblies were scarce and were diverted, officials said. Further, quality claim resolutions became time consuming. Domestic vendors The Army turned to indigenous defence manufacturers for smaller components and sub-assemblies. This was also done by the

Navy and Indian Air Force (IAF). The Army has reached out to domestic vendors, tried to minimise imports of spares, assemblies and so on to the extent possible and diversified the vendor base where domestic options were not available to about seven to eight countries notably Poland, Estonia, Bulgaria, Czech Republic among others," a source said. The indigenous push was particularly in small components and ammunition, officials said. With Russia, there has been an added element of spares as Russia was shut out of the global SWIFT system and the rupee-rouble trade couldn't cater to large payments.

The impact of such tensions is not entirely new as in the past, tensions between Russia and Ukraine had considerably delayed the modernisation of the IAF's AN-32 transport fleet. The upgrade of 100 AN-32 transport aircraft of the IAF under a deal finalised in 2009. While upgrade of 45 AN-32 in Ukraine was completed in 2015, remain-

ing aircraft were to be upgraded by the IAF Base Repair Depot, Kanpur which got considerably delayed. For the Indian Navy, probably the impact is as acute, as it has ordered 30 frontline warships are powered by engines from Zorya Mashproekt of Ukraine. Indian Navy drew a roadmap to achieve a certain level of servicing locally in the next few years. In addition, Zorya is tying up with an Indian company to carry out certain level of engine maintenance reducing the need to ship engines to Ukraine, sources stated.

Defence trade between India and Ukraine continued till just before 2022. For instance, after the Russian missile strikes in 2019, the IAF made emergency procurement of 82 air-to-air missiles for its SU-30MKI fighters. At Aero India in February 2022, Ukraine signed four agreements worth \$70 million. The deal includes sale of new weapons and maintenance and upgrades of existing aircraft in service with the Indian Air Force. Ukraine was completed in 2015, remain-

Dinakar Peri
WARSAW

India and Poland have agreed to formulate and execute a five-year action plan that will guide bilateral collaboration from 2024 to 2028 across several areas, following talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Polish counterpart Donald Tusk. The ties between the two countries have been upgraded to the level of "strategic partnership".

The India-Poland action plan identified priority areas for cooperation in trade, dialogue and security cooperation, climate, energy, mining, science and technology, transport and connectivity, tourism, cyber security, health, people-to-people ties and cultural cooperation.

Poland is among the world leaders in food processing. Mr. Modi noted worth \$70 million. The deal includes sale of new weapons and maintenance and upgrades of existing aircraft in service with the Indian Air Force. Ukraine was completed in 2015, remain-



Narendra Modi had interacted with the Indian diaspora and discussed people-to-people ties in Warsaw. X/SHANENDRAMODI

treatment, solid waste management, urban infrastructure," he said identifying clean coal technology, green hydrogen, renewable energy, artificial intelligence as "common priorities".

Addressing the Indian community on Wednesday evening, Mr. Modi announced the Jam Sahab of Nawanganar youth exchange programme between the two countries under which every year 20 young persons from Poland will be taken on a tour to India. "We invite Polish companies to join hands in India and make for the

world," the PM said. Towards the welfare of the skills workforce, workers, and to promote mobility, the two sides agreed on a social security agreement.

Both sides agreed to work on concluding a cooperation agreement to promote the "safe, sustainable and secure" use of space and commercial space ecosystems. "They also agreed to promote human and robotic exploration," a joint statement said. Poland also recognised India's ambition to join the International Energy Agency. Mr. Modi met Polish President Andrzej Duda at Belvedere Palace.

Doctors at govt. hospitals in Delhi end 11-day strike

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Federation of All India Medical Association (FAIMA) on Thursday decided to end its 11-day strike following "positive" directions from the Supreme Court. The court earlier in the day asked protesting doctors to resume work and assured them that no adverse action would be taken after they rejoin.

"We welcome the acceptance of our prayers for interim protections and the necessary steps to enhance security in hospitals. United, we will continue to fight legally," FAIMA said in a post on X. Resident Doctors' Associations (RDAs) of AIIMS-Delhi, RML Hospital, Lady Hardinge Medical College and the Delhi government-run Indra Gandhi Hospital also called off the strike.

The AIIMS RDA said the doctors would continue their struggle through "a symbolic protest after duty hours till justice is served and safety guidelines are implemented".

Mamata writes to Modi, seeks stringent Central law to prevent sexual assault

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

As the Central Bureau of Investigation approached a court in Kolkata seeking permission to conduct polygraph tests on Sandip Kumar Ghosh, former principal of the R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital, and four other doctors, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi calling for a stringent Central legislation with "exemplary punishment" for perpetrators of sexual assault.

In her letter, Ms. Banerjee highlighted the "regular and increasing" incidents of sexual assault across the country. Citing available data, she pointed out that "more than 90 cases are occurring every day", which, according to her, were shaking the confidence and conscience of the society and the nation. She emphasised that "such serious and sensitive issues need to be addressed in a comprehensive manner" and suggested setting up of "fast-track special courts for speedy trials" of such cases. "The trial in such cases should preferably be completed in 15 days," she wrote. The CBI sought permission from a court to conduct polygraph tests on Dr. Ghosh and four other doctors. A polygraph test is also likely to be done on the accused Sanjay Roy. While Mr. Roy, a civic police volunteer, who was arrested by the Kolkata Police on August 10, is in CBI custody, the former principal has been questioned by the agency over the past several days. In Kolkata, clashes broke out outside Swarnha Bhawan, the headquarters



Mamata Banerjee

of State Health Department, when a rally by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) turned violent.

