

# Daily Current Affairs



जनसत्ता



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10 MCQ QUIZ



A blurred photograph of a modern office interior. In the background, several people are seated around a long wooden table, engaged in a meeting. The scene is brightly lit by large windows, creating a soft, out-of-focus atmosphere. The text is overlaid in the center of the image.

Top 10 MCQ from the session for  
every exam



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What is the primary goal of the newly introduced painless injection technology?

नई पेश की गई दर्द रहित इंजेक्शन तकनीक का मुख्य उद्देश्य क्या है?

- 
- A. Reduce needle-related injuries / सुई से संबंधित चोटों को कम करना
  - B. Enhance immunization efficiency / टीकाकरण दक्षता को बढ़ाना
  - C. Prevent blood-borne infections / रक्त जनित संक्रमणों को रोकना
  - D. All of the above / उपरोक्त सभी

---

Where was the **Surya Kiran 2024** joint military exercise held?

**सूर्य किरण 2024** संयुक्त सैन्य अभ्यास कहाँ आयोजित

किया गया?

---

**A. Visakhapatnam, India / विशाखापत्तनम, भारत**

**B. Saljhandi, Nepal / सलझांडी, नेपाल**

**C. Colombo, Sri Lanka / कोलंबो, श्रीलंका**

**D. New Delhi, India / नई दिल्ली, भारत**

Which country developed the Kaveri engine for the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas?

लाइट कॉम्बैट एयरक्राफ्ट (LCA) तेजस के लिए कावेरी इंजन किस देश द्वारा विकसित किया गया?



- A. Russia / रूस
- B. India / भारत
- C. France / फ्रांस
- D. USA / अमेरिका



The draft guidelines for withdrawing medical support for terminally ill patients were recently released by which ministry?  
टर्मिनल रोगियों के लिए चिकित्सा सहायता वापस लेने के मसौदा दिशानिर्देश हाल ही में किस मंत्रालय द्वारा जारी किए गए?


- A. Ministry of Health / स्वास्थ्य मंत्रालय**
- B. Ministry of Law / विधि मंत्रालय**
- C. Ministry of Home Affairs / गृह मंत्रालय**
- D. Ministry of Social Justice / सामाजिक न्याय मंत्रालय**

What is the Kaveri engine primarily designed to power?  
कावेरी इंजन को मुख्य रूप से किसके लिए डिज़ाइन किया गया है?

- A. Submarines / पनडुब्बियां
- B. Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas / लाइट कॉम्बैट एयरक्राफ्ट (LCA) तेजस
- C. Battle Tanks / युद्धक टैंक
- D. Helicopters / हेलीकॉप्टर

Which country recently legalized assisted dying with provisions for judicial and medical oversight?

किस देश ने हाल ही में न्यायिक और चिकित्सा निगरानी के प्रावधानों के साथ सहायता प्राप्त मृत्यु को वैध बनाया?

- 
- A. India / भारत
  - B. England and Wales / इंग्लैंड और वेल्स
  - C. USA / अमेरिका
  - D. Canada / कनाडा



- What is the **Bald Eagle**, the national bird of the USA, primarily known for?  
यूएसए के राष्ट्रीय पक्षी **बाल्ड ईगल** को मुख्य रूप से किसके लिए जाना जाता है?
- **A. Speed and agility / गति और चपलता**
- **B. Distinctive white head and tail / विशिष्ट सफेद सिर और पूंछ**
- **C. Loud vocalizations / तेज़ आवाज़**
- **D. Large flock sizes / बड़े झुंड का आकार**

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What is the primary objective of the **SLINEX 24** exercise between India and Sri Lanka?  
भारत और श्रीलंका के बीच **SLINEX 24** अभ्यास का मुख्य उद्देश्य क्या है?

- 
- A. Counter-terrorism operations / आतंकवाद विरोधी अभियान
  - B. Maritime cooperation and interoperability / समुद्री सहयोग और अंतरसंचालनीयता
  - C. Border security / सीमा सुरक्षा
  - D. Humanitarian aid missions / मानवीय सहायता मिशन

Which state is the first in India to formalize the implementation of a living will?  
भारत में कौन सा राज्य जीवन वसीयत को लागू करने वाला पहला राज्य है?

- A. Maharashtra / महाराष्ट्र
- B. Goa / गोवा
- C. Karnataka / कर्नाटक
- D. Kerala / केरल



The **Good Governance Day** is celebrated on the birth anniversary of which former Prime Minister of India?

**सुशासन दिवस** भारत के किस पूर्व प्रधानमंत्री की जयंती पर मनाया जाता है?

- A. Lal Bahadur Shastri / लाल बहादुर शास्त्री
- B. Atal Bihari Vajpayee / अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी
- C. Rajiv Gandhi / राजीव गांधी
- D. Jawaharlal Nehru / जवाहरलाल नेहरू

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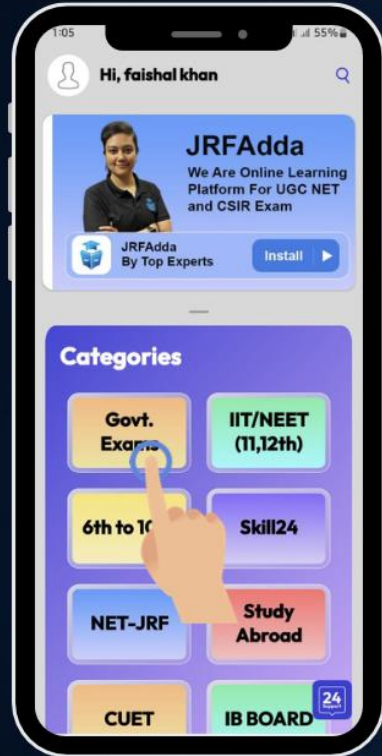


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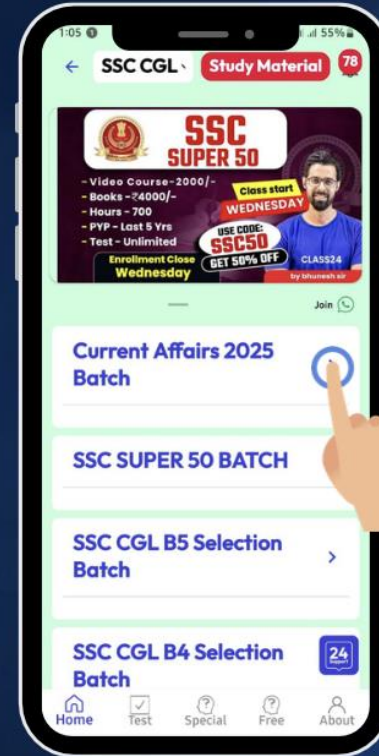
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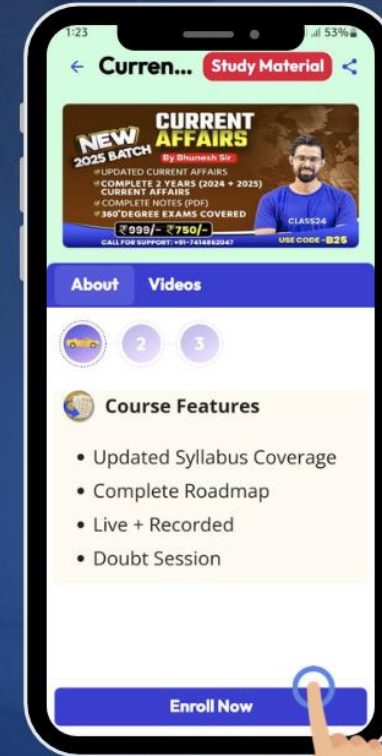
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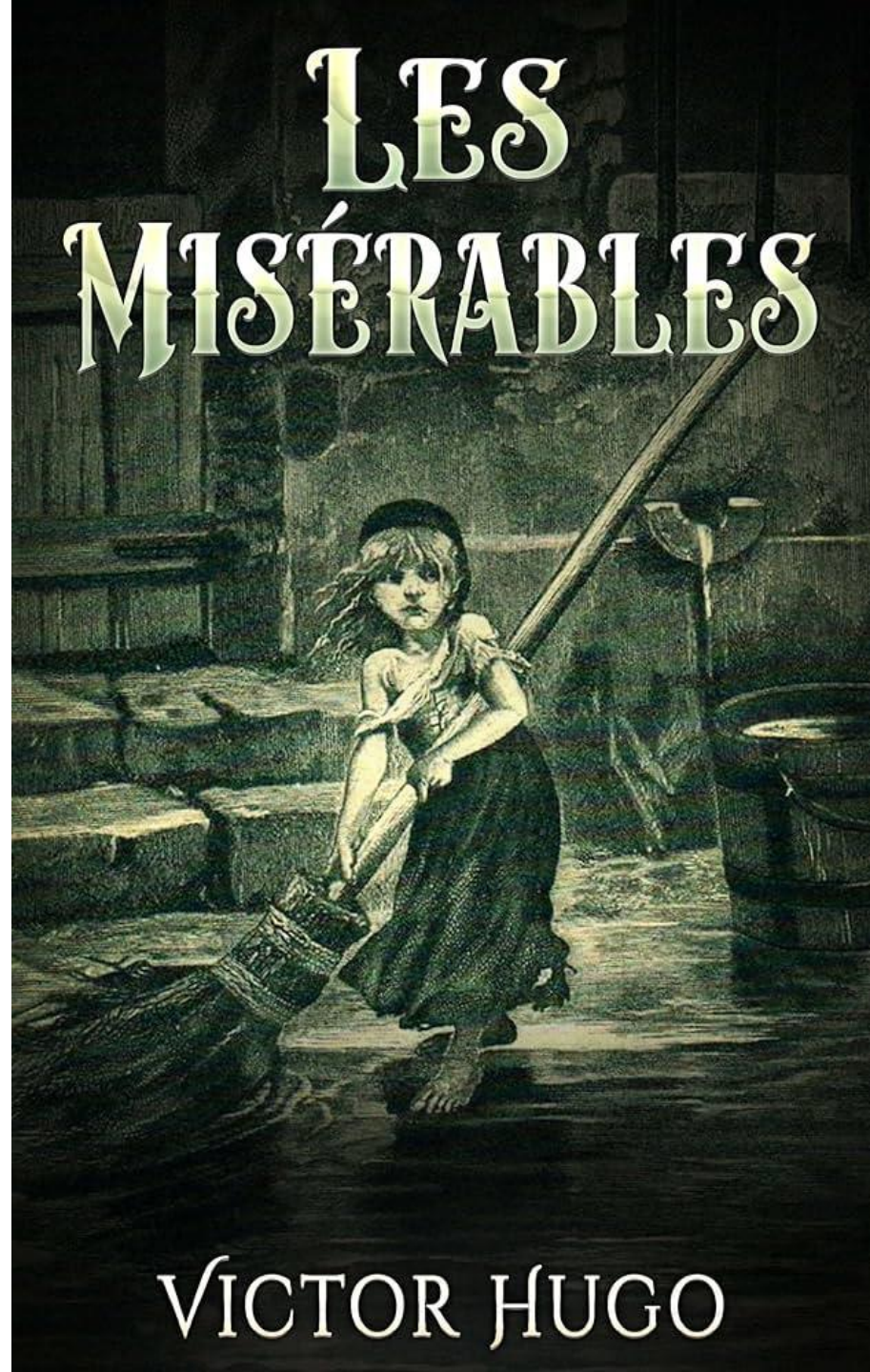
# Step 4





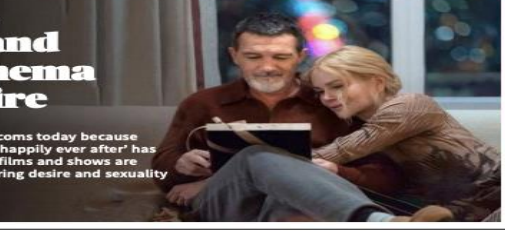
Victor Hugo, *Les Misérables*

*“Even the darkest night will end, and the sun will rise.” –*





**CHANGING SCRIPT**  
**2024 and the cinema of desire**  
There are no rom-coms today because the very idea of a 'happily ever after' has changed. Instead, films and shows are increasingly exploring desire and sexuality  
MAGAZINE » PAGE 3



**It's a chilly winter for Trudeau with local, international concerns**  
PROFILES » PAGE 9  
**What will a second presidency of Donald Trump bring?**  
FAQ » PAGE 8

**Nitish Reddy leads India's fightback with stirring century**  
SPORTS » PAGE 13

# Farm leader's health failing; Punjab 'helpless'

State says a 'forcible evacuation' of Dallew, whose condition is getting worse by the day from a fast-unto-death, will lead to 'collateral damage'; top court says 'one word' from the Centre may defuse the situation, and 'time is running out' for the leader; Centre does not want to make a delicate situation worse by intervening, says Solicitor-General

**Krishnadas Rajagopal**  
NEW DELHI  
The Punjab government said in the Supreme Court on Saturday that a "forcible evacuation" of farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallew, who is weakening by the day from a fast-unto-death, to hospital will lead to "collateral damage" to the police and agitating farmers.  
Mr. Dallew has been on a hunger strike at the Khanauri boundary since November 26 to force the Centre to accept the agitating farmers' demands, including a legal guarantee of minimum support price (MSP) for crops.  
Aware of the deepening crisis, the court said "one word from the Centre may defuse the situation" and

"time was running out for the gentleman (Dallew)", Mr. Dallew had written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, saying he would end his fast only if the Centre engaged with the farmers.  
Appearing before a Vacation Bench of Justices Surya Kant and Sudhanshu Dhulia, Punjab Advocate-General Gurminder Singh said 3,000 people had converged at the protest site where Mr. Dallew was on hunger strike.  
The State's Chief Secretary and the Director-General of Police, facing contempt action, were present online at the hearing. Punjab has been unable to comply with the court's orders, including that of December 27, to seek medical aid and hospitalise Mr. Dallew.  
Mr. Singh said the num-

bers at the protest site had swelled to resist any move to evacuate Mr. Dallew, who has refused to shift to a hospital.  
"Farmers have welded their tractor trolleys together. There is a strong encirclement of the area around Mr. Dallew. Farmers have put in place their volunteers in a multi-layered tier system to control access to the protest site. There is a round-the-clock vigil," Mr. Singh said.  
Two options  
He said there were only two choices open before the authorities, confrontation with the farmers or conciliation. "Opting for confrontation before conciliation would be like putting the cart before the horse... We may lose what we are trying to protect



For farmers' cause: Former Punjab Chief Minister Rajinder Kaur Bhattal meets Jagjit Singh Dallew in Sangrur on Saturday. ANI

here. The man (Dallew) cannot take any jostling or physical resistance," he submitted.  
Justice Kant asked what the next date of hearing. The Bench charged the Centre with the responsibility to file compliance reports a day before December 31, the next date of hearing. The Bench provided the Centre with the responsibility to file compliance reports a day before December 31, the next date of hearing. The Bench provided the Centre with the responsibility to file compliance reports a day before December 31, the next date of hearing.

"peer pressure" to resist hospitalisation after Mr. Singh said the farmer leader had refused to budge despite visits from delegations, including eight State Cabinet Ministers and even the Assembly Speaker.  
Justice Dhulia said preventing a person from getting critical medical attention amounted to abetment to suicide.  
At one point, Justice Dhulia asked the Centre if it could do anything to defuse the stalemate with the farmers over the MSP law.  
"What is the Centre doing to defuse the situation? Are you doing something? We have a situation which is changing from bad to worse. If you can give him some aid, it will be helpful," Justice Dhulia addressed Solicitor-General Tushar Meh-

ta, who is appearing for the Haryana government in the case.  
However, Mr. Mehta said the Centre did not want to make an already delicate situation worse with its intervention. He alleged that Mr. Dallew is being kept "hostage" by other leaders.  
"What better platform could Mr. Dallew wish for when the SC had itself offered him an opportunity to raise his issues, the Solicitor-General enjoined.  
The court said it did not want to be a part of the exchange between Punjab and the Centre. They could engage separately. The court said it was only worried about Mr. Dallew's medical condition.  
"NO PRESSURE TO FAST"  
» PAGE 5

## INSIDE



### Russia warns of severe damage from oil spill

**MOSCOW**  
Russia warned on Saturday of severe environmental damage from an oil spill in the Black Sea caused by collision of two tankers in a storm near Crimea, which declared a state of emergency. » PAGE 12

### Israel 'detains' hospital director in north Gaza

**DEIR AL BALAH**  
Gaza's Health Ministry said on Saturday that Dr. Hussam Abu Safrah, director of Kamal Adwan Hospital, was arrested by Israeli forces. » PAGE 12

## ED summons ex-Telangana Minister and top officials

**The Hindu Bureau**  
HYDERABAD

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has summoned Bharat Rashtia Samithi working president and former Telangana IT Minister K.C. Rama Rao in connection with alleged financial irregularities in the Hyderabad Formula E project.  
Mr. Rao has been asked to appear before the ED on January 7. Senior IAS officer and Special Chief Secretary Arvind Kumar, along with former Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority (HMDA) Chief Engineer B.L.N. Reddy, have also been summoned to appear on January 2 and 3, respectively.  
The Anti-Corruption Bureau registered an FIR on December 19 based on a complaint by Principal Secretary M. Dana Kishore, alleging irregularities in payments exceeding ₹54.88 crore during the Hyderabad Formula E race held in February 2023.  
According to the FIR, the HMDA made payments to Formula E Operations Limited (FEO) and associated entities without following procedures. The government assumed financial responsibility when disputes arose between FEO and Ace Not Gen Pvt. Ltd., the sponsor. Despite an agreement limiting the government's liability, the complaint states that ₹45.7 crore was remitted to FEO between September and October 2023, despite FEO terminating its agreement with the government in the same period.

## Frozen traffic

**The Hindu Bureau**  
SRINAGAR



Skidding on snow: Trucks stranded on the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway at Gaziqind in south Kashmir as heavy snowfall continued on Saturday. The highway was being closed, and flight and train services have been disrupted in the Valley. ANI/NSDK (REPORTS ON PAGE 3)

## Jaishankar discusses ties with Trump's NSA pick

**Press Trust of India**  
SAN FRANCISCO

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar has met U.S. Congressman Michael Waltz, who is President-elect Donald Trump's nominee for National Security Adviser (NSA), and had a wide-ranging conversation on the bilateral partnership between India and the U.S. as well as current global issues.  
Mr. Jaishankar is on an official visit to the U.S. from December 24 to 29. This was the first highest-level in-person meeting between the Indian go-

vernment and the incoming Trump administration.  
"Delighted to meet" Mr. Waltz "this evening", Mr. Jaishankar posted on X on Friday night. "Enjoyed a wide-ranging conversation on our bilateral partnership as well as current global issues. Look forward to working with him," he said. Mr. Waltz, 50, would replace Jake Sullivan as the NSA on January 20, when Mr. Trump would be sworn in as the 47th President of the U.S.  
Mr. Waltz is no stranger to the India-U.S. relationship. A three-term Congressman from the sixth



S. Jaishankar with Michael Waltz, U.S. President-elect Donald Trump's nominee for National Security Adviser. PTI

Congressional District of Florida, Mr. Waltz is the Republican Co-Chair of Congressional India Caucus, the largest country-specific caucus in the U.S. House of Representatives.  
Mr. Waltz also co-lead the Congressional delegation to India in August last year and attended the Independence Day celebrations at

## Manmohan Singh cremated with full state honours

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's mortal remains were consigned to flames at the Nigambodhi Ghat, a public cremation ground here, with full state honours on Saturday. His eldest daughter, Upinder Singh, lit the pyre amid the chanting of religious hymns.

President Droupadi Murmu, Vice-President Jagdeep Thakur, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, King of Bhutan Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, Mauritius Foreign Minister Dhyanidhar K. Ramful, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Home Minister Amit Shah, and Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi, Mallikarjun Jhangra and Rahul Gandhi were present. Before the cremation, the se-



Mortal remains of former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh being taken to Nigambodhi Ghat for last rites on Saturday. ANI

curity forces fired three volleys from small arms and the buglers sounded the "Last Post" as a mark of honour for the former Prime Minister.  
Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan and the three services chiefs paid their last respects to Dr. Singh.  
Dr. Singh's final journey started from his official re-

sidence at 3 Motilal Nehru Road, and reached the All India Congress Committee headquarters around 9 a.m. The mortal remains were kept at the ACC headquarters for about an hour, before heading to the Nigambodhi Ghat for the last rites.  
**TUSSELL CONTINUES**  
» PAGE 4

## Putin apologises to Azerbaijan for crash

**Associated Press**  
MOSCOW

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Saturday apologised to Azerbaijan for what he called a "tragic incident" after an Azerbaijani airliner crashed in Kazakhstan, killing 38 people.  
The Kremlin said in a statement that air defence systems were firing near Grozny, the regional capital of the Russian republic of Chechnya, due to a Ukrainian drone strike as the

plane attempted to land on Wednesday. It stopped short of saying the plane was shot down by Russian air defences.  
According to a Kremlin readout of the call, Mr. Putin apologised to Mr. Aliyev "for the fact that the tragic incident occurred in Kazakhstani airspace".  
The plane was flying from Azerbaijan's capital of Baku to Grozny, when it turned toward Kazakhstan and crashed while attempting to land. There were 29 survivors.



