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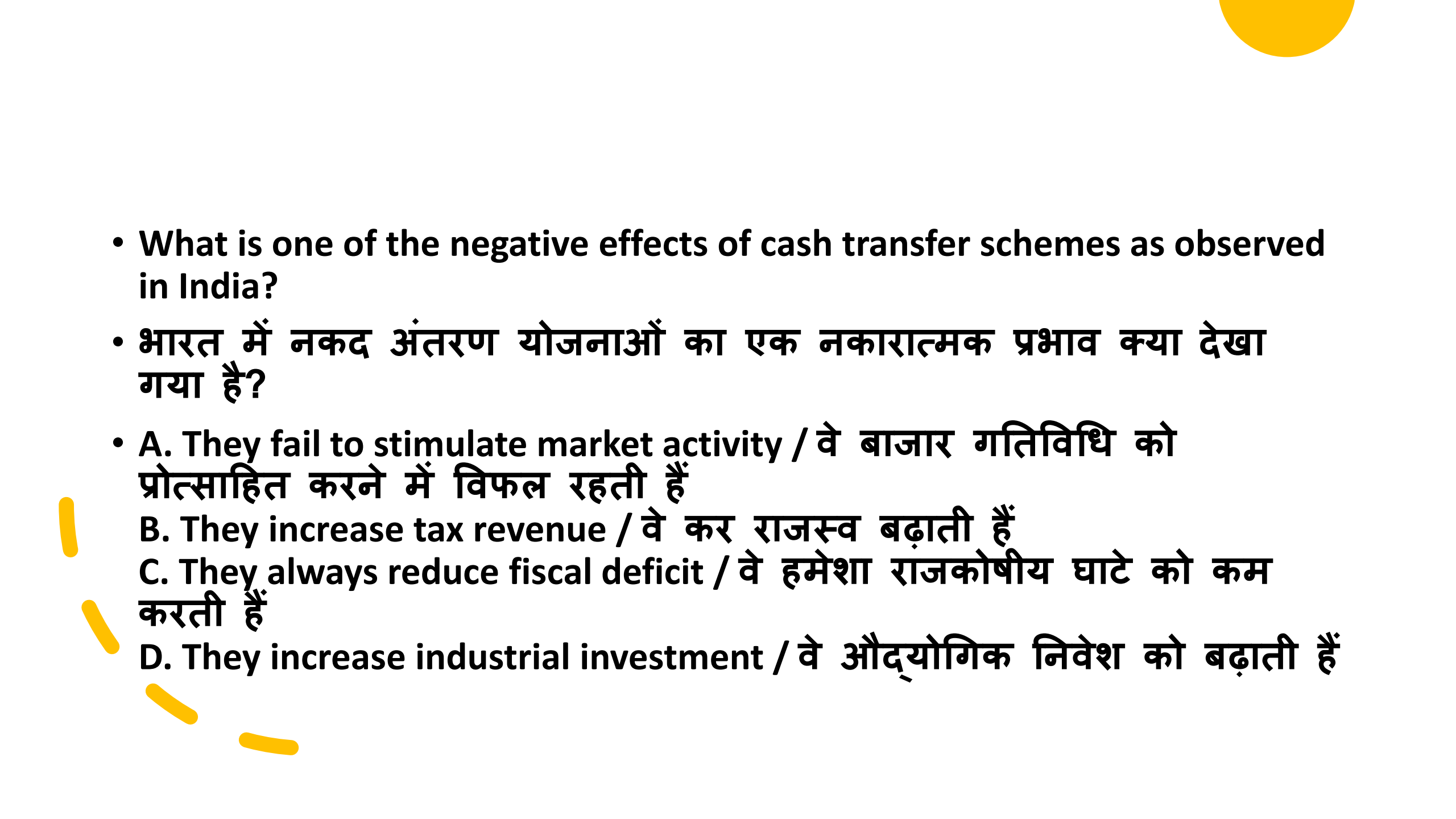



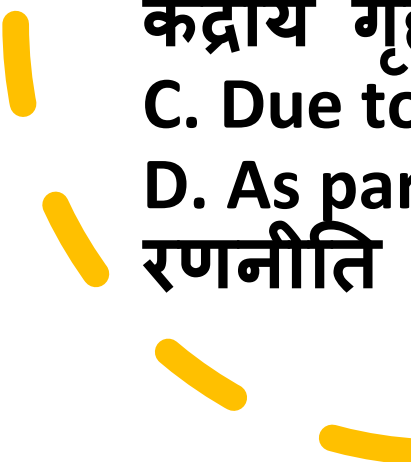
10 MCQ QUIZ

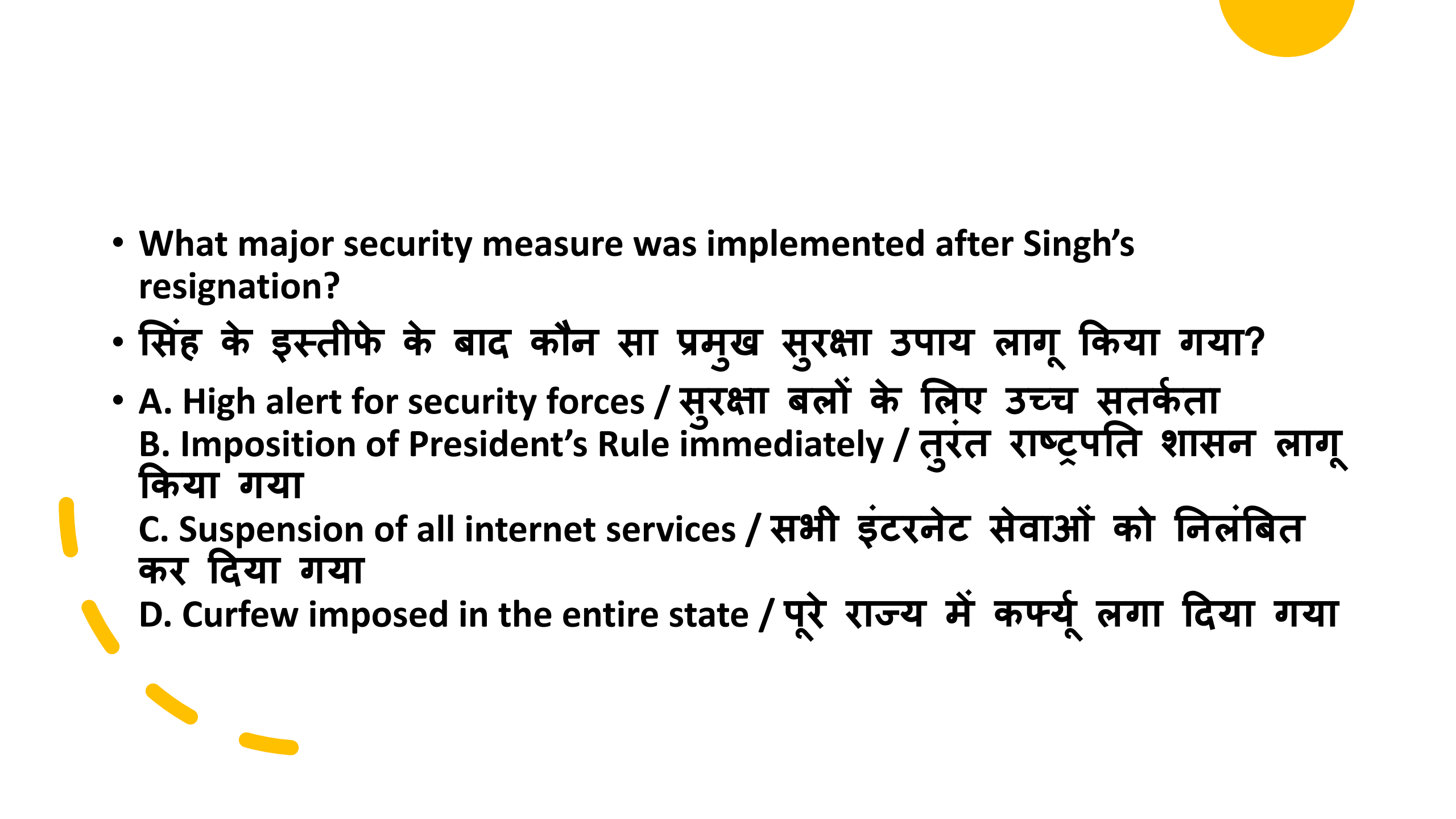


Top 10 MCQ from the session

- What is the key challenge in distinguishing between welfare and freebies in politics?
- राजनीति में कल्याणकारी योजनाओं और मुफ्त योजनाओं के बीच अंतर करने में मुख्य चुनौती क्या है?
- A. No clear definition of freebies / मुफ्त योजनाओं की कोई स्पष्ट परिभाषा नहीं है
- B. Welfare schemes always lead to economic growth / कल्याणकारी योजनाएँ हमेशा आर्थिक वृद्धि लाती हैं
- C. Freebies do not affect electoral outcomes / मुफ्त योजनाएँ चुनावी परिणामों को प्रभावित नहीं करतीं
- D. All freebies are illegal under Indian law / सभी मुफ्त योजनाएँ भारतीय कानून के तहत अवैध हैं

- 
- What is one of the negative effects of cash transfer schemes as observed in India?
 - भारत में नकद अंतरण योजनाओं का एक नकारात्मक प्रभाव क्या देखा गया है?
 - A. They fail to stimulate market activity / वे बाजार गतिविधि को प्रोत्साहित करने में विफल रहती हैं
 - B. They increase tax revenue / वे कर राजस्व बढ़ाती हैं
 - C. They always reduce fiscal deficit / वे हमेशा राजकोषीय घाटे को कम करती हैं
 - D. They increase industrial investment / वे औद्योगिक निवेश को बढ़ाती हैं

- 
- Why did Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh resign?
 - मणिपुर के मुख्यमंत्री एन. बीरेन सिंह ने इस्तीफा क्यों दिया?
 - A. Due to pressure from opposition parties / विपक्षी दलों के दबाव के कारण
 - B. Following a meeting with Union Home Minister Amit Shah / केंद्रीय गृह मंत्री अमित शाह के साथ बैठक के बाद
 - C. Due to a Supreme Court order / सुप्रीम कोर्ट के आदेश के कारण
 - D. As part of an election campaign strategy / चुनाव अभियान रणनीति के रूप में
- 


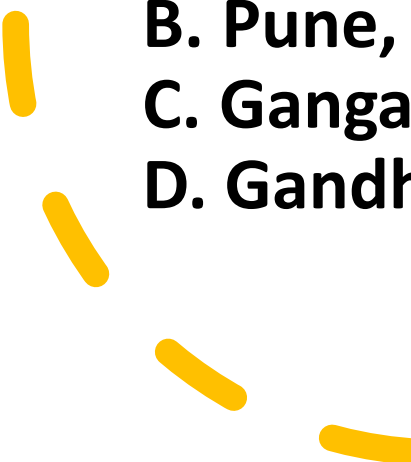
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- What major security measure was implemented after Singh's resignation?
 - सिंह के इस्तीफे के बाद कौन सा प्रमुख सुरक्षा उपाय लागू किया गया?
 - A. High alert for security forces / सुरक्षा बलों के लिए उच्च सतर्कता
B. Imposition of President's Rule immediately / तुरंत राष्ट्रपति शासन लागू किया गया
C. Suspension of all internet services / सभी इंटरनेट सेवाओं को निलंबित कर दिया गया
D. Curfew imposed in the entire state / पूरे राज्य में कर्फ्यू लगा दिया गया

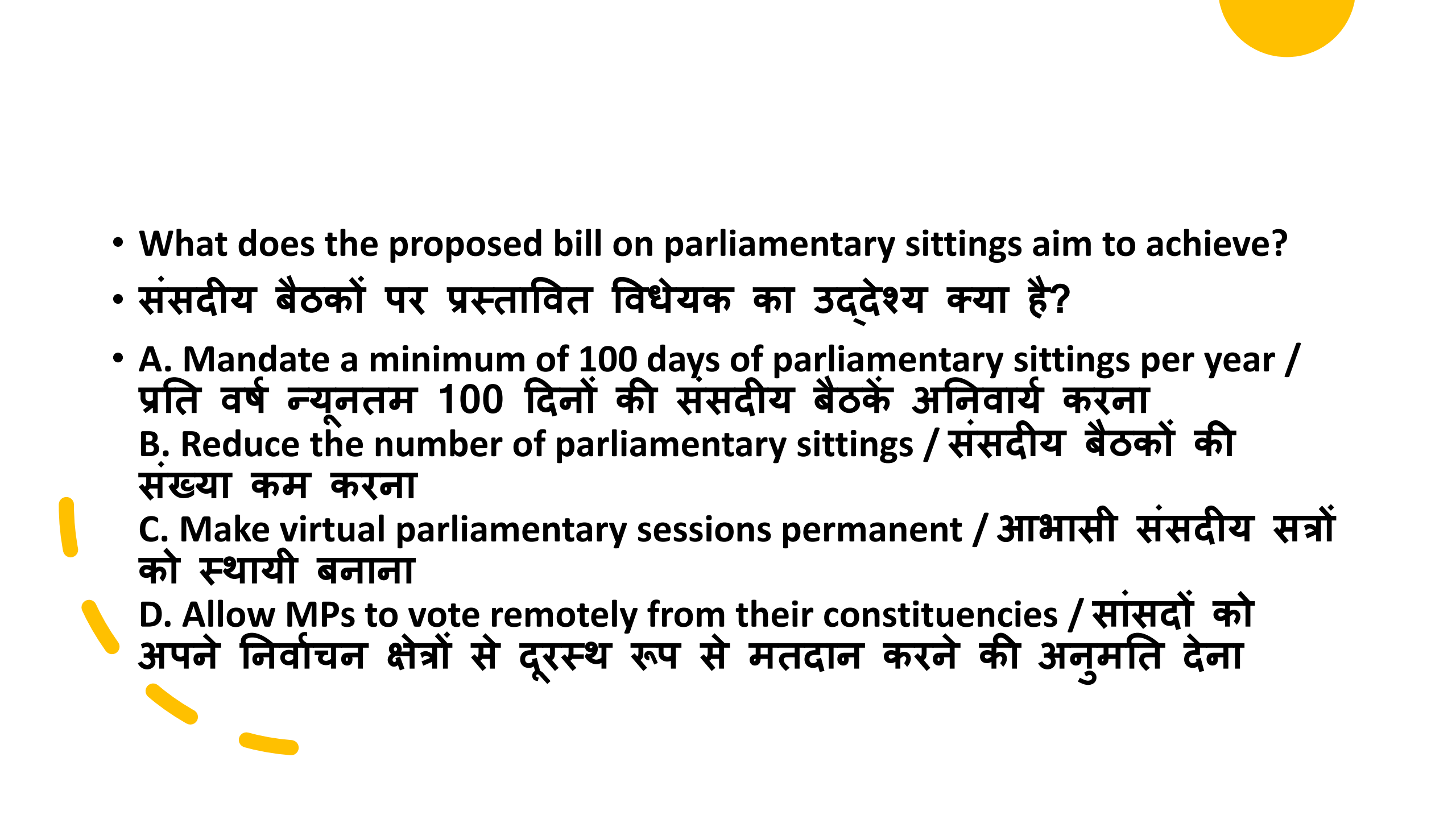
- Which major U.S. fighter jets will be showcased at Aero India 2025?
- एयरो इंडिया 2025 में कौन से प्रमुख अमेरिकी लड़ाकू विमान प्रदर्शित किए जाएंगे?
- A. F-35, KC-135 Stratotanker, B-1 Bomber, F-16 / एफ-35, केसी-135 स्ट्रेटोटैंकर, बी-1 बॉम्बर, एफ-16
- B. Rafale, Su-30MKI, Tejas, F-22 / राफेल, सु-30एमकेआई, तेजस, एफ-22
- C. C-17, MiG-29, Mirage-2000, Apache / सी-17, मिग-29, मिराज-2000, अपाचे
- D. F-22, F-35, Su-57, J-20 / एफ-22, एफ-35, सु-57, जे-20