The BJP has been demanding the resignation of P.K. Banerjee, BJP leader. Suwendu Adhikari said that only five persons wanted to meet the State Health Secretary but the meeting was denied on the instructions of the Chief Minister, who holds the health portfolio.

The BJP and other political and social groups have called for a march to Naxbanna, the State Secretariat, on August 27. The State government has moved the Calcutta High Court against the rally. The court will hear the petition on Friday.

In a related development, two companies of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) have been deployed on the R.G. Kar premises following directions of the Supreme Court. About 170 CISF personnel will guard the hospital that was ransacked by a mob on August 15.

Centre reviews ground rules with Manipur's Kuki-Zo insurgent groups

Vijalita Singh
NEW DELHI

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs is reviewing the ground rules applicable to the Kuki-Zo insurgent groups in Manipur, which are in a suspended state of Operation (SOO) agreement with the government since 2008. One measure proposed by the Union government is the removal of 500 camps from locations close to the valley districts which are dominated by the Meitei people.

The camps are proposed to be relocated further into the hills, said a source. The issue was also discussed on June 17 when Home Minister Shabir Ahmad reviewed the security situation in Manipur with State government officials without Chief Minister N. Biren Singh. Meitei groups have been demanding the removal of the camps.

Mr. Singh has called for the abrogation of the tripartite pact, extended periodically in the past two decades. On February 29, the Manipur government refused to send a representative to a meeting called by Ministry to extend the SOO pact with Kuki-Zo insurgent groups, leaving the agreement in a limbo. Since August 19, three rounds of meetings have been held between three members of the Kuki-Zo insurgent groups and A.K. Mishra, Adviser (North-east), the Ministry and Intelligence Bureau officials to discuss and review the ground rules. After a peace pact is signed with an insurgent group, the cadres are to stay in earmarked camps and weapons and ammunition are accounted for and regular checks are conducted by a monitoring agency decided by the State government. According to an estimate, around 2,000 cadres of the SOO groups live in 14 designated camps in the hill districts of Manipur. Ethnic violence between the Kuki-Zo and the Meitei people erupted in Manipur on May 3, 2023 after a tribal solidarity march to protest a court order turned violent in Churachandpur, a hill district. At least 224 people have been killed and more than 60,000 people displaced from their homes in the past 15 months. In the days before the violence broke in the State, the SOO groups United Peoples' Front (UPF) and the Kuki National Organisation (KNO), had reached a political settlement with the Ministry to end the decades-old issue. The groups had agreed for a self-governance model in the form of a Territorial Council for the Kuki-Zo in the State of Manipur after several rounds of negotiations. Post-violence, they revised their demand to "separate administration" for the Kuki-Zo people.



Keeping a check: Army and Border Security Force (BSF) personnel disarm Kuki militants' bunkers in the Bungle area of Manipur. @BIREN Singh

Railways to run 900 trains to Prayagraj during Kumbh Mela

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Indian Railways is planning to run 900 special trains to Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh for the Kumbh Mela in January 2025. It is estimated that there will be a footfall of an estimated 300 crore pilgrims and their main medium of transport remains a special train. A person of the Indian Railway said.

Joya Verma Sinha, Railway Board Chairperson, inspected the patrolling cameras from a security perspective. As many as 21 cameras will be installed and under bridges are being developed in Prayagraj to cater to additional



Wide patronage: An estimated 30 crore pilgrims are likely to visit the Kumbh Mela in January 2025. FILE PHOTO

crowd owing to the Kumbh Mela. Also, doubling of tracks in Janghali Phapham section and Varanasi-Prayagraj sections is being completed before the Kumbh Mela. In 2019, Railways had developed 500 special trains during the Kumbh Mela.

SC refuses to grant relief to activist in Elgar Parishad case

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday did not grant any interim relief to activist Jyoti Jagtap, who is in jail in connection with the Elgar Parishad-Maoist links case. A bench headed by Justice M.M. Sundeekar said Ms. Jagtap's petitions for bail would be considered with other similar pleas by her co-accused with whom she is charged in the same case.

Her lawyers said she has been behind bars for about four years now. The court should consider that she is a woman, they said.

Ms. Jagtap had moved the apex court challenging the order of the Bombay High Court that refused to grant her interim relief to the National Investigation Agency's (NIA) case against her with the "pro-maoist" and that she was part of a "larger conspiracy" headed by the banned CPI (Maoist) outfit. The High Court had said Ms. Jagtap was an active member of the Kabir Kala Manch (KKM) and that when during its stage play at the Elgar Parishad conference in Pune in November 31, 2017 gave "highly provocative slogans".

Three arrested for trying to set fire to school bus in Bihar

Amarnath Tewary
PATNA

The Bihar Police on Thursday arrested three persons and booked 300 unknown persons in connection with the incident involving a school bus in Gopalganj district where about 300 unidentified persons involved in protest at the place. We have already arrested three persons and will arrest others as and when their identities are revealed," said Gopalganj town police officer in charge Omprakash Chauhan.

"The FIR has been lodged under Sections 128 (2), 127(2), 191(2), 190, 115 (2), 109, 112, 352 and 315) of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita

teachers on board near Arari Mor in the district. However, the police ensured no major incident occurred.

"Through video footage of the incident, we have identified five persons and lodged an FIR against them along with about 300 unidentified persons involved in protest at the place. We have already arrested three persons and will arrest others as and when their identities are revealed," said Gopalganj town police officer in charge Omprakash Chauhan.