### CBI court convicts 14 in Periyar twin murder case

K.S. Sudhi  
KOCCHI

Fourteen accused, mostly Communist Party of India (Marxist) activists, including former MLA K.V. Ranganathan, were convicted in the politically sensitive Periyar twin murder case by CBI special court here on Saturday.

N. Seshadri Nathan, CBI special judge, who found them guilty, acquitted 10 others as the prosecution failed to prove the charges against them.

The prosecution case was that Youth Congress leaders Kripesh, 21, and Sarath Lal, 23, were brutally murdered by the CPI(M) activists at Kannadippara, near Periyar, due to political hostility.

The accused hatched a conspiracy on February 10, 2019, at Echilakkam Bus Stop, Periyar, to murder Kripesh and Sarath Lal to retaliate against the assault on two persons (now convicted) on January 5, 2019, at Kallottur town.

The murders were carried out to prevent the active work of Sarath Lal and Kripesh for the Congress among the people in the locality, according to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), which investigated the case.

The punishment for the accused will be pronounced on January 3.

## Tourist killed as snowfall cuts off traffic in Kashmir

Hundreds of travellers remain stranded since Friday on Srinagar-Jammu highway; residents in several villages in the Valley complain of major power outages and snapped water supply

Peerzada Ashifa  
SRINAGAR

The J&K administration on Saturday grappled with power outage, air and surface traffic disruptions, and stranded tourists in the wake of a spell of heavy snowfall in the past 24 hours.

Life in the Valley was badly impacted as snowfall, which continued intermittently for the second day on Saturday, made roads slippery and enforced closure of many highways, including those connecting Srinagar to Jammu, Poonch, Gurez, Kishtwar, and Tangdhar.

A woman tourist was killed after a boulder rolled down and smashed a minibus in the Mehara area of Ramban district. The boulder caused "severe head injuries to the victim".

Hundreds of travellers remained stranded on the Srinagar-Jammu highway when around 500 vehicles, including 500 heavy and 150 light motor vehicles, were stranded since Friday afternoon.

"Snow clearance operations are under way on the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway on a war footing basis," Senior Superintendent of Police, Traffic (Rural), Ravinder Pal Singh said.



Snow blocks: Tourists trudge along with their luggage on the banks of the Dal Lake in Srinagar during a spell of heavy snowfall on Saturday. [www.zeenews.com](#)

dent of Police, Traffic (Rural), Ravinder Pal Singh said.

Passengers rescued According to the police, around 16 stranded passengers were rescued in the past 24 hours from south and north Kashmir. Residents opened up their houses and mosques in Ganderbal and Budgam districts to accommodate scores of stranded tourists, including children, mostly from Punjab and Hyderabad.

Meanwhile, all flights at the Srinagar airport were cancelled, officials said.

The rail services resumed on Saturday afternoon after being suspended in the morning.

All the examinations to be held by the Kashmir University on Saturday were postponed.

J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said around 41 feeders of 33 kV and 739 feeders of 11 kV were down in the Kashmir division.

"Restoration work is under way and more than 90% feeders are expected to be up and functional by evening today," Mr. Abdullah said on Saturday.

Mr. Abdullah reviewed the situation in Ganderbal, Ganderbal, and Pulwama districts to ensure swift snow clearance and restore uninterrupted essential services including electricity and water.

## Rail services partially operational in Valley; two sections shut

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

Railway services were partially restored after heavy snowfall led to the suspension of service along the Sangaldan-Baramulla section of the Ferozpur division in the Kashmir Valley on Saturday.

"The section between Sangaldan and Baramulla was restored at 2 p.m., and the first train departed at 2:45 p.m. By 4 p.m., the Budgam-Baramulla section was restored and the first train departed at 4:30 p.m.," officials said.

Services along two sections - Anantnag to Qazigand, and via Qazigand to Baramulla - remained shut due to the accumulation of snow on the tracks.

By late evening, around 6 feeders of 11 kV were down in the Kashmir division.

"Restoration work is under way and more than 90% feeders are expected to be up and functional by evening today," Mr. Abdullah said on Saturday.

Mr. Abdullah reviewed the situation in Ganderbal, Ganderbal, and Pulwama districts to ensure swift snow clearance and restore uninterrupted essential services including electricity and water.



An earthmover clears a road following heavy snowfall in the Kashmir Valley. [ANI](#)

clear snow along the remaining blocked sections, too," a Railway official said.

"A WDM (class of diesel-electric) locomotive along with snow cutter will be run to clear the snow on the tracks," an official said.

Officials said inspection by the Commissioner of Railway Safety (CRS) was expected along the 17-km stretch from Katra to Reasi in January.

"The CRS will share observations on safety along the crucial stretch that runs over the Chenab bridge," the official said, adding that the CRS had already submitted a report on the Reasi-Sangaldan section for improvement of safety.

"Once the Reasi-to-Sangaldan section is operational, it will pave the way to connect Jammu to Kashmir via rail," the official said.

## BC leaders seek caste representation

The Hindu Bureau  
HYDERABAD

Representatives of the Backward Classes (BCs) emphasised the urgent need to include a caste census in the upcoming national Census. They argued that accurate data is essential for informed policymaking and ensuring fair representation for BCs, adding that they are still facing "political untouchability".

Speaking at a symposium titled "75 Years of the Indian Constitution-Political Untouchability of BCs" held at the Press Club here on Saturday, they also emphasised the completion of State-initiated socio-economic and caste surveys and called for increased reservations for BCs in education, employment and political institutions.

The speakers accused governments of treating BCs as mere vote banks rather than equal stakeholders. They highlighted the neglect of Articles 14, 15, 16, and 340 of the Constitution, pointing out how indirectly political representation continues to perpetuate social and economic inequality.

The conference also explored successful BC political movements in various States, contrasting them with the absence of similar initiatives in Telangana.

## Rajasthan BJP govt. dissolves 9 districts created in 2023

The Hindu Bureau  
JAIPUR

In a politically contested move, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government in Rajasthan on Saturday dissolved nine of the 17 districts created in 2023 during the previous Congress regime. The decision was taken at a State cabinet meeting presided over by Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma here.

The desert State will now have a total of 41 districts and seven divisions. "The new districts and divisions were created with an eye on political gain... The Congress go-

vernment ignored key factors such as financial resources, population density, geographical area and administrative requirements," Parliament Affairs Minister Jagan Patel said after the Cabinet meeting.

The Opposition Congress condemned the decision, saying it was an act of "imprudence and political vendetta". Pradesh Congress Committee president Govind Singh Dotse said the party would launch a mass agitation from January 1 with the demand for restoration of new districts, He described the decision as anti-people and undemocratic.

### Sneak peek



Sneak peek: Flares fired by naval ships illuminate the night sky above Beach Road in Vatakapatnam on Saturday. The ships had taken part in rehearsals ahead of the Navy Day celebrations scheduled for January 4. [K.N. CECIL](#)

## Opposition criticises U.P. govt. over police outpost near mosque

The Hindu Bureau  
LUCKNOW

Opposition leaders hit out at the Uttar Pradesh government on Saturday over the construction of a new police outpost outside the Shahi Jama Masjid in Lucknow.

The Opposition argued that there was questionable intent behind the construction of the outpost outside the mosque.

"The government opens neither schools nor hospitals in most parts of India. If something is built, it is a police post or a liquor bar."

The government does not have money for anything else. The data itself reveals

that the least number of government facilities are provided in Muslim areas. All India Muslim League president Asaduddin Owaisi wrote on X.

The Congress echoed these sentiments, and said that such actions are part of a broader agenda of criminalising the Muslim community.

The police justified the construction as a necessary measure for enhancing security following violence in the area on November 24, which involved clashes between law enforcement and local Muslim residents over mosque surveys.

## BJP leader denies charges as Bengal police summon him in MLA hostel extortion case

The Hindu Bureau  
KOLKATA

The Kolkata Police on Saturday summoned BJP MLA Nikhil Ranjan Dey after three men were arrested for extortion in the name of Trinamool Congress general secretary Abhishek Banerjee at the MLA hostel in Kolkata.

The three persons arrested at the MLA hostel on Kolkata's 8yd Street on Wednesday night were identified as Junedul Haque Chowdhury, Anwar Sheikh and Subhadip Malik, all residents of Hooghly district. They were allegedly trying to extort ₹5 lakh from Ananda Dutta, Trinamool leader and chairman of the Kalna Municipal Corporation in Purba Bardhaman district.

"The room they were apprehended from was allegedly booked in the name of



Nikhil Ranjan Dey

Mr. Dey, the BJP's Coochbehar Dakshin MLA. The BJP leader denied the allegations. "Those arrested could have used anyone's name, including that of Trinamool MLAs," Mr. Majumdar added.

Recently, Mr. Banerjee had launched *Sehasroay Camps*, a new initiative to bring accessible healthcare to people.

## Call for concerted efforts to preserve Telugu language

The Hindu Bureau  
VIJAYAWADA

The Telugu language has a rich heritage, shaped by famed writers, poets and actresses, artists, and actors across centuries, and there should be no shame in learning, conversing and thinking in Telugu, says former Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana.

Justice Ramana (retd.) was speaking after inaugurating the two-day sixth World Telugu Writers' Mahasabha in Vijayawada on Saturday.

The former CJ pointed out how people in South India are proud and also propelled it to global prominence," he said, entreating the youth to remove the misconception that studying in Telugu would not fetch them jobs.

"Telugu language is called the 'Italian of the East' because of the collective responsibility of the Telugu society, the government and the media to preserve the language," he said, urging the State to set up a Potli Srinagar Vidyalayam in Andhra Pradesh.



Justice N.V. Ramana

## Kolkata police step up watch after arrest of Bangladeshi man with forged documents

The Hindu Bureau  
KOLKATA

Units of the Kolkata police, including its Special Task Force, have been activated to watch out for potential threats from foreign infiltrators ahead of the New Year celebrations, says Minister of Police Manoj Kumar Verma said on Saturday.

"We are keeping a close watch on the hotels and lodges in the city," he said, communicated detailed instructions to police stations to be on alert for suspicious cases to our officers and discussed what we have deduced from our past mistakes," he said. "We have communicated detailed instructions to police stations to be on alert for suspicious cases to our officers and discussed what we have deduced from our past mistakes," he said.

The development follows the arrest of a Bangladeshi citizen from Central Kolkata's Park Street area on Thursday night, a day after Christmas. The man was allegedly carrying forged Indian identity documents.



Manoj Kumar Verma

missioner also addressed allegations of lapses in passport verification processes by the police, following the recent arrest of five people for allegedly running a fake passport racket.

"We have examined the lapses and made recommendations to the local passport officers on how to best address those lapses," Mr. Verma said.

He added that they had discussed how nodal officers at police stations could address loopholes in verification processes and avoid further lapses.

Mr. Verma added that the police would keep special watch on cases of cash driving, drunk driving, sexual harassment and so on. "Traffic police personnel will be present through the night. Additional arrangements will be made for late-night hours," he said.



# Rajasthan BJP govt. dissolves 9 districts created in 2023

**The Hindu Bureau**

JAIPUR

In a politically contested move, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government in Rajasthan on Saturday dissolved nine of the 17 districts as well as three divisions created in 2023 during the previous Congress regime. The decision was taken at a State Cabinet meeting presided over by Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma here.

The desert State will now have a total of 41 districts and seven divisions.

“The new districts and divisions were created with an eye on political gain... The Congress go-

vernment ignored key factors such as financial resources, population density, geographical area and administrative requirements,” Parliamentary Affairs Minister Jogaram Patel said after the Cabinet meeting.

The Opposition Congress condemned the decision, saying it was an act of “imprudence and political vendetta”. Pradesh Congress Committee president Govind Singh Dotasra said the party would launch a massive agitation from January 1 with the demand for restoration of new districts. He described the decision as anti-people and undemocratic.

- **Dissolution of Districts | जिलों को भंग करना**The BJP government dissolved 9 of the 17 districts created in 2023 under the Congress regime.
- भाजपा सरकार ने कांग्रेस शासन में 2023 में बनाए गए 17 में से 9 जिलों को भंग कर दिया।
- **Dissolution of Divisions | संभागों को भंग करना**Three new divisions were also dissolved.
- तीन नए संभाग भी भंग किए गए।

## Current Administrative Setup | वर्तमान प्रशासनिक ढांचा

### Total Districts | कुल जिले

- Rajasthan now has 41 districts.
- राजस्थान में अब 41 जिले हैं।

### Total Divisions | कुल संभाग

- The state has 7 divisions.
- राज्य में 7 संभाग हैं।

## Reasons Cited by BJP Govt. | भाजपा सरकार द्वारा दिए गए कारण

### Political Nature | राजनीतिक स्वरूप

- The BJP alleged that the districts were created with political motives.
- भाजपा ने आरोप लगाया कि जिलों का निर्माण राजनीतिक उद्देश्यों से किया गया था।

### Lack of Planning | योजना की कमी

- Factors like financial resources, population density, and administrative requirements were ignored.
- वित्तीय संसाधनों, जनसंख्या घनत्व और प्रशासनिक आवश्यकताओं जैसे कारकों की अनदेखी की गई।

## Opposition's Reaction | विपक्ष की प्रतिक्रिया

### Condemnation by Congress | कांग्रेस की निंदा

- The Congress termed the move as "imprudent and politically motivated."
- कांग्रेस ने इस कदम को "अविवेकपूर्ण और राजनीतिक प्रतिशोध" करार दिया।

### Planned Agitation | आंदोलन की योजना

- The Congress announced a statewide agitation starting January 1, demanding restoration of the districts.
- कांग्रेस ने जिलों की बहाली की मांग को लेकर 1 जनवरी से राज्यव्यापी आंदोलन की घोषणा की।

## Political Criticism | राजनीतिक आलोचना

- The decision has sparked a political controversy with allegations of vendetta politics.
- इस फैसले ने प्रतिशोध की राजनीति के आरोपों के साथ राजनीतिक विवाद को जन्म दिया।

## Administrative Impact | प्रशासनिक प्रभाव

- The move raises questions about governance and resource allocation.
- इस कदम से शासन और संसाधन आवंटन पर सवाल खड़े होते हैं।

# 50 DISTRICTS

## New Districts

- Anupgarh
- Balotara
- Beawar
- Deeg
- Deedwana-Kuchaman
- Dudu
- Gangapur City
- Jaipur Rural
- Jodhpur Rural
- Kekri
- Kotputli-Behror
- Khairthal-Tijara
- Neem Ka Thana
- Phalodi
- Salumbar
- Sanchore
- Shahpura

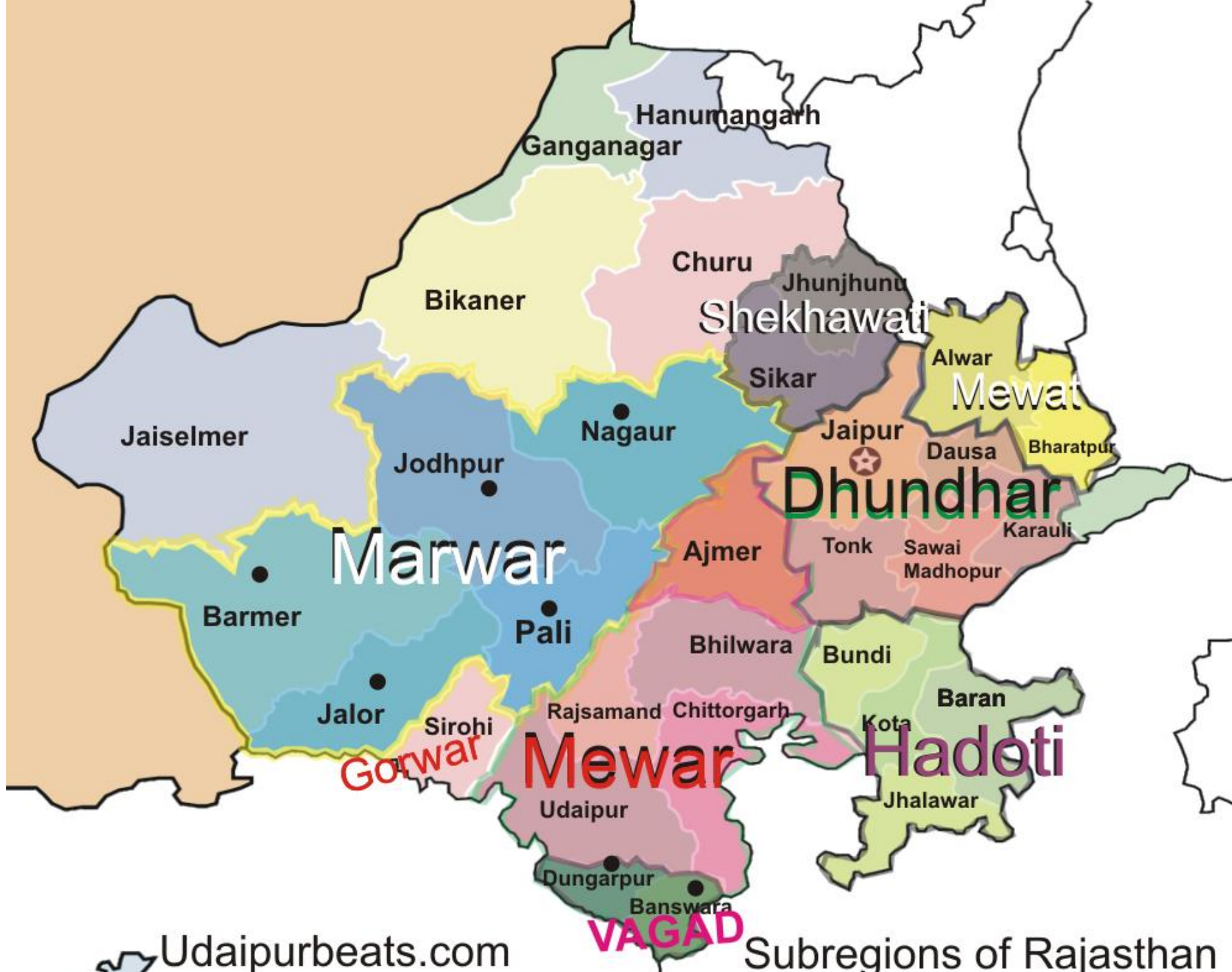
## New Divisions

- Sikar
- Banswara
- Pali



\*Indicative map/Not to scale





## Marine heatwave killed four million Alaska seabirds

The Hindu Bureau

The 2014-2016 Pacific marine heatwave wiped out more than half a roughly four million — of Alaska's common murre (*Uria lomvia*) seabirds, representing the largest documented vertebrate die-off linked to warming oceans, according to a new study. "Although researchers have long known about the impacts of global warming on marine birds but clearly suggested major shifts in

species' ranges and abundance, documented changes have been gradual (years to decades). To our knowledge, this study is the first to show that climate impacts can be swift (one year) and devastating (eliminating half of the population)," authors of a study recently written. "Seabirds are often observed in cascading marine heatwaves, but global warming impacts are not well understood." Marine

heatwaves — intense, prolonged, and expansive warming events — are becoming increasingly common due to climate change. They are profoundly reshaping marine ecosystems globally. These heatwaves lead to mass mortality of key habitat-forming species, like kelp and corals, triggering cascading trophic effects that alter ecosystem productivity, displace lower-trophic-level species, and

amplify food shortages for top predators. Although many upper-trophic-level species suffer from reduced reproduction, increased mortality, and even mass die-offs due to marine heatwaves, broader population impacts are poorly understood. Analysing colony counts before that period (2008-14), and after (2016-22), the authors documented a 52-78% population decline

across 13 murre colonies, equating to the loss of four million birds within the span of less than two years. According to them, this represents the largest documented wildlife mortality due to marine heatwaves. Moreover, the findings reveal no evidence of population recovery since, suggesting potential long-term cascading trophic effects, overall diminished capacity to support historical seabird populations. "Recent

population abundance estimates since then have found no evidence of recovery, suggesting that the heatwaves may have led to an ecosystem shift," the Editor's summary says. "We suspect that the pronounced decline of an abundant and widespread upper-trophic predator to less than half of its former population size in Alaska may signal a new threshold of response to global warming," they write.