- What was the significance of the newly detected radio jet from a quasar?
- एक क्वासर से नए खोजे गए रेडियो जेट का महत्व क्या था?
- A. It was the largest ever observed from an early universe quasar / यह प्रारंभिक ब्रह्मांड के क्वासर से अब तक का सबसे बड़ा देखा गया था
- B. It proved the existence of new galaxies / इसने नई आकाशगंगाओं के अस्तित्व को साबित किया
- C. It confirmed the presence of water in space / इसने अंतरिक्ष में पानी की उपस्थिति की पुष्टि की
- D. It showed that quasars do not emit radiation / इसने दिखाया कि क्वासर विकिरण उत्सर्जित नहीं करते

- What constitutional right was reaffirmed by the Supreme Court regarding arrests?
- सप्रीम कोर्ट ने गिरफ्तारियों के संबंध में किस संवैधानिक अधिकार की पुष्टि की?
- A. Right to be informed of the grounds of arrest / गिरफ्तारी के कारणों की सूचना पाने का अधिकार
- B. Right to remain silent during questioning / पूछताछ के दौरान चुप रहने का अधिकार
- C. Right to free legal aid / मुफ्त कानूनी सहायता का अधिकार
- D. Right to refuse police custody / पुलिस हिरासत से इनकार करने का अधिकार

- What is the role of the National Commission for Safai Karamcharis (NCSK)?
- राष्ट्रीय सफाई कर्मचारी आयोग (NCSK) की भूमिका क्या है?
- A. Monitoring working conditions of sanitation workers / सफाई कर्मचारियों की कार्य स्थितियों की निगरानी करना
- B. Conducting cleanliness awareness campaigns / स्वच्छता जागरूकता अभियान चलाना
- C. Providing financial aid to all municipal workers / सभी नगरपालिका कर्मचारियों को वित्तीय सहायता प्रदान करना
- D. Implementing Swachh Bharat Abhiyan policies / स्वच्छ भारत अभियान की नीतियों को लागू करना

- 
- Where was India's largest solar cell manufacturing unit recently inaugurated?
 - भारत की सबसे बड़ी सौर सेल निर्माण इकाई हाल ही में कहाँ उद्घाटित की गई?
 - A. Noida, Uttar Pradesh / नोएडा, उत्तर प्रदेश
 - B. Pune, Maharashtra / पुणे, महाराष्ट्र
 - C. Gangaikondan, Tamil Nadu / गंगईकोंडन, तमिलनाडु
 - D. Gandhinagar, Gujarat / गांधीनगर, गुजरात
- 

- 
- What does the proposed bill on parliamentary sittings aim to achieve?
 - संसदीय बैठकों पर प्रस्तावित विधेयक का उद्देश्य क्या है?
 - A. Mandate a minimum of 100 days of parliamentary sittings per year / प्रति वर्ष न्यूनतम 100 दिनों की संसदीय बैठकें अनिवार्य करना
 - B. Reduce the number of parliamentary sittings / संसदीय बैठकों की संख्या कम करना
 - C. Make virtual parliamentary sessions permanent / आभासी संसदीय सत्रों को स्थायी बनाना
 - D. Allow MPs to vote remotely from their constituencies / सांसदों को अपने निर्वाचन क्षेत्रों से दूरस्थ रूप से मतदान करने की अनुमति देना

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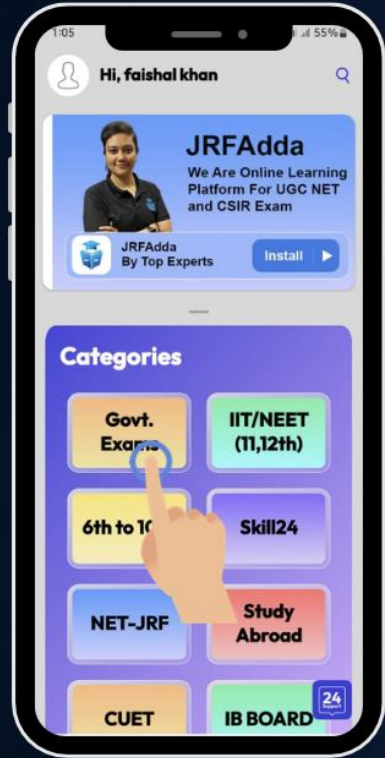
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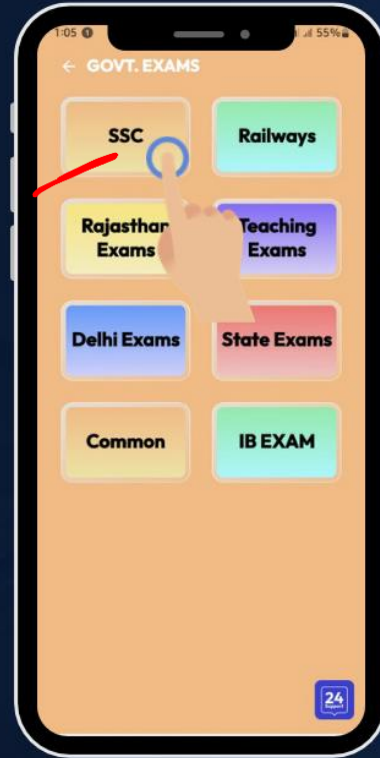
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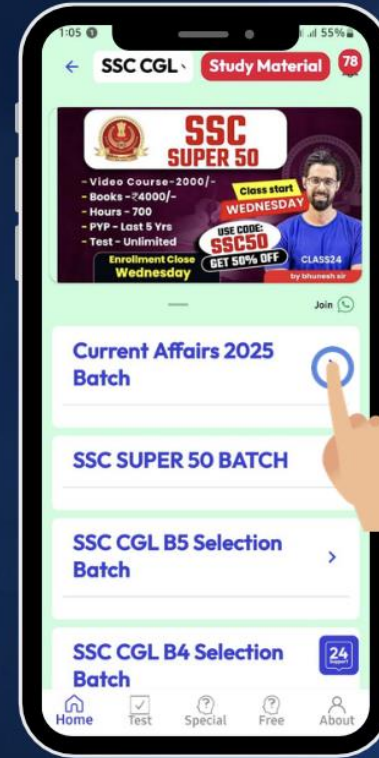
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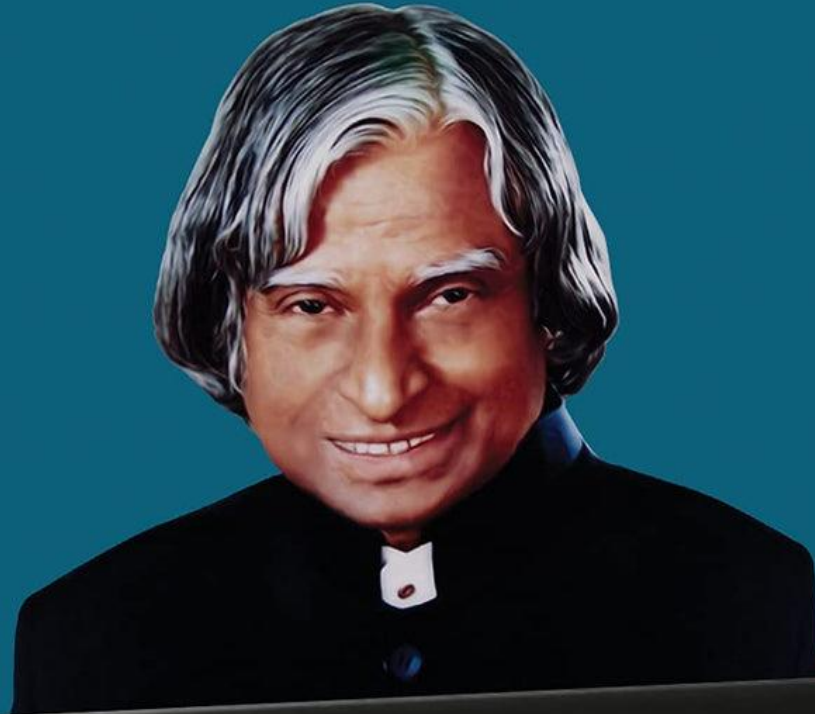


Step 4



Difficulties in your life do not
come to destroy you, but to help
you realize your hidden potential
and power, let difficulties know
that you too are difficult.

◆ ——— *A. P. J. Abdul Kalam* ——— ◆



BLAJAPUR ENCOUNTER
Key Maoist leader was among 31 killed
NEWS > PAGE 6

WINDOW FOR TALKS
China lays down terms for return of Dalai Lama
WORLD > PAGE 14

MULTIPLE AGENDA
PM arrives in France, to co-chair AI summit
NEWS > PAGE 5

PRIVACY QUESTIONED
The problem of regulating live-in relationships
UCC gives state control over personal choices
OPINION > PAGE 9

SECRET OF SUCCESS
Domestic game time has helped: Jadeja
SPORT > PAGE 16

INSIDE

Hamis halts swap of hostages over Israeli violation

JERUSALEM
Hamis on Monday announced it would stop releasing Israeli hostages until further notice over what the Palestinian militant group said were Israeli violations of the ceasefire agreement. The announcement comes amid growing doubts over an already fragile ceasefire. > PAGE 14

Budget benefits the rich too, says Chidambaram

NEW DELHI
Initiating the debate on the Union Budget in the Rajya Sabha on Monday, senior Congress MP P. Chidambaram said the income tax proposals in the Budget benefited not just the middle class but also the rich and the richest in the world. > PAGE 7

Will return to power in 2026, says Mamata

KOLKATA
West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday said that she would continue to power with a two-thirds majority after the Assembly polls in 2026. The polls were made at a meeting with her MLAs at the start of the Budget Session of the West Bengal Assembly. > PAGE 2

BJP scouting for new CM in Manipur after Biren's exit

Three Ministers, Speaker among the contenders for the top spot; State Cong. says it will oppose move to impose President's Rule or to place the Assembly under suspended animation, calls for 'democratically elected government' to safeguard State

Rahul Karmakar
DUWAHATI
A day after Nongthombam Biren Singh resigned as the Chief Minister of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) began scouting for his successor. Sambit Patra, in-charge of the BJP in Manipur, led separate closed-door meetings with each of the party's MLAs — barring seven belonging to the Kuki-Zo community — in the State's capital Imphal on Monday. He also met the MLAs of the Naga People's Front, an ally of the BJP, Manipur's security advisor Kuldeep Singh, and the Hill Areas Committee chairperson Dingranglung Gungthang. Neither Mr. Patra nor the MLAs present at the one-to-one meeting.

"To bring back peace"
"Our discussion was focused on reconciliation and bringing back peace in

Manipur," Minister for Municipal Administration, Housing and Urban Development Yumnam Khemchand told presspersons, insisting that selecting the new Chief Minister was the prerogative of the party's central leadership. "We accepted the decision (Mr. Singh's resignation) taken by our high command. We will abide by any decision that follows," he said, when asked about the likely candidates for the Chief Minister's post. Mr. Khemchand is said to be one of the contenders for the Chief Minister's job. The others are Speaker Thokchom Satyabrata, Public Works Department Minister Konthoujam Gendras, Education Minister Thousmajam Basantakumar, and MLA Thokchom Radheyshyam — the last two are former Indian Police Service (IPS) officers. "Our discussion was focused on reconciliation and bringing back peace in

What next?
BJP has initiated the process to elect a new Chief Minister after N. Biren Singh resigned as Manipur Chief Minister.

State BJP in-charge Sambit Patra holds separate meetings with party's MLAs, barring seven Kuki-Zo members.

He has also met MLAs of Naga People's Front and State security advisor Kuldeep Singh.

Manipur Congress says it would oppose any move to impose President's Rule in the State.

Security has been tightened in Imphal, especially in sensitive areas such as Sangjehong, Sangmael, and Kangla Gate.

'Govt. was forced to remove Biren'
NEW DELHI
Congress MP A. Binod Kojiam on Monday said that Biren Singh's removal was "not an act of conscience, but because the Centre was compelled to remove him." > PAGE 3

'Biren kept State's future in mind'
GUWAHATI
A. Sharda Devi, Manipur's BJP unit chief, claimed Biren Singh resigned keeping the State's future in mind after requesting the Centre to safeguard the integrity of Manipur. > PAGE 3

pose any move to impose President's Rule in Manipur or to place the Assembly under suspended

animation. "We want a democratically elected government in the larger interest of safeguarding democracy in the State," party president Keishan Meghachandra said. A Manipur BJP leader, declining to be named, said the party would take the peace-building process forward. "The State needs to reborn for the sake of development and security. The hunt is for someone acceptable to all communities," he said. There are unconfirmed reports that the BJP's central leadership would meet the Kuki-Zo MLAs, including the BJP's seven, in Delhi, before announcing the name of Mr. Singh's successor. Speculation over the imposition of the President's Rule or protests against Mr. Singh's resignation had the authorities beef up security across the Imphal Valley, specifically the State capital. The police said the situation was being monitored closely.

Aero India is Kumbh of research, says Rajnath

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh described Aero India as "the Kumbh of research", as the biennial air show got under way at the Air Force Station in Bengaluru, on Monday.

Hemanth C.S.
BENGALURU
Defence Minister Rajnath Singh described Aero India as "the Kumbh of research", as the biennial air show got under way at the Air Force Station in Bengaluru, on Monday. Speaking at the inaugural ceremony of the show's 15th edition, Mr. Singh said, "While Maha Kumbh is the Kumbh of introspection, Aero India is the Kumbh of research. While the Maha Kumbh focuses on the spiritual and religious aspects, Aero India centres on external strength. While the Maha Kumbh showcases the culture of India, Aero India will display the power of India." He added that this edition of Asia's biggest aerospace and defence exhibition will showcase, over the next five days, India's aerial prowess and indigenous cutting-edge innovations alongside state-of-the-art products of global aerospace companies.

Innovations galore
The Defence Minister said that between the last edition of the Aero India show, India had come up with many high-tech products such as the Astra Missile, New Generation Akash Missile, Autonomous Underwater Vehicle, Unmanned Surface Vessel, and the Pinaka Guided Rocket, which were being manufactured within the country.



Holding formation: The Surya Kiran Aerobatic Team of the Indian Air Force perform in their iconic red-and-white Hawk Mk-132 jets, during the inauguration of Aero India 2025 at the Yelahanka Air Force Station, in Bengaluru on Monday. > SURAJ KUMAR

Why were you silent about Bills, SC asks T.N. Governor

Krishnan Rajasekar
NEW DELHI
The Supreme Court on Monday questioned the long "silence" of the Tamil Nadu Government, spanning months and years, to the State's Bills, culminating in his withholding of consent and the reference of at least 10 Bills to the President for consideration. Addressing Attorney-General K.V. Venkataramani, who appeared for Governor K.V. Ravi, Justice J.B. Pardiwala said the Governor definitely had "some reasons in mind" when he withheld consent to the Bills. "You had your reasons for not assent by the State government. Yet, the Governor did not communicate what was irking him about the proposed laws. So, he goes quiet for one or two years... He withholds consent... Then suddenly he says I have referred them to the President," observed Justice Pardiwala, accompanied by Justice R. Mahadevan on the Bench. Mr. Venkataramani said the Governor had earlier communicated to the State his objections regarding the constitution of the search-committee for the appointment of Vice-Chancellors of State universities. The Governor, who was asked to include the State University Grants Commission Chairperson's nomination in the search-committee. The State Bills, passed subsequently, sought to remove the Governor, who was an ex-officio Chancellor of these universities, from the Vice-Chancellor appointment process. "The judge, turning Mr. Venkataramani's submission that the Governor had earlier raised objections about the Vice-Chancellors' appointment process on his behalf said that then the Assembly's reconsideration of the 10 Bills at a special sitting on November 18, 2023, would not have been just an empty formality. The Assembly would have known what his objections were," Justice Pardiwala remarked. The court reserved the case for judgment. Senior Advocate A.M. Singhvi, representing the Tamil Nadu government and senior advocates Rakesh Dwivedi and P. Willingdani, "Good governance required the Governor to communicate reasons for withholding consent." Mr. Venkataramani asked whether if the Governor had acted outside his jurisdiction by withholding assent and referring the Bills to the President after finding them unconstitutional. Mr. Singhvi said that once the Governor withholds consent and returns the Bills, with or without valid reasons, it was within the powers of the State Legislature to reconsider the Bills under the first proviso of Article 200 of the Constitution. In this case, the Tamil Nadu Assembly re-examined the Bills and sent them again to the Governor for assent.

