

Daily Current Affairs



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10 MCQ QUIZ



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

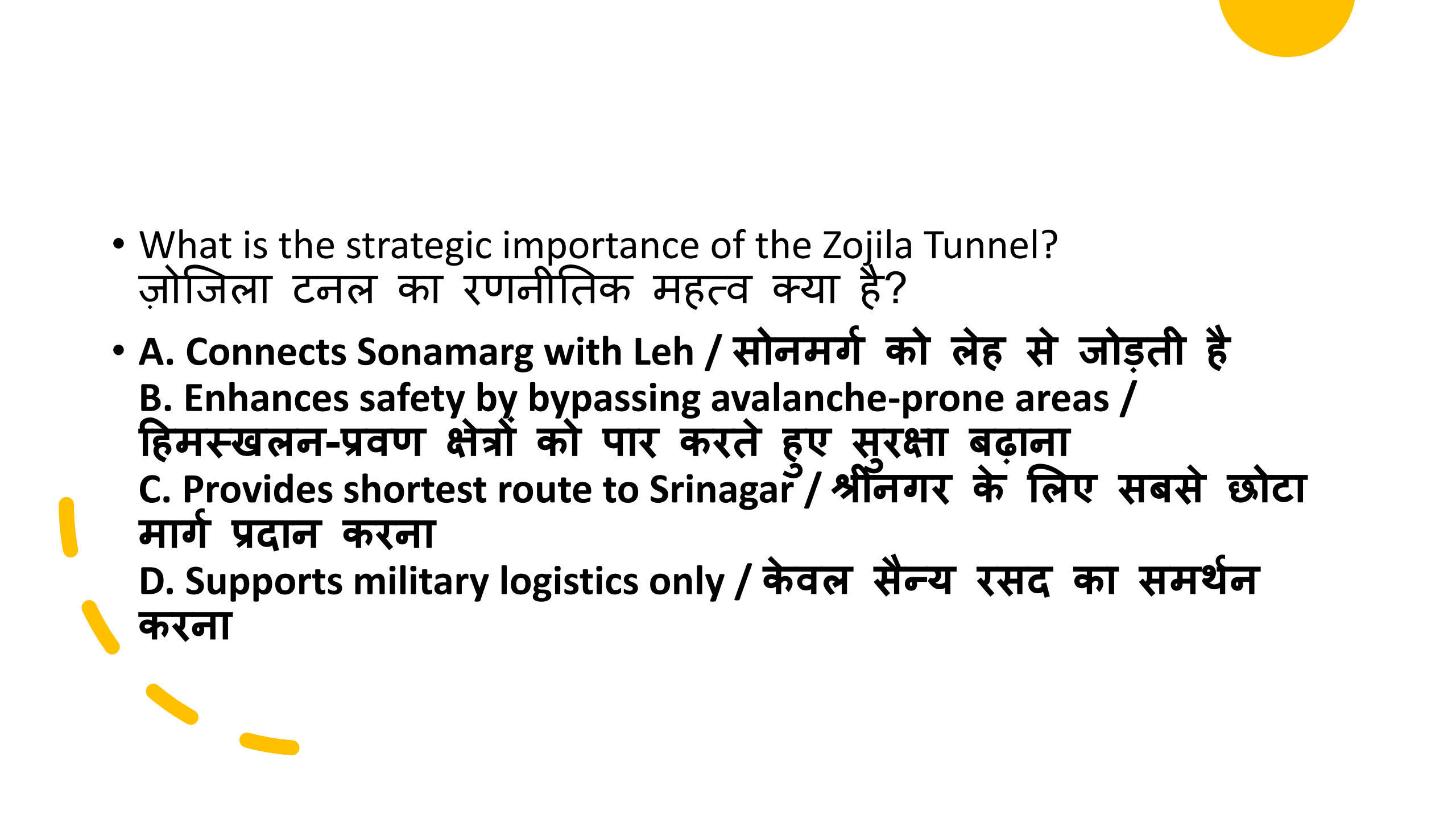
Top 10 MCQ from the session for
every exam

- What is the key significance of the Z-Morh Tunnel in Jammu and Kashmir?

जम्मू और कश्मीर में जेड-मोर्ह टनल का मुख्य महत्व क्या है?

- **A. Boosts year-round connectivity between Kashmir and Ladakh / कश्मीर और लद्दाख के बीच सालभर की कनेक्टिविटी को बढ़ावा देना**
- B. First underwater tunnel in India / भारत की पहली अंडरवाटर टनल**
- C. Promotes tourism in Leh only / केवल लेह में पर्यटन को बढ़ावा देना**
- D. Connects India with China / भारत को चीन से जोड़ती है**

- 
- What is the total length of the Z-Morh Tunnel?
जेड-मोर्ह टनल की कुल लंबाई क्या है?
 - **A. 11.5 km**
 - B. 13.14 km**
 - C. 15 km**
 - D. 10.75 km**
- 


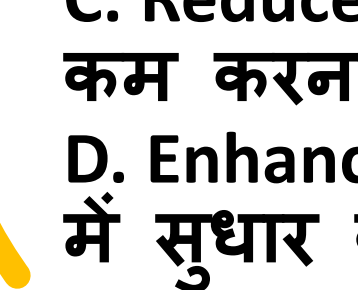
- 
- What is the strategic importance of the Zojila Tunnel?
ज़ोजिला टनल का रणनीतिक महत्व क्या है?
 - **A. Connects Sonamarg with Leh / सोनमर्ग को लेह से जोड़ती है**
 - **B. Enhances safety by bypassing avalanche-prone areas / हिमस्खलन-प्रवण क्षेत्रों को पार करते हुए सुरक्षा बढ़ाना**
 - **C. Provides shortest route to Srinagar / श्रीनगर के लिए सबसे छोटा मार्ग प्रदान करना**
 - **D. Supports military logistics only / केवल सैन्य रसद का समर्थन करना**

- What is the primary focus of the Bhashini Project launched by MeitY?
MeitY द्वारा शुरू किए गए भाषिणी परियोजना का प्राथमिक उद्देश्य क्या है?
- **A. Promotes internet access in regional languages / क्षेत्रीय भाषाओं में इंटरनेट एक्सेस को बढ़ावा देना**
- **B. Provides AI-based healthcare solutions / एआई-आधारित स्वास्थ्य सेवा समाधान प्रदान करना**
- **C. Creates a common digital marketplace / एक सामान्य डिजिटल मार्केटप्लेस बनाना**
- **D. Enables satellite-based communication / उपग्रह-आधारित संचार को सक्षम बनाना**

- In which year was the Bhashini Project launched?
भाषिणी परियोजना किस वर्ष शुरू की गई थी?
- **A. 2020**
- **B. 2021**
- **C. 2022**
- **D. 2023**





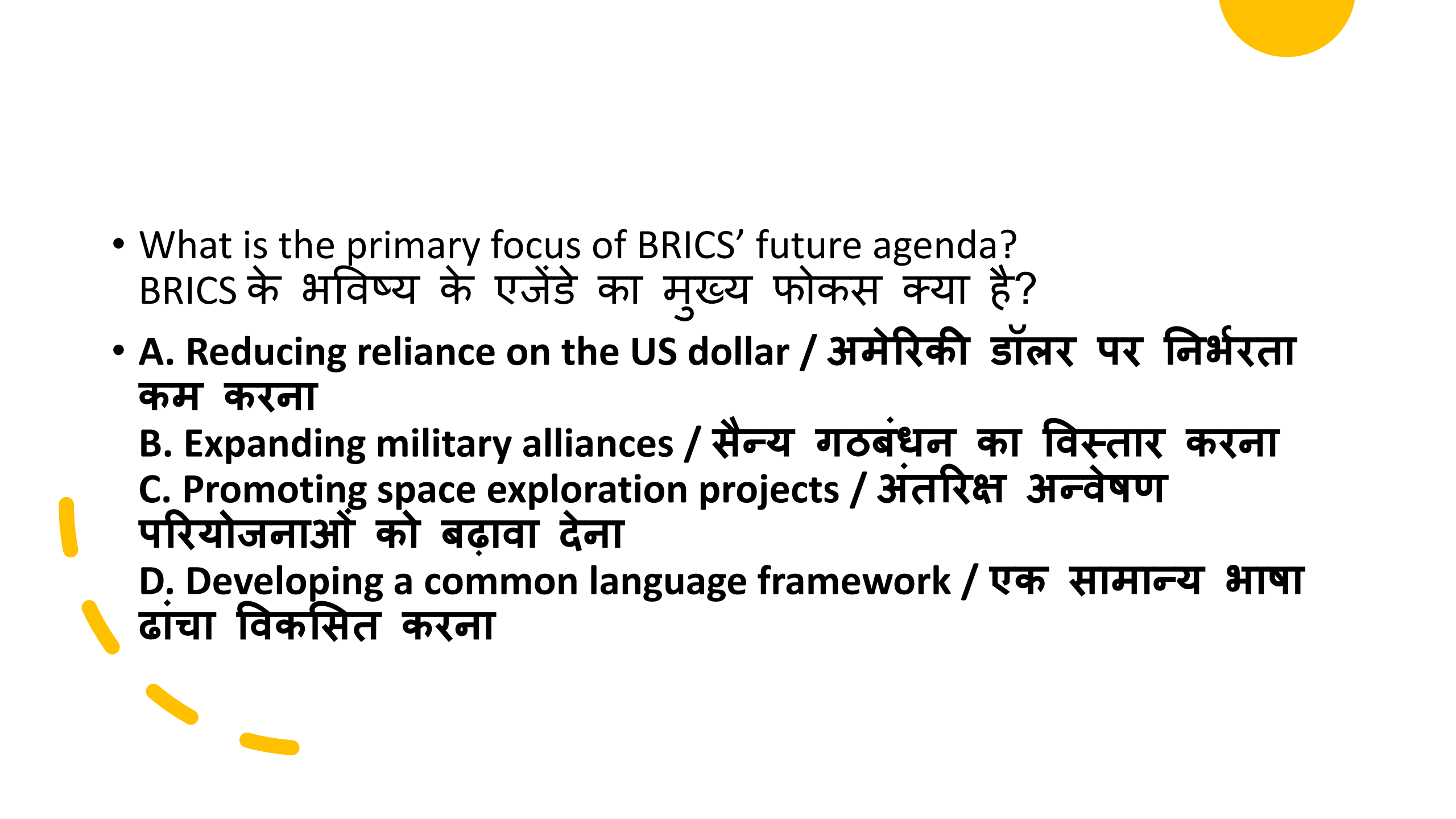
- What technique has the Prayagraj Municipal Corporation adopted to create urban forests?
शहरी जंगल बनाने के लिए प्रयागराज नगर निगम ने कौन सी तकनीक अपनाई है?
- **A. Miyawaki Technique / मियावाकी तकनीक**
- **B. Hydroponics / हाइड्रोपोनिक्स**
- **C. Vertical Gardening / वर्टिकल गार्डनिंग**
- **D. Agroforestry / एग्रोफोरेस्ट्री**

- 
- What is the main goal of the Miyawaki Technique?
मियावाकी तकनीक का मुख्य उद्देश्य क्या है?
 - **A. Create dense forests in small urban spaces / छोटे शहरी क्षेत्रों में घने जंगल बनाना**
 - **B. Increase agricultural yield / कृषि उपज बढ़ाना**
 - **C. Reduce carbon emissions from cities / शहरों से कार्बन उत्सर्जन को कम करना**
 - **D. Enhance soil quality for farming / खेती के लिए मिट्टी की गुणवत्ता में सुधार करना**
- 

- Which country is the origin of the Miyawaki Technique?
मियावाकी तकनीक का उद्गम किस देश में हुआ?
- **A. China / चीन**
- **B. India / भारत**
- **C. Japan / जापान**
- **D. South Korea / दक्षिण कोरिया**



- 
- What new member joined BRICS in January 2025?
जनवरी 2025 में BRICS में नया सदस्य कौन शामिल हुआ?
 - A. Indonesia / इंडोनेशिया
 - B. Saudi Arabia / सऊदी अरब
 - C. Turkey / तुर्की
 - D. UAE / यूएई
- 

- 
- What is the primary focus of BRICS' future agenda?
BRICS के भविष्य के एजेंडे का मुख्य फोकस क्या है?
 - **A. Reducing reliance on the US dollar / अमेरिकी डॉलर पर निर्भरता कम करना**
 - **B. Expanding military alliances / सैन्य गठबंधन का विस्तार करना**
 - **C. Promoting space exploration projects / अंतरिक्ष अन्वेषण परियोजनाओं को बढ़ावा देना**
 - **D. Developing a common language framework / एक सामान्य भाषा ढांचा विकसित करना**

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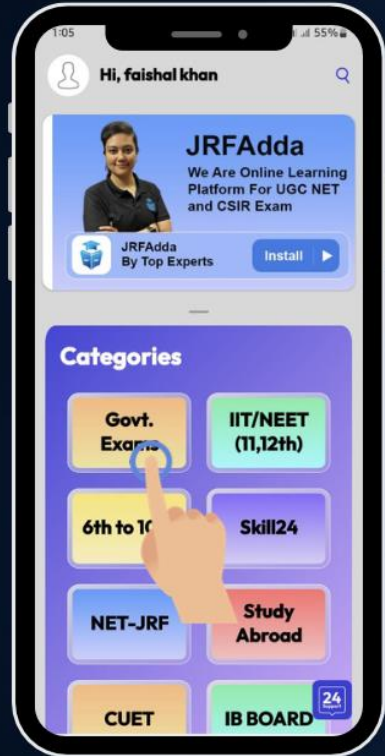
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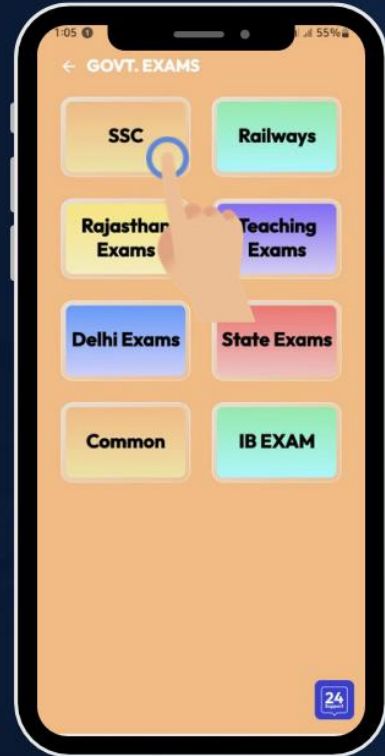
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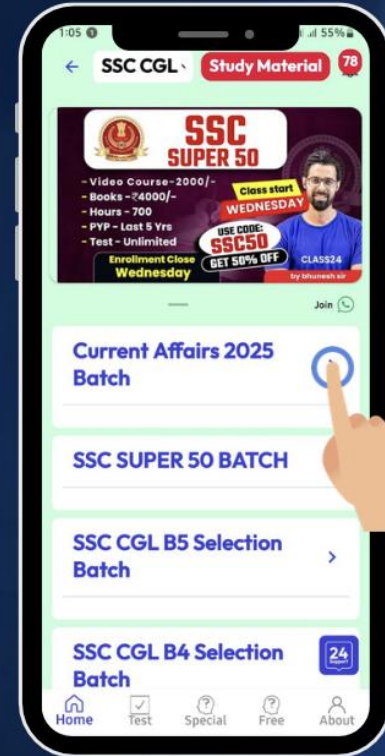
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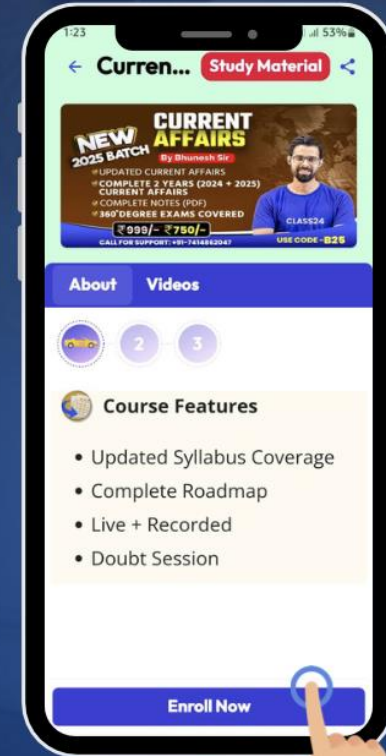
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Step 3