## Why better prediction of cyclone intensity, heavy rainfall is needed

Two critical areas requiring further research are the prediction of tropical cyclone intensity, especially rapid intensification, and forecasting of heavy rainfall associated with landfall

Madhavan Nair Rajeevan

Tropical cyclones rank among the most devastating natural phenomena, with the potential to inflict significant destruction and loss of life. While the North Indian Ocean basin experiences fewer cyclones compared to other regions, it remains highly susceptible to their impacts due to densely populated coastal areas. This vulnerability was tragically highlighted by the Bholia cyclone of 1970, the deadliest tropical cyclone on record. Observational evidence indicates shifts in the patterns, intensity, and frequency of tropical cyclones, underscoring the need for adaptive measures in vulnerable regions.

Climatologically, the Bay of Bengal experiences a high frequency of tropical cyclones compared with the Arabian Sea. In recent years, there has been a 52% increase in the frequency of cyclonic storms in the Arabian Sea, alongside a threefold rise in the duration of very severe cyclonic storms. There is a greater likelihood of cyclonic storms intensifying into severe cyclonic storms. In the satellite era, the accumulated cyclone energy over the North Indian Ocean has shown an increasing trend. These trends are driven by environmental factors such as rising ocean heat content and decreasing vertical wind shear.

In future climate change scenarios, anthropogenic climate change is likely to

alter the frequency of tropical cyclones. Additionally, the tropical cyclone precipitation rates are projected to rise, driven by increased atmospheric moisture from saturated coastal soils, already soaked by preceding rains. The stalling cyclone unleashed unprecedented rainfall, with several locations across Puducherry and Villupuram districts recording 40-80 cm in a single day. Neighbouring districts, including Cuddalore and Tiruvannamalai, also experienced torrential downpours exceeding 20 cm within 24 hours. The deluge submerged vast stretches of farmland, resulting in catastrophic losses for farmers and severely impacting local livelihoods.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has established an impressive track record for accurately predicting the track and landfall of tropical cyclones over the last decade. Despite this, Fensang presented significant forecasting challenges due to its unconventional track, variable speed, and intense rainfall during landfall. While IMD successfully predicted the landfall near Puducherry nearly three days in advance, certain aspects of the cyclone's behaviour were difficult to forecast. For instance, its north-eastward movement on November 27 was not accurately predicted, and the slow progression or stalling near the coast also posed challenges.

More broadly, weather prediction systems face the struggle with forecasting the heavy rainfall associated with tropical cyclones

### Advanced forecasting technologies needed

Precise tropical cyclone prediction still remains a great challenge

■ The Bay of Bengal has seen a 52% increase in the frequency of tropical cyclones compared with the Arabian Sea

■ But in recent years, the frequency of cyclonic storms in the Arabian Sea has increased by 52%, and the duration of very severe cyclonic storms has increased threefold

■ The accumulated cyclone energy over the North Indian Ocean has been increasing due to rising sea surface temperature and decreasing vertical wind shear

■ Eight low-pressure systems formed over the North Indian Ocean during the 2023 post-monsoon season (October-December)



Heavy downpour: In Puducherry, Cyclone Fensang dumped 40 cm of rainfall in 24 hours

■ Of the eight low-pressure systems, four intensified into depressions and two developed into cyclonic storms — Sana in October and Fensang in November

■ Fensang stalled upon reaching the coast due to a rare balanced steering flow, allowing it to maintain its intensity even in landfall

■ IMD successfully predicted the landfall near Puducherry but Fensang's slow eastward movement and the stalling progression were not accurately predicted

lowing it to maintain its intensity even after landfall until the evening of December 1. This persistence was fuelled by abundant moisture from saturated coastal soils, already soaked by preceding rains. The stalling cyclone unleashed unprecedented rainfall, with several locations across Puducherry and Villupuram districts recording 40-80 cm in a single day. Neighbouring districts, including Cuddalore and Tiruvannamalai, also experienced torrential downpours exceeding 20 cm within 24 hours. The deluge submerged vast stretches of farmland, resulting in catastrophic losses for farmers and severely impacting local livelihoods.

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landfalls, a limitation that was particularly evident in Fensang's case. None of the prediction models accurately predicted the exceptional 24-hour rainfall totals exceeding 40 cm recorded in some areas. Limitations in observational data over oceans, and the complex cloud dynamics within the cyclone contribute to forecasting difficulties, necessitating continuous advancements in modeling techniques and real-time data assimilation. Two critical areas requiring further research are the prediction of tropical cyclone intensity, especially rapid intensification and forecasting of heavy rainfall associated with landfall. These challenges are becoming increasingly urgent as IPCC climate models project more intense cyclones, accompanied by heavier precipitation and slower translation speeds.

The critical need for sustained investments in advanced forecasting technologies and research to address existing knowledge gaps. Despite significant progress, achieving precise tropical cyclone predictions remains a great challenge. It is imperative to prioritise measures that safeguard lives, livelihoods, and ecosystems from the devastating impacts of tropical cyclones.

(Madhavan Nair Rajeevan was former Secretary to the prediction system and presently the Vice Chancellor, Arria University, Bengaluru)

## SNAPSHOTS



### A study shows why eating less slows aging

A component of bile called lithocholic acid can extend the lifespan of some animals. Researchers found, in mice, that levels of the acid rise during caloric restriction and that it activates a protein called AMPK, which scientists have already linked to the health benefits of eating less. When nematodes and fruit flies were fed lithocholic acid, the animals lived significantly longer than those that had not been given it. There is no evidence yet that lithocholic acid will have the same effect in humans.



### Neanderthal DNA got into humans earlier than thought

Two studies now suggest that Neanderthal DNA entered human genomes virtually overnight, more recently than was thought. One study finds that modern humans and Neanderthals interbred in a roughly 7,000-year period, the other finds that the mixing took place between 45,000 and 49,000 years ago. The results come in part from the oldest human genomes ever sequenced: a male *Homo sapiens* found near Ramli, Germany and a female *Homo sapiens* from Czech Republic.



### Skin produces antibodies to keep bacteria in check

The human skin seems to be able to produce its own antibodies to keep microbes in check. In mice colonised by *Staphylococcus epidermidis*, a bacterium found on skin, the skin was able to generate antibodies even when other parts of the immune system were disabled. And this surprise power might be harnessed to fight pathogens: when researchers modified *S. epidermidis* to display part of the tetanus toxin, the skin supported protected mice from a lethal dose.

## Question Corner

### Durian flowering

What triggers the flowering of durians?

Based on observations of durian plants, researchers have discovered that around 15 days of dry weather can trigger the flowering of durian plants. This flowering occurs around 50 days after an approximately 15-day dry spell, independent of whether the plant was grafted or grown from a seed. The team found that durian plants flowered approximately 50 days after a prolonged period of dry weather. These dry spells needed to be long enough to show up in moving average traces, specifically periods where rainfall averaged over 15-day windows was less than 1 mm. They proposed that there was some relationship between the flowering of durian and the more general burst of flowering seen in the tropics following long dry spells. But such general flowering events require a longer dry spell of around 30 days to occur. This explains why durians tend to flower multiple times a year, while synchronised flowering across species occurs once every few years.

## Endocrine glands: the body's tiny titans

of hormones in human physiology, with the respective endocrine glands that secrete hormones being described by their size and location in our bodies.

What is noticeable about these descriptions is how small these glands are. The adrenal glands are found atop each kidney, weighing 5-10 grams in adults. The pineal gland in the midline of the brain is the size and shape of a grain of rice and weighs 50-150 mg. The thyroid gland in the neck resembles a butterfly in shape and weighs about 25 grams.

Size versus function One puzzle that has remained unresolved is the huge differences in the size of the endocrine glands. The thyroid gland may weigh no bigger than a chapstick, but a pineal gland is a mere grain of rice. This

The thyroid gland in the neck resembles a butterfly in shape and weighs about 25 grams, compared to the adrenal glands, which are found atop each kidney, weighing 5-10 grams in adults.

A question has been recently answered, for many of our body's hormones, in an analysis by the Alon group at the Weizmann Institute in Rehovot, Israel, as the study was published in the journal *Science*. They start with the number of cells in an endocrine gland that secrete hormones. Thus, the parathyroid gland, four of which are found in the neck, each the size of a lentil seed (in Hindi- *masur*; Ta-

mil, *masur*) weighs 10 mg and has about 10 million cells that secrete the parathyroid hormone. On the other extreme, the adrenal cortex, at least in humans, is much larger and has 4.5 billion cells that secrete cortisol.

All cells that are the target of a hormone molecule have a receptor for that molecule on their surface. Cells bearing these receptors can be tagged and their numbers estimated

in slices of tissue using microscopy. This study shows that the number of hormone-secreting cells are in proportion to the number of cells that are targeted. Every hormone-producing cell has about 2,000 target cells.

The adrenal cortex is relatively large, as is the thyroid gland, and intake to all cells in the body that have a nucleus. The thyroid hormones, which target the liver and muscle cells.

Adjustments to hormonal levels by dietary and other health measures can have a large impact on our well-being. For example, intermittent fasting reduces circulating insulin concentrations because the thyroidal adrenaline intake diminishes the requirement for insulin secretion. Low levels of insulin also result from high fibre, regular exercise, sufficient sleep and low stress levels. Reduced insulin levels make us feel hungrier and some parts of the central nervous system.

Some hormones are secreted by organs that have other functions too. The pancreas, weighing 100 grams, has a major role in secreting digestive enzymes. Only 1-2% of cells in the pancreas produce insulin, which targets the liver and muscle cells.

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# Marine heatwave killed four million Alaska seabirds

## The Hindu Bureau

The 2014-2016 Pacific marine heatwave wiped out more than half – roughly four million – of Alaska’s common murre (*Uria aalge*) seabirds, representing the largest documented vertebrate die-off linked to warming oceans, according to a new study. “Although research on the impacts of global warming on marine birds has clearly suggested major shifts in

species’ ranges and abundance, documented changes have been gradual (years to decades). To our knowledge, this study is the first to show that climate impacts can be swift (one year) and intense (eliminating half of the population),” authors of a study write. “Seabird mortalities are often observed in association with heatwaves, but population impacts are not well understood.” Marine

heatwaves – intense, prolonged, and expansive ocean warming events – are becoming increasingly common due to climate change. They are profoundly reshaping marine ecosystems globally.

These heatwaves lead to mass mortality of key habitat-forming species like kelps and corals, triggering cascading trophic effects that alter ecosystem productivity, displace lower-trophic-level species, and


amplify food shortages for top predators. Although many upper-trophic-level species suffer from reduced reproductive success, increased mortality, and even mass die-offs due to marine heatwaves, broader population impacts are poorly understood.

Analysing colony counts before that period (2008-14), and after (2016-22), the authors documented a 52-78% population decline

across 13 murre colonies, equating to the loss of four million birds within the span of less than two years. According to them, this represents the largest documented wildlife mortality event in the modern era. Moreover, the findings reveal no evidence of population recovery since, suggesting potential long-term ecosystem shifts and an overall diminished capacity to support historical seabird populations. “Recent

population abundance estimates since then have found no evidence of recovery, suggesting that the heatwave may have led to an ecosystem shift,” the Editor’s summary says. “We suggest that the pronounced decline of an abundant and widespread upper trophic predator to less than half of its former population size in Alaska may signal a new threshold of response to global warming,” they write.

**Massive Die-Off | बड़े पैमाने पर मौतें** Between 2014-2016, the Pacific marine heatwave caused the death of over 4 million common murre (Uria aalge) in Alaska.



2014-2016 के बीच, प्रशांत महासागर की गर्मी ने अलास्का में 40 लाख सामान्य समुद्री पक्षियों (उरिया ऐल्ज) की मौत का कारण बना।

- 
- **Largest Documented Vertebrate Die-Off | कशेरुकी प्राणियों की सबसे बड़ी दर्ज मौतें**
    - This represents the largest vertebrate die-off attributed to warming oceans.
    - यह गर्म होते महासागरों से जुड़े कशेरुकी प्राणियों की सबसे बड़ी मौतों का प्रतिनिधित्व करता है।

## . Impacts of Marine Heatwaves | समुद्री गर्मी की प्रभाव

### Ecosystem Alteration | पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र में बदलाव

- Heatwaves disrupt marine ecosystems, affecting kelps, corals, and top predators.
- गर्मी समुद्री पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र को बाधित करती है, केल्व, मूंगा, और शीर्ष शिकारियों को प्रभावित करती है।

## Population Decline | जनसंख्या में गिरावट

- A 52-78% population decline in seabird colonies was observed from 2008-22.
- 2008-22 के बीच समुद्री पक्षियों की कॉलोनियों में 52-78% गिरावट देखी गई।

## Food Chain Disruption | खाद्य शृंखला में बाधा

- Top predators face food shortages due to displacement of lower trophic species.
- निचले स्तर की प्रजातियों के विस्थापन के कारण शीर्ष शिकारी भोजन की कमी का सामना करते हैं।



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**Global Warming | वैश्विक तापमान में वृद्धि** Climate change is leading to more intense and prolonged marine heatwaves.

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जलवायु परिवर्तन अधिक तीव्र और लंबी समुद्री गर्मी को बढ़ावा दे रहा है।

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**Reproductive Failures | प्रजनन में विफलता** Species experienced reduced reproduction and increased mortality.

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प्रजातियों ने कम प्रजनन और अधिक मृत्यु दर का अनुभव किया।

## Ecosystem Shifts | पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र में बदलाव

- The heatwave may have permanently altered Alaska's ecosystem.
- गर्मी ने अलास्का के पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र को स्थायी रूप से बदल दिया हो सकता है।

## No Recovery Observed | पुनर्प्राप्ति नहीं देखी गई

- No evidence of population recovery was found after the event.
- घटना के बाद जनसंख्या पुनर्प्राप्ति के कोई सबूत नहीं मिले।

## 5. Scientific Implications | वैज्ञानिक परिणाम

### New Thresholds for Global Warming Response | वैश्विक तापमान प्रतिक्रिया की नई सीमा

- The decline suggests a potential new threshold in species' response to global warming.
- गिरावट संभावित नई सीमा का संकेत देती है जो प्रजातियों की वैश्विक तापमान प्रतिक्रिया को दर्शाती है।

### Need for Conservation | संरक्षण की आवश्यकता

- Urgent measures are needed to address climate impacts on marine biodiversity.
- समुद्री जैव विविधता पर जलवायु प्रभाव को संबोधित करने के लिए तत्काल उपायों की आवश्यकता है।

ISTANBUL
Turkiye's pro-Kurd party meets
jailed PKK leader after 10 years



A delegation from Turkiye's main pro-Kurdish DEM party on Saturday visited jailed PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan, who is serving life on a prison island off Istanbul, party officials said.

BRUSSELS
EU's universal charger rules for
electric goods come into force



EU rules requiring all new smartphones, tablets and cameras to use the same charger cable into force on Saturday, in a change Brussels said will cut costs and waste.

BERLIN
Elon Musk backs AfD party in
German newspaper opinion piece



U.S. billionaire Elon Musk backed Germany's Alternative for Germany (AfD) in a guest opinion piece for Germany's Welt am Sonntag newspaper published online on Saturday that prompted the commentary editor to resign in protest.

CAIRO
First war-time aid convoy reaches
besieged southern Khartoum



Civilians in a besieged area south of Sudan's war-torn capital received their first aid convoy this week since the war began 20 months ago. The convoy included 22 trucks carrying food from the UN's WFP, one truck from Doctors Without Borders and Care, and five trucks loaded with medicine from UNICEF.

Israel 'detains' director of one of last functioning hospitals in north Gaza

Israeli troops arrest Dr. Hussam Abu Safya, director of Kamal Adwan Hospital; announcement comes a day after Israel stormed the hospital, forcing many staff and patients outside to strip in winter weather; nine killed in overnight strikes

Associated Press
DEIR AL BALAH

Israel's Army detained the director of one of the last functioning hospitals in northern Gaza as overnight strikes in the enclave killed nine persons including children, Palestinian medical officials said, while strenuous rang out across Israel.



Crippled existences: A Palestinian who was evacuated from Kamal Adwan Hospital in north Gaza on Saturday, according to the complex and said it was conducting operations against Hamas infrastructure and militants in the area and had ordered people out of the hospital.

Gaza's Health Ministry said Saturday that Dr. Hussam Abu Safya, director of Kamal Adwan Hospital, was arrested by Israeli forces. The announcement comes a day after Israeli troops stormed the hospital, forcing many staff and patients outside to strip in winter weather, according to the ministry.

Israel's Army did not respond to questions about Dr. Abu Safya. On Friday, it denied claims it had entered or set fire to the complex and said it was conducting operations against Hamas infrastructure and militants in the area and had ordered people out of the hospital.

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devastated Gaza's health sector. The war has killed more than 45,400 Palestinians, more than half women and children, and wounded more than 1,08,000 others, according to Gaza's Health Ministry. Dr. Abu Safya was detained on Friday along with dozens of other staff from the hospital and taken to an interrogation center, the ministry said.

On Friday, MedGlobal, the humanitarian organisation where Dr. Abu Safya worked, said he was a lead physician for the group and was gravely concerned about him. The group said the incident followed the detention of five other of its staff, calling it an "alarming and egregious pattern of targeting medical personnel and spaces."

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Since October, Israel's offensive has virtually sealed off the northern Gaza areas of Jabalya, Beit Hanoun and Beit Lahya and leveled large parts of them. Tens of thousands of Palestinians were forced out but thousands are believed to remain in the area where Kamal Adwan and two other hospitals are located.

Israel has vowed to destroy Hamas after the militants' Oct. 7, 2023, attack on southern Israel in which they killed around 1,200 people and abducted some 250 others. Around 100 Israelis remain captive in Gaza, around a third believed to be dead.

On Saturday, Israel continued attacks across Gaza. An overnight strike killed at least nine people in Be'er Sheva, including women and children.

Taliban target Pakistan in retaliation for air strikes

Associated Press

Afghanistan's Defence Ministry said on Saturday that its forces hit several points inside Pakistan in retaliation for deadly air strikes last week.



Taliban said it targeted locations in Pakistan that served as points for organising attacks on Afghanistan.

Pakistan on last Tuesday launched an operation to destroy a training facility and kill insurgents in Afghanistan's eastern Pakista province. The strikes killed dozens of people, mostly women and children.

Comments from the Taliban Defence Ministry on Saturday, posted on X, said its forces targeted Pakistani troops and three Afghanistans civilians. No one from Pakistan's Foreign Ministry was immediately available for comment.

Ministry spokesperson Ebnayutullah Khwarzami gave no further information about the strikes, including how they were carried out and if there were any casualties on either side.

media outlet, Hurriyat Daily News, cited Ministry sources as saying that the air strikes killed 19 Pakistani troops and three Afghanistans civilians. No one from Pakistan's Foreign Ministry was immediately available for comment.

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and assure the Afghan military of their support against Pakistan. Khost neighbors Pakrika, which was targeted last week. "All of them were chanting angry slogans against this action by Pakistan, such as death to Pakistan," Mr. Hamdard said.

Pakistan officials have accused the Taliban of not doing enough to combat cross-border militant activity, a charge the Taliban government denies, saying it does not allow anyone to carry out attacks against any country from its soil.

West Asia can't be a proxy for big powers, say China and Iran

Agence France-Presse
BEIJING

The top diplomats of China and Iran agreed on Saturday that West Asia is "not a battleground for the big powers" and should not be an arena of geopolitical competition between countries outside the region.

Foreign Minister Abbas Aragchi and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi agreed that "the international community should respect the sovereignty, security, stability, unity and territorial integrity of Middle East (West Asia) countries," according to a readout from Beijing's Foreign Ministry.

Mr. Aragchi is on his first visit to China since being appointed Foreign Minister of Iran.

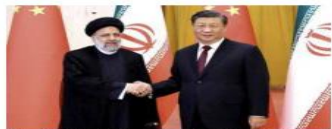
Many issues The two major trading partners reiterated calls for a ceasefire in Gaza, the proper implementation of the ceasefire in Lebanon, and the "integrated promotion of counter-terrorism, reconciliation and humanitarian processes in Syria".