Trump to impose 25% tariffs on steel, aluminium imports

U.S. imports most of its aluminium and steel from Canada, China and Mexico. Tables show imports in \$ billion (2019-2023)

Aluminium and articles made of them		Iron & steel and articles made of them	
Country	Imports in \$ billion	Country	Imports in \$ billion
1. Canada	\$7.3bn	1. China	\$16.3bn
2. China	\$18.5bn	2. Canada	\$71.4bn
3. Mexico	\$9.6bn	3. Mexico	\$58.4bn
4. India	\$8.9bn	4. India	\$15.6bn
5. India	\$4.5bn	5. India	\$15.6bn

Associated Press
WASHINGTON
President Donald Trump has said the U.S. will impose 25% tariffs on all steel and aluminium imports, including from Canada and Mexico, as well as other import duties later in the week. "Any steel coming into the United States is going to have a 25% tariff," he told presspersons on Sunday. Air Force One as he flew from Florida to New Orleans to attend the Super Bowl. When asked about aluminium, he responded, "aluminium will be subject to the trade penalties." Mr. Trump also reaffirmed that he would announce "reciprocal tariffs" "probably Tuesday or Wednesday" — meaning that the U.S. would impose import duties on products in cases in which another country has levied duties on U.S. goods. "If they are charging us 130% and we're charging them nothing, it's not going to stay that way," he said. Mr. Trump on Sunday did not offer any details about the steel and aluminium duties, or the reciprocal tariffs. He previously threatened 25% import taxes on all goods from Canada and Mexico, though he paused them for 30 days barely a week ago. At the same time, he proceeded to add 10% duties on imports from China. Mr. Trump's comments are the latest example of his willingness to threaten, and in some cases to impose, import taxes. Tariffs are coming much earlier in his presidency than during his previous four years in the White House, when he prioritised tax cuts and deregulation. Mr. Trump, a Republican, has alternately said he sees import taxes as tools to force concessions on industries such as immigration but also as a source of revenue to help close the government's budget deficit. Mr. Trump said he would also delay the tariffs on the millions of small manufacturers that often fashion firms such as Temu and Shein — until customs officials can figure out ways to impose them. The small packages have previously been exempt from tariffs. Mr. Trump's latest remarks stirred immediate worry from some global trading partners. S. Korea in worry South Korea's acting President, Choi Sang-mun, called a meeting with the country's top foreign policy and trade officials on Monday to examine how Mr. Trump's proposed tariffs on steel and aluminium would affect its industries. The office of Mr. Choi, who also serves as the country's Finance Minister, said officials discussed the potential impact and Seoul's possible responses, but specific details of the meeting were not disclosed. LOWER DUTIES > PAGE 6

Bangladesh arrests 1,300 Hasina loyalists

Agence France-Presse
DHAKA
Bangladeshi police said on Monday more than 1,300 people have been arrested in a sweeping crackdown dubbed "Operation Doy Moru", targeting gangs allegedly connected to the ousted regime of Sheikh Hasina. Jahangir Alam Chowdhury, head of the Interior Ministry in the interim government that took over after Ms. Hasina was ousted in the August 2024 anti-led protests, has vowed the operations will continue "until we uproot the devils".

Trump to impose 25% tariffs on steel, aluminium imports

Metal merchandise

U.S. imports most of its aluminium and steel from Canada, China and Mexico. Tables show imports in \$ billion (2018-2023)



1	Canada	\$57.3bn
2	China	\$18.5bn
3	Mexico	\$9.6bn
4	UAE	\$8.9bn
5	India	\$4.5bn



1	China	\$85.1bn
2	Canada	\$71.4bn
3	Mexico	\$58.4bn
..		
9	India	\$15.6bn

Tariff matrix

The table shows the current tariffs on top U.S. exports to India



Product	Basic customs duty
Crude petroleum	₹1 per metric tonne
Diamond	5%
Coking coal, steam coal	2.75%
Aeroplanes	2.5%*
LNG	2.75%
Gold	6%
Aluminium and scrap	2.50%
Other types of waste, scrap	0.00%
Saturated acrylic hydrocarbons	2.50%
Suspension grade PVC resin	7.50%
Non-industrial diamonds	0.00%
Bleached/semi-bleached coniferous wood	5%

* zero if imported by a scheduled commercial operator

Associated Press

WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump has said the U.S. will impose 25% tariffs on all steel and aluminium imports, including from Canada and Mexico, as well as other import duties later in the week.

“Any steel coming into the United States is going to have a 25% tariff,” he told presspersons on Sunday on Air Force One as he flew from Florida to New Orleans to attend the Super Bowl. When asked about aluminium, he responded, “aluminium, too” will be subject to the trade penalties.

Reciprocal tariffs

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Mr. Trump’s latest remarks stirred immediate worry from some global trading partners.

S. Korea in worry

South Korea’s acting President, Choi Sang-mok, called a meeting with the country’s top foreign policy and trade officials on Monday to examine how Mr. Trump’s proposed tariffs on steel and aluminium would affect its industries.

The office of Mr. Choi, who also serves as the country’s Finance Minister, said officials discussed the potential impact and Seoul’s possible responses, but specific details of the meeting were not disclosed.


LOWER DUTIES

» PAGE 6

- **U.S. President Donald Trump** announced **25% tariffs on steel and aluminium imports** from **Canada, Mexico, and other nations**, citing trade imbalances.

अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति डोनाल्ड ट्रंप ने कनाडा, मैक्सिको और अन्य देशों से स्टील और एल्युमीनियम आयात पर **25% टैरिफ** लगाने की घोषणा की, व्यापार असंतुलन को कारण बताया।

-  **Reciprocal tariffs policy** was also announced to **match import duties levied by other countries**.

 पारस्परिक टैरिफ नीति की भी घोषणा की गई ताकि अन्य देशों द्वारा लगाए गए आयात करों का मुकाबला किया जा सके।

- **Historical Aspects | ऐतिहासिक पहलू**
- **1 Protectionist Policies in U.S. History:**
- **The Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act (1930) imposed high tariffs on over 20,000 imported goods, worsening the Great Depression.**
- **स्मूट-हॉले टैरिफ अधिनियम (1930) ने 20,000 से अधिक आयातित वस्तुओं पर ऊँचे टैरिफ लगाए, जिससे ग्रेट डिप्रेशन और गहरा हुआ।**
- **The U.S. had previously imposed steel tariffs in 2002 under George W. Bush, but it backfired, leading to job losses.**
- **अमेरिका ने 2002 में जॉर्ज डब्ल्यू. बश के कार्यकाल में भी स्टील पर टैरिफ लगाया था, लेकिन इससे नौकरियाँ में कमी आई।**

-
- **2 Trade Wars in History:**
 - **U.S.-Japan Trade War (1980s):** U.S. imposed quotas on Japanese automobiles, leading to economic tensions.
 - **अमेरिका-जापान व्यापार युद्ध (1980 के दशक में):** अमेरिका ने जापानी ऑटोमोबाइल पर कोटा लगाया, जिससे आर्थिक तनाव उत्पन्न हुआ।
 - **China-U.S. Trade War (2018):** Trump had earlier imposed tariffs on Chinese goods, escalating economic tensions.
 - **चीन-अमेरिका व्यापार युद्ध (2018):** ट्रंप ने पहले चीनी उत्पादों पर टैरिफ लगाया था, जिससे आर्थिक तनाव बढ़ा।

◆ Economic Aspects | आर्थिक पहलू

1 Impact on Global Trade:

Higher tariffs may increase production costs for industries dependent on steel & aluminium.

उच्च टैरिफ से उन उद्योगों की उत्पादन लागत बढ़ सकती है जो स्टील और एल्यूमीनियम पर निर्भर हैं।

Affected nations like Canada, Mexico, China, and South Korea might retaliate with counter-tariffs.

प्रभावित देश जैसे कनाडा, मैक्सिको, चीन और दक्षिण कोरिया प्रतिकारात्मक टैरिफ लगा सकते हैं।

- **2 Impact on India:**
- **India is a major steel exporter to the U.S.** Any tariff increase may affect Indian steel companies like **Tata Steel & JSW Steel**.
- **भारत अमेरिका को स्टील का बड़ा निर्यातक है। टैरिफ वृद्धि से टाटा स्टील और जेएसडब्ल्यू स्टील जैसी भारतीय कंपनियों पर असर पड़ेगा।**
- The **Make in India initiative** could benefit if global companies shift manufacturing to India.
- **मेक इन इंडिया पहल को लाभ मिल सकता है यदि वैश्विक कंपनियां भारत में निर्माण स्थानांतरित करें।**

- **3 Stock Market Impact:**
- The **announcement led to market volatility**, with stock markets reacting negatively.
- **घोषणा से बाजार में अस्थिरता आई**, शेयर बाजारों ने नकारात्मक प्रतिक्रिया दी।
- A **weaker rupee** may increase India's **current account deficit (CAD)**.
- **कमजोर रुपये से भारत के चालू खाता घाटे (CAD) में वृद्धि हो सकती है।**

- **◆ Geographical Aspects | भौगोलिक पहलू**
- **1 Effect on Resource-Rich Regions:**
- **Steel & aluminium industries in Canada & Mexico are directly affected.**
- **कनाडा और मैक्सिको में स्टील और एल्यूमीनियम उद्योग सीधे प्रभावित हुए।**
- **Iron ore & coal-producing regions like Australia & Brazil may see trade shifts.**
- **आयरन अयस्क और कोयला उत्पादक क्षेत्र जैसे ऑस्ट्रेलिया और ब्राजील में व्यापार बदलाव हो सकता है।**

- **◆ Social Aspects | सामाजिक पहलू**
- **1 Impact on Employment:**
- Higher tariffs may **protect U.S. steel industry jobs** but **increase production costs.**
- उच्च टैरिफ से अमेरिकी स्टील उद्योग में नौकरियां बच सकती हैं, लेकिन उत्पादन लागत बढ़ सकती है।
- U.S. consumers may face **higher prices on automobiles, infrastructure, and appliances.**
- अमेरिकी उपभोक्ताओं को ऑटोमोबाइल, बुनियादी ढांचे और उपकरणों पर अधिक कीमत चुकानी पड़ सकती है।


- **2 Impact on Developing Nations:**
- **Developing economies like India, Brazil, and South Africa may face reduced trade opportunities.**
- **भारत, ब्राजील और दक्षिण अफ्रीका जैसे विकासशील देश घटते व्यापार अवसरों का सामना कर सकते हैं।**
- **3 Political Backlash & Protests:**
- **Labor unions & business groups may oppose higher tariffs if they cause price hikes.**
- **मजदूर संघ और व्यापार समूह उच्च टैरिफ का विरोध कर सकते हैं, यदि इससे कीमतें बढ़ती हैं।**
- **Potential rise in anti-globalization sentiment among affected workers.**
- **प्रभावित श्रमिकों में वैश्वीकरण विरोधी भावना बढ़ सकती है।**

- **◆ Conclusion | निष्कर्ष**
- **1 Short-Term Gains, Long-Term Risks:**
- U.S. manufacturers may **initially benefit** from reduced foreign competition.
- अमेरिकी निर्माता शुरुआत में विदेशी प्रतिस्पर्धा से लाभान्वित हो सकते हैं।
- However, **retaliatory tariffs & supply chain disruptions** may hurt U.S. growth.
- लेकिन, प्रतिकारात्मक टैरिफ और आपूर्ति श्रृंखला में रुकावटें अमेरिकी विकास को नुकसान पहुंचा स

- **2** India's Stand:
- India must balance trade relations with both the U.S. and China.
- भारत को अमेरिका और चीन दोनों के साथ व्यापार संबंधों को संतुलित करना होगा।
- The Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative can help reduce dependency on global markets.
- आत्मनिर्भर भारत पहल वैश्विक बाजारों पर निर्भरता कम करने में मदद कर सकती है।

- **UPSC Mains Question | यूपीएससी मुख्य परीक्षा प्रश्न:**

-  *"Analyze the impact of protectionist trade policies on the global economy. How should India respond to the increasing trade wars?"*

 *"राष्ट्रवादी व्यापार नीतियों का वैश्विक अर्थव्यवस्था पर प्रभाव का विश्लेषण करें। भारत को बढ़ते व्यापार युद्धों का कैसे जवाब देना चाहिए?"*



Moment of Ign: Visitors at the inauguration of Aero India at the Air Force Station Yelahanka in Bengaluru on Monday.



In sync: Hawk Mk. 132 jets of the Surya Kiran Aerobatic Team during manoeuvres as part of the air show.



Sea of visitors: Delegates and others during the inauguration of the Aero India event in Bengaluru.



Touching the skies: Indian Coast Guard Do-228 planes fly past in Rakkhsh formation during the air show.

HAL renames upgraded trainer aircraft 'Yashas'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Hindustan Aeronautics Limited's Hindustan Jet Trainer (HJT)-36 was re-named Yashas on the inaugural day of Aero India. The aircraft was earlier called Sitara. The defence PSU said the trainer had undergone extensive modifications to resolve departure characteristics and spin resistance throughout the aircraft envelope.

The large-scale changes to the baseline intermediate training platform has led to significant upheaval in its capabilities and hence provided an opportunity for a new name to be given in accordance with the aircraft's continued relevance as a training system for modern military aviation," said D.K. Sunil, Chairman and Managing Director, HAL.

The HAL said that it was capable of stage II pilot training, counter insurgency and counter surface force operations, armament training, and aerobatics. It added that the capabilities of HJT-36 are stall and spin, aerobatics, armament carriage up to 1000 kg, single point ground refuelling and de-fuelling.

'Self-reliance push drives Indian defence industry'

Rajnath says global companies must utilise opportunities offered by domestic defence ecosystem; overall ease of doing business has improved 'tremendously', he adds at the CEO roundtable

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Noting that the Indian defence ecosystem is self-reliance in defence production, facilitated by a conducive policy regime, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday asked chief executive officers (CEOs) of global defence companies to utilise the opportunities offered by the domestic defence ecosystem.

Listing out measures taken in this regard, he said the portal, Defence Exim, had made the export authorisation process seamless and 46 joint ventures and companies were given foreign investment approval in the defence sector till date.

Mr. Singh was addressing a "CEO Roundtable" at Aero India 2025 with the theme "Enabling Defence Cooperation through Global Engagement" (EDGE), which saw Original Equipment Manufacturers from 19 countries, including 35 Indian private companies and 16 defence public sector undertakings.



Highlighting advances: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh at the inauguration of Aero India in Bengaluru on Monday. K. MURALI KUMAR

Elaborating on steps taken to "make the domestic defence industry an important component" of the national economy in order to facilitate India's transition from a developing to a developed country by 2047, he said, "We have allowed FDI up to 75% through the Automatic Route for companies seeking new defence licenses, while 100% is allowed under government approval route."

He further said over 500 start-ups and micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) were working under the aegis of Innovations for Defence Excellence (IDEX), with focus on innovative projects in defence sector.

"Our overall ease-of-doing-business environment has improved tremendously. This is showing great results as India has the third largest start-up ecosystem in the world today. This is expected to witness year-on-year growth of 10-12%.

We possess a young generation of highly-skilled workforce, which constantly updates itself in the face of the fast-changing ecosystem of the world. You must not miss the opportunity to leverage the advantages of this ecosystem," Mr. Singh added.

The Defence Testing Infrastructure Scheme was introduced to provide financial assistance to the aerospace and defence sector for setting up six-eight greenfield testing and certification facilities. As a testimony to the emergence of India as a defence export nucleus, the country has seen 31-fold growth "in the export of products in the last 10 years as compared to Financial Year 2014-15", he said.

ICA-Mk2 prototype likely to be rolled out by 2025-end, AMCA by early 2027: officials

Dinakar Peeli
BENGALURU

The first prototype of the country's fifth-generation fighter jet, the Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft or AMCA, is expected to be rolled out by the end of 2026 or early 2027, while the first prototype of the Light Combat Aircraft-Mk2, which is a bigger and more capable version of the ICA, is expected by the end of this year, officials of the Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) said.