"The FIR has been lodged under Sections 128 (2), 127(2), 191(2), 190, 115 (2), 109, 112, 352 and 315) of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita

(BNS)", the official said. Among the five identified persons, three have already been arrested, while the two others are absconding, said the official.

In Patna, the police had to resort to mild baton charge on protesters to disperse them from the capital's main Dak Bungalow Chouraha (thoroughfare). During the baton charge, with water cannons being used, a policeman accidentally hit a Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) deputee at the place.

Union Minister Chirag Paswan said on X: "This is our responsibility to become a voice for the rights of people from the disadvantaged classes."

Modi's Ukraine visit likely to explore deeper ties in defence manufacturing

India operates a large inventory of military equipment of Ukrainian origin; the Prime Minister, who will be in Kyiv at the invitation of Volodymyr Zelenskyy, will discuss partnerships in defence trade, which has been affected by the ongoing war

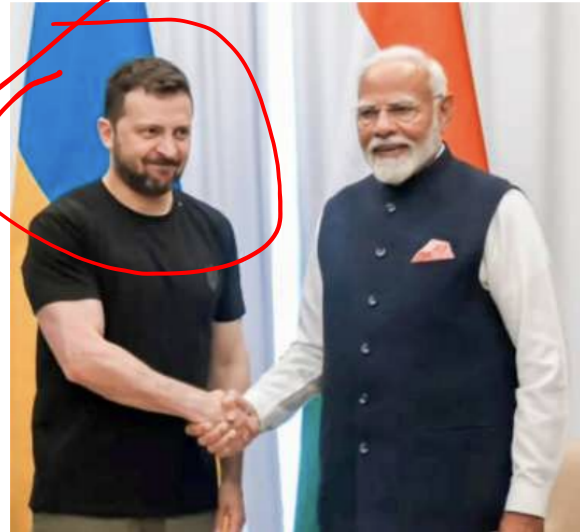
Dinakar Peri
KYIV

The symbolism and balancing act aside, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Ukraine on Friday, the first by an Indian Prime Minister, will focus on cooperation in defence, with India operating a large inventory of military equipment of both Russian and Ukrainian origin.

In the three years since the war in Ukraine, India has seen supplies and spares held up for some time and has attempted to diversify and reduce dependence by turning to domestic companies as well as seeking alternate vendor base in other countries.

The situation has improved since and spares, components and supplies have started coming, though not to the pre-war levels, according to official sources. Both Russia and Ukraine have assured that they would ensure timely deliveries, though earlier schedules have not been met, the sources said.

Sources said Ukraine



Narendra Modi and Volodymyr Zelenskyy hold a bilateral meeting during the G-7 Summit in Italy in June. FILE PHOTO

has several cutting-edge systems and technologies many of which are battle-tested. It has expressed interest in forming joint ventures with Indian companies.

The war in Ukraine in February 2022 impacted all three services of the Indian military that have huge inventories both from Russia and Ukraine. Immediately after the war began, the Indian Army terminated several contracts relat-

ed to air defence, armour and artillery as it faced escalation in prices from other countries since spares and supplies became scarce and were diverted, officials said. Further, quality claim resolutions became time consuming.

Domestic vendors

The Army turned to indigenous defence manufacturers for smaller components and sub-assemblies. This was also done by the

Navy and Indian Air Force (IAF). "The Army has reached out to domestic vendors, tried to minimise imports of spares, assemblies and so on to the extent possible and diversified the vendor base where domestic options were not available to about seven to eight countries notably Poland, Estonia, Bulgaria, Czech Republic among others," a source said. The indigenous push was particularly in small components and ammunitions, officials said.

With Russia, there has been an added element of payments as Russia was shunted out of the global SWIFT system and the rupee-rouble trade couldn't cater to large payments.

The impact of such tensions is not entirely new as in the past, tensions between Russia and Ukraine had considerably delayed the modernisation of the IAF's AN-32 transport fleet. Ukraine upgraded over 100 AN-32 transport aircraft of the IAF under a deal finalised in 2009. While upgrade of 45 AN-32s in Ukraine was completed in 2015, remain-

ing aircraft were to be upgraded by the IAF Base Repair Depot, Kanpur which got considerably delayed.

For the Indian Navy, probably the impact is as acute, if not more, as over 30 frontline warships are powered by engines from Zorya Nashproekt of Ukraine. Indian Navy drew a roadmap to achieve a certain level of servicing locally in the next few years. In addition, Zorya is tying up with an Indian company to carry out certain level of engine maintenance reducing the need to ship engines to Ukraine, sources stated.

Defence trade between India and Ukraine continued till just before 2022. For instance, after the Balakot air strike in 2019, the IAF made emergency procurement of R-27 air to air missiles for its SU-30MKI fighters. At Aero India in February 2021, Ukraine signed four agreements worth \$70 million which includes sale of new weapons and maintenance and upgrades of existing ones in service with the Indian military, as reported by *The Hindu* earlier.