Foreign Ministers of both countries call for peace in Gaza and Lebanon, solution to Syrian crisis

The two sides agreed that the Middle East belongs to the people of the Middle East, and is not a battleground for the big powers, and should not be a victim of geopolitical competition and conflicts between countries from outside the region, the ministry said.

China and Iran were both supporters of ousted Syrian president Bashar al-Assad. Syria's new leader, Muhammad al-Jolani, is an ardent opponent of Tehran.

Mr. Aragchi and Mr. Wang also discussed Iran's nuclear programme, which governments including the United States say could be on its way to building weapons.



China is Iran's largest trading partner and a top buyer of its sanctioned oil. AP/REUTERS

'Save the panda'



Hundreds gather in Hong Kong on Saturday to watch the city's first pyrotechnics drone show, as part of a campaign to raise support and awareness of panda conservation at the waterfront of the Victoria Harbour in Hong Kong on Saturday.

Russia warns of severe damage from oil spill as Crimea declares a state of emergency

Agence France-Presse
MOSCOW

Russia warned on Saturday of severe environmental damage from a huge oil spill in the Black Sea caused when two tankers collided in a storm near Crimea, which declared a state of emergency. One tanker sank and another ran aground on December 15 in the Kerch Strait between Russia and the annexed Crimean peninsula.

Thousands of volunteers have been mobilised for "clean-up" operations that have been criticised as insufficient by some Russian scientists. The tankers were carrying 9,200 tonnes of fuel oil, around 40% of which may have spilled into the sea, according to authorities. "The situation is truly critical," said Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov, quoted by Russian press agencies. It is unfortunately impossible to calculate for the moment the extent of the environmental damage but specialists are working regularly on it," he said. The Moscow-installed



Thousands have been mobilised for clean-up operations that have been criticised as insufficient by some Russian scientists.

governor of Crimea said he had declared a state of emergency "because of the oil products spill in the Kerch Strait".

Russia's Transport Ministry insisted that "all polluted aquatic areas that have been identified have been cleaned" and "no recurring pollution has been detected".

But Emergency Situations Minister Alexander Kurenkov was more cautious, saying "The threat of a new fuel oil leak in the Black Sea from the tankers could spill on the coast persists". President Vladimir Putin called the oil spill an "ecological disaster".

BNP flays Yunus's plan to lower voting age to 17 in Bangladesh

Press Trust of India
DHAKA

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) on Saturday said that Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus's suggestion to set the minimum voting age at 17 would put pressure on the Election Commission and could delay the election process.

Mr. Yunus, 84, who was sworn in to lead the interim government after the ouster of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in August, on Friday suggested that the minimum voter age should be lowered to 17 years. The Dhaka Tribune newspaper reported.

In a video message played in an election dialogue, Mr. Yunus said, "To give their (youth) opinion on their own future, I think the voting age for them should be fixed at 17 years."

BNP secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, during a discussion at the Jatiya Press Club here, said the chief adviser's suggestion to lower the voting age to 17 means new voter list would have to be prepared.

Further delays "Now, people will fear that even more time will be wasted and further delays will occur," he said.

Mr. Alamgir said there is an impression among the people that the interim government is deliberately trying to delay the election process. "But that is not my perception," he added. The BNP leader said the chief adviser should not



Muhammad Yunus

have raised the issue without first consulting the stakeholders.

"You are the chief executive, and you said that 17 years is better. When you say this, it becomes binding on the Election Commission," he said.

Mr. Alamgir said the government should have left the matter to the Election Commission, allowing it to make a decision.

He said that the current minimum age of 18 for becoming a voter is acceptable to all.

"If you want to reduce it by one year, then let the new Election Commission propose it and engage in discussions with the political parties," the BNP leader said.

During his Victory Day speech on December 16, Mr. Yunus indicated that elections might be held by early 2026. "Broadly speaking, the election can be scheduled between the end of 2025 and the first half of 2026," he said. Mr. Yunus said that the elections would be held after updating the voters' list.



## **BRUSSELS**

# EU's universal charger rules for electric goods come into force



GETTY IMAGES

▶ EU rules requiring all new smartphones, tablets and cameras to use the same charger came into force on Saturday, in a change Brussels said will cut costs and waste. Manufacturers are now obliged to fit devices sold in the EU with a USB-C, the port chosen by the bloc as the common standard for charging electronic tools. AFP

Delhi • Chandigarh • Bangalore • Hyderabad • Kolkata • Mysore • Vadodra • Thiruvananthapuram • Kochi • Vijayawada • Mangalore • Thiruvallur • Kollam • Hubli • Mumbai • Madurai • Malappuram • Mysore • Tirupur • Lucknow • Cuttack • Patna

**LOWEST IN EIGHT YEARS**  
**Internet shut down**  
**60 times in 2024**  
NEWS » PAGE 4

**ISRO'S YEAR-ENDER**  
**Space docking**  
**experiment**  
**mission**  
**today**  
NEWS » PAGE 6

**AZERBAIJANI PLANE CRASH**  
**Russia shot down**  
**jet, says President**  
WORLD » PAGE 14

**ONE NATION ONE ELECTION**  
**Common polls &**  
**representative**  
**democracy**  
**Bill has lapses that**  
**affect democratic fabric**  
EDITORIAL » PAGE 8

**RAZOR'S EDGE**  
**Fourth BGT Test**  
**evenly poised**  
SPORT » PAGE 16

**INSIDE**



**'Slang project to**  
**mitigate risks**  
**posed by China'**

**ITANAGAR**  
Assam Chief Minister Pema Khandu said the Slang Upper Multipurpose Project (SUMP) was meant to generate electricity but also to mitigate risks of flooding if China released excess water. » PAGE 4

**Series of events**  
**to mark 75 years**  
**of Constitution**

**NEW DELHI**  
Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said his government had commenced a series of activities for a year to celebrate the completion of 75 years of the Constitution. He said it was a matter of great honour for the people of the country. » PAGE 5

**Tiger Zeenat**  
**tranquillised and**  
**caged in Bengal**

**KOLKATA**  
A female tiger which had kept forest officials of three States on their toes for weeks after running away from the Simlipal Tiger Reserve in Odisha was finally captured on Sunday after being tranquillised in Bankura district of West Bengal. » PAGE 6

**Israeli air strike**  
**near Syrian**  
**capital kills 11**

**BEIRUT**  
An Israeli air strike on the outskirts of Damascus on Sunday killed 11 persons, according to a war monitor, as Israel continues to target Syrian military infrastructure after the ouster of President Bashar al-Assad. » PAGE 14

# 179 killed after South Korean jet crash-lands

Rescuers find only two survivors in the wreckage of the flight, which skidded across the airstrip on its belly and smashed into a barrier bursting into flames; authorities say the control tower issued a bird strike warning as the plane was landing and the pilot sent out a distress signal just before the accident; the aircraft's black box has been recovered

**Agence France-Press**  
**Associated Press**  
SEOUL

A Jeju Air plane carrying 181 people from Thailand to South Korea crashed on arrival on Sunday, smashing into a barrier and bursting into flames, killing everyone aboard except two flight attendants. The aircraft crashed while landing in the town of Muju, about 290 km south of Seoul. The Transport Ministry said the plane was a 15-year-old Boeing 737-800 jet that had arrived from Bangkok and that the crash happened at 9:03 a.m. local time.

A total of 179 people were killed in the fire, the South Korean fire agency said. Emergency workers pulled two people, both crew members, to safety. Health officials said they are conscious and not in a life-threatening condition.

Lee Joong-hyeon, chief of the Muju fire station, told a televised briefing that the plane was completely destroyed, with only the tail assembly remaining recognisable among the wreckage.

Mr. Lee said that workers were looking into various possibilities about what caused the crash, including whether the aircraft was struck by birds. Transport Ministry officials later said their early assessment of communication records showed the airport control tower issued a bird strike warning to the plane shortly before it intended to land and gave its pilot permission to land in a different area. The pilot sent out a distress signal shortly before the crash, officials said.

Senior Transport Ministry official Joo Jong-wan said workers had retrieved the flight data and cockpit voice recorders of the



Fatal landing: Firefighters and rescue teams at the wreckage of the passenger plane, of which only the tail assembly remains recognisable, at the Muju International Airport on Sunday. CITY IMAGES

plane's black box. He said it may take months for investigators to complete their probe.

**Runway remains closed**  
The runway at the Muju airport will be closed until January 1, the Ministry

said. Footage of the crash aired by South Korean television channels showed the aircraft at high speed, apparently with its landing gear still closed, overrunning the runway and colliding head-on with a con-

crete wall on the outskirts of the facility, triggering an explosion. Other local TV stations aired footage showing thick plumes of black smoke billowing from the plane, which was engulfed in flames.

Among the 177 bodies so far found, officials have so far identified 88 of them, the fire agency said. The passengers were predominantly South Korean, as well as two Thai nationals.

Thailand's Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra expressed deep condolences to the families of those affected by the accident in a post on X. She said she ordered the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to provide assistance immediately.

Kerati Kijmanawat, the Director of Airports of Thailand, confirmed in a statement that Jeju Air flight 7C 2216 departed from Suvarnabhumi Airport with no reports of abnormal conditions with the aircraft or on the runway. Jeju Air in a statement expressed its "deep apology" over the crash and said it will do its "utmost to manage the aftermath of the accident."

In a televised news conference, Kim E-bae, Jeju Air's president apologised to bereaved families and said he feels "full responsibility" for the incident. Mr. Kim said the company had not identified any mechanical problems with the aircraft following regular checks and that he would wait for the results of government investigations into the cause of the incident.

Roeting said in a statement on X it was in contact with Jeju Air and was ready to support the company in dealing with the crash. "We extend our deepest condolences to the families who lost loved ones, and our thoughts remain with the passengers and crew," Roeting said.

**INCIDENTS ON A LOOP**  
» PAGE 8  
**SHOCK AND GRIEF**  
» PAGE 15

## Snowed in



OFF track: Tourists gather around a bus that veered off a snow-laden road near the Patnihar hill station in Lidhampur district of Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday. The snowfall since Friday evening in the Union Territory is the heaviest in recent memory. PH (REUTERS) REPORT PAGE 2

## Humpy's win caps India's 2024 chess dominance

**P.K. Ajith Kumar**

India's great year in chess became greater on Sunday as Konerki Humpy won the women's World Rapid chess championship in New York. This is the second world rapid title for the 37-year-old from Vijayawada.

And this is the second world chess title of the month for India as D. Gukesh had lifted the world championship trophy in Singapore just two weeks ago.

Back in September, India's chess title of the month for India as D. Gukesh had lifted the world championship trophy in Singapore just two weeks ago. Ms. Humpy emerged as

the champion in New York, scoring 8.5 points from 11 rounds. The final round had begun with seven players tied on 7.5 points, but among them only Ms. Humpy won, against India's Irene Sukandar, making her the outright champion.

Shortly after her victory, Ms. Humpy told the *Hindu* over phone from New York that the title meant a lot to her. "This is one of the most cherished titles for me, as I wasn't among the favourites here," she said.

D. Harika tied for second place, but was placed fifth after tie-breakers were applied. It was a disappointing day for In-

dia in the Open section, though. Arjun Erigaisi, who had begun the day as one of the joint leaders, could only finish fifth, with nine points.

**MORE REPORTS**  
» PAGE 16



## AAP, BJP trade charges of voter list 'manipulation' in Delhi

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Sunday accused each other of manipulating the Delhi electoral roll in an attempt to win the Assembly election due to be held in February. AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal accused the BJP of trying to manipulate the voter list in the New Delhi Assembly constituency to win the election by "unfair" means. AAP Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Singh said the BJP was even trying to get his wife's name deleted from the list. Hitting back, the BJP said that it would not allow valid votes to be cast in Delhi. It claimed to have provided multiple pieces of evidence, and accused Mr. Kejriwal of attempting to

cover his "wrongdoings" by creating confusion among the people.

**'Valid voters deleted'**  
"Today, I want to present some data from my New Delhi assembly constituency. BJP's 'Operation Lotus' began in this constituency on December 15. In just 15 days, they submitted nearly 5,000 applications for vote deletions and 7,500 applications for new additions," Mr. Kejriwal said at a press conference, claiming they were all bogus. The AAP chief claimed that when the party verified 500 of the 5,000 applications for deletions, they found that 408 of those voters had been living at their addresses for more than 30 years. "This means valid, existing voters are being deleted. Deleting a legitimate citizen's vote



AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal with Delhi CM Atishi and other leaders in New Delhi on Sunday. SHASHI SHANKAR KASHEP

effectively strips them of their citizenship," he said. In one house, 47 votes were added, and in another, 22 votes were added. Mr. Kejriwal claimed, however, that 408 of these votes were found to be non-existent and this showed that it was a clear case of fraud, he added.

holding elections as the process loses all fairness. This is a blatant and brazen act of misconduct," he added.

He also warned officials not to engage in any illegal activities, noting that though governments may change in the future, the files and their signatures will remain as evidence, leading to serious consequences for them.

Mr. Singh said that the BJP had filed applications to remove his wife Anita Singh's name from the voter list in the New Delhi Assembly constituency. "Not once, but twice, on the 24th and 26th of December, Anita Singh, my wife, and I were asked to delete our names from the voter list in the New Delhi Assembly constituency. This would amount to tampering with 12% of the votes. If 12% of the votes are manipulated, there's no point in

late by targeting her," he said.

Meanwhile, Delhi BJP chief Vinendra Sachdeva accused the AAP of "manipulating" the electoral roll. He said that 2,000 people applied for new voter registrations on December 24. Similar applications have been observed in various constituencies on December 25, 26, and 27. This is not mere coincidence but a clear attempt of Mr. Kejriwal's manipulation plan affecting 70 constituencies," he said. Mr. Sachdeva said that, surprisingly, none of these applications belonged to 18 to 20-year-olds; instead, the applicants' ages ranged from 30 to 48 years. "The BJP has sent a complaint to the Election Commission yesterday and will be submitting another complaint today," he said.

## 'Expect tariff hikes, FTA push in new Trump era'

**Suhasini Haidar**  
NEW DELHI

India should expect raised tariffs and a renewed push to get a free trade agreement finalised as Donald Trump gets set to begin a second term as U.S. President, says former U.S. Ambassador to India Kenneth Juster. In an exclusive interview, Mr. Juster, a former U.S. Department of Commerce official who was appointed by Mr. Trump to rekindle his first term, said Mr. Trump's first term and campaign pronouncements were indicators that the second term would see a further strengthening of India-U.S. ties, but certain irritants in ties, such as high tariffs, market access in areas such as "agricultu-



Kenneth Juster

ral exports from United States to India and the IT equipment sector and medical devices" could return. In Mr. Trump's first term, the U.S. had withdrawn India's GSP status for exporters, and forced India to cancel all oil imports from Iran.

**INTERVIEW ON**  
» PAGE 5



# 181

No. of people on board  
(175 passengers, 6 crew)

# 179

people  
**85** women, **84** men, **10**  
identifiable – dead

# 2

survive  
both crew members

## WHAT CAUSED THE CRASH?

Officials are investigating why the **landing gear** appears to have **malfunctioned**

**Bird Hit?** As the plane was landing, the airport warned it about a potential bird strike. The plane issued a mayday alert shortly after, and then crash-landed

➤ Muddy tidal flats near Muan International Airport are favourite resting places for migrant birds. Photos in local media show flocks of birds flying near the airport on Sunday

**Engine fire?** A footage by MBC-TV showed one of the engines briefly emitting flames as it neared the airport



➤ A passenger texted a relative to say a **bird was stuck in the wing.** The person's final message was, 'Should I say my last words?'

**Short Runway?** An official said this was likely not a factor. 'The runway is 2,800 metres long, and similar-sized aircraft have been operating on it without issues,' officials say

# PLANE CRASH-LANDS ON ITS BELLY, HITS A BARRIER, EXPLODES INTO A FIREBALL

Videos show the plane skidding down the runway with no visible landing gear



## SOUTH KOREAN AIR DISASTERS

Crash the first fatal accident for Jeju Air

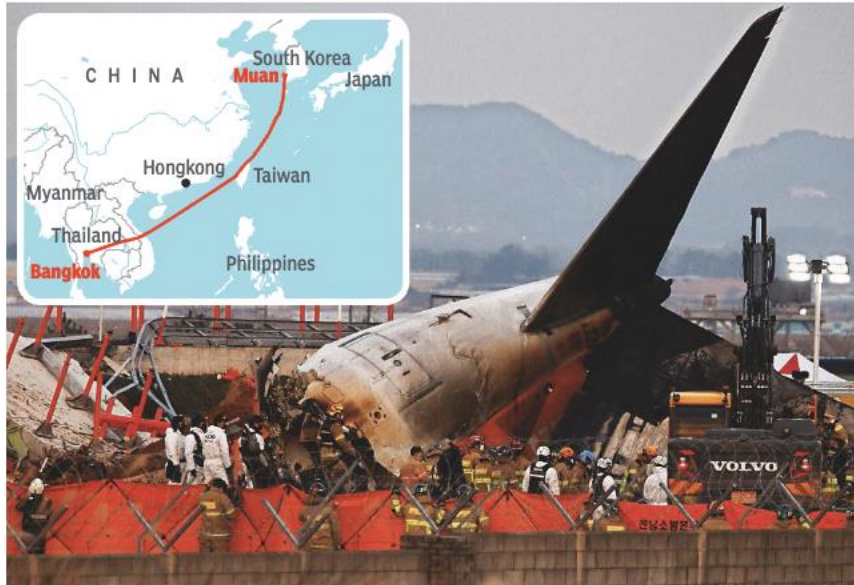
**1983** | Soviet fighter jet shoots down a Korean Air flight above the Sea of Japan, **23 crew and 246 passengers die**

**1997** | Korean Airline plane crashes in Guam, **killing 229**

**2013** | Asiana Airlines plane crash-lands in San Francisco, **killing three, injuring 200**

**2007** | Jeju Air-operated Bombardier Q400 carrying 74 veers off the runway, a dozen hurt

**2002** | Air China plane crash **kills 129**, one of the worst on South Korean soil





# Nearly 200 airlines use 737-800, making up about 15% of world's fleet of aircraft

The Jeju Air plane that crashed in South Korea was a Boeing 737-800, a model that is used widely around the world. There are about 28,000 passenger planes in service globally, according to Cirium, an aviation data provider. About 15%, or 4,400, are Boeing 737-800s. The plane belongs to the company's Next-Generation 737 family of jets, the precursor to the more modern 737 Max.

Nearly 200 airlines use the 737-800, according to Cirium, including five in South Korea. Boeing has delivered about 5,000 to customers since 1998.

"The plane in question is very safe and has a good safety record," said Najmedin Meshkati, a professor of engineering at the University of Southern California who has studied safety history of the Boeing 737 line.

The age of the global fleet of

## In Nepal, copter makes emergency landing after being hit by bird

A helicopter en route to Kathmandu carrying five US nationals had to make an emergency landing at Banepa, 50km east of the capital, after it was hit by a bird on Sunday. The 9N-ACG chopper, belonging to the private Heli Everest airlines, was coming from Lukla, gateway to Mt Everest, when it was struck by the bird at 11 am, an official said. The pilot managed to land the copter safely, the official added. PTI

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737-800 planes ranges from about 5 years old to more than 27 years old. A well-maintained passenger jet can fly 20 to 30 years or even longer. According to the flight tracking website Flightradar24, the plane that cras-

hed was 15 years old.

Officials said they were investigating the cause of the crash, including the possibility that a bird strike led to a landing gear malfunction. Boeing said in a statement it was in contact with Jeju Air and was ready to help the airline.

Bird strikes are not uncommon in aviation. Some airports deploy falcons and take other measures to keep their skies clear of birds. Muan International Airport, where the crash occurred, uses measures such as playing audio of distress calls to disperse birds as well as shooting them, according to the Korean office of civil aviation.

Meshkati said the landing gear of the 737-800 line is well designed and has a history of reliability, though poor upkeep could result in it not deploying correctly. NYT

- **Overview of Boeing 737-800 | बोइंग 737-800 का परिचय**
- **Global Presence:** Approximately **15% of the world's passenger fleet** (around 4,400 planes) are Boeing 737-800 models.  
**वैश्विक उपस्थिति:** विश्व के यात्री बेड़े का लगभग **15%** (लगभग **4,400 विमान**) बोइंग 737-800 मॉडल हैं।
- **Operator Count:** Nearly **200 airlines** use this aircraft globally.  
**ऑपरेटर की संख्या:** लगभग **200 एयरलाइंस** इस विमान का उपयोग करती हैं।
- **Safety Record:** The model is considered very safe with a strong safety history.  
**सुरक्षा रिकॉर्ड:** इस मॉडल को अत्यधिक सुरक्षित माना जाता है।






- **Incident in South Korea | दक्षिण कोरिया में घटना**

- **Crash Details:** A Jeju Air Boeing 737-800 crashed, sparking investigations into possible bird strikes or landing gear issues.