The two programmes are critical for the IAF's modernisation plans, with ICA strength down to 31 fighter squadrons.

The ICA-Mk2 is in very advanced stage. All the jigs and fixtures have been completed. The airframe is in the assembly line. We will be making a roll-out by year-end and flying in the first quarter of 2026," said Jitendra J. Jadhav, Director General ADA. "We are very confident that we will complete 2028-29, he said, adding "It has all indigenously weaponised in the last 10 years as compared to Financial Year 2014-15", he said.



For the future: A model of India's AMCA, which is a fifth-generation fighter aircraft. ANI

Given the huge delays in new inductions and rapid modernisation of fighters by China and Pakistan, there is pressure to speed up development process.

The AMCA is a fifth-generation fighter aircraft (FGFA) and its primary role is as a stealth aircraft. While armament of around 1.5 tonnes can be carried internally, the AMCA can also carry weapons at its wing stations. A prototype stealth aircraft, he said.

In terms of timelines, Mr. Neel explained that the sky towards the end of 2026. The total duration of the development phase is 10 years. The aircraft will be certified by 2032 and the plan for induction will be 2034 in the IAF," said Krishna Rajendra Neel, Outstanding Scientist and Officiating Project Director of the AMCA programme, speaking to The Hindu at Aero India.

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India, U.K. sign several agreements to strengthen defence cooperation

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The United Kingdom on Monday announced the formal launch of the Defence Partnership India (DPI), a dedicated cell within the U.K. Ministry of Defence for deepening cooperation with India.

The Aero India also saw several defence cooperation agreements between India and the U.K., which covered production of Man Portable Air Defence Systems (MANPADS) and Lightweight Multitrole Missiles (LMM), as well as establishment of an Advanced Short-Range Air to Air Mis-

sile (ASRAAM) assembly and test facility in India. A Statement of Intent (SoI) was also signed to design and develop an integrated STAR-Streak high-velocity missiles and launchers set for delivery this year.

The U.K. announces a dedicated cell for deepening bilateral defence cooperation with India. The U.K. High Commission said the DPI will further collaborate to produce LMMs, the state-

ment said. This "develops and expands the partnership between Indian and British industry, laying the foundation for BDL and Indian industry to form an integral part of the U.K. global supply chain", it stated. "It will address mutual security concerns, create jobs in both countries and enable interoperability by both armies."

The statement added that MBDA U.K. and BDL were working on the installation of a first-of-its-kind ASRAAM assembly and test facility in Hyderabad, for missiles that would be carried by Jaguar and Light Combat Aircraft-Mk1A.

Stealth aircraft from Russia and U.S. showcase their aerial capabilities

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Visitors witnessed a scintillating aerial display by two of the most advanced fifth-generation fighter aircraft in the world on the inaugural day of Aero India here on Monday.

At 2.30 p.m. the Russian Su-57, which was making its debut at the air show, took off from the runway of the Air Force Station, Yelahanka and for the next few minutes it was seen in a series of manoeuvres.

The Su-57, developed by Sukhoi Design Bureau, is Russia's first operational stealth fighter with supersonic cruising speeds, advanced sensor integration, and a wide range of weapons. It was part of the joint Fifth Generation Fighter Aircraft programme with Russia before withdrawing in 2018.

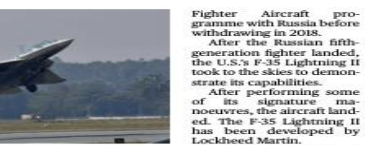


Making a debut: Russia's Su-57 fighter jet takes off during the inauguration of Aero India in Bengaluru on Monday. K. MURALI KUMAR

After the Russian fifth-generation fighter landed, the U.S.'s F-35 Lightning II took to the skies to demonstrate its capabilities.

After performing some of its signature manoeuvres, the aircraft landed. The F-35 Lightning II has been developed by Lockheed Martin.

This is the second time that the U.S. stealth aircraft is taking part in Aero India. The F-35A Lightning II is the newest fifth-generation fighter of the USAF with stealth, supersonic, and multi-role capabilities.



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Modi arrives in France for AI summit, talks with Macron

Kallol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in France on a three-day visit during which he will co-chair an AI Action Summit with French President Emmanuel Macron and hold bilateral talks with him.

Representing the Global South in the Paris AI Action Summit, broadening consular and diplomatic ties, and nuclear research are some of the items on the agenda of Mr. Modi's visit to France, an official statement said on Monday. The official statement issued ahead of his departure for the two-nation



Warm welcomes: Prime Minister Narendra Modi with members of the Indian diaspora in France on Monday. PTI

tour departing France and the U.S. intended that he will be co-chairing the AI Action Summit, which will be held in Paris on Tuesday and Wednesday.

The AI summit is the third in a series of global initiatives on artificial intelligence after the AI Safety Summit in the U.K. in 2023 and South Korea in 2024.

The summit in Paris will focus on innovation, public interest, future of work and issues in AI governance. India is expected to represent the voice of the Global South on AI-related issues.

Economic cooperation: The bilateral component of the visit will begin after the AI summit and will include interaction with the India-France CEOs Forum where Mr. Modi and Mr. Macron will lay down respective visions of economic cooperation. On Tuesday evening, Mr. Macron will host a dinner in honour of Mr. Modi.

Following the visit to France, Mr. Modi is scheduled to take off for the United States for the Nuclear Reactor (ITER) project which is a major international project on energy generation and nuclear research.

"I will also pay tribute to the Indian soldiers who laid down their lives during World War I and II at the Mazargues War Cemetery. On Tuesday evening, talks will build on the ground covered then," Mr. Modi said in a tweet on X. (With PTI inputs)

after similar graves across Europe where Indian soldiers sacrificed themselves during the two World Wars.

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President takes holy dip at Maha Kumbh

The Hindu Bureau
LUCKNOW

President Droupadi Murmu took a holy dip at the Triveni Sangam in Prayagraj on Monday. She said the Maha Kumbh was a wonderful and living symbol of India's rich cultural heritage.

"Today I had the good fortune of bathing in the holy confluence of Maa Ganga, Yamuna, and the inner stream Saraswati in the divine atmosphere of Maha Kumbh. This huge gathering of faith and belief is a wonderful and liv-



President Droupadi Murmu in Prayagraj on Monday. PTI

ing symbol of India's rich cultural heritage. Maha Kumbh gives the message of unity and spiritualism to humanity. I pray to Maa Ganga that she keeps her blessings on everyone. Ms. Murmu said.

India, U.K. sign several agreements to strengthen defence cooperation

The Hindu Bureau

BENGALURU

The United Kingdom on Monday announced the formal launch of the “Defence Partnership-India”, or DP-I, a dedicated cell within the U.K. Ministry of Defence for deepening cooperation with India.

The Aero India also saw several defence cooperation agreements between India and the U.K., which covered production of Man Portable Air Defence Systems (MANPADS) and Lightweight Multirole Missiles (LMM), as well as establishment of an Advanced Short-Range Air to Air Mis-

The U.K. announces a dedicated cell for deepening bilateral defence cooperation with India

sile (ASRAAM) assembly and test facility in India. A Statement of Intent (SoI) was also signed to design and develop an Integrated Full Electric Propulsion (IFEP) system for Indian Navy ships.

U.K. Defence Minister Lord Vernon Coaker announced the DP-I while opening the U.K.-India Defence Partnership pavilion at Aero India, and the ded-

icated programme office within the U.K.’s Ministry of Defence will serve as a one-stop shop for strengthening bilateral defence collaboration, the U.K. High Commission said.


Thales U.K. and Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) signed a contract that will deliver Laser Beam-Riding MANPADs (LBRMs), with an initial supply of STAR-Streak high-velocity missiles and launchers set for delivery this year.


In another development, following the signing of this initial LBRM contract, both Thales and BDL will further collaborate to produce LMMs, the state-



ment said. This “develops and expands the partnership between Indian and British industry, laying the foundation for BDL and Indian industry to form an integral part of Thales’ global supply chain”, it stated.

“It will address mutual security concerns, create jobs in both countries and enable interoperability by both armies.”

The statement added that MBDA U.K. and BDL were working on the installation of a first-of-its-kind ASRAAM assembly and test facility in Hyderabad, for missiles that would be carried by Jaguar and Light Combat Aircraft-Mk1A.


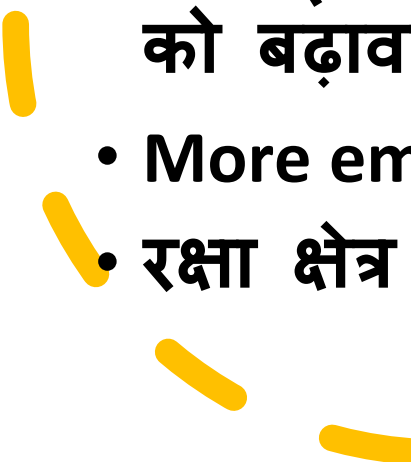
-  India and the UK have signed multiple defence agreements to enhance bilateral military cooperation. The agreements include the production of Man-Portable Air Defence Systems (MANPADS), Lightweight Multirole Missiles (LMM), and the establishment of an Advanced Short-Range Air-to-Air Missile (ASRAAM) assembly and testing facility in India.

 भारत और यूके ने द्विपक्षीय सैन्य सहयोग को बढ़ाने के लिए कई रक्षा समझौतों पर हस्ताक्षर किए हैं। समझौतों में शामिल हैं -
मैन-पोर्टेबल एयर डिफेंस सिस्टम (MANPADS), हल्के बहु-भूमिका मिसाइल (LMM) और भारत में एक उन्नत शॉर्ट-रेंज एयर-टू-एयर मिसाइल (ASRAAM) असेंबली और परीक्षण सुविधा की स्थापना।

-  A dedicated UK-India Defence Partnership Cell (DP-I) has been launched within the UK Ministry of Defence.
 यूके के रक्षा मंत्रालय में एक समर्पित "यूके-इंडिया डिफेंस पार्टनरशिप सेल (DP-I)" स्थापित किया गया है।
-  Thales UK and Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) will collaborate on producing advanced missile systems.
 थैल्स यूके और भारत डायनामिक्स लिमिटेड (BDL) उन्नत मिसाइल प्रणाली के उत्पादन में सहयोग करेंगे।
-  MBDA UK and BDL will work on an ASRAAM assembly unit in Hyderabad.
 MBDA यूके और BDL हैदराबाद में ASRAAM असेंबली यूनिट पर कार्य करेंगे।

- **1 Colonial Legacy & Defence Ties:**
- India and the UK share a **historical military relationship from the British colonial era.**
- भारत और यूके का ब्रिटिश औपनिवेशिक युग से सैन्य संबंध रहा है।
- The Indian Army, Navy, and Air Force have British origins in terms of structure and organization.
- भारतीय सेना, नौसेना और वायुसेना की संरचना और संगठन ब्रिटिश मॉडल पर आधारित हैं।

- **2 Post-Independence Cooperation:**
- **UK supported India during the 1962 Sino-Indian War with arms supply.**
- **यूके ने 1962 के भारत-चीन युद्ध के दौरान भारत को हथियारों की आपूर्ति की।**
- **India and UK signed a Defence & Security Agreement in 2002.**
- **भारत और यूके ने 2002 में एक रक्षा और सुरक्षा समझौते पर हस्ताक्षर किए।**

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- **◆ Economic Aspects | आर्थिक पहलू**
 - **1 Boost to Defence Industry:**
 - **Investment in missile and weapon manufacturing will boost India's domestic defence industry.**
 - **मिसाइल और हथियार निर्माण में निवेश भारत की घरेलू रक्षा उद्योग को बढ़ावा देगा।**
 - **More employment opportunities in the defence sector.**
 - **रक्षा क्षेत्र में अधिक रोजगार के अवसर।**
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- **Geographical Aspects | भौगोलिक पहलू**
- **1 Strategic Positioning:**
- **The Indo-Pacific region is a major focus for both India and the UK.**
- **हिंद-प्रशांत क्षेत्र भारत और यूके दोनों के लिए प्रमुख फोकस है।**
- **India's defence cooperation with the UK strengthens its security posture in the Indian Ocean.**
- **भारत का यूके के साथ रक्षा सहयोग हिंद महासागर में उसकी सुरक्षा स्थिति को मजबूत करता है।**
- **2 UK's Role in QUAD and AUKUS:**
- **Although the UK is not part of QUAD, it has growing strategic interests in the Indo-Pacific.**
- **यूके QUAD का हिस्सा नहीं है, लेकिन हिंद-प्रशांत क्षेत्र में इसकी रणनीतिक रुचि बढ़ रही है।**

Gaza and Trump's 'expanding the canvas' strategy

Emergency exit but peace in Middle is elusive

N. Biren Singh is finally shown the door.

In a long overdue decision, N. Biren Singh resigned as Chief Minister of Manipur on Sunday. It was reportedly under duress due to growing dissidence within the state's ruling N. Biren Singh-led National Democratic Alliance government even as the opposition Congress planned no-confidence motion in the Assembly. The Supreme Court of India had recently sought the services of the Centre Forensic Science Laboratory to provide a "sealed-cover report" on "leaked audio tapes" that it is examining, allegedly featuring Mr. Singh as an instigator of the ethnic conflict that has raged for months between two communities in the State. These proximate reasons apart, Mr. Singh's continuation was long made untenable with the ethnic conflict having shown few signs of abating, and him being seen as championing the cause of chauvinists from one group. In any case, the Union Government had, de facto, used the provisions of Article 355 to seize control over law and order without declaring its imposition. The BJP and its allies had also lost both Lok Sabha seats in the 2024 general election, indicating a fatigue in the valley and hill regions with the State government. Mr. Singh's rhetoric about the Kuki-Zo-Hmar communities, persistently accusing them of being infiltrators from Myanmar and providing a haven to "drug dealers" and illicit crop cultivators, fuelled the antipathy on both sides of the conflict, while his inability to rein in violent groups that openly brandished sophisticated weapons and used their political rallies as mourning — created a culture of impunity. With the BJP persisting with his leadership, there was little room for any reconciliation as civil society activists refused to engage in peace talks.

The Union government and the BJP should now make the best use of the opportunity by looking for a new leader who is unburdened by the shenanigans of Mr. Singh's rule and willing to work towards genuine reconciliation. Second, the Union government should accelerate the process of involving civil society leaders in talks, once again, to address immediate issues such as the rehabilitation and return of internally displaced people. This will lay the ground for a political solution and address grievances in the hills and the valley. There are several instruments in India's federal system that allow for creative solutions within the existing system. These have also worked well in other parts of the country in ending conflicts. But confidence-building measures aimed at an end to violent violence are a necessity before such solutions are mooted. Mr. Singh's resignation should pave the way for more such measures and it would be a pity if the government to not follow up on these quickly.

Troubled waters India and Sri Lanka must facilitate discussions among their fishermen

In the latest chapter of the long-standing fisheries dispute in the Palk Bay region, Sri Lanka Navy arrested 14 fishermen from Tamil Nadu's Kaminathapuram district on February 8 for alleged poaching in waters north of Mannar. Two trawlers were also impounded. On January 27, the Navy had fired at an Indian boat near Delft Island, injuring two fishermen. With these arrests, the total number of Indian fishermen detained this year has risen to 77. Just last week, a Sri Lankan court had released nine fishermen from Kattalai, Puducherry, but one of them received a six-month prison sentence. Additionally, Sri Lankan courts have been imposing hefty fines, complicating their release. Government data over the past decade, based on responses in Parliament, show that in 2024, the number of Indian fishermen arrested in Sri Lanka crossed the 500-mark for the first time in 10 years (526). The number of arrests in 2024 was 1,000.