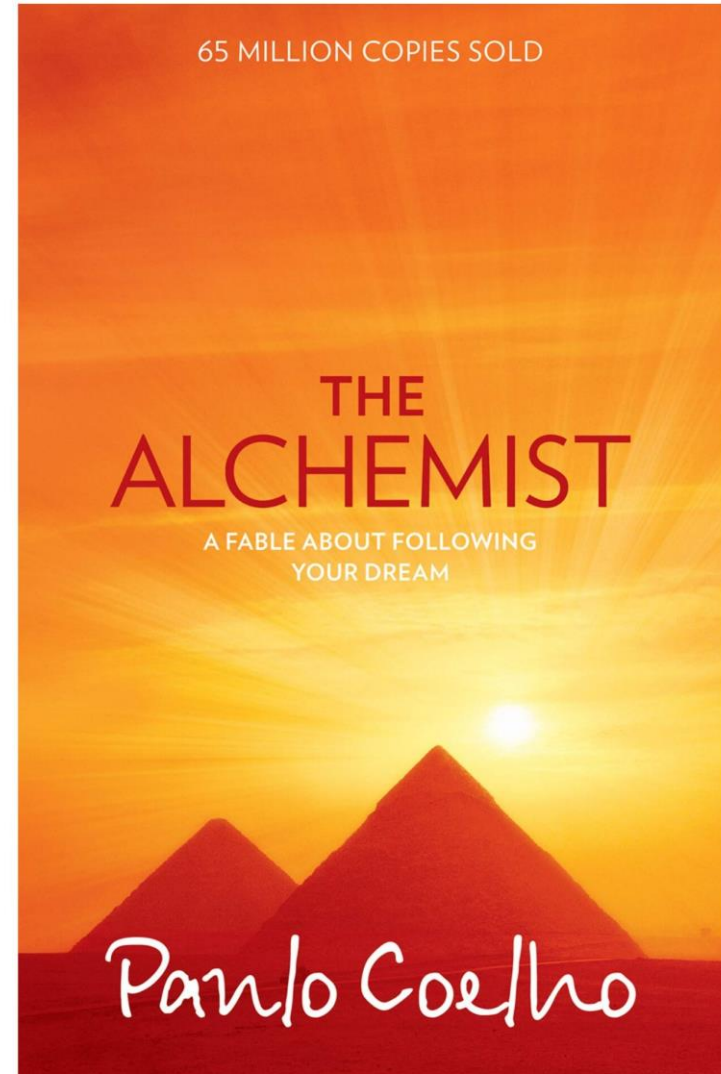


Step 4



Paulo Coelho, *The Alchemist*

- *“When you want something, all the universe conspires in helping you to achieve it.” –*



JEE ATTEMPTS
Board's 'folly' caused dispute, remarks SC
NEWS » PAGE 3

PART 1.5 DEGREE CELSIUS
2024 global temperature cracks climate Rubicon
NEWS » PAGE 5

BILATERAL TIES
Afghanistan no threat to any nation: Taliban
WORLD » PAGE 12

TO WEAR OR NOT WEAR
In Kerala, a squabble over shirts and seers
Remark sparks debate, citizens stand divided
GROUND ZERO » PAGE 7

ACHING THE CHASE
Pratika, Tejal power India to victory
SPORT » PAGE 14

INSIDE



Water recedes in Assam coal mine; 8 miners trapped
UMBANGSO
Water levels in the flooded rat-hole coal mine in Assam's Dima Hasao district dropped by seven metres on Friday, raising hopes of rescuing eight trapped miners. » PAGE 3

Focus on Odisha during Singapore President's visit
NEW DELHI
Singapore President Tharman Shanmugaratnam will visit India from January 15-18, focusing on Odisha to explore potential projects and will mark the 50th anniversary of bilateral relations with India, said sources. » PAGE 3

Alkali Dal accepts Sukhbir Badal's resignation
CHANDIGARH
The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) working committee accepted Sukhbir Singh Badal's resignation as party president, marking a course correction to revive the century-old party struggling for a political comeback in Punjab. » PAGE 4

3mn children in Sudan face acute malnutrition: UN
PORT SUDAN
Amid the 20 months of war between the Army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, an estimated 1.2 million children under the age of five are expected to face acute malnutrition this year, Sudan, says UNICEF. » PAGE 12

Trump sentenced in hush money case

U.S. President-elect gets an unconditional discharge, New York judge spares Trump prison term or fine | He will become the first felon in the White House; calls it a 'setback for the New York court system' | Outside the courthouse, Trump supporters held giant banner emblazoned with their idol's name

Agency France-Press
NEW YORK
A judge sentenced Donald Trump to an unconditional discharge on Friday for covering up hush money payments to a porn star despite the U.S. President-elect's efforts to avoid becoming the first felon in the White House.
The judge spared Mr. Trump prison or a fine even though the 34 counts of falsifying business records on which he was convicted in May 2024 carried potential jail time. Instead New York judge Juan Merchan handed down the mildest criminal sanction available, an unconditional discharge — a relatively uncommon measure.
"Never before has this court been presented with such a unique and remarkable set of circumstances," Mr. Merchan said. "The only lawful sentence that permits entry of a judgment of conviction without encroaching on the highest office of the land is an unconditional discharge."
Mr. Trump attended his sentencing virtually, with the judge, lawyers and media packed into the scruffy Manhattan courtroom that was the backdrop to the trial's high drama, legal wrangling and vitriolic personal attacks by the divisive Republican.
"Terrible experience" "This has been a very terrible experience. I think it's been a tremendous setback for New York and the New York court system," Trump said before the discharge was passed. "It was done to damage my



Case closed: Donald Trump and attorney Todd Blanche appear virtually before judge Juan Merchan for the sentencing hearing. Mr. Trump had been convicted of a "premeditated and continuous" hush money scheme in this case was unanimous and decisive and it must be respected." The trial saw Mr. Trump forced to look on as a string of witnesses testified that he had fraudulently covered up illicit payments to porn star Stormy Daniels in an effort to stop her dis-

closing their tryst ahead of the 2016 presidential election, which he ultimately won.
Mr. Trump had sought a suspension of the criminal proceedings after a New York State appeals court dismissed his effort to have the hearing delayed.
However, the Supreme Court ruled that sentencing could proceed.
Prosecutors opposed the effort to stave off sentencing, 10 days before Mr. Trump is due to be sworn in for a second term, arguing it was wrong for the apex court to hear the case when the mogul still had avenues of appeal to pursue in New York.
First convicted felony
An unconditional discharge is a measure without any sanctions or restriction that nonetheless upholds the jury's guilty verdict — and Mr. Trump's infamy as the first former President to be convicted of a felony.
The 78-year-old had potentially faced up to four years in prison.
"He's sticking his middle finger at the judge, the jury, the system of justice, and laughing," said Pace University law professor and former prosecutor Bennett Gershman ahead of the sentencing.
Outside the courthouse, Trump supporters held a giant banner emblazoned with the mogul's still had avenues of appeal to pursue in New York.
Mr. Trump's counsel had argued sentencing should have been postponed while the Republican appealed his conviction, but New York state Associate Justice Ellen Gesmer rejected that on Tuesday.
Mr. Trump repeatedly called the prosecution a "witch hunt" which Mr. Steinglass said was "designed to have a chilling effect."
"This defendant has caused enormous damage to public perception of the criminal justice system," Mr. Trump's lawyer Todd Blanche said. "Every very much disagree with much of what the [prosecution] just said."
Mr. Trump was certified as the winner of the 2024 presidential election on Monday, four years after his supporters rioted at the US Capitol as he sought to overturn his 2020 defeat.



Brief reprieve: As winds abate, fire crews continue to battle the raging wildfires devastating Los Angeles this week. In the West Hills section of the city on Thursday, the fires have so far killed 10 persons and destroyed nearly 10,000 structures, AP JOINT/PHOTO BY AP/WIDE WORLD



Art in a box: President Droupadi Murmu's guests are set to receive a gift box containing the South India's hand-crafted crafts. Here are some products featured in the hamper:

President Murmu's invite for this year's Republic Day reception set to honour crafts from South

Nistula Hebbar
NEW DELHI
A stiff white card embossed with the Lion Capital of Ashoka in the usual format of the invitation card sent out for the customary 'At Home' reception held at Rashtrapati Bhavan on Republic and Independence Day. This year, however, to mark 75 years since the formation of the Republic of India, things are different.
In a departure from convention, invitees for the "At Home" will receive a specially curated box of crafts from the five southern States — Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Telangana, and Andhra Pradesh — along with the card.
The idea of this special

box, packed with symbolic meaning, was floated by President Droupadi Murmu herself, and executed by Rashtrapati Bhavan, with the support of the National Institute of Design (NID), which has campuses in Ahmedabad and Bengaluru (where President Murmu is a Visitor).
"The idea behind the artefacts in the invitation box is the 5,000-year civilizational history of Bharat, with the underlying message of sustainability and colour schemes that in-volve the forming of the Indian Republic," Rashtrapati Bhavan officials told *The Hindu*.
The craft products in the invitation box are made in the southern States, have GI (geographi-

cal indicator) tags, and are drawn from the "One District One Product" scheme.
The institute's Bengaluru campus, with craftsmen from five States still hard at work there.
The craft elements will be packed in a box made of bamboo weave with Kalamkari paintings on it done by Murmalakunta artisans. The box will include an Ikat-Pochampalli cover that can be used even after the box has been dismantled, a fridge magnet depicting Mysore's Ganjifa art, usually seen in the famous Ganjifa playing cards, and a handmade pouch of Kanjeevaram silk from Tamil Nadu. "Etikoppakka dolls from Andhra Pradesh are included, along with a bookmark made of screw-pine leaves woven by artists from Kerala," he added.
According to NID Ahmedabad director Ashok Mondal, the curation and done the crafting was done in

SC stays GST notices to online gaming companies

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI
The Supreme Court on Friday stayed the operation of showcause notices of ₹12 lakh crore issued under the Goods and Services Tax, proceedings against online gaming companies.
A Bench of Justices J.B. Pardiwala and K. M. Shahabuddin passed the order on petitions filed by 49 online gaming companies.
Advocate Abhishek A. Rastogi, who represented the companies in court, said a freeze on further action protected his clients from any coercive action and ensured that demands made in the showcause notices were not time-barred.
The court listed the case next on March 18.
There dispute in the case concerned the interpretation of GST applicability on online gaming. The government, represented by Additional Solicitor General N. Venkataraman, argued that 28% GST must be levied on the total cost of the game, effective entry amount, effective to the entire prize pool.
However, gaming firms argued that GST should only be levied on platform fees or commission, as many of the games involve skill rather than chance.
The court held that GST had transferred to itself 27 writ petitions challenging a notice referring to the site as "Hari Mandir" and plans for starting religious activities there.
"No such activities will be permitted. Please file a status report," Chief Justice Khanna addressed the respondents.
Advocate Vishnu Shankar Das, for the Hindu Advocate Commissioner to be kept in a sealed cover.

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI
The Supreme Court on Friday directed that status quo be maintained with respect to a well located near the entrance of the Shahi Jama Masjid at Sambhal in Uttar Pradesh.
A Bench of Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Sanjiv Kumar issued directions to private respondents and local authorities at Sambhal on an application filed by the mosque's management committee.
The court directed the respondents to file their counter-affidavits and status reports within two weeks. It posted the case on February 25.

Senior advocate Huzefa Ahmad, for the mosque committee, said the well held historical significance and its water has been used since time immemorial. He raised concerns over a notice referring to the site as "Hari Mandir" and plans for starting religious activities there.
"No such activities will be permitted. Please file a status report," Chief Justice Khanna addressed the respondents.
Advocate Vishnu Shankar Das, for the Hindu Advocate Commissioner to be kept in a sealed cover.

Maintain status quo on well near Sambhal mosque, directs SC



Under watch: Friday prayers happens under tight security at the Shahi Jama Masjid in Sambhal on Friday. PTI

view and had historically been used for worship.
"Partly within mosque" Mr. Ahmad said the well was partly within the mosque premises, showing a Google Maps image to support the claim.
"Pass an appropriate direction to the District Magistrate, Sambhal, to ensure that status quo is maintained with respect to the private well situated near the stairs/entrance of the mosque and not to take any steps/actions with regard to the same without due permission from this Honourable Court," the committee had asked.
In November last year, the top court had to intervene to instruct the Uttar Pradesh Police and Sambhal district administration to be "totally, absolutely and neutrally" maintain peace after violence in the area left five dead. Protesters had clashed with the police over a survey to verify claims by Hindu plaintiffs that the mosque was built over a temple in the 16th Century.
The top court had stayed the civil proceedings in the local court and directed the mosque survey report prepared by the Advocate Commissioner to be kept in a sealed cover.