**दुर्घटना का विवरण:** जेजू एयर का एक बोइंग 737-800 दुर्घटनाग्रस्त हो गया, जिसमें पक्षी टकराव या लैंडिंग गियर की समस्याओं की संभावना की जांच की जा रही है।

- **Aircraft Age:** The crashed plane was approximately **15 years old**.
- विमान की उम्र:** दुर्घटनाग्रस्त विमान लगभग **15 साल पुराना** था।
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## Nepal Helicopter Emergency Landing | नेपाल हेलीकॉप्टर आपातकालीन लैंडिंग

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**Reason:** A helicopter en route to Kathmandu made an emergency landing after being struck by a bird.

**कारण:** काठमांडू जाते समय एक हेलीकॉप्टर ने पक्षी से टकराने के बाद आपातकालीन लैंडिंग की।

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**Passengers:** It was carrying five US nationals.

**यात्री:** इसमें पांच अमेरिकी नागरिक सवार थे।





- **Insights on Bird Strikes | पक्षी टकराव पर जानकारी**

- **Frequency:** Bird strikes are common in aviation, potentially leading to landing gear malfunctions.

**आवृत्ति:** विमानन में पक्षी टकराव आम है, जो लैंडिंग गियर की खराबी का कारण बन सकता है।

- 
- **Safety Measures:** Airports use falcons, distress calls, and other techniques to mitigate bird strikes.

**सुरक्षा उपाय:** हवाई अड्डे बाज, संकट कॉल और अन्य तकनीकों का उपयोग पक्षी टकराव को रोकने के लिए करते हैं।

## • . Design and Longevity | डिज़ाइन और स्थायित्व

- **Durability:** Boeing 737-800 planes can last 20-30 years with proper maintenance.

**स्थायित्व:** उचित रखरखाव के साथ बोइंग 737-800 विमान 20-30 साल तक चल सकता है।

- **Landing Gear:** The landing gear is well-designed but requires consistent upkeep to avoid malfunctions.

**लैंडिंग गियर:** लैंडिंग गियर अच्छी तरह से डिज़ाइन किया गया है लेकिन खराबी से बचने के लिए नियमित रखरखाव की आवश्यकता है।

# Humpy's win caps India's 2024 chess dominance

**P.K. Ajith Kumar**

India's great year in chess became greater on Sunday as Koneru Humpy won the women's World Rapid chess championship in New York. This is the second world rapid title for the 37-year-old from Vijayawada.

And this is the second world chess title of the month for India as D. Gukesh had lifted the world championship trophy in Singapore just two weeks ago.

Back in September, India's men's and women's teams were the champions at the Chess Olympiad in Budapest.

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the champion in New York, scoring 8.5 points from 11 rounds. The final round had begun with seven players tied on 7.5 points, but among them only Ms. Humpy won, against Indonesia's Irene Sukandar, making her the outright champion.

Shortly after her victory, Ms. Humpy told *The Hindu* over phone from New York that the title meant a lot to her. "This is one of the most cherished titles for me, as I wasn't among the favourites here," she said.

D. Harika tied for second place, but was placed fifth after tie-breakers were applied. It was a disappointing day for In-

dia in the Open section, though. Arjun Erigaisi, who had begun the day as one of the joint leaders, could only finish fifth, with nine points.

**MORE REPORTS**

» PAGE 16



Koneru Humpy (born 31 March 1987) is an Indian chess grandmaster. Humpy is a runner-up of the Women's World Chess Championship and the reigning two-time Women's World Rapid Chess Champion.

In 2002, she became the youngest woman ever to achieve the title of Grandmaster aged 15 years, 1 month, 27 days, a record only since surpassed by Hou Yifan.

Humpy is a gold medalist at the Olympiad, Asian Games, and Asian Championship.

She is also the first Indian female grandmaster.



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- **Koneru Humpy's Achievement:** Koneru Humpy won the **2024 Women's World Rapid Chess Championship** held in New York.

कोनेरू हम्पी की उपलब्धि: कोनेरू हम्पी ने न्यूयॉर्क में आयोजित **2024 महिला वर्ल्ड रैपिड शतरंज चैंपियनशिप** जीती।

- **Historical Context:** This is her second world rapid chess title; the first was in 2019.


इतिहास: यह उनका दूसरा विश्व रैपिड शतरंज खिताब है; पहला उन्होंने 2019 में जीता था।

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- **Points Scored:** Humpy scored **8.5 points from 11 rounds**, defeating Indonesia's Irene Sukandar in the final round.  
**स्कोर:** हम्पी ने 11 राउंड में **8.5 अंक** बनाए और अंतिम राउंड में इंडोनेशिया की आइरीन सुकंदर को हराया।  
**Tie-breaker Situation:** Seven players were tied at 7.5 points before the final round, but Humpy emerged as the outright winner.  
**टाई-ब्रेकर स्थिति:** अंतिम राउंड से पहले 7.5 अंकों पर सात खिलाड़ी बराबरी पर थे, लेकिन हम्पी ने विजयी बढ़त बनाई।

## . Other Indian Performances | अन्य भारतीय प्रदर्शन



**D. Harika:** Finished fifth after tie-breakers, despite tying for second place in points.  
डी. हरिका: अंकों में दूसरे स्थान पर टाई करने के बावजूद, टाई-ब्रेकर के बाद पांचवें स्थान पर रहीं।



**Arjun Erigaisi:** Placed fifth in the Open section with nine points.  
अर्जुन एरिगैसी: ओपन सेक्शन में नौ अंकों के साथ पांचवें स्थान पर रहे।

**Recent Success:** India's men's and women's teams won the Chess Olympiad in Budapest in September.

**हालिया सफलता:** सितंबर में बुडापेस्ट में भारत की पुरुष और महिला टीमों ने शतरंज ओलंपियाड जीता।

**D. Gukesh's Achievement:** Just two weeks prior, D. Gukesh lifted the World Chess Championship trophy in Singapore.

**डी. गुकेश की उपलब्धि:** दो सप्ताह पहले डी. गुकेश ने सिंगापुर में वर्ल्ड चैम्पियनशिप ट्रॉफी जीती।



Aspect	Classical Chess	Rapid Chess	Blitz Chess
<b>Time Control</b>	- Usually 90 minutes per player, plus 30 seconds increment per move.	- 15 to 25 minutes per player, with or without increments.	- 3 to 5 minutes per player, with or without increments.
<b>Game Duration</b>	- Long games, lasting 4-6 hours or more.	- Medium-length games, lasting 30 minutes to 1 hour.	- Very short games, typically 5 to 10 minutes.
<b>Playing Style</b>	- Deep strategic and positional play.	- Balances strategy and speed.	- Relies heavily on speed, quick calculation, and intuition.
<b>Thinking Time</b>	- Ample time for deep calculations and planning.	- Moderate time for calculations but limited for deep strategies.	- Very limited thinking time; focuses on quick decisions.
<b>Common Use</b>	- Used in professional tournaments and world championships.	- Often played in quicker tournaments and online matches.	- Popular for online chess and casual competitions.
<b>Stress Level</b>	- Lower stress due to extended time for moves.	- Moderate stress with reduced time pressure.	- High stress due to extreme time constraints.
<b>Mistakes</b>	- Fewer mistakes due to ample thinking time.	- More prone to mistakes due to time pressure.	- Frequent mistakes due to very limited time.
<b>Popularity</b>	- Preferred by traditionalists and professional players.	- Gaining popularity in tournaments and online platforms.	- Extremely popular in online chess and casual games.
<b>Skill Focus</b>	- Tests deep knowledge, long-term strategy, and endgame skills.	- Tests adaptability and ability to balance speed with strategy.	- Tests speed, intuition, and quick pattern recognition.

## 2025 may ring in small savings rate cuts

While the case for rate cutting cycle is in place starting with next quarter, government may defer its initiation till April for better optics as reduction amid high inflation, with important Assembly polls around the corner, may not go down well with voters, say experts; rates were last cut in 2020

Vikas Dhoot  
NEW DELHI

Investors in small savings schemes should brace themselves for a year of interest rate cuts, and the first reduction in returns on these schemes may come as early as next quarter, say experts. This week when the government resets rates for the January to March quarter.

While the case for a rate cutting cycle is in place starting with the upcoming quarter, the government may defer its initiation till April for better optics as a reduction amid high inflation, with an important Assembly election around the corner, may not go down well, experts believe.

The government had last slashed rates on small savings schemes in April 2020, in the range of 0.5% to 1.4% on different instruments, bringing the return on Public Provident Fund

down to 7.1% from 7.9% prevalent till then.

Although the PPF rate has remained unchanged since then, the Centre be-

gan hiking rates on other small savings instruments from October 2022.

“Since Q3 [third quarter] of 2022-23, interest rates on various small savings instruments have been cumulatively increased in the range of 70 to 200 basis points (bps) by the Government of India (GoI),” the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had noted in its October bulletin. One basis point equals 0.05%.

“The GoI kept rates on small savings schemes unchanged for Q3-2024-25. Rates on most of the small savings instruments are now above the formula-based rates, except rates on public provident funds and post office recurring deposits,” the RBI had noted, estimating the Q3 returns were a tad under 40 bps higher than the formula-based rates.

G-sec yields Since October this year, government securities (G-sec) yields, to which small savings returns were linked in 2016 based on a

formula, have eased further, and that trend is likely to persist in the coming year.

“The interest rates on most small savings

### Growing gap

The table shows the interest rates on various small savings schemes for the third quarter of the fiscal year 2024-25

Small savings schemes	Interest rates (%)	Gap from formula-based interest rates (%) (points)
Savings deposit	7.1	-0.24
Public Provident Fund	7.1	-0.19
One-year*	6.9	-0.19
Two-year*	7.1	-0.28
Three-year*	7.5	-0.42
Monthly income scheme	6.7	-0.12
Kisan Vikas Patra	7.5	-0.41
Senior Citizens Saving Scheme	8.2	-0.37
Account Scheme	8.2	-0.36

formula, have eased further, and that trend is likely to persist in the coming year. “The interest rates on most small savings

schemes are well above the corresponding G-sec yields, with the spreads between the two widening further over the acceptable levels during the last few

months, owing to a dip in the latter during the period. This suggests that there is room to cut small savings rates for the next quarter, say experts, told *The Hindu*.

Bank of Baroda chief economist Madan Nayyar agreed there is a “theoretical case” for rate cuts but this may not be the right time to effect a reduction as inflation is still high and there is a feeling that consumption is taking a hit.

Moreover, he noted that these schemes are targeted at more vulnerable sections of society and senior citizens.

Tepid inflows Incidentally, the inflows on account of savings deposits and certificates and the PPF have been tepid during April-October 2024, amounting to just about 37% of the budgeted amount during this period (compared to around 50% in the year ago period), per Controller General of Accounts (CGA) data.

This would likely prompt the government to keep rates unchanged for the coming quarter, Ms. Nayyar said. “However, amid the expectations of a rate cut in Q4 of 2024-25 and Q1 of 2025-26, we believe that the interest rates on small savings schemes are likely to be pared from the April-June 2025 quarter onwards, which will also aid in the transmission of monetary policy,” she concluded.

Support for rate cuts “During the course of the year 2025, there could be a stronger case for cutting rates on these schemes, particularly if the RBI cuts the repo rate. But a repo rate cut may not necessarily be lower G-sec yields as other factors also play a part,” Mr. Sahasrabudhe said. “We expect the 10-year G-sec yield to trade between 6.5% and 6.6% by the end of 2024-25 and between 6.1% and 6.2% by the end of 2025-26,” said Carma Ratings’ chief economist Rajani Sinha.

## Siang project to help mitigate flood risks posed by China: Arunachal CM

Press Trust of India  
ITANAGAR

Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu said the Siang Upper Multipurpose Project (SUMP), estimated to cost ₹13 lakh crore, was being planned by the Centre not just for generating electricity but to maintain the natural flow of the river all year round and mitigate risks of flooding if China released excess water.

Mr. Khandu’s remarks came at the wake of the approval of the construction of the world’s largest dam, at a cost of \$137 billion, on the Brahmaputra river in Tibet close to the Indian border. The dam is to be built at a huge gorge in the Himalayas, where the Brahmaputra river makes a huge U-turn to flow into Arunachal Pradesh and then to Bangladesh.

Part of the SUMP, with an estimated installed capacity of 11,000 mw, is not just about generating power, but also about maintaining the natural flow of the Siang river and mitigating potential flood risks from water releases by China,” Mr. Khandu told PTI in an interview.

Describing SUMP as a project of national impor-



Pema Khandu during the book launch on tribal heritage in Arunachal Pradesh on Saturday. (PTI/ANANDI/P)

tance, he said hydroelectricity is only the secondary goal of it.

Objective of project “The real objective of the project is to save the Siang river and the communities that have depended on it for generations,” he said.

The survey for preparing the pre-feasibility report of the projects is yet to be done amid stiff opposition from locals who are concerned about displacement, loss of livelihoods, and environmental impact of the mega dam.

Warning of severe consequences if China’s project moves ahead “without safeguards”, Mr. Khandu said the neighbouring country’s plans to divert water into the Brahmaputra into its arid regions could drastically reduce

the flow of the Siang river during winters. “In such a scenario, the volume of water could decrease so much that one might be able to cross the mighty river on foot,” he claimed.

“The proposed Siang project would create a reservoir capable of storing 9 billion cubic meters of water. This would ensure the river maintains a consistent flow, even during dry seasons. Additionally, the reservoir would act as a buffer in case of sudden water releases from upstream Chinese dams, potentially averting catastrophic flooding in Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Bangladesh,” he said.

Against the backdrop of the on-going bilateral discussions between India and China, the CM cautioned against “complacency”.

“China is unpredictable and can do anything,” Khandu said, underscoring the need for India to remain vigilant.

“We cannot take chances when it comes to national security and the welfare of our people,” he said.

The Chinese government approved the construction of the hydropower project in the lower reaches of the Yarlung Zangbo river, the Tibetan name for the Brahmaputra.

It is expected to generate more than 300 billion kWh of electricity each year — enough to meet the annual needs of over 300 million people.

The total investment in the dam could exceed one trillion yuan (\$137 billion), which would dwarf any other single infrastructure project on the planet, including China’s own Three Gorges Dam, regarded as the largest in the world. On the concerns of the locals, Khandu said the government would conduct extensive surveys before finalising the plans.

“Only after these studies, we will know the extent of the impact on the height, and the submergence area,” he said, adding that a public hearing will be held to listen to people’s concerns.

Arunachal Pradesh  
NEW DELHI

India saw the lowest number of mobile internet shutdowns in eight years in 2024, rounding out a period where the country became the most frequent deployer in the world of the measure, according to data from the Internet Shutdowns Tracker, maintained by the Software Freedom Law Centre, in-  
posed for a fixed number of days at a time.

The reduction — there have been 60 slight dips so far this year, with 96 last year — comes with fewer shutdowns imposed in Manipur and Jammu and Kashmir, where administrations have imposed a disproportionately high number of curbs in past years.

In the last month, shutdowns were imposed in Ambala, Haryana, as a result of planned farmer agitations, and extended in nine districts of Manipur owing to “the prevailing law and order situation in the State”.

The most internet shutdowns in 2024, following the 132 days of the 370 of the Constitution the previous year. An extension of an internet shutdown is counted by SPLC as a fresh shutdown, as

these curbs are usually imposed for a fixed number of days at a time.

“Digital rights activists have bemoaned the constant use of shutdowns, arguing they are unnecessary and ineffective as a response to unrest. What’s more, they have repeatedly published the shutdown orders by the Supreme Court. “Four years after the historic Bhasin versus Union of India judgment, officials continue to fail to publish shutdown orders, and have been repeatedly corrected by courts for failing to comply,” the advocacy group Access Now said in May.

Internet shutdowns for the internet for the well-being of the nation, it said. The act location of the, the balanced with the need to prevent misuse by anti-social elements, and the temporary suspensions of internet services by Union

## ‘Bangladesh’s trouble won’t be allowed to spill over into Bengal’

Shihy Sahay Sinha  
KOLKATA

West Bengal Director-General of Police (DGP) Rajeev Kumar said on Sunday that the volatile situation in Bangladesh will not be allowed to affect peace in the State. “We do not want people to use it (the situation in Bangladesh) to create communal and security problems here,” Mr. Kumar said in a statement.

The DGP said that border management is the Border Security Force’s responsibility, and admitted to “lapses” as people have crossed the border but emphasised that special forces have been “effective in arresting and neutralising” such elements. West Bengal shares 2,216 km of border with Bangladesh, and since the fall of the Sheikh Hasina regime in August this year, there have been several arrests of Bangladeshi nationals in Kolkata and other parts of the State.

The police recently unearthed a fake passport



Rajeev Kumar

speaking to the media, he said that the police had played a crucial role in apprehending the militant. “We tracked the Kashmiri militant for two days based on information provided by the Special Task Force of the State Police. After that, we called the Kashmir Police,” he said.

On the passport scam, the DGP said a notification by the Ministry of External Affairs has minimised the role of police, and the police have urged different agencies to overhaul the passport verification.

each year. It is also notable as parliamentarians have been pushing on whether a study has been conducted for years.

In November 2019, former Minister for Communications Ravi Shankar Prasad said in a written Rajya Sabha response that the government “has not undertaken any evaluation or study to assess the economic impacts of internet shutdowns”.

Then Minister of Communications Pema Khandu said in a written Rajya Sabha answer on December 12.

No study The Union government reiterated in Parliament in the Winter Session that it did not have centralised data on internet shutdowns across India and that it had not conducted any study on the efficacy of the measure. The Department of Telecommunications, under the Union Ministry of Communications, has issued the rules under which State and Union Territory authorities may or may not conduct internet shutdowns.

The lack of any study has been particularly marked as digital rights activists have pushed back against the practice, with shutdowns being employed dozens of times

in the country.” In 2022, former MoS for Communications Devisinh Chaudhary said that “DoT has not commissioned any study to assess the efficacy of internet shutdowns in dealing with public emergencies”.

Ex-IPS officer and Ayodhya dispute OSD dies in Patna

The Hindu Bureau  
PATNA

Acharya Kishore Kunal, former IPS officer and founder secretary of Mahavir Mandir Trust, died of cardiac arrest in Patna on Sunday.

He served as Patna Senior Superintendent of Police. He was also appointed officer on special duty on the Ayodhya dispute.

He has penned several books, the most famous being *Ayodhya Revisited*, which was also part of the final hearing on the Ram Janmabhoomi case.

## Security forces faced resurgence in militancy in Jammu region this year

Press Trust of India  
SRINAGAR

Security forces maintained an upper hand over militants in Kashmir in 2024 compared with the Jammu region, which saw itself in the throes of a full-blown militancy involving all 10 districts. The ratio of security personnel killed against militants in Jammu is far higher than the Valley, indicating a change in the way security forces are being used to tackle militants in terms of training and survival tactics.

According to official data, the Jammu region witnessed the killing of 18 security personnel against 13 militants in around 30 contacts established either in ambushes or anti-militancy operations. In Kashmir, 55 militants were killed in

anti-militancy operations, which left 10 security personnel dead.

It’s the first time in many decades that security forces have taken more casualties, including officers and personnel of the elite PAKA units of the Army, compared with militants in the Jammu region.

Official data suggested that some people were killed in militancy-related incidents in Doda, Kathua, Rajouri and Kishtwar, four in Udhampur, three in Jammu, three in Rajouri, and two in Poonch.

The security forces remain on tenterhooks in the Chenab Valley, especially in Udhampur, Kishtwar and Kishtwar districts, as only 13 militants could be neutralised this year. In the face of inputs about the

Jammu region told *The Hindu*. The change in tact was evident both in terms of training level and survival tactics of these militants in the forest ranges, officials said.

“They did not just use forest covers and treacherous topography to their advantage,” the official said. “Official data suggested that some people were killed in militancy-related incidents in Doda, Kathua, Rajouri and Kishtwar, four in Udhampur, three in Jammu, three in Rajouri, and two in Poonch.”