In a letter to External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on February 3, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin said that 17 fishermen and 216 fishing boats were still under the custody of Sri Lanka. Unlike in the past, when they were quickly released, recent years have seen rising convictions for violations of the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) and unlawful fishing. While Tamil Nadu and Puducherry fishermen often cross the IMBL, their counterparts in Sri Lanka's Tamil-speaking Northern Province, who are still recovering from the civil war, oppose their fishing methods, particularly ecologically unsustainable bottom trawling. Northern Sri Lankan fishermen are seeking a sustainable solution that protects their waters from over-exploitative fishing. Indian fishermen have repeatedly sought a fresh approach to talks with their Sri Lankan counterparts, with the last such meeting having taken place in November 2016. The issue was also raised in the more recent Joint Working Group meeting in Colombo last October. However, the Anura Kumara Disanayake-led Sri Lankan government appears reluctant to negotiate. New Delhi and Colombo must recognise that a fresh approach is required to break the deadlock rather than continuing with a business-as-usual mindset. Unlike the cases of Indian fishermen detained in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar, the arrests in Sri Lanka are significantly higher. New Delhi must facilitate immediate discussions between their fishing communities to find interim solutions. It is only through proactive diplomacy and sustainable fishing policies that the ongoing conflict can be addressed effectively.

Donald Trump, a consummate dealmaker, often relies on the "expanding the canvas" strategy to resolve an intractable stalemate. Nevertheless, he made most audacious ever deal-bid on February 4, 2025, with typical deal-hunger, he wanted the Gaza Strip to be depopulated, with its 2.3 million residents being relocated to Egypt and Jordan while the United States was to take over this "demolition site" to develop it into "a Riviera for the world's people". While swinging this wrecking ball over Gaza and the region at large, he also hinted that in the next few weeks, he may have another proposal for settling the West Bank issue. Both Mr. Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu — who was on hand — conspicuously praised Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) and hinted that Saudi Arabia would soon join the Abraham Accords. This prompted MBS to promptly state that Saudi Arabia would not establish ties with Israel without the creation of a Palestinian state.

To most observers, Mr. Trump's pitch was chutzpah off his playbook of many recent grandiose remarks. To some others, it was a colonial land grab in West Asia, a veritable geopolitical minefield. Its maximalist opening overture seems to be designed to shock the opponent stakeholders into concentrating their minds and coming up with a more realistic counter-offer for eventual settlement on more balanced terms.

A geopolitical reconfiguration
Mr. Trump's "truthful hyperbole" only underlines two undeniable contextual aspects. First, after a particularly brutish and violent epoch since October 7, 2023, vital but volatile West Asia is now tethering on the verge of a profound geopolitical reconfiguration. Second, a little nudge from its friends, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia might be among its prominent architects.

The 16 months of unprecedented hostilities have demoralised several long-standing adversaries — from Israeli invincibility to the end of the Syrian civil war. The feared Axis of Resistance stands neutered for the time being. Through a revival cannot be ruled out, Iran's extensive and carefully assembled strategic network from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean has been upended and its deterrence against Israel has been dented. While Israel has managed a pyrrhic victory, its internal and external consequences are still panning out. The mayhem has convulsed West Asia and bequeathed the hapless region with colossal challenges which can be broadly divided into two intertwined verticals: political and economic.

Politically, the no-holds-barred conflicts and assassinations galore have left the region



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repolished with fewer guardrails, lower mutual trust and unrequited revengefulness. The regional turmoil can further segregate into perennial sub-issues crying for lasting solutions such as the Israeli-Palestinian question, the Iranian quest for nuclear technology, the Kurdish pursuit of national identity and the Yemeni imbroglio. The region may also witness the long-known "unknown" all over again: In his second term, Mr. Trump appears as impulsive as before and more diplomatically naïve than his first. Although he professes to prioritise the American economic resurrection, Washington's global entanglements keep ceaselessly knocking at his door. Moreover, his abrasive cowboy diplomacy has penchant for transactional short-term fixes and his propensity for overbidding are often counterproductive. Further, he may discover that the world in general and West Asia in particular are no longer where they were during Trump's first term. He has thrust forth the centrality of Palestinian statehood, complicating, if not derailing, his vision to expand the Abraham Accords with the inclusion of Saudi Arabia and other Arab states. He also has to contend with the growing influence of the ultra-religious Jewish groups in Israel and the HTS-led Syria.

Economic issues
West Asia's current economic problems are two-fold. The first set is rooted in the conflicts waged over the past few years including in Gaza (aiding 1.70,000 deaths), Syria (aiding 5.50 billion), Lebanon (\$8.5 billion) and Syria (damage from a 13-year civil war is put at around \$500 billion). While humanitarian issues are urgent, a return to socio-economic normalcy depends necessarily on the implementation of political resolutions. In many cases, the western economic sanctions also come in the way. The second regional economic problem is strategic in nature: dependence on hydrocarbons, notoriously fickle and volatile, has become a major economic consumption peak by the end of this decade. Recent Trump disruptions including walking away from the Parisian accord on the launch of the "Drill, baby, drill" campaign and the public call for lower oil prices, make one wonder whether he is part of this specific problem or its solution. The shale revolution has made the U.S. the world's largest oil producer. However, the technology, being more expensive, is highly price sensitive. If oil prices are drastically forced down, the shale technology may not be remunerative. Further, an oil glut would dent the economies which are heavily dependent on oil exports to bear the major burden of the huge post-construction.

Moreover, Mr. Trump's tariffs and sanctions blitzkrieg against friends and foes alike has not only disrupted global trade and investment flows

West Asia is being reconfigured geopolitically with Saudi Arabia as one of its main architects

India as a bridge between the Global North and South

In his address in January 2025, in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, while addressing the 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas convention, the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, said, "Today's India not only firmly asserts its own point but also strongly amplifies the voice of the Global South". Similarly, when India held the 3rd Voice of Global South Summit 2024, last August, Mr. Modi said that India aspires to lead the required reforms to take developing countries into a new, more inclusive structure of global governance.

What has influenced India's renewed enthusiasm to champion the cause of the developing world? And, how can the country influence change to become an effective global development partner? Unlike the Non-Alignment Movement (NAM), India's motivation does not appear to be based on decolonisation or strong criticism of the West. Rather, as India attempts to increase its presence in the Global South, it is simultaneously deepening its relationships with traditional partners such as the United States and Europe. The high-level visit of Jake Sullivan, the former U.S. National Security Adviser, in January reflects this. Mr. Modi's visit to Poland, in August 2024, was the alliance's attempt to create new alliances.

The China factor argument
The cynical answer often circles back to India trying to counter China's growing global dominance. Trends of foreign direct investments in Africa indicate that India appears to be in a race with China, mainly focusing on countries which already have a significant Chinese presence. Further, industrialised countries are thought to be strategically partnering with India to contain China's rising international footprint. The Quad partnership, an on-going dialogue between Japan, India, Australia and the U.S., for a free and fair Indo-Pacific, is seen as one such strategy. However, the India-China competition does not give the full picture. India is trying to create an individual identity as an emerging power in its own right forward



Poora Ramanarath is an Associate Fellow at the Centre for Social and Economic Progress (CSEP), New Delhi

its own strategic trade, defence, and geopolitical interests. Global South countries are disillusioned with present economic paradigms, burdened by debt and colonialist structures, and are looking for another China or a new western institution. India can fill this gap while being a bridge between the Global North and South. To be successful, India needs to back up its rhetoric with the right strategies.

Steps that India must take
The first is for India to double-down on its call for an alternate paradigm of development cooperation that is not dictated by the Global North. India often lays emphasis on equal partnerships with other developing countries, trying to set its own agenda, rather than traditional powers. In practice, it signals otherwise by putting forward strategies with an India-led and China-backed approach.

The newly announced "Global Development Compact" aimed at facilitating growth in the Global South, was described as rooted in Indian experiences and strategies. India's development of an emerging power and being the world's largest democracy makes it unique. However, it does not hold all the answers. India must merit India to not only assert itself as a provider of knowledge but also be open to learning from other Global South countries to address its domestic challenges. Countries are bound to be more receptive toward a country that views them as partners. Otherwise, India may not be perceived as a big brother imposing traditional and increased engagement with new partners.

Second, New Delhi has laid stress on a more human-centric approach to tackle developmental challenges. This has been done at various fora towards promoting behavioural change via the "Voice of the Global South" of the Global South can take shape as well. If it also learns to listen

but has also led to the strengthening of the U.S. dollar. As most West Asian currencies are tied to the dollar, they have also risen, denting their economic competitiveness and derailing their bids to diversify away from oil.

Spotlight on Saudi Arabia

To help cope with the multiple crises in West Asia, the U.S. and the Kingdom need to reorient their over 80-year-old alliance beyond its traditional "security in return for oil" paradigm. The Kingdom, the region's biggest economy (GDP of \$2 trillion), has come out relatively unscathed by the conflicts waging around it. It is relevant to note that the Saudi Public Investment Fund is estimated to have total assets of \$200 billion and Saudi Aramco has a market capitalisation of \$1.79 trillion. The country is led by MBS, a pragmatic ruler with an iconoclastic ambition to head the Arab and Islamic world. Apart from hosting two well-attended Arab-Islamic Summits on the Gaza conflict, he has extricated himself from the costly Yemeni civil war and normalised ties with Iran and Qatar. He has deepened links with Russia and China without antagonising Washington. With Saudi Arabia as the world's largest oil exporter, MBS has been a moderating influence on OPEC and OPEC+. A fortnight ago, Mr. Trump told a Davos video-conference that his first official international phone call after re-entering the White House was with MBS, where the Crown Prince offered to invest \$600 billion in the U.S. Mr. Trump then coolly asked him to "round off" the figure to \$1 trillion. The incident only goes to show that the Kingdom under MBS has what it takes to be a political and economic bulwark for the region.

Before the Gaza war, America's regional diplomacy was focused on the Israel-Palestine reconciliation. While MBS did not rule out joining the Abraham Accords, he played hardball by asking Washington for stiff conditions including a bilateral security treaty, access to nuclear technology and state-of-the-art weaponry. However, 16 months of sordid bloodletting in Gaza has left plenty of toxicity in its wake, making MBS now insist on a pathway towards a two-state solution, which the Israeli Parliament has officially rejected.

Despite these serious obstacles, the rationale for a Saudi-U.S. re-engagement remains intact as the world's largest oil producer and a Gulf state with war-ravaged regions and leverage Saudi Arabia's profile to persuade doubtful and sullen Arabs to see the merit of a negotiated solution. Mr. Trump's other challenge lies in coaxing the Israeli leadership to be more flexible and go beyond its survival instinct. Thus, while Trump-MBS bromance may or may not launch a trillion-dollar bilateral investment boom, their synergy would be a priceless contribution to healing the maulled West Asia.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Delhi result
The defeat of the grand old party in the Delhi election is a setback. It should be an eye-opener to the Gandhi siblings. It is going to be a long road for the Gandhi family to get the slow train moving again. **Arundhathi Sankaranarayanan**, Chennai

The Indian electorate is, by and large, a moderately tolerant people, but it does react and flag vulgar extremes of corrupt behaviour. Interestingly, the BJP beat AAP at its own game by offering freebies. The dismal show by the Congress leadership question marks about its

ability to win elections. **Gregory Fernandes**, Mumbai
Lessons from deportation practices. In Andhra there is hardly any Indian expatriate who ever says, "I don't get back to my country". On the contrary, they say

they have better opportunities in Canada, Australia and Germany. The Prime Minister does not say "We will give them similar if not better opportunities". On the contrary, there is a silence over the handicuffing of our people. The External Affairs Minister goes to the

extent of saying that the U.S. is following standard procedure. India must pursue development and create opportunities. **H.G.R. Prasad**, Chennai
Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.com. In must carry the postal address.

The views expressed are personal

Gaza and Trump's 'expanding the canvas' strategy

Donald Trump, a consummate dealmaker, often relies on the "expanding the canvas" strategy to resolve an intractable stalemate. Nevertheless, he made his most audacious ever deal-bid on February 4, 2025: with typical nonchalance, he wanted the Gaza Strip to be depopulated, with its 2.3 million residents being relocated to Egypt and Jordan while the United States was to take over this "demolition site" to develop it into "a riviera for the world's people". While swinging this wrecking ball over Gaza and the region at large, he also hinted that in the next four weeks, he may have another proposal for settling the West Bank issue. Both Mr. Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu – who was on hand – conspicuously praised Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MbS) and hinted that Saudi Arabia would soon join the Abraham Accords. This prompted MbS to promptly state that Saudi Arabia would not establish ties with Israel without the creation of a Palestinian state.

To most observers, Mr. Trump's pitch was chutzpah off his playbook of many recent grandiloquent remarks. To some others, it was a colonial land grab in West Asia, a veritable geopolitical minefield. Its maximalist opening overture seems to be designed to shock the opponent stakeholders into concentrating their minds and coming up with a more realistic counter-offer for eventual settlement on more balanced terms.

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The 16 months of unprecedented hostilities have demolished several long-standing shibboleths – from Israeli invincibility to the end of the Syrian civil war. The feared Axis of Resistance stands neutered for the time being, although a revival cannot be ruled out. Iran's extensive and carefully assembled strategic outreach from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean has been upended and its deterrence against Israel has been denied. While Israel has managed a pyrrhic victory, its internal and external consequences are still panning out.

The mayhem has convulsed West Asia and bequeathed the hapless region with colossal challenges which can be broadly divided into two intertwined verticals: political and economic.

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repolished with fewer guardrails, lower mutual trust and unsated revengefulness. The regional turmoil can be further segregated into perennial sub-issues crying for lasting solutions such as the Israel-Palestine question, the Iranian quest for nuclear technology, the Kurdish pursuit of national identity and the Yemeni imbroglio. Additionally, the region now also faces a "known unknown" all over again: In his second term, Mr. Trump appears as impulsive as before and more unpredictable.

Although he professes to prioritise the American economic resuscitation, Washington's global entanglements keep ceaselessly knocking at his door. Moreover, his abrasive cowboy diplomacy, his penchant for transactional short-term fixes and his propensity for overbidding are often counterproductive. Further, he may discover that the world in general and West Asia in particular are no longer where they were during Trump 1.0. The Gaza war has thrust forth the centrality of Palestinian statehood, complicating, if not derailing, his vision to expand the Abraham Accords with the inclusion of Saudi Arabia and other Arab states. He also has to contend with the growing influence of the ultra-religious Jewish groups in Israel and the HTS-led Syria.

Economic issues

West Asia's current economic problems are two-fold. The first set is rooted in the conflicts waged over the past few years including in Gaza (rebuilding 1,70,000 houses destroyed is to cost \$50 billion), Lebanon (\$8.5 billion) and Syria (damage from a 13-year civil war is put at around \$500 billion). While humanitarian issues are urgent, a return to socio-economic normalcy would necessarily await the respective political resolutions. In many cases, the western economic sanctions also come in the way. The second regional economic problem is structural: the dependence on hydrocarbons, notoriously fickle natural resources threatened by a global consumption peak by the end of this decade. Recent Trump disruptions including walking away from the Paris climate accord, the launch of the "Drill, baby, drill" campaign and the public call for lower oil prices, make one wonder whether he is part of this specific problem or its solution. The shale revolution has made the U.S. the world's largest hydrocarbon producer, but the technology, being more expensive, is highly price sensitive. If oil prices are drastically forced down, shale technology may no longer be remunerative. Further, an oil glut would dent the West Asian economies which are widely expected to bear the major burden of the huge post-conflict reconstruction.

Moreover, Mr. Trump's tariffs and sanctions blitzkrieg against friends and foes alike has not only disrupted global trade and investment flows

but has also led to the strengthening of the U.S. dollar. As most West Asian currencies are tied to the dollar, they have also risen, denting their economic competitiveness and derailing their bids to diversify away from oil.

Spotlight on Saudi Arabia

To help cope with the multiple crises in West Asia, the U.S. and the Kingdom need to reorient their over 80-year-old alliance beyond its traditional "security in return for oil" paradigm. The Kingdom, the region's biggest economy (GDP 1.07 trillion), has come out relatively unscathed by the conflicts waging around it. It is relevant to note that the Saudi Public Investment Fund is estimated to have total assets of \$930 billion and Saudi Aramco has a market capitalisation of \$1.79 trillion. The country is led by MbS, a pragmatic young leader with an iconoclastic ambition to head the Arab and Islamic world. Apart from hosting two well-attended Arab-Islamic Summits on the Gaza conflict, he has extricated himself from the costly Yemeni civil war and normalised ties with Iran and Qatar. He has deepened links with Russia and China without antagonising Washington. With Saudi Arabia as the world's largest oil exporter, MbS has been a moderating influence on OPEC and OPEC+. A fortnight ago, Mr. Trump told a Davos videoconference that his first official international phone call after re-entering the White House was with MbS, where the Crown Prince offered to invest \$600 billion in the U.S. Mr. Trump then coolly asked him to "round off" the figure to \$1 trillion. The incident only goes to show that the Kingdom under MbS has what it takes to be a political and economic bulwark for the region.