Capital and largest city	Kyiv 49°N 32°E
Official language and national language	Ukrainian ^[1]
Ethnic groups (2001) ^[2]	78% Ukrainians 17% Russians 4.9% other
Religion (2018) ^[3]	87.3% Christianity 11.0% no religion 0.8% other 0.9% unanswred
Demonym(s)	Ukrainian
Government	Unitary semi-presidential republic
• President	Volodymyr Zelenskyy
• Prime Minister	Denys Shmyhal
• Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada	Ruslan Stefanchuk
Legislature	Verkhovna Rada
Formation	
• Kievan Rus'	882
• Galicia–Volhynia	1199
• Cossack Hetmanate	18 August 1649
• People's Republic	20 November 1917
• Soviet Republic	10 March 1919
• UN membership	24 October 1945
• Independence declared	24 August 1991
• Current constitution	28 June 1996
Area	
• Total	603,628 ^[4] km ² (233,062 sq mi) (45th)
• Water (%)	3.8 ^[5]

Area	
• Total	603,628 ^[4] km ² (233,062 sq mi) (45th)
• Water (%)	3.8 ^[5]
Population	
• 2024 estimate	▲ 33,365,000 ^[6] (36th)
• Density	60.9/km ² (157.7/sq mi) (126th)
GDP (PPP)	2024 estimate
• Total	▲ \$515.947 billion ^[6] (49th)
• Per capita	▲ \$15,464 ^[6] (102nd)
GDP (nominal)	2024 estimate
• Total	▲ \$188.943 billion ^[6] (58th)
• Per capita	▲ \$5,663 ^[6] (111st)
Gini (2020)	▼ 25.6 ^[7] low inequality
HDI (2022)	▼ 0.734 ^[8] high (100th)
Currency	Hryvnia (₴) (UAH)
Time zone	UTC+2 ^[9] (EET)

Prime Minister Modi's Visit to Ukraine:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to visit Ukraine, marking the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister to the country.

The visit is at the invitation of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and will focus on deepening defense cooperation between India and Ukraine.




- **Defense Equipment and Trade:**

- India operates a large inventory of military equipment of both Russian and Ukrainian origin.
- The ongoing war in Ukraine has affected supplies and spares for this equipment, leading India to diversify its defense trade relationships.
- The visit aims to explore partnerships in defense manufacturing and trade, with a focus on overcoming challenges posed by the war.



- **Efforts to Diversify and Reduce Dependency:**

- India has taken steps to reduce its dependency on Russian and Ukrainian suppliers by turning to domestic vendors and seeking alternative suppliers in countries like Poland, Estonia, Bulgaria, and the Czech Republic.




- The Indian Army and Air Force have been particularly focused on minimizing imports of spares, assemblies, and other components.

- **Impact of the War in Ukraine:**

- The war in Ukraine has disrupted supply chains, affecting the availability of military equipment and leading to delays in deliveries.
- Both Russia and Ukraine have assured India of timely deliveries, but the situation remains challenging.




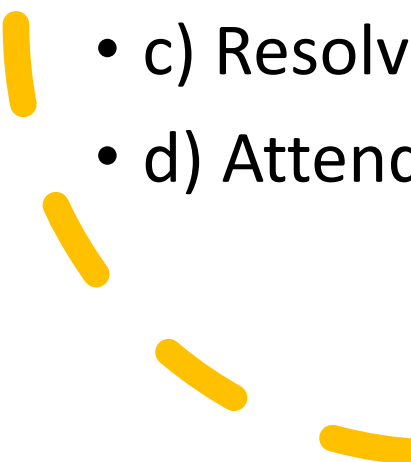
- **Indigenous Defense Manufacturing:**

- India has increased its push for indigenous defense manufacturing, especially for smaller components and sub-assemblies.
 - The Indian Army has started to develop cutting-edge systems and technologies through joint ventures with Indian companies.
- 

1. Previous Defense Trade with Ukraine:

1. India and Ukraine had robust defense trade ties until February 2022.
2. Previous agreements between the two countries included the upgrade of Indian Air Force (IAF) transport aircraft and other military equipment.



- 
- What is the primary focus of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Ukraine?
✓
 - a) Discussing economic trade deals between India and Ukraine.
 - b) Strengthening defense cooperation and partnerships in defense manufacturing.
✓
 - c) Resolving political tensions between Russia and Ukraine.
 - d) Attending a diplomatic summit hosted by the United Nations.
- 

India, Poland formulate action plan, upgrade ties to strategic partnership

Dinakar Peri
WARSAW

India and Poland have agreed to formulate and execute a five-year action plan that will guide bilateral collaboration from 2024 to 2028 across several areas, following talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Polish counterpart Donald Tusk. The ties between the two countries have been upgraded to the level of a “strategic partnership”.

The India-Poland action plan identified priority areas for cooperation which include political dialogue and security cooperation, trade and investment, climate, energy, mining, science and technology, transport and connectivity, terrorism, cyber security, health, people-to-people ties and cultural cooperation.

Poland is among the world leaders in food processing, Mr. Modi noted and invited Polish companies to join the mega food parks being built in India. “In India, rapid urbanisation is opening up new opportunities for our cooperation in areas such as water



Narendra Modi had interacted with the Indian diaspora and discussed people-to-people ties in Warsaw. X/@NARENDRAMODI

treatment, solid waste management, urban infrastructure,” he said identifying clean coal technology, green hydrogen, renewable energy, artificial intelligence as “common priorities”.

Addressing the Indian community on Wednesday evening, Mr. Modi announced the Jam Saheb of Nawanagar youth exchange programme between the two countries under which every year 20 young persons from Poland will be taken on a tour to India.

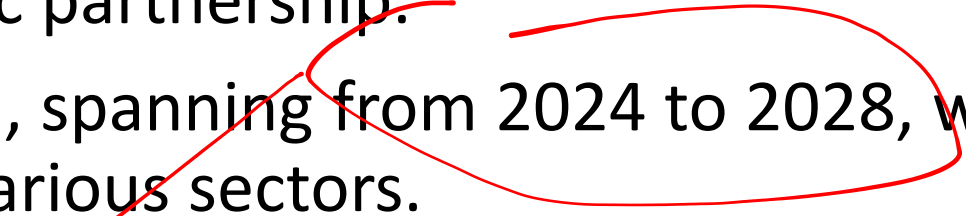
“We invite Polish companies to join Make in India and make for the

world,” the PM said. Towards the welfare of the skilled workforce, workers, and to promote mobility, the two sides agreed on a social security agreement.