Trump sentenced in hush money case

U.S. President-elect gets an unconditional discharge, New York judge spares Trump prison term or fine

He will become the first felon in the White House; calls it a 'setback for the New York court system'

Outside the courthouse, Trump supporters held giant banner emblazoned with their idol's name

Agence France-Presse
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A judge sentenced Donald Trump to an unconditional discharge on Friday for covering up hush money payments to a porn star despite the U.S. President-elect's efforts to avoid becoming the first felon in the White House.

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“Never before has this court been presented with such a unique and remar-

kable set of circumstances,” Mr. Merchan said. “The only lawful sentence that permits entry of a judgment of conviction without encroaching on the highest office of the land is an unconditional discharge.”

Mr. Trump attended his sentencing virtually, with the judge, lawyers and media packed into the scruffy Manhattan courtroom that was the backdrop to the trial's high drama, legal wrangling and vitriolic personal attacks by the divisive Republican.

“Terrible experience”
“This has been a very terrible experience. I think it's been a tremendous setback for New York and the New York court system,” Mr. Trump said before the discharge was passed. “It was done to damage my



Case closed: Donald Trump and attorney Todd Blanche appear virtually before judge Juan Merchan for the sentencing hearing. AP

reputation, so I would lose the election.”

The former President appeared on screens in the courtroom with two large U.S. flags behind him, wearing a red tie with white stripes and looking on impatiently as the brief proceeding unfolded.

Ahead of the sentencing, prosecutor Joshua Steinglass said Mr. Trump

had been convicted of a “premeditated and continuous deception”. “The verdict in this case was unanimous and decisive and it must be respected.”

The trial saw Mr. Trump forced to look on as a string of witnesses testified that he had fraudulently covered up illicit payments to porn star Stormy Daniels in an effort to stop her dis-

closing their tryst ahead of the 2016 presidential election, which he ultimately won.

Mr. Trump had sought a suspension of the criminal proceedings after a New York State appeals court dismissed his effort to have the hearing delayed.

However, the Supreme Court ruled that the sentencing could proceed.

Prosecutors opposed the effort to stave off sentencing, 10 days before Mr. Trump is due to be sworn in for a second term, arguing it was wrong for the apex court to hear the case when the mogul still had avenues of appeal to pursue in New York.

First convicted felony

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upholds the jury's guilty verdict – and Mr. Trump's infamy as the first former President to be convicted of a felony.

The 78-year-old had potentially faced up to four years in prison.

“He's sticking his middle finger at the judge, the jury, the system of justice, and laughing,” said Pace University law professor and former prosecutor Bennett Gershman ahead of the sentencing.

Outside the courthouse, Trump supporters held a giant banner emblazoned with their idol's name that was buffeted by high winds. There was also a small vigil of anti-Trump demonstrators behind a hoarding reading “Trump is guilty”.

Mr. Trump's counsel had argued sentencing should have been post-

poned while the Republican appealed his conviction, but New York state Associate Justice Ellen Gesmer rejected that on Tuesday.

Mr. Trump repeatedly called the prosecution a “witch hunt” which Mr. Steinglass said was “designed to have a chilling effect”.

“This defendant has caused enduring damage to public perception of the criminal justice system,” the career prosecutor said.

Mr. Trump's lawyer Todd Blanche said he “very, very much disagree with much of what the [prosecution] just said”.

Mr. Trump was certified as the winner of the 2024 presidential election on Monday, four years after his supporters rioted at the US Capitol as he sought to overturn his 2020 defeat.

• Donald Trump Sentenced in Hush Money Case

• Overview

- Former U.S. President Donald Trump was sentenced to an **unconditional discharge** for his role in **hush money payments** to a porn star.
- This makes Trump the first U.S. President-elect to face a criminal conviction.
- पूर्व अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति डोनाल्ड ट्रंप को एक **निर्विवाद रिहाई** की सजा सुनाई गई, जो उन्हें पोर्न स्टार को भुगतान के मामले में दोषी ठहराती है।
- इससे ट्रंप पहले ऐसे अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति निर्वाचित बन गए हैं, जिन पर आपराधिक दोष सिद्ध हुआ है।

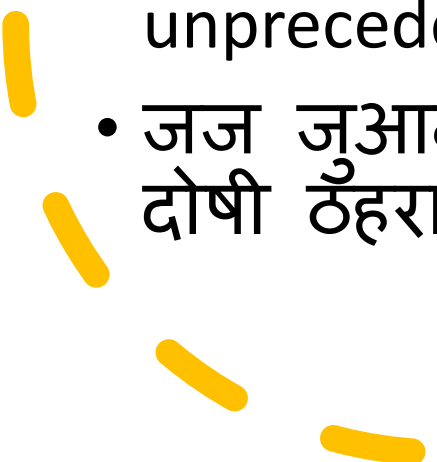


- **Sentence Details**

- The **unconditional discharge** was granted by Judge Juan Merchan despite Trump's conviction on **34 counts of falsifying business records**.

- This spared Trump a prison term or fine, a move seen as unprecedented.

- जज जुआन मर्चन ने ट्रंप को **34 झूठे व्यावसायिक रिकॉर्ड** मामलों में दोषी ठहराए जाने के बावजूद जेल या जुर्माने से मुक्त कर दिया।





- **Court Proceedings**

- Trump attended the sentencing virtually, and the courtroom witnessed high drama with legal arguments and personal attacks.

- अदालत की कार्यवाही के दौरान, ट्रंप ने वर्चस्व उपस्थिति दर्ज की, और कोर्टरूम में कानूनी बहस और व्यक्तिगत टिप्पणियों का माहौल देखा गया।

- **Prosecution's Argument**

- Prosecutors argued that Trump made payments to silence **Stormy Daniels** ahead of the **2016 presidential election**, calling it “**continuous deception.**”

- अभियोजकों ने तर्क दिया कि ट्रंप ने **2016 के राष्ट्रपति चुनाव** से पहले **स्टॉर्मी डेनियल्स** को चुप कराने के लिए भुगतान किया, जिसे “**निरंतर धोखा**” करार दिया गया।





- **Trump's Reaction**




- Trump called the case a “**terrible experience**” and labeled the prosecution as a “**witch hunt.**”

- ट्रंप ने इस मामले को "भयानक अनुभव" कहा और अभियोजन पक्ष को "चुड़ैल शिकार" करार दिया।

- **Public Reaction**

- Outside the courtroom, Trump supporters displayed banners with his name, while anti-Trump demonstrators held signs saying “**Trump is guilty.**”

- अदालत के बाहर, ट्रंप समर्थकों ने उनके नाम के बैनर लहराए, जबकि विरोधियों ने "ट्रंप दोषी है" के संकेत लगाए।



- **Historical Significance**

- 1. First Convicted Felon as President-Elect**

- 1. Trump's conviction marks an unprecedented moment in U.S. history.
 - 2. ट्रंप का दोषसिद्ध होना अमेरिकी इतिहास में अभूतपूर्व घटना है।

- 2. Impact on 2024 Election**

- 1. Trump was declared the **winner of the 2024 presidential election**, but this conviction casts a shadow on his political future.
 - 2. ट्रंप को **2024 के राष्ट्रपति चुनाव का विजेता** घोषित किया गया, लेकिन यह दोष उनके राजनीतिक भविष्य पर सवाल खड़ा करता है।

- 3. Legal and Political Fallout**

- 1. The conviction raises debates about the integrity of the U.S. justice system and its impact on the global stage.
 - 2. यह दोष अमेरिका की न्याय प्रणाली की अखंडता और वैश्विक मंच पर इसके प्रभाव को लेकर बहस छेड़ता है।

GETS UNCONDITIONAL DISCHARGE

- Trump convicted May 30, 2024 by NY court of **34 counts** of falsifying business records
- On Jan 9, NY's highest court declined to block Trump's sentencing. US Supreme Court same day denied his bid to halt sentencing by **5-4 majority that included GOP appointees** John Roberts & Amy Coney Barrett
- Acknowledging Trump's inauguration 10 days later, Merchan imposed **unconditional discharge** of Trump's sentence,



'This has been a very terrible experience. The fact is, I'm totally innocent,' Trump said at hearing a rare and lenient alternative to jail or probation

“ This has been truly an extraordinary case... Donald Trump the ordinary citizen, Donald Trump the criminal defendant would not be entitled to the protections of the presidency

—Judge Juan Merchan

'This has been a very terrible experience. The fact is, I'm totally innocent,'
Trump said at hearing

President Murmu's invite for this year's Republic Day reception set to honour crafts from South

Nistula Hebbar

NEW DELHI

A stiff white card embossed with the Lion Capital of Ashoka is the usual format of the invitation card sent out for the customary "At home" reception held at Rashtrapati Bhavan on Republic and Independence Day. This year, however, to mark 75 years since the formation of the Republic of India, things are different.

In a departure from convention, invitees for the "At home" will receive a specially curated box of craftwork from the five southern States – Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Telangana, and Andhra Pradesh – along with the card.

The idea of this special

box, packed with symbolic meaning, was floated by President Droupadi Murmu herself, and executed by Rashtrapati Bhavan, with the support of the National Institute of Design (NID), which has campuses in Ahmedabad and Bengaluru (where President Murmu is a Visitor).

"The idea behind the artefacts in the invitation box is the 5,000-year civilisational history of Bharat, with the underlying message of sustainability and colour schemes that invoke the 75 years of the forming of the Indian Republic," Rashtrapati Bhavan officials told *The Hindu*. The craft products in the invitation box are all made in the southern States, have GI (geographi-

Art in a box

President Droupadi Murmu's guests are set to receive a gift box containing the best of south India's GI-tagged crafts. **Here are some products featured in the hamper:**



Pochampally Ikat on a pencil pouch:

This Telangana staple is known for its distinct geometric patterns and bold colours



Etikoppaka toys:

The soft wood and lacquer toys from the eponymous village in Andhra Pradesh are valued for the use of natural dyes and themes depicting everyday life



Kalamkari on bamboo:

These goodies will arrive in a bamboo box decorated with Kalamkari motifs, pen-drawn with natural dyes



Kanchipuram silk as a pouch: The handloom silk, world renowned for its richness and elegance, makes its way from Tamil Nadu

cal indicator) tags, and are drawn from the "One District One Product" scheme.

According to NID Ahmedabad director Ashok Mondal, the curation and even the crafting was done in

the institute's Bengaluru campus, with craftsmen from five States still hard at work there.

The craft elements will be packed in a box made of bamboo weave with Kalamkari paintings on it done by Nimmalakunta artisans. The box will include an Ikat-Pochampalli cover that can be used even after the box has been dismantled, a fridge magnet depicting Mysore's Ganjifa art, usually seen in the famous Ganjifa playing cards, and a handmade pouch of Kancheevaram silk from Tamil Nadu. "Etikoppaka dolls from Andhra Pradesh are included, along with a bookmark made of screw-pine leaves woven by artistes from Kerala," he added.

- **President Murmu's Republic Day Reception to Highlight South Indian Crafts**

- **Overview**

- This year, President Droupadi Murmu has introduced a **special curated gift box** as part of the **Republic Day "At Home" reception**, replacing the conventional invitation card format.
- The initiative focuses on **celebrating crafts** from the five southern states: **Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana.**
- इस वर्ष, राष्ट्रपति द्रौपदी मुर्मू ने गणतंत्र दिवस "एट होम" रिसेप्शन के लिए पारंपरिक निमंत्रण कार्ड के स्थान पर दक्षिण भारतीय शिल्पों पर आधारित विशेष गिफ्ट बॉक्स पेश किया।



- **Significance of the Box**

- The **5,000-year-old civilizational history of India** is reflected in the items, focusing on **sustainability and cultural richness**.

- बॉक्स में भारत की **5,000 वर्षों की सभ्यतागत विरासत और सस्टेनेबिलिटी और सांस्कृतिक समृद्धि** को दर्शाया गया है।

- Items are made under the **One District One Product (ODOP)** scheme and have **Geographical Indication (GI)** tags.

- सामग्री वन डिस्ट्रिक्ट वन प्रोडक्ट योजना के तहत बनी हैं और उनके पास **भौगोलिक संकेतक (GI) टैग** हैं।







- **Contents of the Gift Box**

- **Pochampally Ikat on a Pencil Pouch** (Telangana): Known for geometric patterns and bold colors.



- **इकत पोचमपल्ली पेंसिल पाउच** (तेलंगाना): ज्यामितीय डिज़ाइन और गहरे रंगों के लिए प्रसिद्ध।



- **Etikoppaka Toys** (Andhra Pradesh): Made of lacquered wood, depicting themes of daily life.



- **एतिकोप्पका खिलौने** (आंध्र प्रदेश): लाह चढ़ी लकड़ी से बने खिलौने।



- **Kalamkari on Bamboo Box** (Andhra Pradesh): Bamboo box decorated with traditional Kalamkari motifs. कलमकारी डिजाइन के साथ बांस बॉक्स (आंध्र प्रदेश) | **Kanchipuram Silk Pouch** (Tamil Nadu): Known for its elegance and rich weaving. कांचीपुरम रेशम पाउच (तमिलनाडु): अपनी भव्यता और बुनाई के लिए प्रसिद्ध।

1. Additional Highlights

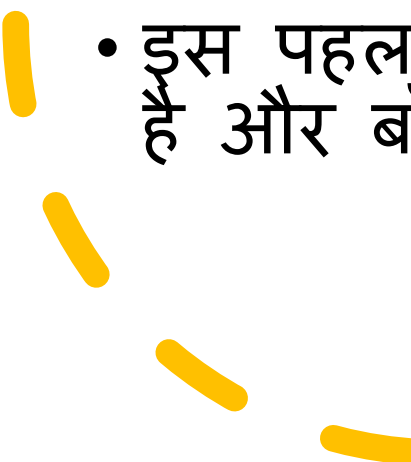
1. Includes a **bookmark made of screw-pine leaves** from Kerala.
2. **केरल** की स्कू-पाइन पत्तियों से बना बुकमार्क भी शामिल है।
3. Features a **fridge magnet of Mysore's Ganjifa art** (Karnataka).
4. **कर्नाटक** के मैसूर की गंजिफा कला पर आधारित फ्रिज मैग्नेट।



- **Design and Execution**

- The initiative is supported by the **National Institute of Design (NID)**, with campuses in **Ahmedabad and Bengaluru**.

- The box's eco-friendly design emphasizes the **75th anniversary of India's Republic**.