Before the Gaza war, America's regional diplomacy was focused on Riyadh-Tel Aviv reconciliation. While MbS did not rule out joining the Abraham Accords, he played hardball by asking Washington for stiff concessions including a bilateral security treaty, access to nuclear technology and state-of-the-art weaponry. However, 16 months of sordid bloodletting in Gaza has left plenty of toxicity in its wake, making MbS now insist on a pathway towards a two-state solution, which the Israeli Parliament has officially rejected.





Despite these serious obstacles, the rationale for a Saudi-U.S. re-engagement remains intact as MbS can usefully fund the reconstruction of the war-ravaged regions and leverage Saudi Arabia's profile to persuade doubtful and sullen Arabs to see the merit of a negotiated solution. Mr. Trump's other challenge lies in coaxing the Israeli leadership to be more flexible and go beyond its survival instinct. Thus, while Trump-MbS bromance may or may not launch a trillion-dollar bilateral investment boom, their synergy would be a priceless contribution to healing the mauled West Asia.

- Former U.S. President Donald Trump proposed a new Middle East peace plan, advocating for the relocation of Gaza's population and a geopolitical restructuring of the region.

📌 पूर्व अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति डोनाल्ड ट्रंप ने एक नई मध्य पूर्व शांति योजना का प्रस्ताव रखा, जिसमें गाजा की आबादी के पुनर्वास और क्षेत्र की भू-राजनीतिक पुनर्रचना की वकालत की गई।

- 📌 Trump's proposal has sparked controversy as it suggests displacing 2.3 million Gazans to build a "new world for the people."

📌 ट्रंप के प्रस्ताव ने विवाद खड़ा कर दिया है क्योंकि इसमें 2.3 मिलियन गाजावासियों को विस्थापित करने और उनके लिए "नई दुनिया" बनाने की बात कही गई है।

-  The plan hints at closer cooperation with Saudi Arabia and the broader Arab world, aiming to expand the Abraham Accords.
 योजना सऊदी अरब और व्यापक अरब दुनिया के साथ घनिष्ठ सहयोग का संकेत देती है और अब्राहम समझौतों के विस्तार की दिशा में अग्रसर है।
-  Economic crisis in West Asia, ongoing wars, and regional instability are crucial factors influencing Trump's strategy.
 पश्चिम एशिया में आर्थिक संकट, चल रहे युद्ध, और क्षेत्रीय अस्थिरता ट्रंप की रणनीति को प्रभावित करने वाले महत्वपूर्ण कारक हैं।

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- **Historical Aspects | ऐतिहासिक पहलू**
 - **1 Arab-Israeli Conflict & U.S. Role:**
 - **The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been a core issue in Middle East geopolitics since the formation of Israel in 1948.**
 - **इज़राइल-फिलिस्तीनी संघर्ष 1948 में इज़राइल के गठन के बाद से मध्य पूर्व की भू-राजनीति में एक प्रमुख मुद्दा बना हुआ है।**
 - **The U.S. has historically played the role of a mediator in Arab-Israeli peace processes, often favoring Israel.**
 - **अमेरिका ने ऐतिहासिक रूप से अरब-इज़राइल शांति प्रक्रिया में मध्यस्थ की भूमिका निभाई है, अक्सर इज़राइल के पक्ष में।**



- **2 Abraham Accords (2020):**

- The Trump administration brokered peace deals between Israel, UAE, Bahrain, Sudan, and Morocco.

- ट्रंप प्रशासन ने इज़राइल, यूएई, बहरीन, सूडान और मोरक्को के बीच शांति समझौते कराए।

- This marked a significant shift in Middle East diplomacy.



- इसने मध्य पूर्व कूटनीति में एक महत्वपूर्ण बदलाव किया।



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- **3** Gaza Conflict & Displacement:
 - Gaza has been a contested region with multiple conflicts since Israel's withdrawal in 2005.
 - गाजा 2005 में इज़राइल की वापसी के बाद से कई संघर्षों का केंद्र रहा है।
 - Trump's plan to relocate Gazans is unprecedented and controversial.
 - गाज़ावासियों को विस्थापित करने की ट्रंप की योजना अभूतपूर्व और विवादास्पद है।

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- **Economic Aspects | आर्थिक पहलू**
 - **1 West Asia's Economic Crisis:**
 - **Conflicts in Gaza, Syria, and Yemen have led to economic devastation.**
 - **गाजा, सीरिया और यमन में संघर्षों ने आर्थिक तबाही मचाई है।**
 - **High military spending and reconstruction costs burden regional economies.**
 - **अधिक सैन्य खर्च और पुनर्निर्माण लागत क्षेत्रीय अर्थव्यवस्थाओं पर बोझ डालते हैं।**

-
- **2 Saudi Arabia's Role:**
 - **The Saudi economy is undergoing transformation under Vision 2030, reducing dependence on oil.**
 - **सऊदी अर्थव्यवस्था विज़न 2030 के तहत तेल पर निर्भरता कम कर रही है।**
 - **Trump sees economic cooperation with Saudi Arabia as crucial for Middle East stability.**
 - **ट्रंप सऊदी अरब के साथ आर्थिक सहयोग को मध्य पूर्व स्थिरता के लिए महत्वपूर्ण मानते हैं।**

- 
- **3** Impact on India:
 - Oil price volatility due to Middle East instability affects India's economy.
 - मध्य पूर्व की अस्थिरता के कारण तेल की कीमतों में अस्थिरता भारत की अर्थव्यवस्था को प्रभावित करती है।
 - Trade disruptions in the region impact Indian exports.
 - क्षेत्र में व्यापार व्यवधान भारतीय निर्यात को प्रभावित करता है।
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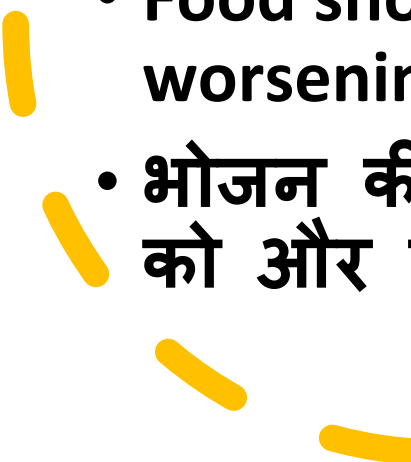
- **◆ Geographical Aspects | भौगोलिक पहलू**

- **1 Gaza & Strategic Importance:**

- Gaza is geographically significant as it borders Israel and Egypt, making it a hotspot for conflict.
- गाजा भूगोलिक रूप से महत्वपूर्ण है क्योंकि यह इज़राइल और मिस्र की सीमा से लगा हुआ है, जिससे यह संघर्ष का केंद्र बनता है।

- **2 Red Sea & Middle East Trade Routes:**

- The Red Sea is a crucial trade corridor for global oil shipments.
- लाल सागर वैश्विक तेल शिपमेंट के लिए एक महत्वपूर्ण व्यापार मार्ग है।
- Instability in the region threatens maritime security.
- क्षेत्र की अस्थिरता समुद्री सुरक्षा के लिए खतरा पैदा करती है।

- 
- **Social Aspects | सामाजिक पहलू**
 - **1 Humanitarian Crisis in Gaza:**
 - **Ongoing conflict has displaced thousands of Palestinians.**
 - **चल रहे संघर्ष ने हजारों फिलिस्तीनियों को विस्थापित कर दिया है।**
 - **Food shortages, unemployment, and lack of medical aid are worsening the crisis.**
 - **भोजन की कमी, बेरोजगारी, और चिकित्सा सहायता की कमी संकट को और गहरा रही है।**
- 



Couples at a pre-wedding photoshoot in Qingdao, Shandong province, China. FILE PHOTO

Marriages in China down by a fifth in 2024: government

Agence France-Press
BEIJING

China last year saw a one-fifth decline in marriages, the latest sign of persistent demographic challenges as Beijing works to encourage births despite an uncertain economic outlook for young families.

The country saw 6.1 million couples register for marriage in 2024, down from 7.7 million the previous year, according to data published by the Ministry of Civil Affairs.

The 20.5% drop coincided with the third consecutive year of overall population decline in China, which in 2023 was surpassed by India as the world's most populous nation.

China's population of 1.4 billion is now rapidly ageing, with nearly a quarter of people aged 60 or above as of the end of last year. The demographic trends present fresh challenges for authorities in the country, which has long relied on its vast workforce as a driver of economic growth.

The slide in marriages comes despite a pro-family campaign rolled out in recent years by Beijing, which has included various subsidies and messaging encouraging people to have children.

But experts say that higher costs — especially for education and childcare — and the challenging employment market awaiting fresh graduates are among factors discouraging would-be parents.

"If I don't rely on my parents, I simply can't afford to buy a house, and getting married is also a huge expense," commented a user of Chinese microblogging site Weibo under a news post about the data.

Frozen waters



Fishing boats are surrounded by sea ice in Jiaozhou bay, in Qingdao, in China's eastern Shandong province on Saturday. AFP

After the ceasefire in Gaza, West Bank Palestinians face more Israeli barriers

After the January 19 truce, Israeli forces, using drones and attack helicopters, targeted Jenin and increased checkpoints across the West Bank, disrupting the lives of hundreds of thousands of people, Israel says these measures are to prevent Hamas from opening a new front in the region

Associated Press
RAMALLAH

Abdullah Fauzi, a banker from the northern West Bank city of Nablus, leaves home at 4 a.m. to reach his job by eight, and he's often late.

His commute used to take an hour — until Hamas's attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, after which Israel launched its offensive in the Gaza Strip.

The Israeli military also ramped up raids against Palestinian militants in the northern West Bank, and diverted its residents through seven new checkpoints, doubling Mr. Fauzi's time on the road.

Now it's gotten worse. As the truce between Israel and Hamas took effect, Mr. Fauzi's drive to the West Bank's business and administrative hub, Ramallah, has become a convoluted, at least four-hour waffle through steep lanes and farm roads as Israel further tightens the noose around Palestinian cities in measures it considers essential to guard against militant attacks.

"You can fly to Paris while we're not reaching our homes," the 42-year-old said from the Azadi checkpoint outside Ramallah last week.

"Whatever this is, they've planned it well," he



A Palestinian street vendor advertises to motorists with a sign that reads, 'Hot and cold drinks' at the Ein Sana Israeli army checkpoint near the West Bank city of Ramallah. AFP PHOTO

said. "It's well-designed to make our life hell."

As the truce between Israel and Hamas took hold on January 19, radical Israeli settlers — incensed over an apparent end to the war and the release of Palestinian prisoners in exchange for Israeli hostages — rampaged through West Bank towns, torching cars and homes.

More checkpoints
Two days later, Israeli forces used drones and attack helicopters descended on the northern West Bank city of Jenin, long a centre of militant activity.

More checkpoints started going up between Palestinian cities, slicing up the occupied West Bank and creating choke points the

Israeli army can shut off on a whim. Crossings that had been open 24/7 started closing during morning and evening rush hours, upturning the lives of hundreds of thousands of people.

New barriers — earthen mounds, iron gates — multiplied, pushing Palestinian cars off well-paved roads and onto rutted paths through open fields. What was once a soldier's glance and head tilt became international border-like inspections.

Israel says the measures are to prevent Hamas from opening a new front in the West Bank. But many experts suspect the crackdown has more to do with assuaging settler leaders like Bezalel Smotrich, the

could raise tensions in the West Bank.

The checkpoints all over the West Bank, it said, were "to ensure safe movement and expand inspections."

Top fight against terror
"Checkpoints are a tool we use in the fight against terror, enabling civilian movement while providing a layer of screening to prevent terrorists from escaping," said Lt. Col. Nadav Shoshani, an Israeli military spokesman.

To spend rush hour at an Israeli checkpoint is to hear of the problems it has brought — Palestinian families divided, money lost, trade disrupted, sick people kept from doctors.

Ahmed Jibril said not even his position as manager of emergency services for the Palestinian Red Crescent protects him.

"We're treated like any other private car," he said, describing dozens of cases in which Israeli soldiers forced ambulances to wait for inspection.

In one case, the Palestinian Health Ministry reported that a 46-year-old woman who had suffered a heart attack in the southern city of Hebron, died while waiting to cross a checkpoint.

The Israeli military said it was not aware of that specific incident. But citing Hamas's use of civilian in-

frastructure like hospitals to conceal fighters, the army acknowledged subjecting medical teams to security checks "while trying to reduce the delay as much as possible in order to mitigate harm."

The U.N. humanitarian agency, or OCHA, reported that, as of last November 28, Israel had 793 checkpoints and roadblocks in the West Bank, 228 more than before the war in Gaza.

With its upscale restaurants and yoga studios, Ramallah gained a reputation in past conflicts for being something of a well-to-do bubble where cafe-hopping residents can feel immune to the harsh realities of the occupation. Now its residents, stuck in rambling long lines to run simple errands, feel under siege.

Palestinian trucks, packed with perishable food and construction materials, are not spared the scrutiny. Soldiers often ask truckers to pull over and unload the cargo for inspection. Fruit rots. Textiles and electronics get damaged.

The delays raise prices, further choking a Palestinian economy that shrank 28% last year as a result of punitive Israeli policies imposed after Hamas's attack, said Palestinian Economist Mohammad Almour.

Vietnam aims at cutting public sector jobs, slash govt. budgets

Agence France-Press
HANOI

Vietnam is aiming to cut one in five public sector jobs and slash billions of dollars from government budgets, mirroring U.S. President Donald Trump's push to take a hatchet to spending.

The drive — due to go before the rubber-stamp parliament in the coming days — is creating unease in a communist country where working for the state long meant a job for life.

Vietnam's top leader To Lam, who half a year ago became Communist Party general secretary following the death of his predecessor, has said that state agencies should not be "safe havens for weak officials."

The reforms, described as "a revolution" by senior officials, will see the number of government minis-

tries and agencies slashed from 30 to 22. The media, defence, the police and the military will all face cuts.

Almost two million people worked in the public sector as of 2023, and one in five of these jobs will go over the next five years, according to the government.

Of those cuts, 100,000 people will be made redundant or offered early retirement, but it has yet to offer clarity on how the much larger target will be reached.

Some have already been sacked, like Thanh, a pseudonym, who said his 12-year career as a TV producer was "aggressively"

terminated last month. The state-controlled news channel where he worked was shuttered, one of five broadcasters already closed, and the father-of-two was given two weeks' notice.

Building on stellar economic growth of 7.1% in 2024, Vietnam — a global manufacturing hub heavily reliant on exports — is aiming for eight per cent this year.

But anxiety is mounting over the country's potential vulnerability to tariffs under the new Trump administration.

Bloated bureaucracy
A bloated bureaucracy is also seen as a brake on growth, as is a high-profile anti-corruption campaign that has slowed everyday transactions.

Vietnam is aiming to become a middle-income country by 2030 and leap into the high-income ranks

by 2045. "They really want to achieve the goal," said Nguyen Hong Hai, Fulbright Vietnamese Scholar at American University in Washington DC.

"It's about [demonstrating] the building on stellar economic growth of the party, the power of the party."

Authorities say savings from the cuts in spending could total \$4.5 billion (13 trillion dong) over the next five years, despite costs of more than \$5 billion for retirement and severance packages.

But Vu Quynh Huong, a civil servant, said she was concerned that the most capable staff — who will have options to work elsewhere — could be the ones who leave.

Streamlining the bureaucracy has been a Communist Party policy for nearly a decade but Lam is pushing the scheme with intensity and rapidly.