The security forces remain on tenterhooks in the Chenab Valley, especially in Udhampur, Kishtwar and Kishtwar districts, as only 13 militants could be neutralised this year. In the face of inputs about the



Under attack: An official said militants started setting up bases in the Pir Panjal Valley in 2020, first time since 2005. FILE PHOTO

presence of over 30 militants in the region. “To watch the militants’ upscaling of tactics, a special unit of the National Security Guard, an elite force also known as Black Cats, was sent to Jammu on June 9, for the first time this year. J&K also saw an increase

in. Three village defence guards were also killed by militants this year.

Militants also stepped up attacks in Srinagar after the return of External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar from a trip that was intended to break ice between the two nations. His return was followed by a major attack on a tunnel project, a

strategic project have been in Kashmir with Ladakh, the first time since 2003. The attack left seven, including six labourers and one doctor dead in the Kashmir region and 14 in the Jammu region. These civilian casualties included nine agronomists, who were killed in the Jammu region on June 9, on the eve of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s swear-

ing-in. Three village defence guards were also killed by militants this year. Militants also stepped up attacks in Srinagar after the return of External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar from a trip that was intended to break ice between the two nations. His return was followed by a major attack on a tunnel project, a strategic project have been in Kashmir with Ladakh, the first time since 2003. The attack left seven, including six labourers and one doctor dead in the Kashmir region and 14 in the Jammu region. These civilian casualties included nine agronomists, who were killed in the Jammu region on June 9, on the eve of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s swear-



# India shuts down Internet 60 times in 2024, the lowest in eight years

**Aroon Deep**  
NEW DELHI

India saw the lowest number of mobile Internet shutdowns in eight years in 2024, rounding out a period where the country became the most frequent deployer in the world of the measure, according to data from the Internet Shutdowns Tracker, maintained by the Software Freedom Law Centre, India.

The reduction – there have been 60 shutdowns so far this year, with 96 last year – comes with fewer shutdowns imposed in Manipur and Jammu and Kashmir, where administrations have imposed a disproportionately high number of curbs in past years.

In the last month, shutdowns were imposed in Ambala, Haryana, as a result of planned farmer agitations, and extended in nine districts of Manipur owing to “the prevailing law and order situation in the State”. The most Internet shutdowns – 132 – happened in 2020, following the revocation of Article 370 of the Constitution the previous year. An extension of an Internet shutdown is counted by SFLC as a fresh shutdown, as



**No connectivity:** The most shutdowns happened in 2020 after the abrogation of special status of J&K under Article 370. FILE PHOTO

these curbs are usually imposed for a fixed number of days at a time.

Digital rights activists have bemoaned the constant use of shutdowns, arguing they are unnecessary and ineffective as a response to unrest. What's more, States do not always publish the shutdown orders as ordered by the Supreme Court. “Four years after the historic Bhasin versus Union of India judgment, officials continue to fail to publish shutdown orders and have been repeatedly corrected by courts for failing to comply,” the advocacy group Access Now said in May.

“The contribution of the Internet for the well-being of citizens has to be balanced with the need to prevent misuse by anti-social elements requiring temporary suspensions of internet services,” Union

Minister of State for Communications Pemmasani Chandra Sekhar said in a written Rajya Sabha answer on December 12.

## No study

The Union government reiterated in Parliament in the Winter Session that it did not have centralised data on Internet shutdowns across India and that it had not conducted any study on the efficacy of the measure. The Department of Telecommunications, under the Union Ministry of Communications, has issued the rules under which State and Union Territory authorities may order Internet shutdowns.

The lack of any study has been particularly marked as digital rights activists have pushed back against the practice, with shutdowns being employed dozens of times

each year. It is also notable as parliamentarians have been pushing on whether a study has been conducted for years.

In November 2019, former Minister for Communications Ravi Shankar Prasad said in a written Rajya Sabha response that the government “has not undertaken any evaluation or study to assess the economic impacts of Internet shutdowns”. Then Minister of State for Communications Sanjay Dhotre said in the Upper House in February 2020 that “records related to Internet shutdowns ordered by State governments are not maintained by either DoT or the Ministry of Home Affairs”.

Mr. Dhotre said the same month that “DoT has not conducted any study on the effect of internet shutdown on economy, tourism, education sector etc”. Similarly in 2021, he had said, “DoT has not conducted any study to calculate the economic cost of Internet shutdowns in the country.”

In 2022, former MoS for Communications Devusinh Chauhan said that “DoT has not commissioned any study to assess the efficacy of internet shutdowns in dealing with public emergencies”.

## 60 Internet Shutdowns in 2024 | 2024 में 60 इंटरनेट बंदी

- India recorded the lowest number of mobile Internet shutdowns (60) in the past eight years.
- भारत ने पिछले आठ वर्षों में सबसे कम मोबाइल इंटरनेट बंदी (60) दर्ज की।

## Comparison with Previous Years | पिछले वर्षों की तुलना

- In 2020, there were 132 shutdowns, largely due to the abrogation of Article 370 in J&K.
- 2020 में 132 बार इंटरनेट बंद किया गया, मुख्यतः अनुच्छेद 370 हटाए जाने के कारण।



## Jammu and Kashmir | जम्मू और कश्मीर

- A significant reduction in shutdowns, but still a hotspot.
- बंदियों में कमी, लेकिन यह क्षेत्र अभी भी प्रभावित।

## Recent Shutdowns in Haryana and Manipur | हरियाणा और मणिपुर में हालिया बंदी

- Imposed due to farmer protests and law and order issues.
- किसानों के विरोध और कानून-व्यवस्था के कारण लागू।

## Digital Rights Concerns | डिजिटल अधिकार चिंताएं

### Criticism from Activists | कार्यकर्ताओं की आलोचना

- Shutdowns are criticized for being ineffective and harmful to economic and social well-being.
- इंटरनेट बंदियों को आर्थिक और सामाजिक हानि के लिए आलोचना की गई।

### Lack of Published Orders | आदेशों का अभाव

- Despite Supreme Court directions, shutdown orders are not regularly published.
- सर्वोच्च न्यायालय के निर्देशों के बावजूद, आदेश प्रकाशित नहीं किए जाते

## Government Statements | सरकारी बयान

### No Study Conducted | कोई अध्ययन नहीं किया गया

- No centralized study or evaluation on the impact of shutdowns.
- बंदियों के प्रभाव पर कोई केंद्रीकृत अध्ययन नहीं।

### Statement by MoS Communications | संचार राज्य मंत्री का बयान

- DoT has not assessed the economic costs of shutdowns.
- दूरसंचार विभाग ने बंदियों की आर्थिक लागत का आकलन नहीं किया।

## Broader Implications | व्यापक प्रभाव

## Economic and Social Impact | आर्थिक और सामाजिक प्रभाव

- Shutdowns hinder economic activities, education, and communication.
- बंदियां आर्थिक गतिविधियों, शिक्षा, और संचार को बाधित करती हैं।

## Call for Reforms | सुधार की मांग

- Activists demand transparency and alternative measures for managing crises.
- कार्यकर्ता पारदर्शिता और संकट प्रबंधन के लिए वैकल्पिक उपायों की मांग कर रहे हैं।




Indian government imposed a total of 780 shutdowns from 2014 to 2023.

India shut down the internet for over **7,000 hours** in 2023.

Regionally, **Jammu and Kashmir** saw the **highest number of shutdowns** (433 in the last 12 years).

The longest blackout in 2023 took place in **Manipur** from May to December amid ethnic clashes.

- 
- Globally, **protests, information control & political instability** caused maximum shutdowns.
  - Global Internet freedom has **declined** for the **13th consecutive year**, and the environment for human rights online has deteriorated in 29 countries, as per the latest **Freedom House report**.
  - **India's ranking** has hovered around the **same** benchmark in the last three years, with a dip from 2016 and 2017, when India scored 59 points, to 50 points in 2023.

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**IN BRIEF**



**Man City beats Leicester to return to winning ways**

Manchester City beat Leicester 2-0 in the Premier League on Sunday to notch just its second win in 14 games in all competitions.

**The results:** Premier League: Leicester 0 lost to Manchester City 2 (Sarrion 21, Haaland 76); Crystal Palace 2 (Chalobah 31, Ezze 52) bt Southampton 1 (Oribing 14); Everton 0 lost to Nottingham Forest 2 (Wood 19, White 61); Fulham 2 (Umeraz 40, Wilson 72) drew with Bournemouth 2 (Evanilson 51, Quattrone 89); Tottenham 2 (Bentancor 12, Johnson 49) drew with Wolves 2 (Hwang 7, Strand Larsen 87).

**Series A:** Napoli 3 (Hazard 79) bt Venezia 0.  
**On Saturday:** Serie A: Cagliari 0 lost to Inter Milan 3 (Bastoni 54, Martinez 71, Calhanoglu 78 pen); Lazio 1 (Dele-Bashiru 27) drew with Atlanta 1 (Bresciano 88).



**Afghanistan's batting marathon interrupted by rain**

Captain Hashmatullah Shahidi was unbeaten on 179 as Afghanistan trailed Zimbabwe by 71 runs after a rain-shortened fourth day of the first Test in Bulawayo on Sunday. He and double centurion Rahmatullah Shaiq put on 364 for the third wicket before the latter was out having made a career-best 234 at the Queens Sports Club.

**The scores:** Zimbabwe 586 in 235.2 overs vs Afghanistan 233.1 in 156 overs (Shaiq 234, Shahidi 179 batting, Akar Zazi 46 batting).

**Lakshya Sen finishes third at King Cup International**

Lakshya Sen outplayed French star Alex Lanzier 21-17, 21-11 to win the third-place play-off contest at the inaugural King Cup International badminton open in Shenzhen (China) on Sunday. The 23-year-old secured a prize purse of around €36 lakh.

**Indian women's football squad for Maldives friendlies**

The Indian women's football team coach Joakim Alexanderson, on Sunday, selected a mix of senior and under-20 players in the squad for the friendlies against Maldives on December 30 and January 2, 2025 at Bengaluru.

**The squad:** Goalkeepers: Hemanga Seram, Malham Lirthingambi Devi, Nandini; Defenders: Aruna Bag, Juhli Singh, Adhika, Sahana Basire, Sanju, Shweta Topso, Sorokhalom Ranjena Chenu, Toljam Thibisana Chenu, Vikash Bara; Midfielders: Ginoe Dangmei, Kajol Dsouza, Neha, Nongmekapam Sibam Devi, Nita Linda, Rimpal Haldar; Forwards: Lhingdelkim, Lynda Kom Serto, Pooja, Pyari Xasa, Simron Gurung.

**Muddappa clinches three National titles**

**Sports Bureau**

CHENNAI

Hernath Muddappa of Mantra Racing reinforced his status as the "Drag King" by notching up a triple crown in the fourth annual final round of the MMSC (Maddur Motor Sports Club) Indian National Motorcycle Drag Racing Championship at the Madras International Circuit (MIC) here on Sunday.

Muddappa took his tally of National titles to 15, making him the country's most decorated motorsport athlete.

**The results (Provisional, all 4-Stroke unless mentioned):** Unrestricted: 1. Hernath Muddappa (Mantra Racing) 7:57.5; 2. S.P. Sigan Prasad (Mantra Racing) 7:57.0; 3. Khaja Anas Ahmed 8:05.0. **165cc - 180cc (Super Sport):** 1. Mughal Pasha (Fast Racing) 7:55.0; 2. Ayman Baig 8:10.0; 3. Adnan (Fast Racing) 8:28.0. **Rider champion:** Muddappa; **Champion Team:** Fast Racing.



**Hernath Muddappa.** **85cc - 105cc (SS):** 1. Muddappa 7:56.2; Ahmed 8:12.0; 3. Sigan Prasad 8:13.6. **Rider champion:** Muddappa; **Champion Team:** Mantra Racing. **95cc - 85cc (SS):** 1. Muddappa 8:27.2; 2. Mohammed Riyaz (Fast Track Racing) 8:27.3; 3. Altar Khan (Fast Track Racing) 8:30.0. **Note:** Muddapp and Riyaz tied with same timing. Muddappa won a faster "Reaction Time" was placed first. **Rider champion:** Mohammed Riyaz; **Champion Team:** Fast Track Racing. **25 Up to 230cc (SS):** 1. Syed Imran 12:78.2; 2. Shabrukh 12:82.6; 3. Shabrukh Subhanji (Fast Track Racing) 13:17.8. **Rider champion:** Shabrukh Khan; **Champion Team:** Big Boys Racing Team.

**Youngsters help Bengal Tigers begin with win over Toofans**

Jugraj, Sukhjeet and Yousuf find the target for the winner; Soorma edges past Dragons in shootout

**III.**  
**Ultra Sensation**  
ROHITELLA

Sh hrachit Rash Bengal Tigers had bet big on its young forwards while building the team and they did not disappoint as it began its Hockey India League (HIL) journey with a 3-2 win over Hyderabad Toofans on Sunday. Erratic and inconsistent, Toofans was forced to play catch-up all through with the team appearing to be still finding its connections and rhythm. An early goal by Bengal Tigers, a penalty corner conversion by Jugraj Singh, helped the team settle and for large parts, it was clearly the better side on the field. Toofans' trump card — Gonzalo Peillat, the most expensive overseas player



On target! Jugraj opened the scoring for Bengal Tigers. In: VICKAS

it 3-0 for Bengal Tigers in the 36th, running in from the left and smashing in from the top of circle past goalkeeper Vikas Dahiya. The Bengal Tigers defence was also effective in thwarting the few times Toofans managed to take a shot at the goal with Irish goalkeeper Jamie Carr bringing off some brilliant saves, including a couple of back-to-back ones and a penalty stroke from Marco Casella in the 24th minute. The Toofans strikers barely managed to find openings and the one time they did, Rohit Singh's well-timed pass from the baseline was deflected in by Thyroo Barid for the team's first goal in the 41st minute. It wasn't enough. Later, Soorma HC edged past Tamil Nadu Dragons in the shootout for its first win in the 20th minute and an unmarked Affan Yousuf made

at the auctions — had an off day, ineffective with his drag-flicks and out of form in the defence. Toofans earned nine penalty corners but could convert only one, a variation that saw Arthur de Sloover deflect Peillat's shot in the final minutes of the game. The Toofans defence, in fact, left a lot to be desired with huge gaps that were clearly the better forwards. Sukhjeet Singh did so in the 20th minute and an unmarked Affan Yousuf made



The big prize: Steelers' balanced approach proved decisive. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

**Steelers down Pirates, take home the PKL title**

**Saikat Chakraborty**

PUNE

Haryana Steelers emerged victorious in the Pro Kabaddi League (PKL) Season 11 final, defeating Patna Pirates 32-23 here at the Shree Shiv Chhatrapati Maharaja Stadium in Baleswar on Sunday. The encounter, billed as a clash between the league's strongest defence — Steelers — and the most potent attack — Pirates — lived up to the hype. However, it was the Steelers' balanced approach which

ultimately proved decisive. Shivam Patare, with a crucial nine points, spear-headed the offensive charge for Steelers, while its defence maintained a strong grip on the Pirates' raiders, led by the dynamic Iranian all-rounder Mohammadreza Chyaneh Shadiou, who contributed seven points. The first half was closely contested with Steelers holding a slight edge. However, a crucial all-out early in the second half put it firmly in control. It was a disappointing

entry into the final. Services managed to score through Bikash Thapa and an own goal by Bengal defender Juwel Ahmed Mazumder. Moments later, Shrestha himself scored, converting a through ball from Maji, taking his tally to seven goals for the tournament. Services' fought back strongly in the second half to reduce the margin in the 53rd minute when substitute Bikash Thapa headed in Dilon Kharka Chhetri's cross from the left. In the 74th minute, it was 'gifted' a second goal when a teasing cross from the right was turned into

**Bengal to face Kerala in Santosh Trophy final**

**Sports Bureau**

HYDERABAD

Bengal knocked out defending champion Services 4-2 in the semifinals of the Santosh Trophy national football championship at the GMC Balakrishna Stadium here on Sunday. The record 32-time winner will take on Kerala in the title clash after it thrashed Manipur 5-1 in the second last-four match. The final will take place on Tuesday.

This is Bengal's 47th entry into the final. Services managed to score through Bikash Thapa and an own goal by Bengal defender Juwel Ahmed Mazumder. The opening goal for Bengal came in the 16th minute due to Services' inability to keep a deep long ball. Maji capitalised on the ball at the edge of the box and fired home. This was Maji's sixth goal of the tournament. In the 74th minute, it was Naro Hari Shrestha's exquisite chip found Handsa, who coolly rounded the



Happy times: Bengal players celebrate after beating Services in the semifinals. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



**Ashi wins rifle 3-position gold**

**Sports Bureau**

BANGALORE

Ashi Chouksey shot 466.7 in the final to beat Olympian Anjum Mousudil by 3.1 points in the women's 50-metre rifle 3-position event of the 67th National shooting championship at the Madhya Pradesh Academy, Bhopal, on Sunday. Anushka Thokur of Karnataka surprised the junior field as she won the gold after having qualified in the eighth place with a modest score of 580. **The results: 50m rifle 3-position:** Women: Ashi Chouksey 466.7 (590); 2. Anjum Mousudil 463.6 (590); 3. Sakshi Padekar 451.3 (587). **Junior:** 1. Anushka Thokur 460.5 (580); 2. Sakshi Padekar 456.3 (587); 3. Nischal 443.9 (585).

**Acc 'keeper Syed Kirmani's autobiography Stumped launched**

**Sports Bureau**

BENGALURU

A galaxy of stars descended at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium on Sunday for the launch of Stumped by Syed Kirmani, the autobiography of one of India's finest wicketkeepers. The book is co-authored by Debashish Sengupta and Dakshesh Pathak. The cricket universe was represented by Kapil Dev, Rahul Dravid, V.V.S. Laxman, Anil Kumble, Brijesh Patel, E.A.S. Prasanna, R.S. Chandrasekhar and many of Kirmani's State teammates. Infosys co-founder N.R. Narayana Murthy and Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar were also in attendance. Former cricketer Sunil Gavaskar, badminton stalwart Prakash Padukone and actor Jackie Shroff sent their well wishes through video messages. Kirmani's famous partnership with Kapil Dev



Star-studded affair: Kirmani's book launch was attended among others by Karnataka Deputy CM Shivakumar. Infosys co-chairman Narayanamurthy and a host of former cricketers. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

camp when Syed Kirmani, Bishan Singh Bedi and others returned to India after a precarious 17 for five, was a favourite memory among speakers on the stage. Kapil spoke about the first time he met Kirmani, who incidentally celebrated his 75th birthday on Sunday. "I was in an under-19

his own net by Bengal defender Juwel Ahmed Mazumder. Moments later, Shrestha himself scored, converting a through ball from Maji, taking his tally to seven goals for the tournament. Services' fought back strongly in the second half to reduce the margin in the 53rd minute when substitute Bikash Thapa headed in Dilon Kharka Chhetri's cross from the left. In the 74th minute, it was 'gifted' a second goal when a teasing cross from the right was turned into

**Stumped autobiography launched**

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"I remember what Kirmani wrote when signing the autograph. He wrote 'Hope to see tons of runs and tons of wickets from you'. That was most kind of him. I also spent a few hours with him, where he taught me so much about the sport and beyond." Kapil said.



# Ace 'keeper Syed Kirmani's autobiography *Stumped* launched

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Former cricketer Sunil Gavaskar, badminton stalwart Prakash Padukone and actor Jackie Shroff sent their well wishes through video messages.

Kirmani's famous partnership with Kapil Dev



**Star-studded affair:** Kirmani's book launch was attended among others by Karnataka Deputy CM Shivakumar, Infosys co-chairman Narayanmurthy and a host of former cricketers. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

against Zimbabwe in the 1983 World Cup, where the duo rescued India from a precarious 17 for five, was a favourite memory among speakers on the stage.

Kapil spoke about the first time he met Kirmani, who incidentally celebrated his 75th birthday on Sunday.

"I was in an under-19

camp when Syed Kirmani, Bishan Singh Bedi and others returned to India after being bloodied and bruised on a tour to West Indies.

"I worked up the courage to approach Kirmani. The first autograph I ever received in my life was from the great 'Kiri bhai' and G.R. Viswanath," Kapil

said.

"I remember what Kirmani wrote when signing the autograph. He wrote 'Hope to see tons of runs and tons of wickets from you'. That was most kind of him. I also spent a few hours with him, where he taught me so much about the sport and beyond," Kapil said.