- इस पहल को **नेशनल इंस्टीट्यूट ऑफ डिजाइन (NID)** ने अंजाम दिया है और बॉक्स का डिज़ाइन पर्यावरण के अनुकूल है।

Cultural and Economic Impact

Promotion of Local Crafts

- Boosts local artisans and promotes regional crafts on a national stage.
- स्थानीय कारीगरों को बढ़ावा और क्षेत्रीय शिल्पों को राष्ट्रीय मंच पर प्रदर्शित करता है।

Showcasing Southern India's Heritage

- Highlights the cultural and historical richness of the southern states.
- दक्षिणी राज्यों की सांस्कृतिक और ऐतिहासिक विरासत को उजागर करता है।

Art in a box

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pouch: This Telangana staple is known for its distinct geometric patterns and bold colours



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Kanchipuram silk as a pouch: The handloom silk, world renown for its richness and elegance, makes its way from Tamil Nadu

IN BRIEF



U.P. CM inaugurates 'Maa Ki Raso' offering meal for ₹9

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Friday inaugurated 'Maa Ki Raso', a community kitchen initiative offering a full meal for just ₹9, in Prayagraj. The community kitchen will be operated by the Nandri Sewa Sansthan at Swaroop Rani Nehru Hospital to serve people from the economically weaker sections. Mr. Adityanath expressed appreciation for the initiative and praised the quality of food, hygiene, and the services being offered. The initiative, under which people can enjoy a full meal of dal, four rotis, vegetables, rice, salad, and a dessert for ₹9, has been launched for the Mahakumbh. Several Ministers, Home Department Principal Secretary Sanjay Prasad, and Jagadguru Mahamandaleswar Santosh Das were also present for the event.

Gangster Chhota Rajan taken to AIMS for nose surgery

Underworld don Chhota Rajan was taken to AIMS in New Delhi for a surgery, prison officials said on Friday. The officials said he was taken to AIMS on Thursday for a surgery on his nose. The surgery was advised by the doctors and he is likely to be brought back to Bihar jail after his operation, said a senior prison officer. He will be kept in the prison hospital under doctors' observation. Security has been tightened in and around the hospital as a precautionary measure. Meanwhile, hospital sources said he is admitted in an old private ward under the ENT Department.

Independent MLA from Kerala joins Trinamool

The Hindu Bureau
MALAPPURAM

P.V. Anwar, Nilambur's independent MLA who broke away from the Kerala's Left Democratic Front, joined the Trinamool Congress led by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday.

Trinamool Congress general secretary Abhishek Banerjee welcomed Mr. Anwar into the party in Kollam, saying that the Nilambur MLA's dedication to public service and his advocacy for the rights of the people of Kerala would enrich their shared mission of inclusive growth.

Sources close to Mr. Anwar indicated that he would meet Ms. Banerjee on Saturday.

Centre allows Kerala to use SDRF funds for Wayanad

The Hindu Bureau
KOCCHI

The Union government on Friday informed the Kerala High Court that the State has been permitted to utilise ₹120 crore from the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF), which has been set apart for payment to the Defence department towards airlifting service charges provided by the Centre, for rehabilitation measures for the Wayanad landslide survivors.

The submission was made by Additional Solicitor General A.K. Sundaresan when a suo motu case registered in the wake of the the Wayanad landslides came up for hearing before Justice A.K. Jayasankaran Nambiar and Justice Eswaran S. He also furnished a letter from the Disaster Management Division of the Union Home Ministry on relaxation of SDRF and NDRF norms.

He also submitted that as per SDRF guidelines, the State Executive Committee constituted under the Disaster Management Act is empowered to spend from the SDRF. The State government is at liberty to utilise the funds in accordance with the approved norms of assistance.

The court observed that the Centre essentially accedes to the proposal mooted by the court.

After stint as Odisha Governor, Raghubar Das returns to BJP

Ex-Jharkhand CM tells party workers not to get disheartened by Assembly poll defeat; his return may challenge Marandi's supremacy; party insiders

Amrit Bihelari
PATNA

Raghubar Das, who recently resigned as the Governor of Odisha, returned to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Friday. The former Jharkhand Chief Minister joined the party in the presence of its State unit chief, Babulal Marandi.

Mr. Das is an OBC leader who became the first non-tribal CM of Jharkhand in 2014.

His return to the BJP could challenge the leadership of Mr. Marandi, who was the first CM of the State, which was founded in 2000 following the bifurcation of Bihar.

As the Jharkhand BJP chief, Mr. Marandi oversaw the party's campaign for last year's Assembly election, in which the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha-led NDA bloc secured 56 out of 81 seats, with the BJP-led NDA securing 24 seats.

'Not eyeing any post'

Addressing the press at the party office in Ranchi, Mr. Das said: "I am very happy to have returned to the party. Let me say that I don't



New beginning: Raghubar Das rejoined the party on Friday in the presence of its State unit chief, Babulal Marandi. ANI

desire any post in the party. I have only one motive — to awaken people and protect the rich culture and tradition of Jharkhand."

Party insiders said that Mr. Das is likely to replace Mr. Marandi, and the latter could be appointed the Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly to maintain the balance between non-tribal and tribal leadership in the party.

The former CM told the press that he was disheartened by the Assembly election defeat. "In 1984, the party won only two seats. At that

time, people used to make fun of us, and today the BJP-led NDA is the power in 22 States," he said.

Asked about the cause of the poll, Mr. Das said, "2024 is over. We must learn the lesson and move forward with new energy and enthusiasm."

Mr. Das represented Jambhadrpur East in the Assembly five times until 2019, when he was defeated by Saryu Roy. He was appointed the Governor of Odisha on October 18, 2023 and resigned from the office in December, 2024.

Courtesy call: Kerala Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar calls on Narendra Modi in New Delhi on Friday. ANI

Arlekar emphasises Governors' rights in higher education

The Hindu Bureau
TRIVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar has affirmed that Governors hold the final authority over matters concerning higher education in States, a position that has been supported by the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the judiciary on several occasions.

His remarks come amid strong opposition from the draft UGC (Minimum Qualifications for Appointment and Promotion of Teachers) Regulations, 2025. The controversy pertains particularly to the provisions granting the Chancellor greater powers in the appointment of Vice-Chancellors.

Mr. Arlekar, interacting with mediapersons in New Delhi on Friday, emphasised that the Governor's responsibility to oversee universities had been consistently clarified by the

authorities concerned at various instances.

"There are no two ways about it," he asserted, while stressing that the Constitution entrusts the Governors with the duty of managing higher education in respective States.

He also expressed the hope that any misunderstandings regarding this issue could be addressed. "The State government, led by CM Pinarayi Vijayan, has strongly criticised the draft UGC (Minimum Qualifications for Appointment and Promotion of Teachers and Academic Staff in Universities and Colleges and Measures for Maintenance of Standards in Higher Education) Regulations, 2025, accusing the Centre of attempting to subvert the authority of State governments in running universities and managing the higher education sector as a whole.

Five held in Bidar contractor Sachin Panchal death case

The Hindu Bureau
BIDAR

The Karnataka Criminal Investigation Department (CID) probing the death of contractor Sachin Panchal, who allegedly ended his life in Bidar on December 18 last year, arrested five persons, including the prime accused, sajjamar Kapnoor, a former member of Kalaburagi Mahanagar Palike, and reportedly a follower of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Minister Priyank Kharge, on Friday.

Mr. Kapnoor has been listed as accused no. 1. The others arrested are Nandkumar Nagabhujange, Geeraknath Sajjan Chinchannagar, and Satish Ratnakar. Their names figure in the FIR registered against



Sachin Panchal

five accused for abetment to suicide of the contractor. The deceased had left behind a seven-page death note blaming eight people for his death.

The BJP has been brought to Bengaluru for further interrogation, sources said. "Those having suicidal thoughts can seek help from Arogya Sahayawani at 164 or DIAL at 10500.

Mr. Kharge had written to the Chief Minister seeking a CID probe, even as BJP demanded that the case be handed over to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

Meanwhile, the BJP had also criticised the delay in the arrest of the accused in the case.

Of the nine accused, five turned up and the remaining four did not.

The five who presented themselves for questioning were grilled for several hours at the Bidar Railway Police Station, where the FIR was first registered and were arrested Friday evening. They will now be brought to Bengaluru for further interrogation, sources said.

Those having suicidal thoughts can seek help from Arogya Sahayawani at 164 or DIAL at 10500.

Abhishek Banerjee's 'Diamond Harbour model' and the churn within Trinamool Congress

NEWS ANALYSIS
Shiv Sabay Sinha
KOLKATA

Political scions often appear to be in a hurry to prove themselves. Recently, Abhishek Banerjee, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's nephew and Trinamool Congress general secretary, organised free health camps in his Diamond Harbour Lok Sabha constituency under his 'Sebaasthya' initiative. The push behind the initiative is visible both on the ground and on social media handles of the Trinamool Congress.

In several days since its launch, the Trinamool Congress claims that one lakh people have been provided medical services under the initiative. "This is not the first time that Mr. Banerjee, who has

made his mark on the political scene by being considered the party's de facto number two, has launched his own initiatives for the parliamentary seat's electorate and promoted the 'Diamond Harbour model' of governance.

In January 2024, the Trinamool Congress leader took up an ambitious initiative of enrolling about one lakh senior citizens in his constituency for an old-age pension scheme. During the pandemic, Mr. Banerjee claimed to have achieved a successful model for tracking and treating COVID-19 cases in Diamond Harbour.

West Bengal model While these initiatives have boosted his popularity and acceptance among the electorate, the 'Diamond Harbour model' operating within the larger 'West Bengal model' has posed

questions for the Trinamool Congress and the State government. The Opposition parties have been quick to point out that if the Trinamool Congress' governance is a success, then there must be some flaws in Mamata Banerjee's West Bengal government model.

The Chief Minister's 37-year-old nephew is a three-time MP in the 2024 Lok Sabha poll, he won the Diamond Harbour seat by a margin of over 2.18 lakh votes, one of the highest victory margins in the state. However, he is not part of the West Bengal govt's cabinet and has little administrative experience.

In several voices within the Trinamool Congress have called for greater role for the party's heir apparent in the State government. The debate on the old guard versus the young



Trinamool Congress MP Abhishek Banerjee interacting with people at a health camp in Diamond Harbour in West Bengal. FILE PHOTO

are also being the subject of speculation among the party's rank and file.

Mr. Banerjee had earlier proposed a retirement age in politics, but the Chief Minister, who is also the Trinamool Congress chairperson, did not appear to

be in agreement.

'The final word' On December 3, 2024, the Trinamool chief tried to put an end to the speculation about the leadership debate by telling party legislators and Ministers in the West Bengal Legislative

Assembly that "I am still there. I am the final word". Following her remarks, the party took disciplinary action against some leaders who had publicly endorsed a larger role for her nephew.

Recently, a section of party leaders, including Ministers, insisted on boycotting artists who were critical of Ms. Banerjee and her government during the protests over the rape and murder of a doctor at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital. While the 'Diamond Harbour Model' took a more liberal approach and that people have the right to protest, Ms. Banerjee's loyalists said that the chief minister's role should be to guide the party chairperson "could not be taken lightly."

Some went to the extent of saying that the party chairperson was away during the height of the protests and "may not



U.P. CM inaugurates 'Maa Ki Rasoi' offering meal for ₹9

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Friday inaugurated 'Maa Ki Rasoi,' a community kitchen initiative offering a full meal for just ₹9, in Prayagraj. The community kitchen will be operated by the Nandi Sewa Sansthan at Swaroop Rani Nehru Hospital to serve people from the economically weaker sections. Mr. Adityanath expressed appreciation for the initiative and praised the quality of food, hygiene, and the services being offered. The initiative, under which people can enjoy a full meal of dal, four rotis, vegetables, rice, salad, and a dessert for ₹9, has been launched for the Mahakumbh. Several Ministers, Home Department Principal Secretary Sanjay Prasad, and Jagadguru Mahamandaleshwar Santosh Das were also present for the event.

IN BRIEF

SpaDeX satellites are at a distance of 1.5 km, says ISRO

The two SpaDeX satellites that are part of a docking experiment are now at a distance of 1.5 km from each other, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Friday. "Spacecrafts are at a distance of 1.5 km and on hold mode. Further drift of 500 m is planned to be achieved by tomorrow (Saturday) morning," the ISRO posted on X. This announcement came a day after the space agency shared that the drift between the satellites had caused the postponement of the docking experiment for the second time had been arrested and they were put in a slow drift course to move closer to each other.

Couple, 3 minor daughters found dead at home in U.P.

Five members of a family were found dead inside their rented house at Laxmi Gate in Meerut district of Uttar Pradesh, the police said on Friday. The victims were identified as Mohammad Moiz, 38, his wife Asma, 35, and their three daughters under the age of 10. The police found the bodies of the couple on the floor, while the bodies of the minors were found inside a storage compartment under the bed. "The exact reason for death will be determined after post-mortem examination, initial investigations point to a possible personal enmity. Senior officials are present at the site and the investigation is progressing swiftly," said Meerut Senior Superintendent Police Vipin Tada. The police have detained two persons.

Bharat Biotech co-founder awarded INSA fellowship

Krishna Ella, co-founder and executive chairman of Bharat Biotech International, was earlier this week conferred the INSA Fellowship of the Indian National Science Academy for 2025. It is the first time that the INSA has awarded fellowships to representatives from the industry. The other notable scientists and technologists who were conferred an INSA fellowship included Anil Kulkarni, former Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission of India; V.K. Saraswat, former Director-General, DRDO; S. Somanath, Chairman, ISRO; S. Kris Gopalakrishnan, co-founder, Infosys; and Sanmir V. Kamat, Secretary DRDA and Chairman, DRDO.

2024 was the first year to breach global warming limit, show data

It is the first time that mean temperature crossed the threshold of 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, says global body; experts say that given the high rate of carbon emissions, the 2024 temperatures represent a point of no return

Jaosh Koshi
NEW DELHI

Humanity has stepped into a future that climate scientists for decades have warned about. Temperature data made public on Friday by the Copernicus Climate Change Service (CCS), an authoritative source on historical trends in climate, show that 2024 was the first year in history when mean global temperature went 1.5 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial level.



Scorching heat: Each of the past 10 years was one of the 10 warmest years on record. FILE PHOTO

Annual climate conferences, or the Conference of Parties convened by the United Nations, are about getting world leaders to agree on measures to curb the 2024 temperatures to keep temperatures from going over 2 degrees Celsius above the temperature in the 1850-1900 pre-industrial period and "as far as possible" keeping it below 1.5 degrees Celsius.

The way climatological boundaries will be determined, a single year in the red doesn't by itself spell disaster. Only when temperatures consistently

breach the 1.5 degrees Celsius mark for a decade or two would a boundary considered to have been breached. However, experts say that given the high rate of carbon emissions at present, the 2024 temperatures represent a point of no return.