With Trump in office, Iranians mark 1979 Islamic Revolution anniversary

Associated Press
TEHRAN

Tens of thousands of Iranians marked the anniversary of the country's 1979 Islamic Revolution, the first such rally since President Donald Trump returned to the White House and restarted his "maximum pressure" campaign targeting Tehran.

The annual commemoration of the end of the rule of the American-backed Shah, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi and the creation of the Shiite theocracy comes this year as deep uncertainty lingers across the country.

Iran faces crushing

sanctions wrecking its economy and the threat of more coming from Mr. Trump, even as the American President suggests he wants to reach a deal with Tehran over its rapidly advancing nuclear programme. Iran's currency, the rial, fell to record low of 928,500 rials to \$1 in aftermarket trading on Monday, a drop of more than 6% from Friday.

Also on Friday, Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei had criticised proposed talks with the United States and described negotiations with America as "not intelligent, wise or honourable."

Mr. Khamenei also suggested

ed that "there should be no negotiations with such a government," though stopped short of issuing a direct order not to engage with Washington.

Iran's reformist President Masoud Pezeshkian, who long has struck a conciliatory tone toward the West, similarly took a harder line in a speech at Azadi, or Freedom, Square in Tehran. He declared Iran to be in a "full-fledged economic war."

"Trump comes and announces let's talk but at the same place he announces and signs all plots," Mr. Pezeshkian said. "They spread propaganda that the country has been



Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian during the marking of 1979 Islamic Revolution anniversary in Tehran on Monday. AFP

weak. We are strong." "We never bow to the foreigners," he added.

People protest
People carried flags, balloons and banners as they

"Death to America" and "Death to Israel," demonstrators also carried images of Mr. Khamenei, who has final say on all state matters.

A demonstrator held up a poster reading, "We are going to wipe out Israel." Iran's military displayed replicas of some of the missiles at the square. People also took selfie photographs in front of a group truck carrying men wearing masks of Mr. Trump

and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu behind bars.

"I know there are a lot of economic problems in the country, but we will support our

country regardless of threats by Trump and Israel," said Mohsen Amin, a 48-year-old teacher.

Iranian state television aired commemorations at sites across the country, urging more people to turn up for the anniversary.

The day, an official holiday, takes on a festival feel with schools and government offices closed, and workers out in the streets.

The Islamic Revolution began with widespread unrest in Iran over the rule of the shah who, terminally ill despite secretly ill with cancer, died in January 1979.

Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini then returned from exile and the government

fell on February 11, 1979, after days of mass demonstrations and confrontations between protesters and security forces.

Later in April, Iranians voted to become an Islamic Republic, a Shiite theocracy with Khomeini as the country's first supreme leader.

Months later, when the United States allowed the shah into the country for cancer treatment in New York, anger boiled over in Tehran leading to the takeover of the U.S. Embassy in November 1979 by militant students. The subsequent 44-day hostage crisis at the embassy then returned from exile and the government



Couples at a pre-wedding photoshoot in Qingdao, Shandong province, China. FILE PHOTO

Marriages in China down by a fifth in 2024: government

Agence France-Presse
BEIJING

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The slide in marriages comes despite a pro-family campaign rolled out in recent years by Beijing, which has included various subsidies and messaging encouraging people to have children.

But experts say that higher costs – especially for education and childcare – and the challenging employment market awaiting fresh graduates are among factors discouraging would-be parents.

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GOING DOWNHILL

- China's population fell for a third consecutive year
- Govt data shows that **6.1 mn** couples registered for marriage in 2024
- The country witnessed **7.68 mn** marriages in 2023
- It recorded **13.47 mn** marriages in 2013



- Over **2.6 mn** couples filed for divorce in 2024
- In the coming decade, roughly **300 mn** Chinese are expected to enter retirement
- The birth rate fell for decades due to China's 1980-2015 one-child policy

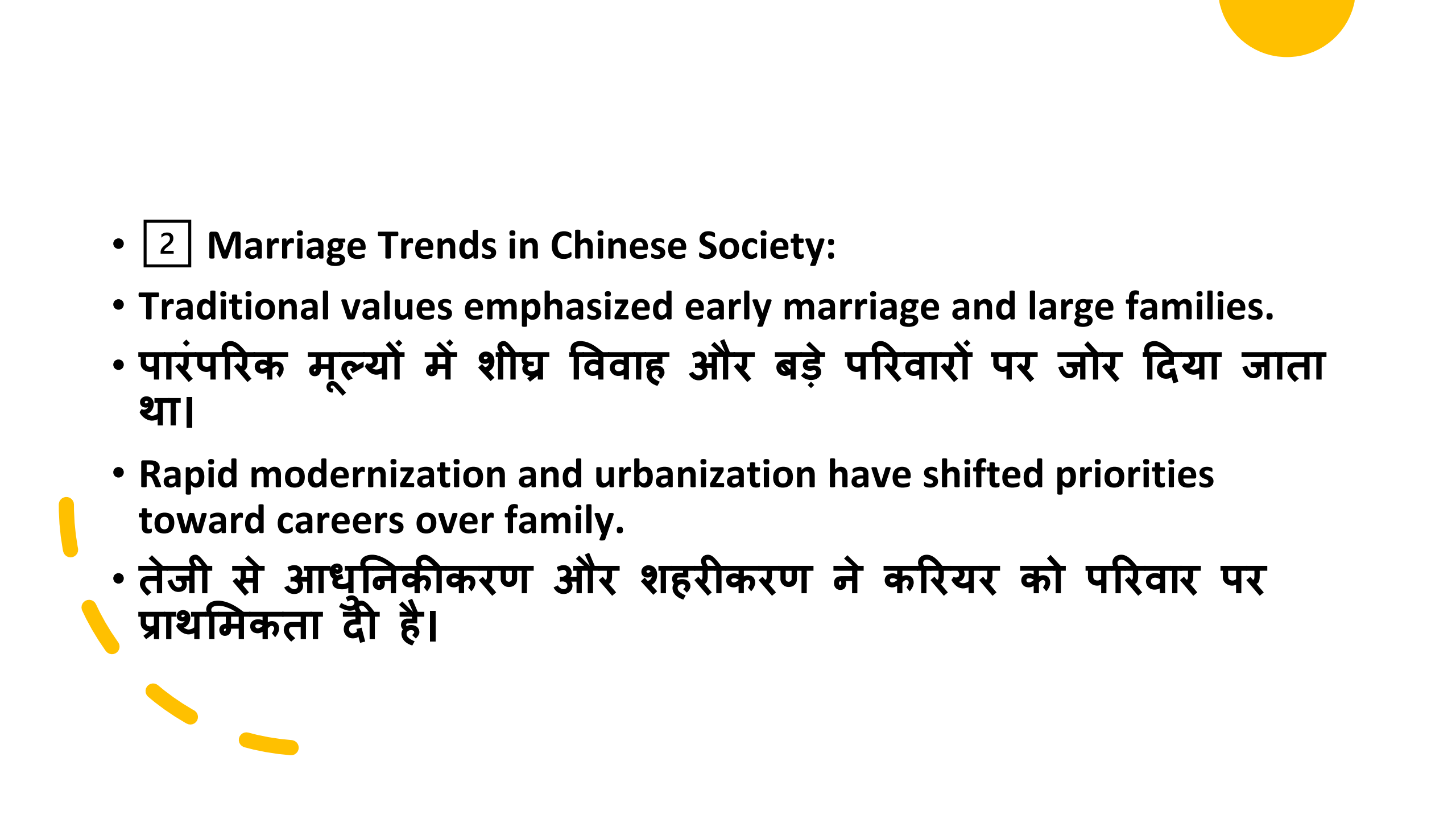
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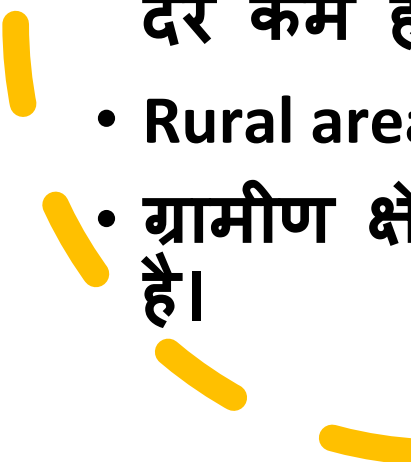
- In 2024, China saw a **20.5% drop in marriages**, with **only 6.1 million couples registering** compared to **7.7 million in 2023**. This decline is part of China's ongoing **demographic crisis**, exacerbated by an **ageing population**, **economic uncertainties**, and **low birth rates**.

• प्रसंग: 2024 में चीन में विवाह दर में 20.5% की गिरावट दर्ज की गई, जहाँ केवल 6.1 मिलियन जोड़ों ने विवाह पंजीकृत कराया, जबकि 2023 में यह संख्या 7.7 मिलियन थी। यह गिरावट जनसंख्या संकट, वृद्ध होती जनसंख्या, आर्थिक अस्थिरता और घटती जन्म दर के कारण हो रही है।

- 👉 China's population is ageing rapidly, with nearly 25% above 60 years.
👉 चीन की आबादी तेजी से बढ़ी हो रही है, जहां 25% से अधिक लोग 60 वर्ष से ऊपर हैं।
- 👉 Rising costs of housing, education, and childcare discourage young couples from marrying.
👉 आवास, शिक्षा और बच्चों की देखभाल की बढ़ती लागत युवा जोड़ों को शादी करने से हतोत्साहित कर रही है।
- 👉 Despite government incentives, economic pressures have led to a three-year decline in population growth.
👉 सरकारी प्रोत्साहनों के बावजूद, आर्थिक दबावों के कारण चीन में तीन वर्षों से जनसंख्या वृद्धि दर में गिरावट जारी है।

- **Historical Aspects | ऐतिहासिक पहलू**
- **1 China's Population Control Policies:**
- **One-Child Policy (1979-2015):** Strict family planning laws led to a **skewed gender ratio and ageing crisis.**
- **एक-बच्चा नीति (1979-2015):** कठोर परिवार नियोजन कानूनों ने लिंगानुपात असंतुलन और वृद्धावस्था संकट को जन्म दिया।
- **Two-Child Policy (2016) & Three-Child Policy (2021):** Failed to reverse declining birth rates.
- **दो-बच्चा नीति (2016) और तीन-बच्चा नीति (2021):** घटती जन्म दर को रोकने में विफल रही।

- 
- **2 Marriage Trends in Chinese Society:**
 - Traditional values emphasized early marriage and large families.
 - पारंपरिक मूल्यों में शीघ्र विवाह और बड़े परिवारों पर जोर दिया जाता था।
 - Rapid modernization and urbanization have shifted priorities toward careers over family.
 - तेजी से आधुनिकीकरण और शहरीकरण ने करियर को परिवार पर प्राथमिकता दी है।

- 
- Geographical Aspects | भौगोलिक पहलू
 - **1** Urban vs. Rural Marriage Trends:
 - Urban areas see lower marriage rates due to career focus and high living costs.
 - शहरी क्षेत्रों में करियर प्राथमिकता और उच्च जीवन लागत के कारण विवाह दर कम है।
 - Rural areas face gender imbalance due to decades of male preference.
 - ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में दशकों से पुरुषों की प्राथमिकता के कारण लिंग असंतुलन है।
- 

2 Regional Variations in Birth Rates:

Cities like Beijing and Shanghai have the lowest fertility rates.

बीजिंग और शंघाई जैसे शहरों में प्रजनन दर सबसे कम है।

China's northeastern provinces face severe population decline.

चीन के पूर्वोत्तर प्रांतों में जनसंख्या गिरावट अधिक है।

Social Aspects | सामाजिक पहलू

1 Changing Social Norms:

Younger generations prioritize careers, education, and personal freedom over marriage.

नए युवा करियर, शिक्षा और व्यक्तिगत स्वतंत्रता को विवाह से अधिक महत्व देते हैं।

Online dating and social media change relationship dynamics.

ऑनलाइन डेटिंग और सोशल मीडिया ने रिश्तों की गतिशीलता बदल दी है।

Record St: Rupee nears 88/\$, gold ₹88k

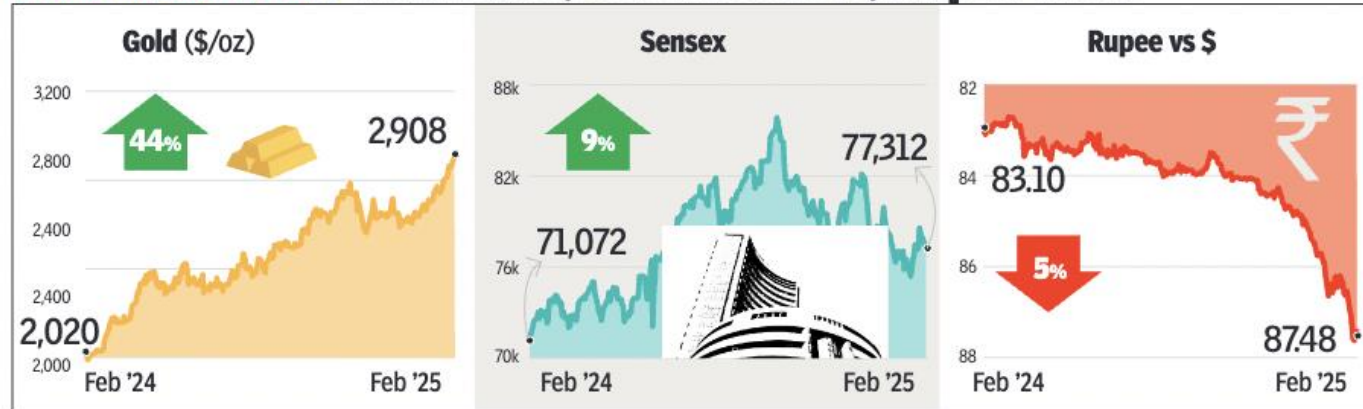
Sensex Slides 548 Pts As FPIs Continue To Sell

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai/Hyderabad: Investors across geographies and assets were jittery on Monday as US President Donald Trump continued to announce new measures, mostly related to trade tariffs. During the day, the rupee weakened to a new record low at close to 88-to-a-dollar mark but closed substantially off that mark, at 87.48, while gold prices inched closer to the Rs 88,000-per-10-gram mark, a record high level. On Dalal Street, across-the-board selling pulled the sensex down by 548 points or 0.7% to 77,312.

However, small and midcap stocks were affected more than

Turbulent Year: Gold Rush, Stock Selloff, Rupee Rout



blue chips by the selloff led by foreign funds. BSE's midcap index was down 2.1% while small-cap was down 2.3%.

On Monday, foreign portfolio investors were net sellers at Rs 2,464 crore, BSE data showed. So far this year, FPIs have net withdrawn nearly Rs 90,000 crore from the stock market alone, data from NSDL and BSE showed.

This outflow of foreign funds

also had a negative impact on the rupee-dollar exchange rate, which is hitting new record low levels on a regular basis.

According to Jateen Trivedi of LKP Securities, the rupee's weakness was mainly due to the recent continued outflow of foreign funds post-Budget and RBI policy as neither of the events provided any substantial reforms or structural shifts be-

yond tax sops for retail investors and a minor cut in interest rate by the central bank. "With ongoing capital outflows, global trade tensions, and a strong dollar, rupee volatility is expected to persist in the 87.25-88 range."

In the bullion market, propelled by the Trump effect, gold breached the \$2,900/ounce mark for the first time ever to hit an intraday high of \$2,911 in interna-







tional spot markets late on Monday. This rally sent prices in local spot markets soaring by over Rs 1,000 in a single day to over Rs 87,250. On MCX, the futures prices for April delivery had hit an all-time high at Rs 85,835.

HDFC Securities attributed the latest high to increased fund flow towards gold as a safe haven asset in response to Trump's latest decision to impose 25% tariffs on all steel and aluminium imports to the US.

In Aug 2020, when gold was at its then peak of \$2,019, rupee was pegged at around 75 to the dollar. Indian Bullion & Jewellers' Association's Surendra Mehta said the sudden surge in prices post Trump's coming to power has driven customers out of the market. "It's a one-sided sentiment. There are no customers in the market. Walk-ins have plunged 80%. It's a big problem as even gold leasing rates are going up," Mehta said.