Both sides agreed to work on concluding a cooperation agreement to promote the “safe, sustainable, and secure” use of space and commercial space ecosystems. “They also agreed to promote human and robotic exploration,” a joint statement said. Poland also recognised India’s ambition to join the International Energy Agency. Mr. Modi met Polish President Andrzej Duda at Belweder Palace.




- **Strategic Partnership Between India and Poland:**

- India and Poland have agreed to upgrade their bilateral relations to the level of a "strategic partnership."
 - A five-year action plan, spanning from 2024 to 2028, will guide collaboration across various sectors.
- 






- **Priority Areas of Cooperation:**

- The action plan identifies key areas for cooperation, including political dialogue, ~~security, trade and investment, climate, energy, science and technology, transportation, connectivity, cybersecurity,~~ health, people-to-people ties, and cultural cooperation.
- 



- **Clean Energy and Technology:**

- Common priorities include clean coal technology, green hydrogen, renewable energy, artificial intelligence, and urban infrastructure.
 - Both countries are working towards concluding a cooperation agreement to promote the "safe, sustainable, and secure" use of space and commercial space ecosystems.
- 



- **Social Security and Skilled Workforce:**




- A social security agreement is planned to ensure the welfare of the skilled workforce and workers.

- The Indian Prime Minister invited Polish companies to join the "Make in India" initiative.



- **Youth Exchange Program:**

- An exchange program called the "Jam Saheb of Nawanagar" will be established, under which 20 young persons from Poland will visit India every year.








1. Poland's Role in Global Food Processing:

1. Poland is a global leader in food processing, and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi invited Polish companies to join India's mega food parks.

2. International Cooperation:

1. Poland recognized India's ambition to join the International Energy Agency. ✓
 2. The two sides agreed to promote human and robotic exploration in space.
- 

- 
- What key area is ~~NOT mentioned as a priority for cooperation~~ between India and Poland in their strategic partnership?
 - a) Cybersecurity
 - b) Renewable Energy
 - c) Military Alliance
 - d) Cultural Cooperation
- 

NO 400

Max Verstappen says he's closer to the end of his career than the start



Heading into his 20th career Formula 1 race, Max Verstappen is clear he doesn't want to be found for No. 400. At the age of 26, Verstappen is the youngest F1 driver to reach the 200-race milestone. "We passed halfway for sure, but it's been already of course an incredible ride."

NO RETURN

Sussex relieves Pujara after signing Daniel Hughes for 2025 season



Cheteshwar Pujara will not return to Sussex for next year's County Championship after the English side opted to relieve him to retain the services of Australian Daniel Hughes. Hughes will be available for all Championship and T20 Vitality Blast matches next season.

IN THE FRAY

Zaheer in talks with Super Giants for mentorship role



Former India pacer Zaheer Khan is in contention to assume the mentorship role at Lucknow Super Giants ahead of the next season of the Indian Premier League. The 45-year-old was head of global development at Mumbai Indians (MI) and also held the position of director of cricket for the franchise from 2018-2022.

ON THE LOOKOUT

ICC to get new woman director as Indra Nooyi's six-year term ends



The International Cricket Council (ICC) is on the lookout for a new independent woman director after PepsiCo head Indra Nooyi's six-year tenure came to an end last month. ICC is also set to get a new chairman after incumbent Greg Barclay's refusal to seek a third term. Nooyi has completed her full term.

Challengers pass the Patriots test in opener

The defending champion overcomes the loss in the first match to put it past the Jaipur outfit; Yangzi wins both her matches, including the mixed doubles in the company of Harmeet

UTT
K. Keerthivasan
CHENNAI

Defending champion Goa Challengers began its Ultimate Table Tennis League campaign on a rousing note, outplaying debutant Jaipur Patriots 9-6 at the Nehru Indoor Stadium here on Thursday.

Goa and Jaipur shared the spoils in the first two singles matches. Challengers captain Harmeet started exceptionally well but fell behind and lost to Cho Seungmin of Jaipur 11-2, 1-11, 5-11 in the opening men's singles contest.

Goa pulled one back through Yangzi Liu in women's singles. Ranked 34th in the world, Yangzi eased past Jaipur's Suthasini Sawetthabot, ranked 19 spots below her, 11-3, 11-6, 11-4.

The crucial third match — mixed doubles — went the distance. Harmeet and Yangzi played the waiting game, exchanging flashy shots unlike the Patriots pair of Ronit Bhanja and Suthasini, to script a 11-1, 6-11, 11-7 win.

Mihai Bobocica of Goa overcame Ronit in a battle that saw the Italian get better as the match progressed. After the change



On the ball: Yangzi put Challengers on course with a win over Suthasini. M. VIDYAN

of ends, and at 5-3 in the third and deciding game, Mihai raced away to a 11-7, 11-5 victory. The result in Chengdu in 2022, showed why he was a dangerous opponent.

Spin-heavy
Armed with a powerful forehand loaded with topspin and backed by a variety of serves with side-spin and back-spin, the Korean took a 7-1 lead in the second and went on to win the game without losing another point.

In the decider, Cho's superior third-ball attack and

backhand winners didn't give Harmeet any chance of making a comeback.

Udhayanidhi Stalin, Tamil Nadu Minister for Youth Welfare and Sports Development, inaugurated the event.