- **Book Launch:** Syed Kirmani's autobiography, *Stumped*, was launched at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru.  
**पुस्तक विमोचन:** सैयद किरमानी की आत्मकथा *स्टम्पड* का विमोचन बैंगलुरु के एम. चिन्नास्वामी स्टेडियम में हुआ।  
**Authors:** Co-authored by Debashish Sengupta and Dakshesh Pathak.  
**लेखक:** इस पुस्तक को देबाशीष सेनगुप्ता और दक्षेश पाठक ने सह-लेखन किया है।

## • Presence of Cricket Legends | क्रिकेट दिग्गजों की उपस्थिति

- The event was graced by legends like Kapil Dev, Rahul Dravid, V.V.S. Laxman, Anil Kumble, and Sunil Gavaskar.

**उपस्थित दिग्गज:** कपिल देव, राहुल द्रविड़, वी.वी.एस. लक्ष्मण, अनिल कुंबले और सुनील गावस्कर जैसे दिग्गजों ने कार्यक्रम में शिरकत की।

- Infosys co-founder N.R. Narayana Murthy and Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar were also present.

**विशेष अतिथि:** इंफोसिस के सह-संस्थापक एन.आर. नारायणमूर्ति और कर्नाटक के उपमुख्यमंत्री डी.के. शिवकुमार भी उपस्थित थे।

- **75th Birthday:** The event coincided with Kirmani's 75th birthday.  
**75वां जन्मदिन:** कार्यक्रम सैयद किरमानी के 75वें जन्मदिन के साथ हुआ। Kapil Dev reminisced about Kirmani's partnership during the 1983 World Cup, where they rescued India from 17 for 5 against Zimbabwe.  
**कपिल देव की यादें:** कपिल देव ने 1983 विश्व कप में जिम्बाब्वे के खिलाफ 17/5 की स्थिति से भारत को बचाने में किरमानी के योगदान को याद किया। Kapil also shared a personal memory of receiving his first autograph from Kirmani.  
**पहला ऑटोग्राफ:** कपिल ने अपना पहला ऑटोग्राफ किरमानी से मिलने की याद साझा की।




- **Messages and Wishes | संदेश और शुभकामनाएं**



- Actor Jackie Shroff and badminton icon Prakash Padukone sent video messages congratulating Kirmani.

**वीडियो संदेश:** अभिनेता जैकी श्रॉफ और बैडमिंटन खिलाड़ी प्रकाश पादुकोण ने वीडियो संदेश भेजे।

- 
- Kirmani's famous partnerships and mentorship were praised during the event.



**साझेदारी और मार्गदर्शन:** कार्यक्रम में किरमानी की प्रसिद्ध साझेदारियों और उनके मार्गदर्शन की प्रशंसा की गई।





# ENTITLED TO PAYOUT IF DENIED BOARDING? KNOW YOUR RIGHTS AS A DOMESTIC FLYER

The aviation regulator has imposed a penalty of Rs 10 lakh on Akasa Air for failing to compensate 7 passengers denied boarding on a Sept 6 Bengaluru-Pune flight. TOI looks at compensation norms for being denied boarding

## SEPT INCIDENT

The aircraft scheduled for the route was grounded and the replacement aircraft had nine non-operational seats. So Akasa transferred 7 passengers to an IndiGo flight that departed nearly two hours later. The question is: how does flight time difference between original and alternative flights decide quantum of compensation?

Pic for representation



## THE RULES

➤ Airlines can legally deny boarding. To reduce the possibility of flight departing with empty seats (some passengers don't show up) airlines can overbook flights to a limited extent

➤ When more passengers report than the number of available seats, the airline must deny boarding to some

➤ If the offloaded passenger is booked on an alternative flight that departs within an hour of the original flight's scheduled

departure, the airline need not pay compensation

➤ Else, the airline must pay compensation that is equal to 200% of the booked one-way basic fare plus airline fuel charge, or Rs 10,000, whichever is lower

## FOR MUCH DELAYED DEPARTURE

**400%** of booked one-way basic fare plus airline fuel charge or Rs 20,000, whichever lower, should be compensation if the alternative flight departs more than 24 hours after the original flight's time

➤ If a passenger does not opt for alternate flight, full ticket refund and compensation equal to 400% of booked one-way basic fare plus airline fuel charge or **₹20,000** should be paid

### The Akasa case

The 7 passengers should have been paid **₹10,000** each





An aerial photograph of the ocean surface, showing deep blue water with intricate, swirling patterns of white foam and lighter blue-green patches, likely representing a deep-sea hydrothermal vent field. The text is centered over the image.

# India's Deep Ocean Exploration Mission in 2026



- The Government of India is preparing to send a human into the deep sea as part of its ambitious 'Deep Sea Mission,' aligned with the country's first human space mission scheduled for early 2026.





## Deep Ocean Mission (DOM)



DOM is implemented by the **Ministry Of Earth Sciences (MoES)** and was approved in 2021 at a cost of nearly **Rs 4,077 crore** over a five-year period in a phased manner.



The mission has **six pillars**: Development of technologies for **deep-sea mining** and a manned submersible to carry **three people to a depth of 6,000 meters** in the ocean;

Development of **ocean climate change advisory services**, involving an array of ocean observations and models to understand and provide future climate projections;

Technological innovations for the exploration and conservation of **deep-sea biodiversity**;

**Deep-ocean survey and exploration** aimed at identifying potential sites of multi-metal hydrothermal sulphides mineralisation along the Indian Ocean mid-oceanic ridges;

1

**Harnessing energy and freshwater** from the ocean; and


2

**Establishing an advanced Marine Station for Ocean Biology**, as a hub for nurturing talent and driving new opportunities in ocean biology and blue biotechnology.



- **Developments Linked to it**

- **Samudrayaan Mission** : As a part of DOM, India's flagship deep ocean mission, '**Samudrayaan**', was initiated in 2021 by the **Ministry of Earth Sciences**.

- The crewed expedition reaching a depth of 6,000 m to the ocean bed in the central Indian Ocean will be accomplished by **Matsya6000**, a deep-ocean submersible.
- 



- **Features of Matsya6000**
  - Matsya6000 combines the best and most feasible features of **remote operated vehicles (ROVs)** and **autonomous remote vehicles (AUVs)**.
  - The interior of Matsya6000 is designed to accommodate three humans travelling within a specialised sphere with a diameter of 2.1 m.



# MATSYA 6000

India's 1<sup>st</sup> Manned Deep Ocean Mission



Sending **3 humans** to **6-km ocean depth** in a **self-propelled submersible**



Exploring **deep sea resources** & **biodiversity assessment**



Endurance of **12 hours** under normal operation and **96 hours** in case of **emergency**



# EXPLORATIONS DOWN UNDER

Manned submersible may be useful in looking for minerals in central and southern Indian Ocean

**SHAPE**  
Spherical with a diameter of **3.2m**

**MATERIAL**  
Titanium. Metal can withstand pressure underwater

**DIVING DEPTH**  
**6km**

## VITAL STATS

**CAPACITY**  
Can accommodate a three-member crew

**DURATION**  
Can remain underwater for **6 to 8** hours

**DEADLINE**  
After Centre approves likely to be ready in **5** years

**BUDGET**  
**₹500cr**

## HOW IT WORKS

Once deployed from a ship, a pilot can steer the vehicle underwater

1

2

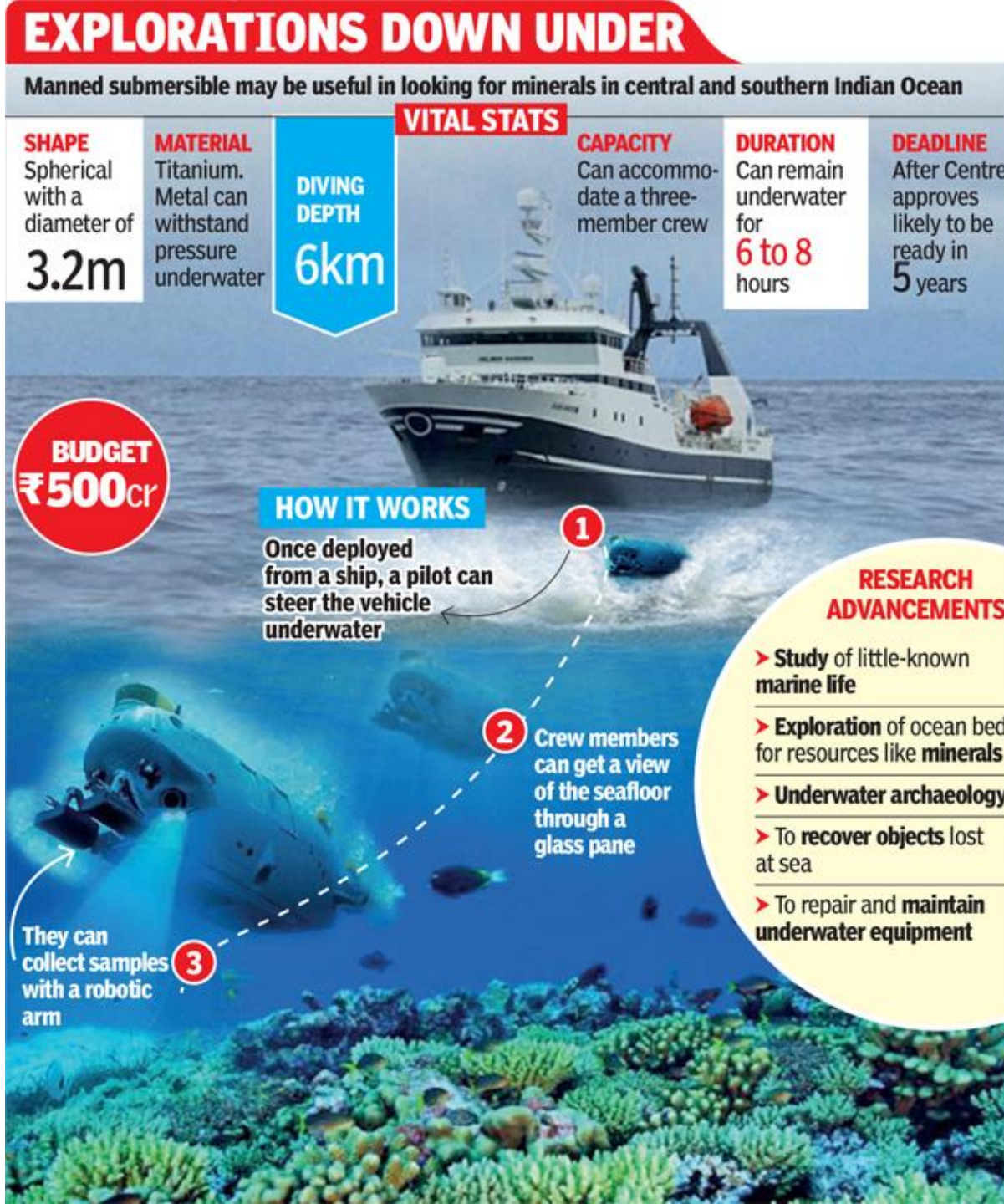
Crew members can get a view of the seafloor through a glass pane

3

They can collect samples with a robotic arm

## RESEARCH ADVANCEMENTS

- > Study of little-known marine life
- > Exploration of ocean bed for resources like minerals
- > Underwater archaeology
- > To recover objects lost at sea
- > To repair and maintain underwater equipment









- Constructed from a **titanium alloy**, the sphere is engineered to withstand pressures of up to **6,000 bar**.
  - It can move at a speed of about **5.5 km/hr** using underwater thrusters.

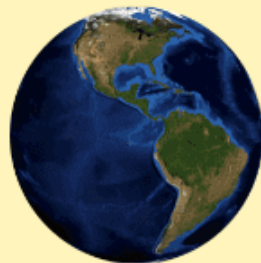


A large satellite dish antenna is positioned on a dark, flat landscape under a starry night sky. The dish is angled upwards and to the right. The sky is filled with numerous stars, and the Milky Way galaxy is visible as a bright, blueish-white band of light stretching across the upper portion of the frame. The overall scene is dark and atmospheric.

# NASA's Parker Solar Probe



**Launch Date**  
Between July 31 and August 19, 2018  
from Kennedy Space Centre in Florida



# The Parker Solar Probe Mission

The spacecraft will fly through the sun's atmosphere to within 3.7 million miles seven times closer than any spacecraft has come before

Arriving at Sun  
2024

## The Probe

Weight: 1,350lb  
Length: 9ft 10in

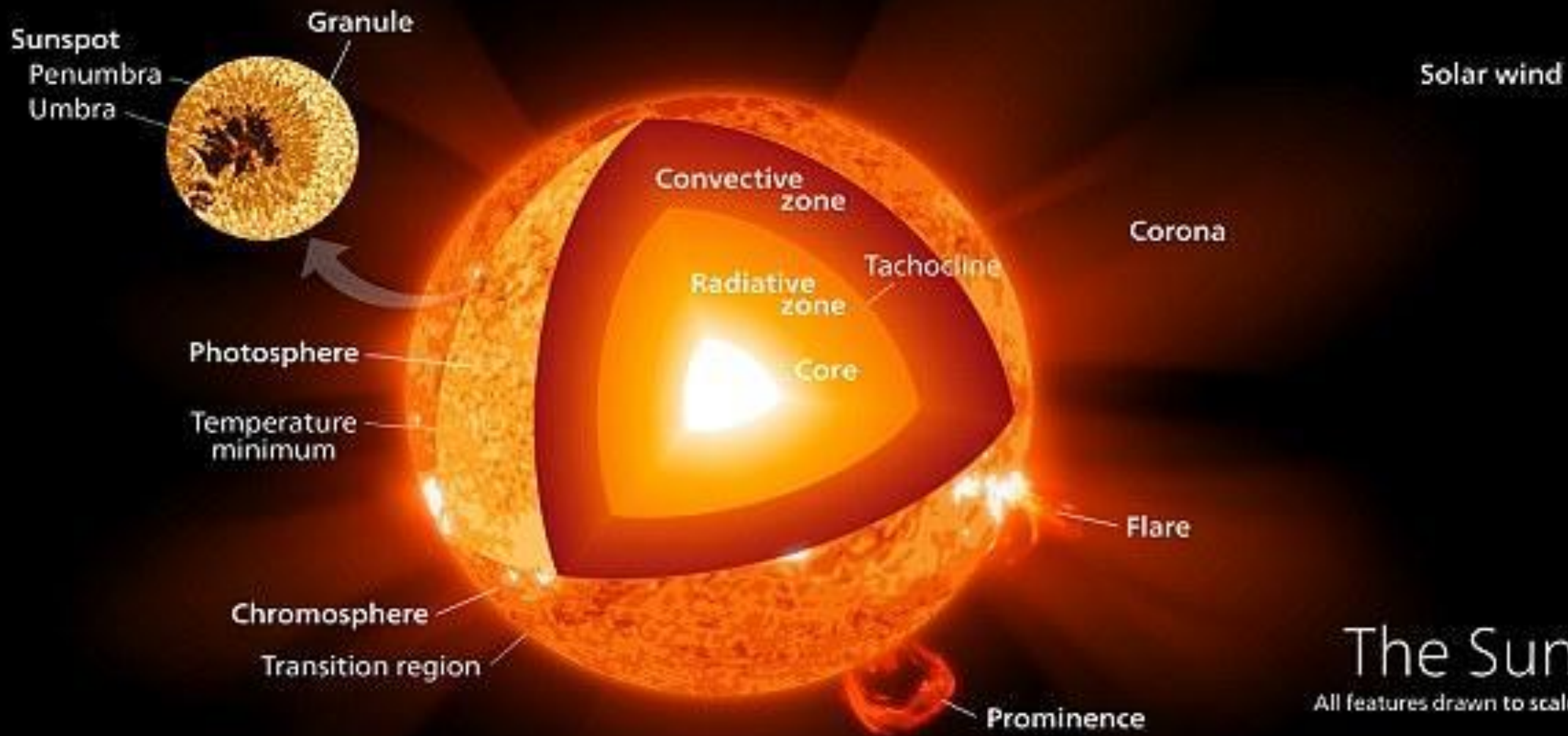
Magnetometers will measure electric and magnetic fields, radio emissions and shock waves

Electromagnetic wave antenna measure radio emissions of the sun and solar winds

Thermal shield to protect instruments is 8ft in diameter and made of 4.5 in thick carbon composite

Solar panels power the probe and retract when close to sun







# Probing the sun

New NASA mission aiming to investigate the sun is scheduled for launch in 2018

## Parker Solar Probe

Unmanned aircraft

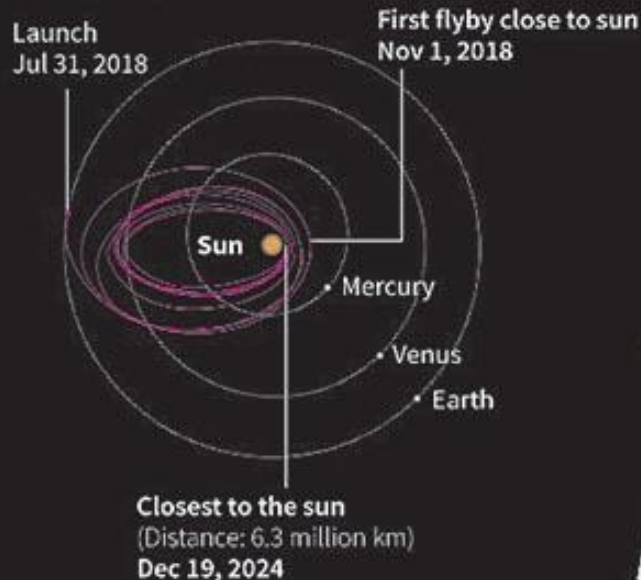
### Mission

- ▶ First to fly directly into the sun's atmosphere, called the corona
- ▶ Trace the flow of energy and understand the heating of corona, explore solar wind acceleration, capture images of solar structures

### Launch window:

July 31 - August 19, 2018  
from Kennedy Space Center, Florida, USA

### 7 flybys of the sun over a 7-year period



### Thermal protection system

- Fitted with 11.5-cm-thick **carbon-composite shield**
- Can withstand nearly 1,400°C around the sun's surface
- Allows instruments to operate at about room temperature

Solar array cooling system  
*Protects solar arrays from incineration as it moves around the sun*

The sun's unstable corona produces

- solar wind
- flares
- explosions of magnetic field and plasma

Antenna

Wide-field imager for solar probe  
*Telescopes to take images of corona and inner heliosphere*

Solar array wings  
*Keep panel power levels and temperatures from fluctuating*

Magnetometers

Speed: Around 700,000 kph  
Length: 3 m  
Weight: 685 kg

- NASA's Parker Solar Probe recently set a historic record by flying closer to the Sun than any other man-made object, reaching speeds of 430,000 mph and withstanding temperatures up to 982°C



## What are the Key Facts Related to Parker Solar Probe?



### About:

- Launched in 2018, a car-sized robotic spacecraft, is named after American solar **astrophysicist Eugene Newman Parker**.
  - This is the **first NASA mission named for a living researcher** and it's humanity's first mission to explore within 3.8 million miles of the Sun's corona.
- The Probe uses an **advanced carbon-composite heat shield** to withstand extreme temperatures.

- Objectives:
- The Parker Solar Probe aims to approach within 6.5 million kilometers of the Sun to study energy flow, solar corona heating.
- It also investigates the source of solar winds, high-speed streams of charged particles that affect space weather.





- 
- To investigate the Sun's corona, and understand why it is hotter than the Sun's surface, a long-standing mystery in astrophysics.
  - To determine the structure and dynamics of the plasma and magnetic fields at the sources of the solar wind.
  - To explore mechanisms that accelerate and transport energetic particles.
- 

- Aditya-L1 Mission
- The Aditya-L1 mission is India's solar observatory at Lagrange Point L1, enabling continuous observation of the Sun's chromospheric and coronal dynamics.
- The spacecraft will be positioned in a halo orbit around Lagrange Point 1 (L1) of the Sun-Earth system, approximately 1.5 million km from Earth.