"While there may be major year variability, an El Niño in some years or a major volcanic eruption in others might influence temperatures, this suggests that there is no going back and that we are on a trajectory on exceeding 2 degrees Celsius by 2050," Rosy Mathew Koll, climate scientist, Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Pune, told The Hindu.

pre-industrial levels. In 2024, the annual average sea surface temperature (SST) over the extra-polar ocean reached a record high of 20.87 degrees Celsius, 0.81 degrees Celsius above the 1991-2020 average.

The average extra-polar SST was at record high levels for the time of year from January to June 2024. From July to December 2024, the SST was the second warmest on record for the time of year, after 2023.

Among the reasons for the record-breaking temperatures in 2024 was the El Niño, which is warming of the Central Equatorial Pacific, that began in June 2023 with effects lasting well into 2024.

"Serious implications" A single year with temperatures 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels does not mean we've reached 1.5°C of global warming. However, it does mean we're getting dangerously close. Every fraction of a degree — whether 1.4, 1.5, or 1.6°C — brings more harm to people and ecosystems, un- der temperature exceeded 1.5 degrees Celsius above

sions cuts," Professor Joeri Rogelj, Director of Research at the Grantham Institute — Climate Change and Environment, Imperial College London, said in a statement.

Other experts referred to the latest, failed talks at Baku, Azerbaijan, where countries couldn't bring themselves to agree on a financial package that would realistically account for the costs of mitigating runaway carbon emissions.

"The year on year increase in average global temperatures has serious implications for developing economies reeling under frequent climate disasters. This, coupled with the failure of COP29 to deliver on meaningful finance, only implies that developing economies will have to allocate more funds to deal with climate impacts and disasters in the future. Mitigation ambition of the developing world would be hit hard, unless fast and meaningful action happens on the carbon markets front," said Vaibhav Chaturvedi, Senior Fellow, Council of Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW).

Centre outlines steps to update gender after surgery abroad

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Transgender citizens who undergo gender affirmation surgery abroad can enter India by submitting a sworn affidavit of gender change along with a certificate from the hospital, the Union government has informed the Delhi High Court. These citizens can subsequently apply for a renewed passport with updated details, it said.

The Ministry of External Affairs has laid down the specific documents required for the change of gender in passports, from transgender to either male or female, the Centre told the court. It said the person needs to submit a "Certificate of Identity for change of gender (form-4), along with identity card (form-6), issued under the Transgender Person (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 read with Transgender Person (Protection of Rights) Rules 2020 in the desired gender".

Alternatively, the person can submit a "Sworn affidavit regarding change in gender and Supporting Certificate/Surgical Reconstruction certificate from the hospital where the applicant underwent medical treatment for the purpose."

Centre calls for comprehensive approach to address impact of climate change on agriculture

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The challenges posed by climate change to the agriculture sector was one of the key themes discussed at The Hindu Businessline Agri and Commodity Summit 2025 held here on Friday.

At the inaugural session, Union Agriculture Secretary Devesh Chaturvedi said the Centre had adopted a two-pronged approach — adaptation and mitigation — to address these challenges.

Ashish Kumar Bhutani, Secretary, Union Cooperation Ministry, said primary agricultural cooperative societies (PACS) can play a vital role in building climate change resilience in rural India.

Mr. Chaturvedi said the adaptation strategies include creating drought- and flood-resistant crop



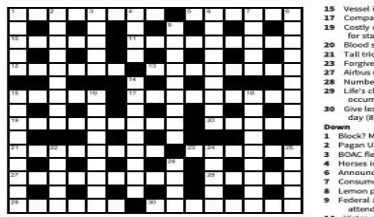
varieties, implementing efficient water management techniques, and providing a cushion through crop insurance in the event of extreme natural calamities.

Mr. Bhutani said climate change was impacting every sector, and collective action should be taken. "The crop insurance scheme covers

40% of farmers. We need to get every single farmer covered under the four pillars necessary to address challenges posed by climate change. The summit saw sessions on irregular monsoons, climate change and new seeds, digitisation, bio energy, and price risk management. There was also an interaction with drone pilots and soil aids.

The associate partners are NCVEX, India, Bayer, Hindustan Urvarak and Rasayan Ltd., Kribhco Agri, NSIC, Aqua Group, and Tamil Nadu Agricultural University. The banking partner is State Bank of India and the broadcast partner is NDTV Profit.

THE CROSSWORD 14380



- Across
1. Refuse container daughter worriedly burst in school (8)
2. Discipline small political leader at this place (6)
3. Scotsman captures an American soldier showing wizardry (5)
4. Killed by wife, fish decapitated (9)
5. Perhaps, Pop or Mon defray cost of tenancy of house, I hear (6)
6. Mistakenly pop pill and sweetener (8)

To solve this puzzle online, get access to our crossword site: @ https://cpgn.puzzle.link/jpr/ta

- Down
1. Vessel in-charge's dress (5)
2. Company that once relied over us arranged Asian diet (4,5)
3. Costly old writing instruments with impeccable violet exteriors, for starters (6)
4. Blood sample contains it... South-eastern drink! (5)
5. Tall fete producing bread (8)
6. Forget average criminal boss (6)
7. Airbus men may make U-boat (9)
8. Number noticed to have five in the middle (5)
9. Life's changed after old Twitter's series of mysterious occurrences (3,5)
10. Give less importance to own place not having church during day (8)
11. Block? Mad! (3,2)
12. Paper USA produces one type of peas (3,4)
13. BOC's flew with new kind of meat (5)
14. Hines's been married (6)
15. Announces in favour of allegations (9)
16. Consistent men with other men of nut shells at first (3,2)
17. Lemon pads squashed to produce cell content (9)
18. Federal agents cover accommodations for some wedding attendees (9)
19. Victor accompanies funny aliens in small transmission (6,3)
20. Heard two Sinto get a couple of items from Baker (9,3)
21. Frank took in aspirant (9)
22. Lasting designed for burman, for example (9)
23. Priest found in Khajuraho bistro (5)
24. Wild! Ignition by some persons (8)
25. In New York, British princess loses English nursemaid (5)
26. That lady's love for the leading man (4)

SUDOKU

A 9x9 Sudoku grid with some numbers filled in. The grid is:
7 2
. 9
1
8
. 3 9 7 5
. 2 . 1 6
8 4 9 8 1

Solution to previous puzzle
9 8 6 1 2 7 4 5
5 4 2 7 8 3 9 1 6
7 8 4 1 2 5 3 6 9
6 9 2 3 8 7 4 5 1
3 5 7 4 6 9 8 2 1
8 4 9 5 2 7 1 6 3
2 1 6 9 3 8 5 7 4

FAITH

Efficacy of Govinda namam

Srivilliputtur in Tamil Nadu is a hallowed ground since two Vaishnavite avatars, Perazhavar and Andal, lived here, experienced God and guided devotees on how to attain His feet. Andal in particular, made God more accessible to everyone, made Govinda a household name that could reach out to in good times and bad, said Damal Perundevi.
Walking up the neighbourhood with her verses in the month of Margashir, she begins with the concept of observing vrat (fasting), she says, "net unnam, pal unnam" (for- getting ghee and milk), giving up rich clothes, all in the quest to attain Govinda's feet. Towards the end of the month, she sings, "koodaval vilvam eer Govinda". She references Krishna's fete in saving the people by holding aloft the Govardhan hill, brining an egoistic Indra to his senses who then showers Krishna with the waters of the holy Ganga, an occurrence celebrated as Govinda Pattabhishekam. The vrat is over and they are ready to partake together, as a community, of sweet Pongal (gokaravatsal), prepared with milk and ghee that runs down a devotee's elbow while eating, along with Govinda. They who gave up everything in the beginning of the month are now ready to bedeck themselves, but to their joy when they look in the mirror to adorn the head piece, the art bane the bracket, the waist belt and anklets, they see only Govinda reflected in the mirror; they experience His presence. Andal says He is capable of defeating those who are not virtuous and equally captivated by the faith posed in Him by devotees and invites everyone to come together and had lasting happiness in Govinda namam.

2024 was the first year to breach global warming limit, show data

It is the first time that mean temperature crossed the threshold of 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, says global body; experts say that given the high rate of carbon emissions, the 2024 temperatures represent a point of no return

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

Humanity has stepped into a future that climate scientists for decades have warned about. Temperature data made public on Friday by the Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S), an authoritative source on historical trends in climate, show that 2024 was the first year in history when mean global temperature went 1.5 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial level.

Annual climate conferences, or the Conference of Parties convened by the United Nations, are about getting world leaders to agree on measures to curb emissions to keep temperatures from going over 2 degrees Celsius above the temperature in the 1850-1900 pre-industrial period and “as far as possible” keeping it below 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Consistent rise

The way climatological boundaries are determined, a single year in the red doesn't by itself spell catastrophe. Only when temperatures consistently



Scorching heat: Each of the past 10 years was one of the 10 warmest years on record. FILE PHOTO

breach the 1.5 degrees Celsius mark for a decade or two would a boundary considered to have been breached. However, experts say that given the high rate of carbon emissions at present, the 2024 temperatures represent a point of no return.

“While there may be year to year variability, an El Nino in some years or a major volcanic eruption in others might influence temperatures, this suggests that there is no going back and that we are on a trajectory on exceeding 2 degrees Celsius by 2050,” Roxy Mathew Koll, climate scientist, Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Pune, told *The Hindu*.

At an average temperature of 15.1 degrees Celsius, 2024 was the warmest year in global temperature records, which go back till 1850, and was 0.72 degrees Celsius above the 1991-2020 average. It was 0.12 degrees Celsius above the average of 2023, the previous warmest year on record. It was also 1.6 degrees Celsius above an estimate of the 1850-1900 temperature designated to be the ‘pre-industrial’ level. Each of the past 10 years (2015-2024) was one of the 10 warmest years on record.

For 11 months in 2024, the monthly global average temperature exceeded 1.5 degrees Celsius above

pre-industrial levels.

In 2024, the annual average sea surface temperature (SST) over the extra-polar ocean reached a record high of 20.87 degrees Celsius, 0.51 degrees Celsius above the 1991-2020 average.

The average extra-polar SST was at record high levels for the time of year from January to June 2024. From July to December 2024, the SST was the second warmest on record for the time of year, after 2023.

Among the reasons for the record-breaking temperatures in 2024 was the El Nino, which is warming of the Central Equatorial Pacific, that began in June 2023 with effects lasting well into 2024.

‘Serious implications’

“A single year with temperatures 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels does not mean we’ve reached 1.5°C of global warming. However, it does mean we’re getting dangerously close. Every fraction of a degree – whether 1.4, 1.5, or 1.6°C – brings more harm to people and ecosystems, underscoring the continued need for ambitious emis-

sions cuts,” Professor Joeri Rogelj, Director of Research at the Grantham Institute - Climate Change and Environment, Imperial College London, said in a statement.

Other experts referred to the latest, failed talks at Baku, Azerbaijan, where countries couldn’t bring themselves to agree on a financial package that would realistically account for the costs of mitigating runaway carbon emissions.

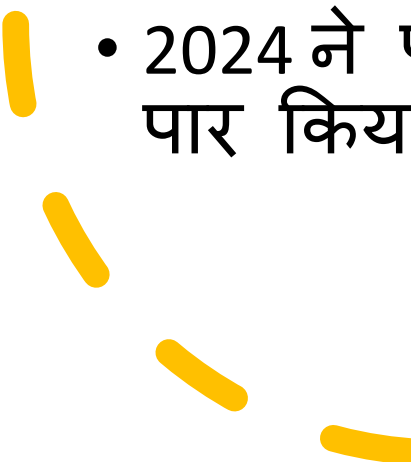
“The year on year increase in average global temperature has serious implications for developing economies reeling under frequent climate disasters. This, coupled with the failure of COP29 to deliver on meaningful finance, only implies that developing economies will have to allocate more funds to deal with climate impacts and disasters in the future. Mitigation ambition of the developing world would be hit hard, unless fast and meaningful action happens on the carbon markets front,” said Vaibhav Chaturvedi, Senior Fellow, Council of Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW).



- **2024 Breaches Global Warming Limit of 1.5°C**

- **Overview**

- For the first time, **global temperatures** in 2024 crossed the **1.5°C threshold** above pre-industrial levels, a significant marker of climate change.



- 2024 ने पहली बार औद्योगिक पूर्व स्तरों से 1.5°C तापमान सीमा को पार किया, जो जलवायु परिवर्तन का एक महत्वपूर्ण संकेत है।



- **Temperature Records**

- The **Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S)** data shows the **average temperature in 2024** was 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.
 - The **annual sea surface temperature (SST)** reached a record **20.87°C** , marking the second-warmest year globally.
 - कॉपेर्निकस जलवायु परिवर्तन सेवा के अनुसार, 2024 में औसत तापमान औद्योगिक पूर्व स्तरों से 1.5°C अधिक था।
 - समुद्र सतह का तापमान **20.87°C** रिकॉर्ड किया गया।
- 

Historical Perspective



2024 was the warmest year globally since 1850.

The year exceeded the previous record set in **2023 by 0.12°C**.

2024 ने 1850 के बाद वैश्विक तापमान का सबसे गर्म वर्ष दर्ज किया।

यह 2023 के पिछले रिकॉर्ड को 0.12°C से पार कर गया।

Causes

The **El Niño phenomenon** contributed significantly, warming the central equatorial Pacific.