Goa Challengers vs Jaipur Patriots 9-6 (Harmeet Desai lost to Cho Seungmin 11-2, 1-11, 5-11; Yangzi Liu vs Suthasini Sawetthabot 11-3, 11-6, 11-4; Harmeet & Yangzi vs Ronit Bhanja & Suthasini 11-1, 6-11, 11-7; Mihai Bobocica vs Ronit 11-1, 11-7, 11-5; Yashwanth Ghorpade lost to Nithyashree Mani 10-11, 11-5, 7-11).

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Archana Kamath quits table tennis to focus on academics



Studies over sport: Archana does not want to postpone her academic pursuits any further. AFP

K. Keerthivasan
CHENNAI

Archana Kamath, who was part of the Indian women's table tennis team which reached the quarterfinals at the Paris Olympics, said she is retiring from competitive sport to focus on higher studies.

In a statement on Thursday, the 24-year-old from Bengaluru ranked 122 in the world, said she was moving away from the sport purely because of her love for academics.

"It was not an easy decision for me to make, but I have retired from competitive table tennis. It is only because of my love for academics."

"Table tennis is an amazing sport that I have had the privilege of playing for a long time and my love for it continues... I have never thought about

nor played with financial returns in mind."

Archana, whose parents are doctors specialising in ophthalmology, said both table tennis and academics have played a huge part in her life and that both have made her the person she is.

"I took a decision to pursue my higher education after the Paris Olympics by enrolling in a full-time two-year Master's programme in Public Policy."

"I felt that now is the time. I did not want to postpone my academic pursuits any further."

The former National champion thanked Indian Oil Corporation, Olympic Gold Quest, SAI/ TOPS, Department of Youth Empowerment and Sports Development, Karnataka and her coaches in her journey for helping her.

Minnu, Priya make the Aussies dance to their tunes

Breaks Trust of India
GOLD COAST

Spinners Minnu Mani and Priya Mishra shared nine wickets between them as India-A bundled out Australia-A for 212 to gain a massive upper hand on the first day of the four-day one-off women's Test here on Thursday.

Skipper and off-spinner Minnu (five for 58) and leg-spinner Priya (four for 38) put the Australian batting unit in a tailspin as it lost all the 10 wickets to the slow bowlers. Opener Georgia Voll (71, 88), 126-4) was fluent during her stay but she fell to left-arm spinner Marnat Kaschp as Australia slumped to 94 for four.

In reply, India-A reached 100 for two at stumps, 112 behind Australia-A's total. It lost Priya Punia (7) early and Shubha Sathish went without contributing much.

The scores: Australia-A 212 in 53 overs (Georgia Voll 71, 88, 126-4; Marnat Kaschp 4/50 vs India-A 100/2 in 36 overs (Shweta Subramani 4/30 batting). Toss: Australia-A.

Brook and Smith revive England after Asitha strikes for Sri Lanka

Agency France-Press
MANCHESTER

Sri Lanka's Asitha Fernando took the Australian batting unit in a tailspin as it lost all the 10 wickets to the slow bowlers. Opener Georgia Voll (71, 88), 126-4) was fluent during her stay but she fell to left-arm spinner Marnat Kaschp as Australia slumped to 94 for four.

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Asitha Fernando had figures of three for 68, having dismissed opener Ben Duckett and Ollie Pope for just six in his first innings as England captain before also removing key batter Joe Root for 42.

But the 25-year-old Brook made 56 while feisty rising star Jamie Smith was unbeaten on 72 as England regained control.

The scores: Sri Lanka 236 in 74 overs vs England 239/6 in 61 overs (Root 42, Brook 56, Smith 72 batting, Asitha Fernando 3/68).

Rizwan and Shakeel guide Pakistan to a mammoth total

Agency France-Press
RAWALPINDI

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Bangladesh openers Shadman Islam was 12 and Zakir Hossain on 11. Bangladesh had pushed Pakistan on to the back foot, but it was Shakeel who repaired the innings through a 98-run fourth wicket stand before another 240 runs were added for the next with Rizwan as Pakistan blunted Bangladesh's attack.

But to reach a mammoth total in the format while Shakeel's 141 was equally polished as the duo lifted Pakistan from a 16 for three

on Wednesday. Bangladesh openers Shadman Islam was 12 and Zakir Hossain on 11. Bangladesh had pushed Pakistan on to the back foot, but it was Shakeel who repaired the innings through a 98-run fourth wicket stand before another 240 runs were added for the next with Rizwan as Pakistan blunted Bangladesh's attack.

The scores: Pakistan 448/6 decl. in 113 overs (Ayub 56, Shakeel 141, Rizwan 171 vs v.s. Bangladesh 27/0 in 12 overs).

US OPEN DRAW

Agency France-Press
NEW YORK

Sri Lanka's Asitha Fernando took the Australian batting unit in a tailspin as it lost all the 10 wickets to the slow bowlers. Opener Georgia Voll (71, 88), 126-4) was fluent during her stay but she fell to left-arm spinner Marnat Kaschp as Australia slumped to 94 for four.

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Sinner could face Alcaraz again in the semifinals



Another epic? Alcaraz beats Sinner at Flushing Meadows in 2023, a five-hour 15-minute quarterfinal. AP Photo

Djokovic will start against a qualifier and then play either fellow Serb Leko Djere or Germany's Jan-Lennard Struff.

Djokovic, a four-time US Open winner, is bidding to clinch a record 25th Grand Slam title.

The highlight match of the opening round sees four-time Grand Slam title winner Naomi Osaka, the champion at Flushing Meadows in 2018 and 2020, face number ten seed and 2017 French Open winner Jelena Ostapenko.