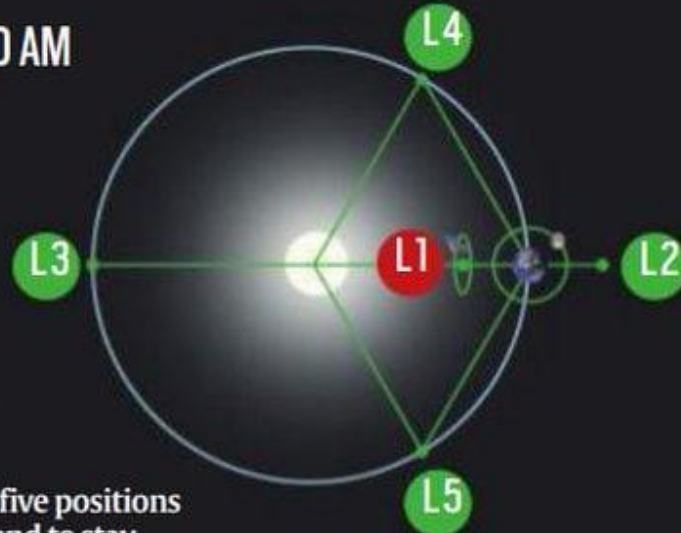
# ADITYA-L1 SOLAR MISSION

India's first space-based observatory-class mission to unlock the mysteries of the Sun

**LAUNCH : SEPT 2, 11.50 AM**

## DISTANCE

1.5-mn km from Earth, about 4 times farther than the Moon. Total travel time from launch to L1: about 4 months



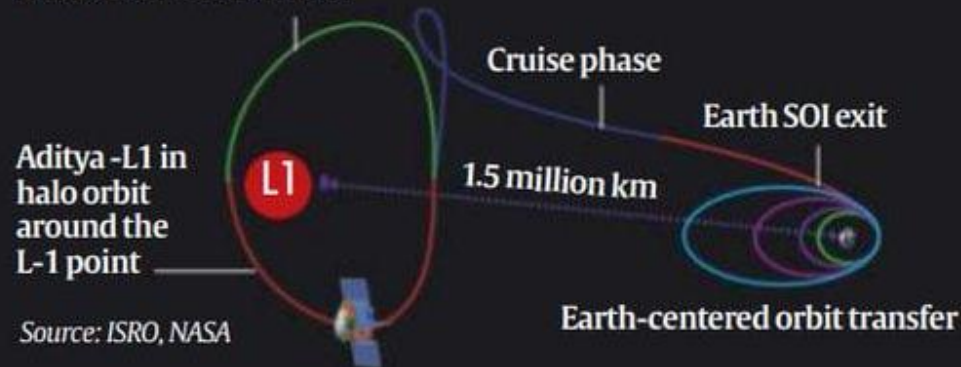
## DESTINATION

Lagrange Point (L1), one of five positions where objects, once sent, tend to stay put. At Lagrange Points, gravitational pull of two large masses precisely equals the centripetal force required for a small object to move with them. L1 point affords uninterrupted view of Sun; is currently home to the 'SOHO' satellite

## ROUTE

After exiting Earth's gravitational Sphere of Influence (SOI), spacecraft will enter cruise phase; will subsequently be injected into a large halo orbit around L1

## Halo orbit insertion in L1



## SPACECRAFT

The spacecraft, which will be launched on a PSLV XL rocket, will carry seven payloads to observe the photosphere, chromosphere, and outermost layers of the Sun (corona) using electromagnetic and particle and magnetic field detectors

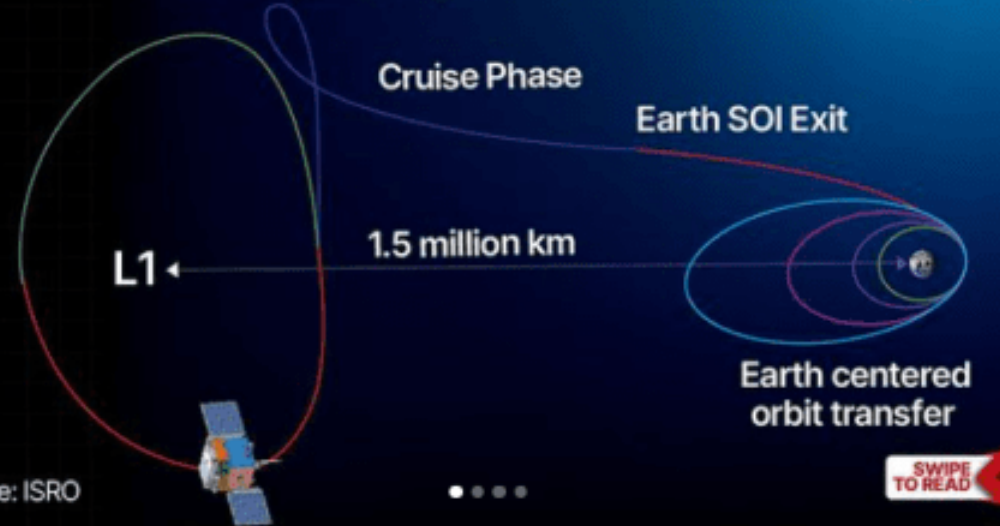


# ISRO's mission to the sun

**Aditya-L1 Mission:**  
The launch of Aditya-L1, the first space-based Indian observatory to study the Sun



## Halo orbit insertion in L1



Source: ISRO





- **The spacecraft will carry seven payloads to observe the photosphere, chromosphere, and the outermost layers of the Sun (the corona) using electromagnetic and particle detectors.**

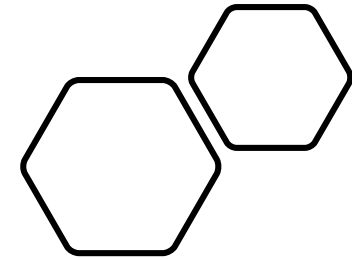


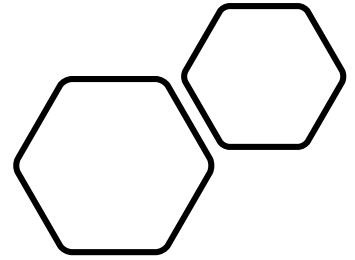


# A Tale of Two Realities in Education



**Students trek barefoot on a raw road to school in Kidagari, AP**






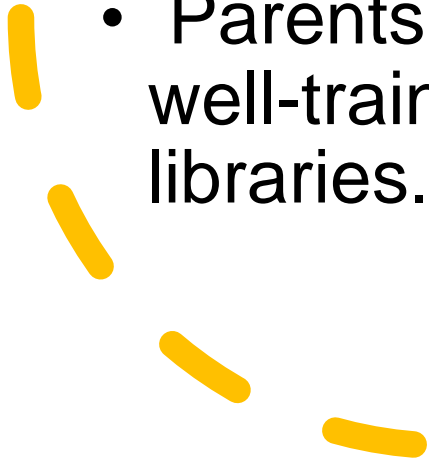








The lack of road connectivity forces children of Kidagari, an interior tribal village in Andhra Pradesh, to trek across thick forests infested with poisonous snakes for 3 km every day to reach their school. While this danger does not seem to dwindle the children's resolve to pursue education, the physical strain and sheer number of hours wasted in the journey to and from the school every day, affects their performance in academics, say teachers.

- 
- In India's urban centres, education thrives with modern conveniences.
  - Children board brightly painted school buses to air-conditioned classrooms, equipped with digital tools and nurturing environments.
  - Parents invest heavily, ensuring holistic development through well-trained teachers, extracurricular activities, and well-stocked libraries.
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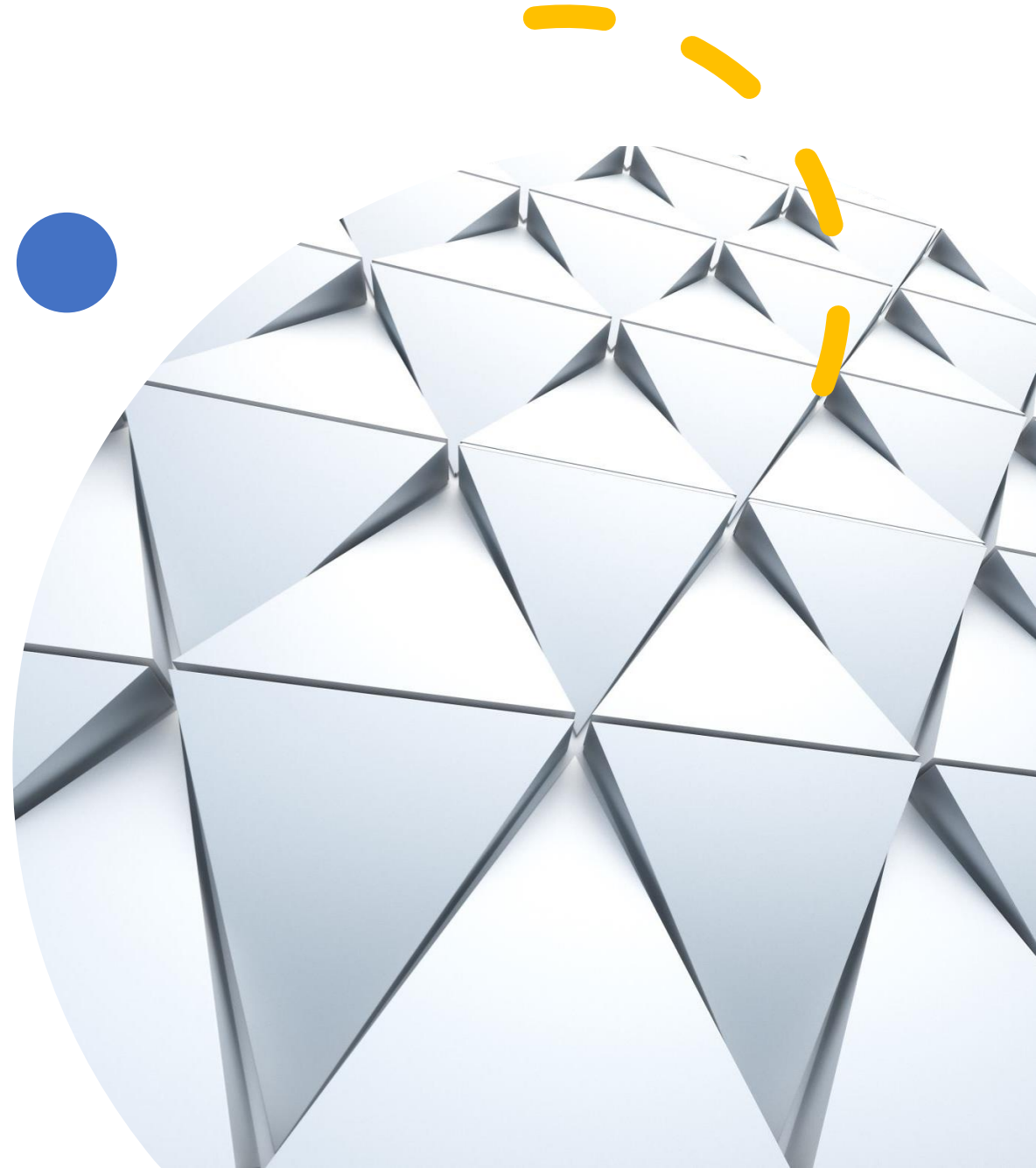
In stark contrast, **Kidagari, a remote tribal village** in Andhra Pradesh's Alluri Sitharama Raju district, presents a daily struggle for education.

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Eight-year-old Meghana and her peers trek 3 kilometres barefoot through dense, snake-infested forests, braving knee-deep streams and treacherous terrain.

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Parents often accompany their children, wary of the dangers along the isolated path.







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- Without basic infrastructure, some schools operate under trees or temporary sheds during rains.
  - Teachers minimize homework and reduce book loads to ease the burden on these children, who battle physical and psychological hurdles just to reach school.
  - Yet, the resilience of Kidagari's children is inspiring.
- 

Dr. Pushpak  
Bhattacharyya  
Committee



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- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has constituted an eight-member committee to develop a framework for the ethical and responsible adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the financial sector.
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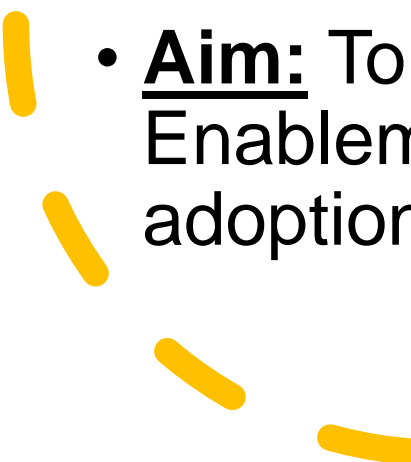


- **About Dr. Pushpak Bhattacharyya Committee:**

- **Established by:** Reserve Bank of India (RBI).



- **Total Members:** 8.

- Chaired by Dr. Pushpak Bhattacharyya, a Professor at IIT Bombay.



- **Aim:** To create a Framework for Responsible and Ethical Enablement of AI (FREE-AI) in the financial sector to guide AI adoption ethically and securely.



- 
- **Need:**
  - **Global and Domestic AI Assessment:** Review AI adoption trends in financial services both globally and in India.
  - **Risk Mitigation:** Identify risks associated with AI in finance and recommend evaluation, mitigation, and monitoring strategies.
  - **Compliance:** Propose compliance requirements for financial entities like banks, NBFCs, fintech firms, and payment system operators.
  - **Governance:** Recommend a governance framework for ethical AI use in the Indian financial sector.
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# Word of the day

## **lynchpin:**

a central cohesive source of support and stability

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**Synonyms:** anchor, backbone, keystone, mainstay

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**Usage:** *Teachers are the lynchpin of the education system.*

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**Pronunciation:** [newsth.live/lynchpinpro](http://newsth.live/lynchpinpro)

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**International Phonetic Alphabet:** /ˈlɪntʃpɪn/

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A blurred photograph of a modern office interior. In the background, several people are seated around a long wooden table, engaged in a meeting. The scene is brightly lit by large windows, creating a soft, out-of-focus atmosphere. The text "Top 10 MCQ from the session for every exam" is overlaid in the center in a white, sans-serif font.

Top 10 MCQ from the session for  
every exam

- What is the name of the Government of India's flagship deep ocean mission?

भारत सरकार के प्रमुख गहरे महासागर मिशन का नाम क्या है?

- **A. Matsya6000 / मत्स्य6000**
- B. Samudrayaan Mission / समुद्रयान मिशन**
- C. Deep Sea Exploration / गहरे समुद्र की खोज**
- D. Ocean Odyssey / महासागर ओडिसी**



- What material is used to construct the pressure sphere of Matsya6000?  
मत्स्य6000 के प्रेशर स्फीयर का निर्माण किस सामग्री से किया गया है?
- **A. Aluminum Alloy / एल्युमिनियम मिश्र धातु**
- **B. Titanium Alloy / टाइटेनियम मिश्र धातु**
- **C. Stainless Steel / स्टेनलेस स्टील**
- **D. Carbon Fiber / कार्बन फाइबर**

- What is the maximum depth Matsya6000 can reach?  
मत्स्य6000 अधिकतम कितनी गहराई तक जा सकता है?
- **A. 2,000 meters / 2,000 मीटर**
- **B. 4,000 meters / 4,000 मीटर**
- **C. 6,000 meters / 6,000 मीटर**
- **D. 8,000 meters / 8,000 मीटर**

- What is the key objective of NASA's Parker Solar Probe mission?  
नासा के पार्कर सोलर प्रोब मिशन का मुख्य उद्देश्य क्या है?
- **A. To explore Mars / मंगल की खोज करना**
- **B. To study the Sun's corona / सूर्य के कोरोना का अध्ययन करना**
- **C. To monitor asteroids / क्षुद्रग्रहों की निगरानी करना**
- **D. To map the Moon / चंद्रमा का मानचित्रण करना**

- What is the primary focus of the Aditya-L1 mission by ISRO?  
इसरो के आदित्य-एल1 मिशन का प्राथमिक उद्देश्य क्या है?
- **A. Observing the Moon / चंद्रमा का अवलोकन करना**
- **B. Studying the Sun / सूर्य का अध्ययन करना**
- **C. Exploring Jupiter / बृहस्पति की खोज करना**
- **D. Monitoring Earth's atmosphere / पृथ्वी के वायुमंडल की निगरानी करना**



- Who is the chairperson of the RBI's committee on ethical AI adoption in the financial sector?  
वित्तीय क्षेत्र में नैतिक एआई अपनाने पर आरबीआई समिति के अध्यक्ष कौन हैं?
- **A. Dr. C.N.R. Rao / डॉ. सी.एन.आर. राव**
- **B. Dr. Pushpak Bhattacharyya / डॉ. पुष्पक भट्टाचार्य**
- **C. Dr. Raghuram Rajan / डॉ. रघुराम राजन**
- **D. Dr. Arvind Subramanian / डॉ. अरविंद सुब्रमणियन**

- What was the primary reason for the Internet freedom decline globally in 2023?

2023 में वैश्विक स्तर पर इंटरनेट स्वतंत्रता में गिरावट का मुख्य कारण क्या था?

- **A. Increase in cyberattacks / साइबर हमलों में वृद्धि**
- **B. Government shutdowns and information control / सरकारी शटडाउन और सूचना नियंत्रण**
- **C. Rise in online scams / ऑनलाइन धोखाधड़ी में वृद्धि**
- **D. Lack of infrastructure / बुनियादी ढांचे की कमी**

- Which chess player won the 2024 Women's World Rapid Chess Championship?

2024 महिला विश्व रैपिड शतरंज चैंपियनशिप किसने जीती?

- **A. Koneru Humpy / कोनेरु हम्पी**
- B. Dronavalli Harika / द्रोणवल्ली हरिका**
- C. Irene Sukandar / आइरीन सुकंदर**
- D. Anna Muzychuk / अन्ना मुझिचुक**

- What record was achieved by NASA's Parker Solar Probe in 2024?  
2024 में नासा के पार्कर सोलर प्रोब ने कौन सा रिकॉर्ड बनाया?
- **A. Fastest man-made object / सबसे तेज़ मानव निर्मित वस्तु**
- **B. First spacecraft to orbit Jupiter / बृहस्पति की कक्षा में पहला अंतरिक्ष यान**
- **C. First object to reach Mars / मंगल तक पहुंचने वाली पहली वस्तु**
- **D. Longest space mission / सबसे लंबा अंतरिक्ष मिशन**



# Fun Fact

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**Myth 17:** You can see the Great Wall of China from space.

- **Truth:** The Great Wall is difficult to see from space with the naked eye because it blends with its surroundings. However, you can see large cities and other artificial lights.



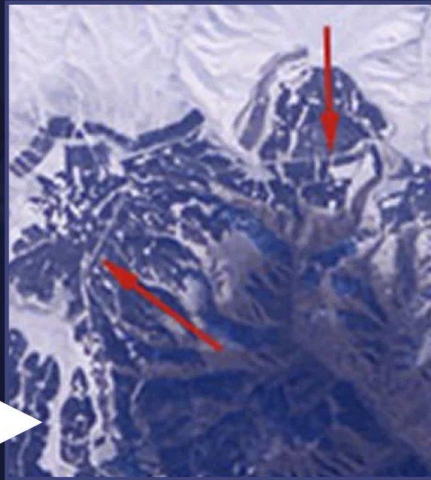
# GREAT WALL OF CHINA

# VISIBLE FROM SPACE?

For more than 300 years, many have spread the false story that China's engineering marvel is visible from the moon because of its vastness. However, they failed to take into account the thickness of the wall as seen from space.

According to those who have been to space, **the Great Wall of China is not visible with the naked eye.** The walls are hardly visible even with the aid of cameras, according to astronauts aboard the International Space Station.

An image **supposedly showing the Great Wall of China from space**, captured by US astronaut Leroy Chiao from the International Space Station. Credit: NASA



**“The Earth looked very beautiful from space, but I did not see our Great Wall.”**

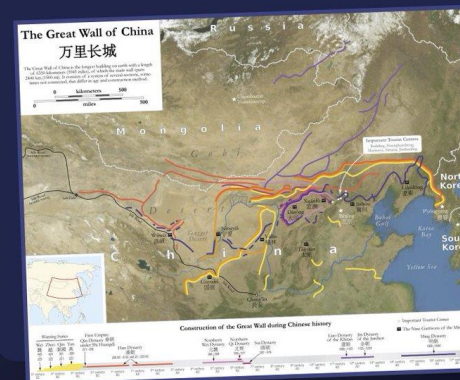
- Yang Liwei, China's First Astronaut (2003)



## The Great Wall of China


The Great Wall of China is a nearly 21,200-km system of walls across northeastern China that was successively built from the 7th century BC to 15th century AD.

The walls were built as a defense against the various groups that might invade ancient China and to control trade transport and travel along the Silk Road.







A group of people are clapping in a dimly lit room. The focus is on the hands and forearms of several individuals, with some wearing suits. The background is blurred, showing more people and a window. An orange horizontal bar is located in the top left corner.

Thank you  
guys.

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