एल नीनो घटना ने इस रिकॉर्ड-ब्रेकिंग तापमान में प्रमुख भूमिका निभाई।

- **Implications of Breaching 1.5°C**

- 1. Global Warming Trajectory**

- 1. Experts suggest a trajectory toward **2°C warming** by 2050 unless carbon emissions are drastically reduced.
 - 2. विशेषज्ञों के अनुसार, यदि कार्बन उत्सर्जन में कटौती नहीं की गई, तो 2050 तक तापमान **2°C** बढ़ सकता है।

- 2. Impact on Developing Nations**

- 1. Increased warming intensifies **extreme weather events** like heatwaves and floods, disproportionately affecting developing countries.
 - 2. अत्यधिक गर्मी और बाढ़ जैसे **अत्यधिक मौसम की घटनाओं** में वृद्धि विकासशील देशों को असमान रूप से प्रभावित करती है।

- 3. Climate Action Challenges**

- 1. Talks in **Baku, Azerbaijan**, failed to agree on a financial package for mitigating emissions, reflecting global inaction.
 - 2. **बक्य, अजरबैजान** में वार्ता में उत्सर्जन को कम करने के लिए वित्तीय समझौता नहीं हो सका।

Scientific Observations

Warming Over Oceans

- SSTs in the **extra-polar oceans** set new records, emphasizing the critical state of marine ecosystems.
- ध्रुवीय महासागरों के बाहर SST रिकॉर्ड स्तर पर पहुंच गया, जो समुद्री पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र की गंभीर स्थिति को दर्शाता है।

Future Projections

- A single year at **1.5°C** does not signify crossing the threshold but indicates proximity to it.
- 1.5°C का एकल वर्ष सीमा को पार करना नहीं दर्शाता, लेकिन इसके निकट होने का संकेत है।

Urgency for Climate Action

Mitigation Costs

- Developing countries must allocate more resources to tackle climate impacts.
- विकासशील देशों को जलवायु प्रभावों का मुकाबला करने के लिए अधिक संसाधन आवंटित करने होंगे।

Long-Term Impacts

- A lack of meaningful action risks **irreversible climate damage**.
- प्रभावी कार्रवाई की कमी से **अपरिवर्तनीय जलवायु क्षति** का खतरा है।

Bharat Biotech co-founder awarded INSA fellowship

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

Krishna Ella, co-founder and executive chairman of Bharat Biotech International, was earlier this week conferred the India Fellowship of the Indian National Science Academy for 2025. It is the first time that the INSA has awarded fellowships to representatives from the industry.

The other notable scientists and technologists who were conferred an INSA fellowship included Anil Kakodkar, former Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission of India; V.K. Saraswat, former Director-General, DRDO; S. Somnath, Chairman, ISRO; S. Kris Gopalakrishnan, co-founder, Infosys; and Samir V. Kamat, Secretary DDR&D and Chairman, DRDO.

Chasing truce

Israel's Netanyahu is keener on his government's survival than on peace.

President Joe Biden's remark that there is real progress in the Israel-Hamas conflict. Hamas on a ceasefire and hostage deal offers a rare ray of hope in ending the 15-month-long war. Mr. Biden said he was confident that his administration, which has only some more days left in office, could secure a deal. However, experience suggests that there is no deal unless an actual deal is reached, irrespective of the progress in talks. Even now, there are conflicting narratives on the remaining bottlenecks. Mr. Biden says Hamas is an obstacle, while Qatari and Egyptian officials, who were involved in the talks, say Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu's refusal to agree to anything more than a temporary ceasefire is the main hurdle. Mr. Netanyahu does not want to bring the war to an end as his far-right government could collapse. But he is ready to accept a temporary halt in fighting in return for hostages. Hamas, fearing that Israel would resume fighting once the hostages are released, demand a permanent ceasefire. While talks drag on, the plight of over two million people in Gaza is nearly forgotten. Israeli strikes have already killed 46,000 Palestinians. Most of Gaza's population lives in tent cities without enough food, drinking water, medicines and electricity.

When Israel launched the war after Hamas's October 7, 2023 attack, it had three objectives - destroy Hamas, secure the release of hostages and bolster the Jewish state's long-term security. Fifteen months later, while Israel has destroyed much of Hamas's military infrastructure and killed its top leadership, the group has survived and transformed itself as an insurgency. Israel has managed to reduce its military presence in Gaza but long-term security risks remain. While a ceasefire with Hezbollah brought relative calm to the northern border, the Houthis of Yemen are now firing missiles and drones to Israel. The country is also facing internal and external challenges. The International Court of Justice is hearing a genocide case against Israel, and the International Criminal Court has issued arrest warrants against Mr. Netanyahu and former Defence Minister Yoav Gallant. Rights organisations, from Amnesty International to HRW, are accusing Israel of genocide. Mr. Netanyahu seems unperturbed, thanks to the military, political and diplomatic support that Israel still enjoys from the Biden administration. But its inability to meet its objectives even in the tiny Gaza Strip, its disregard for international law and norms and the barbarity with which it is attacking the Palestinians should shock anyone interested in the country's physical and moral wellbeing. It is already too late. Israel's leaders and their backers in the West should not prolong this aimless war. Mr. Netanyahu should leave Gaza in return for the release of all hostages.

Local power

Local self-governments make a difference to the lives of people.

Instead of signalling its intention to hold elections to rural local bodies, the Tamil Nadu government has appointed special officers for these bodies in several districts of the State. Elections were due in 9,624 village panchayats, 34 panchayat unions, and 26 district panchayats where the term of office of the RLs came to an end on January 5. These government officers will function for the next six months. In support of this decision, the government has cited the ongoing re-organisation of rural and urban local bodies which will result in a delimitation of wards of the local bodies - a step that the government considers a prerequisite to the conduct of polls to local bodies. It had given an undertaking to the Madras High Court in December 2024, that no poll notification would be issued without completing delimitation and putting in place a quota of seats for women officers for scheduled castes and scheduled Tribes. Apart from creating four more municipal corporations by accommodating village panchayats, the stage is set for the expansion of the limits of municipal corporations, municipalities and townships by taking in other village panchayats. It has proposed the merger of least 140 village panchayats with municipal corporations. Though there is debating final delimitation, the reorganisation, the government is of the view that rapid urbanisation in village panchayats adjoining bigger cities such as Chennai and Coimbatore necessitates a fresh look at the local bodies. In *Suresh Maheshwari vs State of Madhya Pradesh*, the Supreme Court had held that the delimitation or formation of ward "cannot be a legitimate ground to be set forth by any authority much less the State Election Commission - to not discharge its constitutional obligation in notifying the election programme" at an opportune time and ensure that an elected body was installed before the expiry of the five-year term of the outgoing body. It had also stipulated that in undertaking delimitation, which the Court regarded as a continuous exercise, it "ought to be commenced well in advance" so that the elections were notified on time. Sections of the government, however, have opposed the proposed reorganisation of local bodies as they are apprehensive of the cessation of rural development schemes such as the MGNREGS if there is a merger with urban local bodies. Tamil Nadu has a long history that has failed to hold local body polls on time. Bigger cities such as Mumbai and Bengaluru are on the list. It is time that the State realise the importance of the space that local bodies occupy in the democratic structure. Despite shortcomings, local self-governments do make a qualitative difference to people's lives.

Every year, January 12 is celebrated across the length and breadth of India as 'National Youth Festival', a day which is also the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda. The Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue is an innovative one, launched with the vision of engaging India's youth in the developmental journey of the nation. The programme seeks to harness the collective energy, creativity and leadership potential of young minds to contribute towards realising a Viksit Bharat, i.e., a Developed India.



Raksha Khadse
Union Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports
Government of India

A dialogue, its competitive nature
The dialogue is a dynamic, multi-stage initiative, designed to engage and empower India's youth in the country's developmental journey. The competition has four stages, the first being a Viksit Bharat quiz held digitally on the My Bharat platform. This stage tested a participant's knowledge about India's achievements, challenges, and vision for a developed future, covering areas such as sustainable development, technology, and national policies. The top scorers moved on to the second stage, i.e., essay and blogging, where they had to write on themes such as tech for Viksit Bharat and empowering youth for Viksit Bharat, reflecting on their vision for India's future. These submissions were evaluated for originality.

In the third stage, the Viksit Bharat Vision Pitch Deck, participants at the State level presented innovative ideas for India's development through a compelling pitch deck. The best teams from each State advanced to the fourth and last stage of the Viksit Bharat National Championship, which will be held at the Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi on January 11-12, 2025.

In the final, the selected teams will pitch their visionary solutions to the Prime Minister. This in itself is a unique opportunity to influence national policy and contribute to India's vision of a Viksit Bharat. The competition is structured to

test not only a participant's knowledge and creativity but also their leadership and communication skills.

The features this year
The National Youth Festival is an annual celebration of India's youth, fostering a spirit of national integration and promoting the ideals of youth empowerment and creativity. However, this year's festival has introduced several new features.

The focus this year is on Youth for Sustainable Development, a theme that resonates with the global recognition of young people as the drivers of global change. In line with India's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals, the festival has introduced several workshops, seminars and cultural activities that align with the vision of a greener, more inclusive, future. Additionally, there is a greater emphasis on the role of technology and innovation in achieving national goals, with special sessions dedicated to Tech for Good and Innovation for India's Development.

Another unique feature this year is expanded virtual participation. With digital platforms having been integrated into the festival, young people from remote corners of the country can participate in discussions, workshops, and showcase their talents and ideas online. This inclusivity broadens the festival's reach and ensures that youth, regardless of location, has the chance to contribute.

The 2025 National Youth Festival will feature: workshops and panels on leadership and innovation. With a focus on topics such as youth-led entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship, and sustainable living, these sessions will equip participants with the skills necessary to drive change in their communities.

Second, cultural programmes. The festival will celebrate India's rich cultural heritage through music, dance, and folk art performances. These will provide youth with opportunities to showcase themselves and appreciate the diverse cultural landscape of the nation.

Third, tech and innovation showcases. With the theme of Tech for Good, this year's festival will include exhibitions and presentations from young innovators and entrepreneurs who are building solutions to real-world problems in sectors such as health, education, agriculture, and urban development.

Fourth, engagement with leaders. The festival will facilitate direct engagement between youth and key leaders as pathbreakers from various sectors, which include government, business and academia. These interactions will provide participants with insights into leadership, governance, and the path to national progress. Fifth, recognition of youth contributions. Awards and recognitions will be presented to young individuals and organisations that have demonstrated exceptional leadership, innovation and service. This will motivate others to take active roles in shaping India's future.

The role of MY Bharat
The My Bharat (MY Bharat), an autonomous body under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, plays an instrumental role in shaping and guiding the direction of the National Youth Festival. As a platform that empowers youth by promoting engagement, knowledge sharing, and participation in nation-building activities, it is crucial in curating the festival's programmes and ensuring that they align with the aspirations of India's youth. Through MY Bharat, young people can gain access to resources, mentorship, and opportunities that will enhance their ability to contribute meaningfully to the country's development.

In this year's festival, MY Bharat will facilitate the digital integration of youth, enabling participation from across the country. It will also actively support youth-led initiatives, helping them navigate the complexities of social and technological challenges and encouraging them to find innovative solutions for a better India.

In total, India's youth is indeed its most precious asset. As the country progresses towards its vision of becoming a Viksit Bharat, it is the boundless energy, the ideas and the ambition of young people that will power the nation's transformation. The initiative of the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue will not only open a new expressive channel for youth but also shape the political leadership.

The future of India is bright, and it rests in the able hands of its youth. This resonates with the belief expressed by Swami Vivekananda in unlimited possibilities in youth energy when he said, "Give me one hundred 'believing' young men... I will transform India as the number one nation in the entire world..."

India's journey so far on the AI military bandwagon

As the world has begun utilising and developing artificial intelligence (AI) for military purposes amidst debates of ethical concerns, India also appears to have hopped on the bandwagon. Last year saw a massive Budget of ₹2.1 lakh crore (₹25 billion), with an emphasis on modernising and upgrading India's military. India has begun to make strides towards integrating AI systems with its military and using them across various systems. Products such as the Indrabil autonomous drone security system have been developed. India has also attracted investments from numerous foreign tech giants for its AI ecosystem. Microsoft, for example, has committed approximately \$3 billion to building data centres in Telangana.



Adya Madhavan
research analyst at
The Telegraph
Insights

On track but there are hurdles
Multiple government figures have made statements about the utility of AI for military purposes, including Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, who remarked that "artificial intelligence or AI has the potential to revolutionise military operations, from predictive analytics to autonomous decision-making systems". Additionally, India is a part of multiple joint initiatives internationally that focus on AI. All these signs indicate the pouring of money and manpower into developing AI systems for military purposes. India is on track to fully utilising the potential of AI. However, there are some obstacles. One addressed, they will ensure that India's adoption of AI will be even better. A lack of digital skills in the workforce, as well as a dearth of funds are the obvious factors. The biggest issue is the fact that the data centres required to run AI systems are expensive. India's military already has to focus on replacing legacy systems such as older aircraft with newer models, which is an expensive endeavour in itself. India's legacy hardware is no longer competitive in the global sphere, and significant resources are being directed towards replacing and upgrading it. However, more general hurdles which are

India has begun harnessing AI's potential to strengthen its ecosystem, but there are still significant impediments

harder to overcome exacerbate the problem. One such issue is that India's policies on AI are still fragile and lack guidelines for their implementation. For instance, the National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence outlines India's vision for deploying AI. Clarity on how to roll it out, insight on actual mechanisms for deployment.

Similarly, the responsible AI for All paper outlines the importance of accountability and transparency and puts forward principles for a reliable AI use, but falls short on providing military-AI-specific recommendations. Major strides have been made through these documents, but of now, arguably more robust frameworks need to be put in place for the deployment of AI in the defence and security military. The Defence Artificial Intelligence Council (DAIC) and the Defence AI Project Agency (DAIPA) have been set up, and the objectives will bridge these gaps. However, there have not been any recent updates available to the world from the bodies.

The international picture
AI is also a technology that is a must based on the alacrity with which other countries have been focusing on integrating it with their militaries. Israel and China have focused on rapidly developing military AI, and their military technologies are already far ahead. India needs clarity of vision in its attitude towards AI, to make it possible to roll out AI systems in line with the global AI wave. There appears to be some degree of inconsistency within the government regarding its stance on military AI. This is reflected in remarks made by notable defence and security officials, such as the mistrust regarding the new technology. For example, the Minister of External Affairs has expressed that India will not be as dangerous for the world as nuclear bombs once we work - in terms of their potential dangers to the world. During the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) in 2023, the Prime Minister

also remarked that there must be a focus proceeding with extreme caution and warmth of fragility and lack guidelines for their implementation. On the fact that AI will be critical in the coming years, especially military AI, there appears to be less clarity on how to roll it out.

The specific problems in India
One of the biggest challenges that must be addressed, even when India is at the stage where technologies are ready to be widely deployed, is the historically siloed nature of the armed forces. The Indian Army, Indian Navy, and Indian Air Force have separate doctrines, systems and communication practices. This will likely significantly hinder interoperability and the procurement of systems for joint operations. Finally, when it comes to the procurement of systems for themselves, one of the issues with developing AI for defence is the reliance on public sector units (PSUs), which has prevailed in India for many decades. Despite the misconception that most of India's defence manufacturers are public sector companies, many private entities and startups produce advanced, high-quality systems. To equip the military with the best systems at a large enough scale, there will have to be public-private partnerships (PPPs) or an introduction of private competition. As seen with the space sector, this can significantly change the state of affairs.