- On Monday, the Indian rupee depreciated to a record low of ₹88 per dollar, while gold prices surged past ₹88,000 per 10 grams.
- The decline in rupee value was driven by foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) withdrawing ₹2,464 crore from Indian markets, along with global economic uncertainties and U.S. trade policies.

• प्रसंग: सोमवार को भारतीय रुपया रिकॉर्ड न्यूनतम स्तर ₹88 प्रति डॉलर पर पहुंच गया, जबकि सोने की कीमतें ₹88,000 प्रति 10 ग्राम से ऊपर चली गईं। रुपये की गिरावट का मुख्य कारण विदेशी पोर्टफोलियो निवेशकों (FPIs) द्वारा ₹2,464 करोड़ की निकासी, साथ ही वैश्विक आर्थिक अस्थिरता और अमेरिका की व्यापार नीतियां रहीं।

-  The Sensex fell by 548 points to close at 77,312.
 सेंसेक्स 548 अंकों की गिरावट के साथ 77,312 पर बंद हुआ।
-  Foreign investors pulled out nearly ₹90,000 crore from stock markets this year.
 इस वर्ष अब तक विदेशी निवेशकों ने शेयर बाजार से लगभग ₹90,000 करोड़ निकाले।
-  Gold breached the \$2,900 per ounce mark for the first time.
 सोना पहली बार \$2,900 प्रति औंस के स्तर को पार कर गया।

- **1 Rupee-Dollar Volatility Over the Years:**
- **1991 Crisis:** The rupee was devalued due to an economic crisis.
- **1991 संकट:** आर्थिक संकट के कारण रुपये का अवमूल्यन किया गया।
- **Global Financial Crisis (2008):** The rupee depreciated sharply due to capital outflows.
- **वैश्विक वित्तीय संकट (2008):** पूंजी निकासी के कारण रुपया तेजी से गिरा।
- **COVID-19 Pandemic (2020):** The rupee weakened due to economic slowdown and global trade disruptions.
- **कोविड-19 महामारी (2020):** आर्थिक मंदी और वैश्विक व्यापार बाधाओं के कारण रुपया कमजोर हुआ।

- **2 Historical Gold Trends in India:**
- **Gold has traditionally been a hedge against inflation and currency depreciation.**
- **सोना परंपरागत रूप से मुद्रास्फीति और मुद्रा अवमूल्यन के खिलाफ एक बचाव रहा है।**
- **In 2011, gold reached ₹30,000 per 10 grams due to global uncertainties.**
- **2011 में वैश्विक अनिश्चितताओं के कारण सोना ₹30,000 प्रति 10 ग्राम पहुंचा।**

- **Economic Aspects | आर्थिक पहलू**
- **1 Reasons for Rupee Depreciation:**
- **Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) pulling out capital.**
- **विदेशी पोर्टफोलियो निवेशकों द्वारा पूंजी निकासी।**
- **Rising U.S. interest rates attracting investment to the U.S.**
- **अमेरिका में ब्याज दरें बढ़ने से निवेश वहां स्थानांतरित होना।**
- **Trade war tensions and global uncertainties.**
- **व्यापार युद्ध और वैश्विक अनिश्चितताएँ।**



- **2** Impact of Weak Rupee:

- Increases import costs (e.g., crude oil, electronics).

- आयात लागत बढ़ती है (जैसे कच्चा तेल, इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स)।

- Higher inflation due to expensive imported goods.

- महंगे आयातित सामान के कारण मुद्रास्फीति बढ़ती है।

- Boosts exports by making Indian goods cheaper globally.


- निर्यात को बढ़ावा मिलता है क्योंकि भारतीय वस्तुएँ सस्ती हो जाती हैं।



- **3 Gold Prices & Safe Haven Demand:**
- **Gold is seen as a safe asset during economic uncertainty.**
- **अर्थिक अस्थिरता के समय सोने को सुरक्षित संपत्ति माना जाता है।**
- **Investors shift to gold when stock markets decline.**
- **शेयर बाजार में गिरावट के समय निवेशक सोने में निवेश करते हैं।**

- **Geographical Aspects | भौगोलिक पहलू**
- **1 India's Dependence on Foreign Capital:**
- **India imports 85% of its crude oil needs, making rupee depreciation costly.**
- **भारत अपनी कच्चे तेल की जरूरतों का 85% आयात करता है, जिससे रुपये का अवमूल्यन महंगा हो जाता है।**
- **2 Global Trade & Investment:**
- **Weak rupee makes imports expensive but boosts exports.**
- **कमजोर रुपया आयात को महंगा बनाता है, लेकिन निर्यात को बढ़ावा देता है।**
- **India is the second-largest consumer of gold after China.**
- **भारत चीन के बाद सोने का दूसरा सबसे बड़ा उपभोक्ता है।**

BIMSTEC Youth Summit

- 
- The Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports officially inaugurated the first BIMSTEC Youth Summit in Gandhinagar, Gujarat, focused on promoting cooperation and developing leadership abilities among the youth from BIMSTEC nations.

BIMSTEC

The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation



Nepal



Bhutan



Bangladesh



India



Thailand



Myanmar



Sri Lanka

7 MEMBER COUNTRIES



Objectives of BIMSTEC



To enable environment for rapid economic development.



To collaborate and mutually assist members on matters of common interest.



To maintain close and beneficial cooperation with existing international and regional organizations.



To endeavour to eradicate poverty from the Bay of Bengal region.



To establish multidimensional connectivity, promote synergy among connectivity frameworks in the region.

Founded in 1997 through **Bangkok Declaration**



Location of BIMSTEC in [Asia](#)

Secretariat	Dhaka, Bangladesh ^[3]
Official language	English
Membership	 Bangladesh  Bhutan  India  Myanmar  Nepal  Sri Lanka  Thailand
Leaders	
• Chairmanship	 Thailand (since March 2022) ^[4]
• Secretary General	 India (since 2023) ^[5]
Establishment	6 June 1997; 27 years ago
Area	
•	4,876,941 km ² (1,882,997 sq mi) (7th)
Population	
• 2020 estimate	1,723,388,648 ^[6]
• Density	353.37/km ² (915.2/sq mi)
GDP (PPP)	estimate
• Total	 US\$18.582 trillion ^[7] (3rd)
GDP (nominal)	2023 estimate
• Total	 \$5.225 trillion ^[7] (4th)

Theme: 'Youth as a bridge for intra-BIMSTEC exchange'

Aim: The Summit provides a platform for young leaders from BIMSTEC nations to engage in discussions on regional cooperation and emerging challenges.



SRY Gene

- Re
w
un



What is Sex Determination?


- Sex determination is the **biological process** that decides whether a baby develops as a **male or female**, influenced by **genetic and hormonal factors**.

Role of Chromosomes in Sex Determination:

- **Humans have 23 pairs of chromosomes**, including one pair of sex chromosomes: **XX (female) or XY (male)**.
- **Egg cells always carry an X chromosome**, while **sperm cells carry either X or Y**.
- **If a sperm with an X chromosome fertilizes an egg, the baby is female (XX)**; if a **Y-carrying sperm fertilizes the egg, the baby is male (XY)**.



- **What is the SRY Gene?**

- The **SRY (Sex-determining Region Y) gene** is found on the **Y chromosome** and acts as the **master switch** for male development.
 - **Function:** It activates a cascade of genes that trigger the formation of **testes** in the embryo, which then produce **testosterone**, promoting male characteristics.
 - **SRY Absence:** If the **SRY gene is missing or non-functional**, the embryo develops **female reproductive structures** by default.
- 

- **How SRY Gene Influences Sex Determination?**

- **Normal Process:** If the **SRY gene is present and functional**, the embryo develops into a **male**; if absent, it follows the **female pathway**.
- **Rare Exceptions:** Sometimes, the SRY gene **translocates** (moves) from the **Y chromosome to the X chromosome** due to mutation. This can lead to:
 - **SRY-Positive Males (XX):** Individuals with an **SRY-bearing X chromosome** develop as males but remain sterile.
 - **SRY-Positive Females (XX):** In exceptional cases, females carrying the **SRY gene** develop normally due to **biased X chromosome inactivation**, preventing the gene's function.

100 GW Solar Power Capacity




India has crossed 100 GW of installed solar capacity, marking a key milestone toward its 500 GW non-fossil energy goal by 2030.


Growth in Solar Capacity: It surged over 35 times in the last decade, rising from 2.82 GW in 2014 to 100 GW in 2025.

The grand total of solar and hybrid projects stands at 296.59 GW.

Solar Contribution to Climate Goals: Solar power contributes 47% of India's total renewable energy capacity.



Top Solar States: Rajasthan, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, and Madhya Pradesh.



Growth in Manufacturing: Solar module production capacity surged from 2 GW in 2014 to 60 GW in 2024.

Achieving Climate Goals



Non-Fossil Energy Capacity

Achieving 500 GW of non-fossil energy capacity by 2030.



Renewable Energy Source

Sourcing 50% of energy requirements from renewable sources by 2030.



Carbon Emission Reduction

Reducing projected carbon emissions by 1 billion tonnes by 2030.



Economic Carbon Intensity

Lowering carbon intensity of the economy by 45% by 2030.




Net-Zero Goal

Reaching net-zero emissions by 2070.



Baltic Nations

- 
- The three Baltic states disconnected their electricity systems from Russia's power grid to integrate the countries more closely with the European Union and boost security.
 -

THE BALTIC STATES

- Capitals
- ▲ Highest points



Baltic nations

Baltic states are in the northeastern region of Europe and contain the countries of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, on the eastern **shores of the Baltic Sea**.

They are bounded on the west and north by the **Baltic Sea**, which gives the region its name, on the east by Russia, on the southeast by Belarus, and on the southwest by Poland.



- **Baltic Sea**

- The **largest expanse of brackish water in the world**, the semi-enclosed and relatively shallow.

- The Baltic Sea is an **arm of the North Atlantic Ocean**. It is bound by the **Scandinavian Peninsula**, the mainland of Northern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Europe, and the Danish islands.




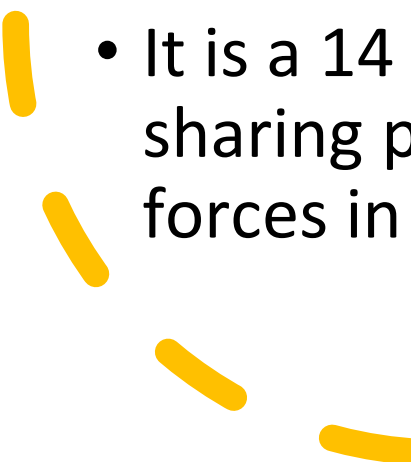
- The **Baltic Sea** is artificially linked to the **White Sea** by the **White Sea Canal** and to the **North Sea** by the **Kiel Canal**.
- It includes the **Gulf of Bothnia**, the **Bay of Bothnia**, the **Gulf of Finland**, the **Gulf of Riga**, and the **Bay of Gdańsk**.







Exercise 'Cyclone 2025'

- 
- **Exercise 'Cyclone 2025'** began at the Mahajan Field Firing Range in Rajasthan .
 - **Exercise 'Cyclone 2025'**
 - It is a **joint military exercise** between India and Egypt .
 - The first edition of the exercise was conducted in 2023 in India.
 - It is a 14 day exercise which aims to enhance defence cooperation by sharing professional skills and improving interoperability of special forces in desert environments
- 

Word of the day

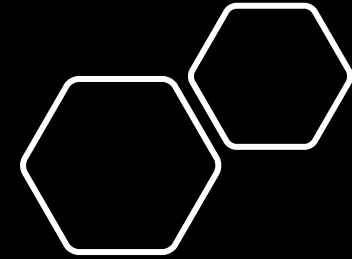
Canard:

a deliberately misleading fabrication; a false or improbable account

Usage: *The book should refute the old canard that he is guilty.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/canardpro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /kə'nɑːd/



Fun fact

The World's Largest Residential Palace

- The **Istana Nurul Iman**, the Sultan's palace, is the **largest residential palace in the world**, with **1,788 rooms**, **257 bathrooms**, and a garage for **110 cars**.





Top 10 MCQ from the session

Word of the day

Malapropism:

the unintentional misuse of a word with one that sounds similar

Synonym: misstatement

Pronunciation: newsth.live/malapropismpro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /ˈmæləpɹɒp,ɪzəm/



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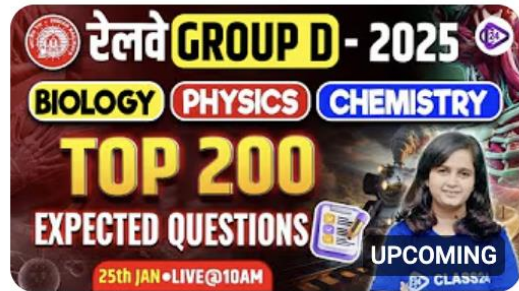


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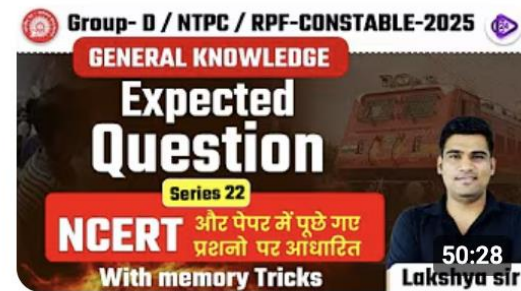


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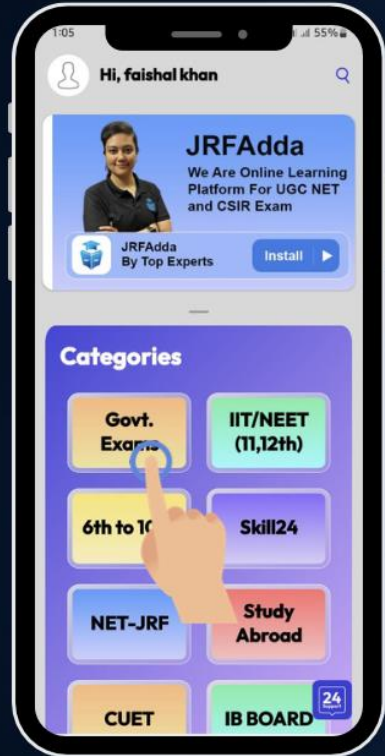
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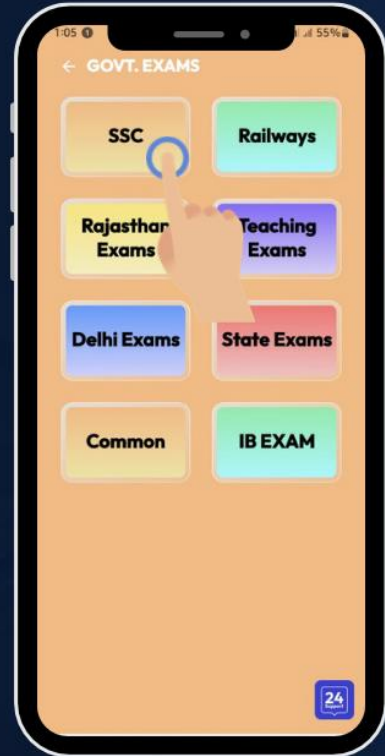
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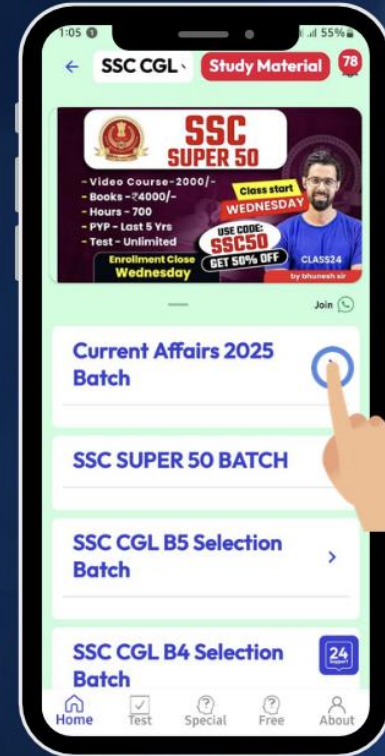
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Thank you
guys.