The clash will be Osaka's first at the US Open since becoming a mother.

Lord's to host first women's Test in 2026



'Home': Lord's cricket ground. GETTY IMAGES

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) said that after playing a three-match ODI series against hosts England in July 2025, India will return in 2026 for a one-off Test.

India will travel to England for a white-ball tour in 2025. A five-match T20 series will be followed by three ODIs.

The first match of the T20 series will be played at Nottingham on June 28, the second at Bristol on July 1 and the third at The Oval on July 4.

The fourth and fifth T20s will be played at Old Trafford and Edgbaston on July 9 and 12.

The first of the three ODIs will be at Southampton on July 16, the second at Lord's on July 19 and the final match of the series will be at Chester-le-Street on July 22.

ON THE LOOKOUT

ICC to get new woman director as Indra Nooyi's six-year term ends

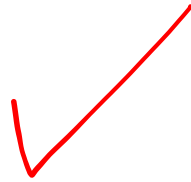


REUTERS

The International Cricket Council (ICC) is on the lookout for a new independent woman director after PepsiCo head Indra Nooyi's six-year tenure came to an end last month. ICC is also set to get a new chairman after incumbent Greg Barclay's refusal to seek a third term. Nooyi has completed her full term.

Predecessor	Imperial Cricket Conference (1909–1965) International Cricket Conference (1965–1989)
Formation	15 June 1909; 115 years ago
Type	Federation of national associations
Headquarters	<ul style="list-style-type: none">London, England (1909–2005)Dubai, United Arab Emirates (2005–present)
Membership	108 members
Official languages	English
Chairman	Greg Barclay
Deputy Chairman	Imran Khwaja
CEO	Geoff Allardice ^[1]
General Manager	Wasim Khan
Revenue (2023)	US\$596.014 million ^[2]
Expenses (2023)	US\$208.375 million ^[2]

Internship portal in the works



Will help match opportunity with youth skill sets

AANCHAL MAGAZINE
New Delhi, August 22

A NEW PORTAL is in the works to enable youths to apply for internships directly with the country's top 500 companies under a special package announced in the Budget.

The portal would facilitate a certain matching of skill sets of the applicants with the type of internship opportunities provided by the companies.

The ministry of corporate affairs (MCA) will announce the guidelines for the internship scheme over the next two weeks, following which the portal will be made active for the prospective applicants, officials involved in the exercise said.

"The idea is not to upload any existing database of the country's youth on the portal, because some may not want to opt for this internship scheme.

"Instead, the companies will list out their internship opportunities and these will get matched with the information provided by the applicants, enabling a free flow of information on the portal," a senior government official said.

The portal is expected to be functional after the guidelines for the scheme are finalised by the MCA. The ministry is in discussion with the companies, the official said.

In the Union Budget for 2024-25 presented by the NDA government on July 23, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman had announced the Prime Minister's Package for Employment and Skilling with an overall outlay of ₹2 lakh crore.

The government is keen to ensure that those at the mar-

AT A GLANCE

■ The portal would facilitate a certain matching of skill sets of the applicants with the type of internship opportunities provided by the companies

■ MCA will announce the guidelines for the internship scheme over the next two weeks

■ The portal is expected to be functional after the guidelines for the scheme are finalised by the MCA



■ The govt is keen to ensure that those at the margins, especially those less skilled and less employable, are able to make the most of this internship scheme

■ Internships are to be provided to 10 million youth by India's top 500 companies over the next five years

gins, especially those less skilled and less employable, are able to make the most of this internship scheme.

As part of the package announced in the Budget, internships are to be provided to 10 million youth by India's top 500 companies over the next five years.

"They will gain exposure for 12 months to real-life business environments, varied professions and employment opportunities.

"An internship allowance of ₹5,000 per month along with a one-time assistance of ₹6,000 will be provided.

"Companies will be expected to bear the training cost and 10% of the internship cost from their CSR funds," Sitharaman had said.

In July, then finance secretary TV Somanathan, who is now cabinet secretary, had said that the government

plans to talk to the top 500 companies and mutually agree on a "voluntary quota system" for taking on board interns under the employment package announced in the Budget 2024-25.

The "quota system" would be based on the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) expenditure of these companies.

"We won't be giving them (companies) the type of people they would normally recruit because we don't want to give them a subsidy for people they would have hired anyway.

"We will have a negative list also: Say, nobody from IITs, IIMs, chartered accountants, cost accountants, nobody who is paying income tax, nobody whose parent is a government servant, etc.


"We want it for the people who are left out of the normal channels of recruitment," Somanathan had said.



- **Internship Portal Development:**


- A new portal is being developed to help youth apply directly for internships with India's top 500 companies, as announced in the Union Budget 2024-25.

- **Skill Matching:**

- The portal will match the skill sets of applicants with appropriate internship opportunities provided by companies.
- 




- **Guidelines and Implementation:**

- The Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) will announce the guidelines for the internship scheme within the next two weeks.
 - The portal is expected to become functional once these guidelines are finalized.
- 




- **Inclusive Internship Scheme:**

- The government aims to ensure that marginalized youth, especially those less skilled and less employable, benefit from this scheme.
 - The scheme is designed not to upload an existing youth database but to allow companies to list internship opportunities which will then be matched with applicants' skills.
- 




- **Internship Details:**

- The internship will offer 12 months of real-life business experience in various professions and employment opportunities.
 - Interns will receive a ₹5,000 monthly allowance, with a one-time assistance of ₹6,000.
- 











- **Company Participation:**

- Companies will bear the training costs and 10% of the internship cost from their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds.
 - A “voluntary quota system” is being discussed with companies to onboard interns under the employment package.
- 