India has already begun harnessing AI's potential to bolster its defence ecosystem. However, these multiple impediments serve as a reminder of the message that needs to be taken. Strategic alignment is paramount, and robust frameworks and policies are necessary to ensure AI's effective and ethical deployment. India needs to make systemic changes to tackle issues such as the inter-service silos and an over-reliance on PSUs. Finally, collaboration and innovation in defence - in terms of PPPs - will be necessary to accelerate AI adoption and innovation. With a cohesive strategy, India will be able to maximise the utility of AI.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dispora, global journeys
The journeys of the Indian diaspora, who are scattered across the globe, offer the remarkable chapter. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's landmark call at the Pravasi Bharyata Divas, to document their achievements, contributions, is a timely reminder of the unique role Indians play in connecting nations, cultures and economies. (Page 1, January 10). From excelling in academics, business and politics to the one hand to preserving and propagating India's rich cultural heritage on the other, their efforts form an indelible bond

between India and the world. By highlighting their stories of triumph and struggle, India can offer the world a deeper understanding of its global footprint. Acknowledging the contributions of the diaspora will strengthen India's global partnerships. This initiative should be supported through academic studies, cultural collaborations with overseas communities. (Page 1, January 10).
Tiruch, Tamil Nadu

The history of the Indian diaspora is a part of India's rich tradition and culture. Indian history needs to be highlighted globally. (Page 1, January 10).
Rajesh Mohan Rao, Dharmadam, Thalassery, Kerala

Indians, wherever they are outside their country, have brought pride to the countries they live in. They have made significant contributions to the growth of the economy of these countries. They are loving and tolerant. It is fitting that the Prime Minister has called for documenting the history of the Indian diaspora. (Page 1, January 10).
Pavithra M., Pudukkottai, Tamil Nadu

Whenever a stampede occurs, numerous questions arise regarding the precautionary measures and crowd management strategies. Be it music and dance shows, festivals and events, the safety and miscellaneous functions, the organisers and officials in charge should have a "risk avoidance" plan in place. Appropriate measures can be taken using technology such as facial recognition, drones and stampede monitoring alarms. (Page 1, January 10).
P. P. Reddy, Thaikavu, Kannur, Kerala

As he will have access to the nuclear button. (Page 1, January 10).
G. David Milton, Marthandapuram, Tamil Nadu

The deleterious and expansionist agenda of the President-elect of the U.S. is concerning Mr. Trump should respect the sovereignty of other nations and consider the ramifications of his actions. It is once again a reminder of how destructive and dangerous power can be. (Page 1, January 10).
Balagopal Gopinath, Keriakkad, Alappuzha, Kerala

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the postal address.

India's journey so far on the AI military bandwagon

As the world has begun utilising and developing artificial intelligence (AI) for military purposes amidst debates of ethical concerns, India also appears to have hopped on the bandwagon. Last year saw a defence Budget of ₹6.21 lakh crore (\$75 billion), with an emphasis on modernising and upgrading India's military. India has begun to make strides towards integrating AI systems with their military and using them across various systems. Products such as the Indrajaal autonomous drone security system have been developed. India has also attracted investments from numerous foreign tech giants for its AI ecosystem – Microsoft, for example, has committed approximately \$3 billion to building data centres in Telangana.

On track but there are hurdles

Multiple government figures have made statements about the utility of AI for military purposes, including Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, who remarked that “artificial intelligence or AI has the potential to revolutionize military operations, from predictive analytics to autonomous decision-making systems”.

Additionally, India is a part of multiple joint initiatives internationally that focus on AI. All these steps indicate the pouring of money and manpower into developing AI systems for military purposes. India is on track to fully utilising the potential of AI. However, there are some obstacles. Once addressed, they will ensure that India's adoption of AI will be even better.

A lack of digitised data to train systems on as well as a dearth of funds are the obvious factors. The biggest issue is the fact that the data centres required to run AI systems are expensive. India's military already has to focus on replacing legacy systems such as older aircraft with newer models, which is an expensive endeavour in itself. India's legacy hardware is no longer competitive in the global sphere, and significant resources are being directed towards replacing and upgrading it.

However, more general hurdles which are



Adya Madhavan

research analyst at
The Takshashila
Institution

India has begun harnessing AI's potential to strengthen its defence ecosystem, but there are still significant impediments

harder to overcome exacerbate the problem. One such issue is that India's policies on AI are still fragmented or lack guidelines for implementation. For instance, the National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence outlines India's vision for deploying AI. However it provides little insight on actual mechanisms for deployment.

Similarly, the responsible AI for All paper outlines the importance of accountability and transparency and puts forward principles for responsible AI use, but falls short in making military-AI-specific recommendations. Major strides have been made through these documents, but, as of now, arguably more robust frameworks need to be put in place for the deployment and the regulation of AI in the military. The Defence Artificial Intelligence Council (DAIC) and the Defence AI Project Agency (DAIPA) have been set up, and their objectives will bridge these gaps. However, there have not been any recent updates available to the public from these bodies.

The international picture

AI is also a technology that is a must based on the alacrity with which other countries have been focusing on integrating it with their militaries. Israel and China have focused on rapidly developing and deploying military AI and their technologies are already far ahead. India needs clarity of vision in its attitude towards AI, to make it possible to roll out AI systems faster and catch up with the global AI wave. There appears to be some degree of inconsistency within the government regarding sentiments towards military AI. This is reflected in remarks made by notable figures that underscore resistance or mistrust regarding the new technology. For example, the Minister of External Affairs compared AI to nuclear weapons – AI will be as dangerous for the world as nuclear bombs once were” – in terms of their potential dangers to the world.

During the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) in 2023, the Prime Minister

also remarked that there must be a focus proceeding with extreme caution and warned of the darker sides of AI. While there is clarity on the fact that AI will be critical in the coming years, especially military AI, there appears to be less clarity on how to roll it out.

The specific problems in India

One of the biggest challenges that must be addressed, even when India is at the stage where technologies are ready to be widely deployed, is the historically siloed nature of the armed forces. The Indian Army, Indian Navy, and Indian Air Force have separate doctrines, systems and communication practices. This will likely significantly hinder interoperability and the procurement of systems for joint operations.

Finally, when it comes to the procurement of systems themselves, one of the issues with developing AI for defence is the reliance on public sector units (PSU), which has prevailed in India for many decades. Despite the misconception that most of India's defence manufacturers are public sector companies, many private entities and startups produce advanced, high-quality systems. To equip the military with the best systems at a large enough scale, there will have to be public-private partnerships (PPPs) or an introduction of private competition. As seen with the space sector, this can significantly change the state of affairs.

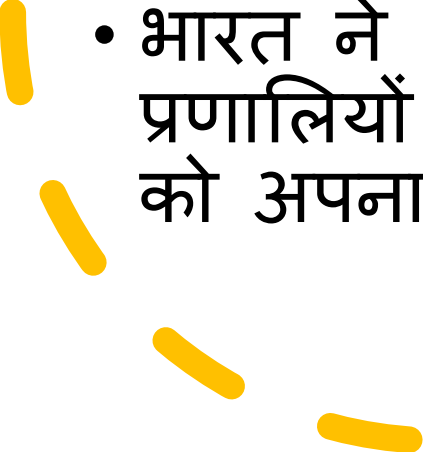
India has already begun harnessing AI's potential to bolster its defence ecosystem. However, these multiple impediments serve as a reminder of the measures that need to be taken. Strategic alignment is paramount, and robust frameworks and policies are necessary to ensure AI's effective and ethical deployment. India needs to make systemic changes to tackle issues such as the inter-service silos and an overreliance on PSUs. Finally, collaboration and innovation internationally and in terms of PPPs will accelerate AI adoption and innovation. With a cohesive strategy, India will be able to maximise the utility of AI.



- **India's Journey on the AI Military Bandwagon**

- **Overview**

- India has made strides in adopting Artificial Intelligence (AI) for defense, aiming to modernize its military capabilities and integrate AI into various systems.

- 
- भारत ने अपनी रक्षा क्षमताओं को आधुनिक बनाने और विभिन्न प्रणालियों में एआई को एकीकृत करने के लिए कृत्रिम बुद्धिमत्ता (AI) को अपनाने में प्रगति की है।

- **Budget and Investments**

- In 2023, a budget of ₹6.21 lakh crore (\$75 billion) was allocated to modernize India's military.
- Microsoft and other tech giants have invested around \$3 billion in Telangana for AI data centers.
- 2023 में, भारत की सेना के आधुनिकीकरण के लिए ₹6.21 लाख करोड़ का बजट आवंटित किया गया।
- माइक्रोसॉफ्ट और अन्य तकनीकी दिग्गजों ने तेलंगाना में एआई डेटा सेंटर के लिए लगभग \$3 बिलियन का निवेश किया है।

- **On Track but Facing Challenges**

- 1. Statements from Leaders**

- 1. Defense Minister Rajnath Singh emphasized AI's potential to revolutionize military operations.
 - 2. रक्षा मंत्री राजनाथ सिंह ने एआई की सैन्य संचालन में क्रांति लाने की क्षमता पर जोर दिया।

- 2. Policy and Framework**

- 1. India's **National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence** outlines a vision but lacks specific implementation mechanisms for military AI.
 - 2. भारत की **राष्ट्रीय कृत्रिम बुद्धिमत्ता रणनीति** दृष्टिकोण प्रदान करती है लेकिन सैन्य एआई के लिए कार्यान्वयन तंत्र की कमी है।

- 3. Obstacles**


- 1. Data availability and the cost of setting up data centers remain significant challenges.
 - 2. डेटा की उपलब्धता और डेटा सेंटर स्थापित करने की लागत बड़ी चुनौतियां बनी हुई हैं।



- **International Comparisons**

- Countries like **Israel** and **China** have rapidly integrated AI into their militaries, providing them a strategic edge.

- भारत के मुकाबले **इज़राइल** और **चीन** ने अपने सैन्य बलों में एआई को तेजी से शामिल किया है, जिससे उन्हें रणनीतिक बढ़त मिली है।



- **Specific Problems in India**

- 1. Outdated Systems**

1. India still relies on public sector units (PSUs) for defense production, which hinders access to advanced technologies.
2. भारत अभी भी रक्षा उत्पादन के लिए सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र की इकाइयों (PSUs) पर निर्भर है, जो उन्नत प्रौद्योगिकियों तक पहुंच में बाधा डालता है।

- 2. Interoperability**

1. The Indian Army, Navy, and Air Force operate on separate systems, leading to integration challenges.
2. भारतीय सेना, नौसेना और वायु सेना अलग-अलग प्रणालियों पर काम करते हैं, जिससे एकीकरण में चुनौतियां आती हैं।

- 3. Public-Private Partnerships**

1. Greater collaboration between private and public sectors is essential for innovation.
2. नवाचार के लिए निजी और सार्वजनिक क्षेत्रों के बीच अधिक सहयोग आवश्यक है।

Recommendations

Robust Policies

- A robust framework for deploying and regulating AI in the military is needed.
- सैन्य में एआई को लागू करने और विनियमित करने के लिए एक मजबूत ढांचा आवश्यक है।

Global Partnerships

- India must participate in international collaborations for AI innovation.
- भारत को एआई नवाचार के लिए अंतरराष्ट्रीय सहयोग में भाग लेना चाहिए।

Training and Innovation

- Emphasis on education and R&D to maximize AI's potential.
 - एआई की संभावनाओं को अधिकतम करने के लिए शिक्षा और अनुसंधान एवं विकास पर जोर।
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NEW DELHI, SATURDAY, JANUARY 11, 2025



FINANCIAL EXPRESS



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IN THE NEWS

Infosys escalates legal row with Cognizant, files counter-lawsuit
INFOSYS HAS FILED A counter-lawsuit against Cognizant and its CEO Ravi Kumar in a US court, accusing them of engaging in anti-competitive practices and misusing sensitive information to undermine Infosys. Helix, reports **FE Bureau**. ■ PAGE 6

Earth records hottest year in 2024, crosses key 1.5°C threshold
EARTH'S WARMING EXCEEDED 1.5°C on an annual basis for the first time in 2024, reports **Bloomberg**. It's the most robust evidence that countries are failing to meet a Paris Agreement goal of limiting global heating to that level as a decades-long average. ■ PAGE 24

SBI chief for regime to track end-use of funds raised by small biz
SBI CHAIRMAN C.S. Setty has urged for the creation of a market infrastructure institution to track the end-use of funds borrowed or raised as equity by small businesses, reports **PTI**. A "viable mechanism" is needed to ensure that the funds are used for the intended purposes, he said. ■ PAGE 6

Vodafone sells shares worth ₹2,800 crore, exits Indus Towers
BRITISH TELECOM FIRM Vodafone has sold its entire stake in Indus Towers for ₹2,800 crore, reports **PTI**. Vodafone has sold 3% stake in Indus Towers and used ₹990 crore from the proceeds to clear lenders dues. ■ PAGE 6

NaBFID plans to raise record ₹40,000 crore in Jan-Mar quarter
STATE-RUN NABFID IS planning its largest ever fundraising of ₹40,000 crore from the local-debt market via bonds and loans for January-March, reports **Bloomberg**. ■ PAGE 6

RBI holds largest VRR auction in a year over liquidity woes
AS THE LIQUIDITY deficit worsened further, the RBI held its largest VRR auction rate in nearly a year, with a notified amount of ₹2.25 lakh crore, reports **Sachin Kumar**. ■ PAGE 6

Garima Sadhwani
New Delhi, January 10
WITH 400 MILLION people in attendance, and manifold eyeballs on it, the Maha Kumbh is gargantuan not only in human presence but also in business opportunity as well. The figure is ₹2 lakh crore to be precise, put forth by Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday.
This makes the event a pitching ground no brand wants to miss. So, devotees will find changing rooms for women by Dabur Amla and Vatika at the ghats and special baby care rooms being set up by Dabur Lal Tail. ITC's brand Bingle will be making rash. For local songs, ane Kuku FM, an audio storytelling platform, will use the event to launch its

Meta's new task on fact-checking
Final test is whether quality vetting of facts will happen
■ EXPLAINER, P7

Most Indians bought white and black cars in 2024
There's a preference for natural, understated shades over brighter tones like blue, red or orange.
■ MOTORING, P9

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50-YEAR FACILITY SEEN TO BOOST PUBLIC INVESTMENTS

Bigger capex loans to states
RUN-UP TO THE BUDGET 2025-26
PRASANTA SAHU
New Delhi, January 10
THE CENTRE WILL continue to turbocharge public capital expenditure by extending liberal capex loans to state governments for the sixth year in a row in FY26. It may either keep the outlay for the 50-year interest-free loans for the next fiscal at ₹1.5 lakh crore, the same as the current year in absolute terms, or announce a 10% hike to ₹1.65 lakh crore, sources said.
The move to maintain the loan amounts for the next fiscal at comparable levels is in the wake of a moderation in public capex in the current financial year, partly caused by general elections at the start of the year, but also due to capacity constraints faced by various govern-

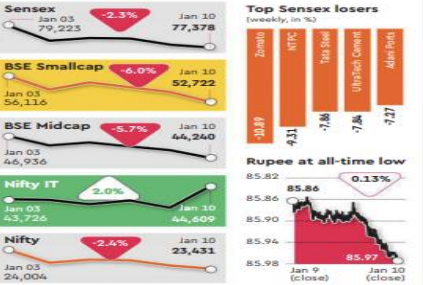


ments when it comes to implementing projects. Cross-fused capital formation, a loan proxy of investments, is seen to grow 6.4% in 2024-25, compared with 9% in 2023-24, as per the first advance estimates of the gross domestic product (GDP) released recently.
To ensure that states don't scale down their own capex, the Centre has linked a substantial portion of

the outlays to reforms and specific projects as part of the vision to make India a developed nation.
The Centre's capex has grown on an average of 30% between FY22 and FY24 as it adopted a capex-led growth strategy, taking such productive spending to 3% of GDP for the first time in FY24.
It had set a target of ₹1.1 lakh crore, including ₹1.5 lakh crore for states in FY25, a 17% increase over ₹9.5 lakh crore achieved in FY24.
The Centre has been continuing with the scheme as it promotes decentralised development of the country which may not be achieved fully through railways or highways, the major vehicles of its investment. The railways and NHAI also have capacity constraints.
In the pre-budget meeting with Union ministers, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman last month, state finance ministers demanded an increase in the allocation for capex loans and more flexibility in the scheme.
Continued on Page 17

IT only outlier in bloodbath this week

The bluechip stocks fell on Friday and logged weekly losses on worries about India Inc earnings, while IT shares gained after comments from TCS indicated early signs of a demand revival. The benchmarks — Sensex and Nifty — fell about 2.4% this week. Broader indices small-caps and mid-caps lost about 7.5% and 5.8%, respectively. The only outlier was the IT sector, which saw Nifty IT closing the week with a 2% gain.