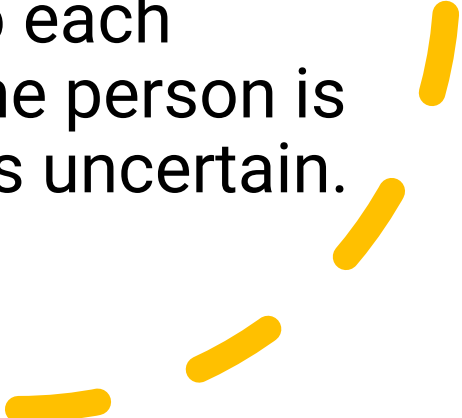
- **Quota System and Exclusions:**


- The "quota system" would be based on CSR expenditure, ensuring that those from marginalized backgrounds benefit.
 - The scheme will exclude people from elite educational backgrounds (like IITs, IIMs), professional courses (like chartered accountants), and those who are economically well-off or whose parents are government servants.
- 

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- 
- What is the main focus of the new internship portal being developed by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA)?
 - a) To upload an existing database of youth for easy access by companies.
 - b) To facilitate the matching of youth skills with internship opportunities provided by top companies.
 - c) To provide financial assistance to all applicants regardless of their economic background.
 - d) To ensure all students from IITs and IIMs are given priority in the internship scheme.

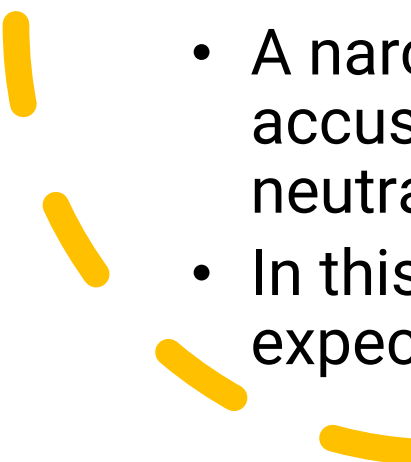
Polygraph Test

- 
- Recently, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has been authorised to perform a polygraph test on the key suspect in the rape and murder case of a postgraduate doctor at Kolkata Medical College.
 - The polygraph test will help investigators check the consistency of the suspect's statements and identify potential deception.
- 

- 
- **Lie Detector Test** is a procedure that measures and records several **physiological indicators** such as **blood pressure, pulse, respiration, and skin conductivity** while a person is asked and answers a series of questions.
 - This test is based on the **assumption that physiological responses** that are triggered when a person is **lying** are **different** from what they would be otherwise.
 - A **numerical value** is assigned to each response to conclude whether the person is telling the truth, is deceiving, or is uncertain.
- 

- 
- A test similar to polygraph was **first done in the 19th century** by the **Italian criminologist Cesare Lombroso**, who used a machine to measure changes in the **blood pressure** of criminal suspects during interrogation.

- **Different From Narco-Analysis Test:**

- A narco analysis test involves injecting **sodium pentothal** into the accused, inducing a **hypnotic or sedated state** that supposedly neutralises their imagination.
 - In this state, the individual is considered **incapable of lying** and is expected to reveal truthful information.
- 



- **Accuracy of Tests:**

- Polygraph and narco tests are **not scientifically proven to be 100% accurate** and remain controversial in the medical field.
- Despite this, investigative agencies have recently used these tests as a "**softer alternative**" to torture to extract the truth from suspects.





Violation of Article 20(3):



Polygraph, narco-analysis, and brain mapping tests conducted without the accused's consent violate Article 20(3) of the Indian Constitution, which protects the right against self-incrimination.



This article ensures that no person accused of an offence is compelled to be a witness against themselves.

- 
- **Necessity of Consent:** As these tests involve the accused providing potentially **self-incriminating information**, obtaining their **consent is mandatory** to avoid breaching constitutional rights.
 - **Judicial and Human Rights Concerns:** The use of narco-analysis and similar tests raises **significant concerns about judicial integrity and human rights**, particularly regarding individual rights and freedoms.
- 



Uttarakhand Launches India's First Gross Environment Product

- Recently, Uttarakhand became the 1st state in the country to assign monetary values to its natural resources, including air, water, forest, and soil and termed it as the Gross Environment Product (GEP).



About GEP:

It is a component of Green GDP and is considered as the product and service value that the ecosystem provides for human welfare and economic and social sustainable development, including provisioning, regulating and cultural ecosystem services.

Green GDP is an economic growth indicator that factors in environmental aspects like biodiversity losses and climate change costs along with the standard GDP.

Word of the day

Impugn:

attack as false or wrong

Synonym: challenge

Usage: *He impugned his rival's character*

Pronunciation: bit.ly/impugnpro

International Phonetic

Alphabet: /ɪm'pju:n/

CURRENT AFFAIRS COURSE

- ✓ UPDATED CURRENT AFFAIRS (2023+2024)|
- ✓ COMPLETE NOTES(PDF)

COMPLETE GK/GS COURSE

- ✓ STATIC GK
- ✓ HISTORY
- ✓ POLITY
- ✓ GEOGRAPHY
- ✓ ECONOMICS

USE CODE


B60

CALL FOR SUPPORT: +91-7414862047



• **LIVE DOUBT SESSION**



A group of people are clapping in a dimly lit room. The focus is on the hands and forearms of several individuals, some in the foreground and some blurred in the background. The lighting is soft and moody, with a blueish tint. In the top left corner, there is a solid orange horizontal bar and a cluster of small, glowing red dots of varying sizes.

Thank you
guys.