At 5.2% in Nov, IIP expands at highest pace in 6 months

INDIA'S INDUSTRIAL OUTPUT expanded at 5.2%, the highest pace in six months, in November, 1.2% back of a sharp uptick in the manufacturing sector, according to data released on Friday, reports **FE Bureau**. The manufacturing sector grew 5.2%, aided by a low base (1.3%), when the growth was just 1.3%. In October, IIP had grown a modest 2.7% with a low base of 4.9%. ■ PAGE 2

Forex reserves at 10-month low on rupee pressure

INDIA'S FOREIGN EXCHANGE reserves fell for the fifth week to a 10-month low of \$634.59 billion as of January 3, reports **Reuters**. The reserves fell by \$7.7 billion in the week, after a cumulative \$17.8-billion drop in the prior three weeks. Reserves have fallen by about \$70 billion from their all-time high of \$704.89 billion in late September. ■ PAGE 6

Outrage over L&T chief's hard work talk

FE BUREAU
New Delhi, January 10
LARSEN & TOUBRO CHAIRMAN S.N. Subramaniam's comments on a 90-hour working week elicited a shocked outrage with a host of his peers in corporate India, criticising the idea of working inordinately long hours. CEOs took to Twitter and television on Friday to express their reservations on the remarks by Subramaniam, who has exhorted L&T employees to work even on Sundays.
Bajaj Auto managing director and CEO Rajiv Bajaj said that most people were already working 12 hours a day thanks to long com-

90-HOUR WORK WEEK DEBATE
■ Ad guru Piyush Pandey says it should be heard: mind balance over work-life balance
■ Veteran stock market investor Devina Mehra says this type of working is bunkum
■ Bajaj Auto's Rajiv Bajaj says the quality of work is more important than quantity
■ Intoforge founder Sanjiv Bikhchandani notes that working 12 hours a day for seven days was not sustainable
■ Ad guru Piyush Pandey says it should be heard: mind balance over work-life balance
■ Veteran stock market investor Devina Mehra says this type of working is bunkum

mutes. The practice of working 90-hour week should start at the top, he said, adding it was the quality and not the quantity of work that matters. "We need a kinder, gentler world more than ever before," Bajaj said, emphasising that the quality of work was more important than quantity.
Advertising guru Piyush Pandey

observed that rather than a work-life balance, what was needed was a heart-mind balance, adding L&T should be "tormented". Pandey said it was important to be hard working but not to be slaves.
The government's founder Sanjiv Bikhchandani noted that employees must meet a deadline, when there is no choice. However, working a day for seven days a week was not sustainable, Bikhchandani said.
Continued on Page 17

Sebi in favour of doubling floor for FPI disclosures

FE BUREAU
Mumbai, January 10
IN A MOVE that will bring relief to foreign portfolio investors (FPIs), the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has proposed a doubling of the additional disclosure threshold for FPIs with an exposure of ₹25,000 crore. The suggestion — has been made with a view to keeping exposures in sync with the rise in market volumes.
■ Additional disclosure threshold for FPIs may be raised to ₹50,000 cr of equity AUM
■ Suggestion has been made with a view to keeping exposures in sync with the rise in market volumes
■ Consumption basket notes that 'potential to disrupt the market' has to be evaluated relative to the size of the market.
■ Sebi's August 2023 circular had set out the rules for the additional disclosure to be made for an AUM exceeding ₹25,000 crore
border. The rules made the prior approval of the government mandatory for such direct and indirect investments into India.
The August 2023 circular had also mandated the disclosure of granular details of all entities holding any ownership or control in an FPI, without any threshold if they held more than 5% of the Indian equity AUM in a single Indian corporate group. The regulator's intention was to guard against possible circumvention of minimum public shareholding (MPS) and anti-acquisition rules under the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) regulations.

E-gaming firms get big SC relief on over ₹1L-cr GST notices

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi, January 10
THE SUPREME COURT on Friday stayed show-cause notices issued by GST authorities worth over ₹1 lakh crore to online gaming companies and cancelled an alleged tax evasion. A bench of justices Jai Prakash and R. Mahadevan said the matters required hearing and all proceedings against the gaming companies should remain stayed until the hearing.
Additional solicitor general N Venkatesh, representing the GST department, said some show-cause notices would come to an end in February. The matter was posted for further hearing on March 18.
The government issued show-cause notices to online gaming companies in October 2023 issued show-cause notices to online gaming companies in October 2023, making it mandatory for overseas online gaming companies to register in India from October 3, 2023, come into effect August 2023. GST Council clarified 28% GST would be levied on the full value of bets

placed on online gaming platforms. Gaming companies moved various high courts against such GST demands, contesting the claims of the revenue authorities.
Continued on Page 17

CASE FILE
■ E-gaming firms grudging with 28% GST instead of 18% for the period up to October 2023
■ Companies argue 28% tax is applicable only starting October 1, 2023, govt says it's from August 2023
■ Govt says Oct 2023 revision only provided clarity to what was already in force

The 2-lakh-core business opportunity India Inc is vying for How Maha Kumbh is a pitching ground for brands


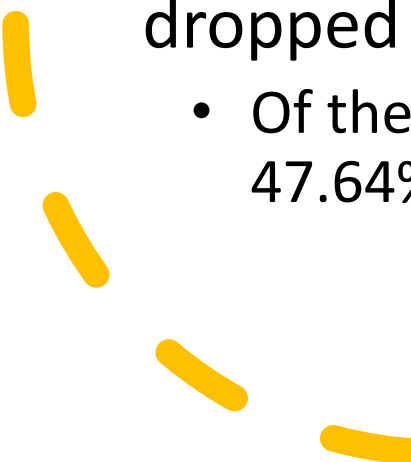
MONEY MELA
₹3,000 cr estimated to be spent by India Inc
₹5 lakh spend for tier-1 brand activation
₹10 lakh for hoardings or flex boards
■ Up to ₹1 cr brands may spend on LED screens
■ Changing rooms for women by Dabur Amla and Vatika at the ghats
■ Special baby care rooms by Dabur Lal Tail, Dabur Dant, Sman zones
■ Mother Dairy is setting up 45 kiosks
■ Kuku FM will use event to promote its OTT app 'Bhakti'
■ ITC is offering a luxury tent experience
■ Omora Hospitality's two luxury tented accommodations
■ The globe makes the Maha Kumbh a huge potential area for branding.
The UP government itself is spending ₹5,000 crore on the event. Sharing details with **FE**, Mohi Malhotra, CEO of Dabur India, said, "We are setting up exclusive Dabur Dant Sman Zones inside the 'mela' with unique products like toothpaste dispensers. The company has also planned a life-size Anirudh Kalkash installation with Dabur Honey, with a virtual storytelling feature about Samudra Manthan and the significance of Kumbh. Special Kalkash-shaped 'pan' are also being created, which would be given to pilgrims for carrying back the holy water with them."
As even Vivek Chaturvedi, additional director, magistrate of Maha Kumbh, told **FE**, "A huge influx of crowd and devotees from all around

between ₹50 lakh and ₹1 crore. As even Vivek Chaturvedi, additional director, magistrate of Maha Kumbh, told **FE**, "A huge influx of crowd and devotees from all around

between ₹50 lakh and ₹1 crore. As even Vivek Chaturvedi, additional director, magistrate of Maha Kumbh, told **FE**, "A huge influx of crowd and devotees from all around



Sex Ratio at Birth
Dropped in Haryana


- 
- As per the Data from Civil Registration System (CRS), sex ratio at birth in Haryana **dropped to 910 in 2024**, the lowest it has been since 2016 when the ratio was 900.
 - **About**
 - After **peaking at 923 in 2019**, the sex ratio at birth in Haryana dropped to 910 in 2024, **an eight-year low**.
 - Of the 516,402 children born in Haryana in 2024, **52.35% were boys**, while 47.64% were girls.
- 

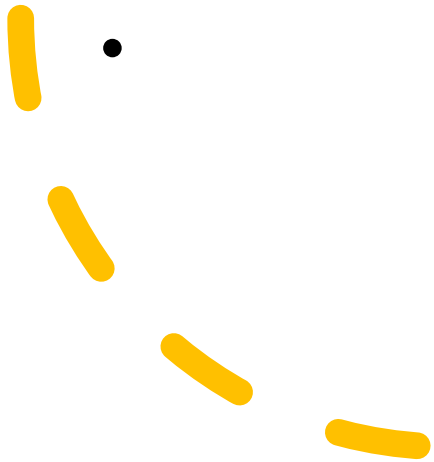
The Sex ratio at birth is defined as the number of female births per 1000 male births.

The sex ratio is the measure of the number of females per 1,000 males in a given population.

Reasons for Increase in Past:

- **Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PNDT) Act, 1994:** The gains made between 2014 and 2019 came due to the **strict enforcement of the PNDT Act** coupled with an intense awareness campaign.

- 
- **Reason for Decrease:** More needs to be done to change attitudes, and in recent years, enforcement of laws aimed towards curbing female foeticide has loosened.
 - The **concept of 'only boy'** was not a popular phenomenon until now, but a section of the families have started opting for it due to the decreasing land holdings.



- **Sex Ratio in India**
- **Census 2011:**
 - The sex ratio at all India levels was **943** and the same for **rural and urban areas are 949 and 929** respectively.



- 
- The sex ratio for the **0-19 age group** was **908** while that of the **60+ age group** was **1033**.
 - The sex ratio in the economically active age group (15-59 years) was **944**.
 - The sex ratio was **highest in Kerala** (1084) followed by Puducherry (1037) and **lowest in Daman & Diu** (618) followed by Dadar & Nagar Haveli (774) and then Chandigarh (818).



- **National Family Health Survey 2021:**



- According to the NFHS-5, the overall **sex ratio at birth in India was 929.**
- The sex ratio of the population for the country was estimated as **1020.**

-





- **Why Historically there has been an Imbalance in the Sex Ratio in India?**
- **Cultural Preference for Sons:**
- **Gender Discrimination**
- **Female Infanticide:**
- **Sex-Selective Abortion:**
- **Economic Factors:**


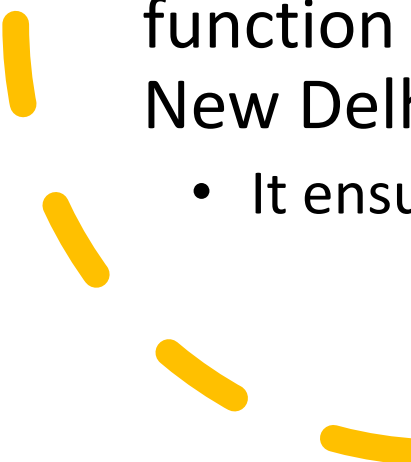




- 
- **Government Initiatives to Improve Sex Ratio**
 - **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP)**
 - **Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act, 1994:**
 - **Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana**
 - **The National Health Mission (NHM)**
- 

BHARATPOL Portal



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- The Union Home Minister inaugurated the BHARATPOL portal developed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in New Delhi.
 - **BHARATPOL Portal**
 - BHARATPOL, or **Broadcast Hub for Assistance and Real-Time Action against Transnational Crimes**, is a technological platform created to facilitate real-time coordination between central and state agencies and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL).
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- It is designed to speed up investigations and improve crime control measures by providing a structured and secure interface for data sharing.
 - **Key Modules**
 - **Connect:** This module allows all Indian law enforcement agencies to function as an extension of INTERPOL's National Central Bureau (NCB-New Delhi).
 - It ensures quick and secure transmission of investigation requests and data.
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- **INTERPOL Notices:** The portal enables faster issuance and management of INTERPOL notices, such as Red Corner Notices, for locating criminals both domestically and globally.
 - **References:** It provides access to data and references from INTERPOL's 195 member countries, simplifying the process of seeking and offering international assistance.
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- **What is Interpol?**

- **Interpol** is an intergovernmental organization, which stands for International Criminal Police Organization.

- **Background:** It was founded in **1923** at the International Police Congress in Vienna as the **International Criminal Police Commission (ICPC)**.


1. In 1956, the ICPC adopted the name Interpol.

- **Members:** It has **196 member** countries, including **India**.

- **Headquarters:** Lyon, France



Hysterectomy

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- There is growing concern over the potential excess of caesarean sections and unnecessary hysterectomies being performed.
 - **About Hysterectomy**
 - A hysterectomy is a surgical procedure to remove a woman's uterus, which means she will no longer have menstrual periods or be able to become pregnant.



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- The **uterus** is the place where a baby grows when a woman is pregnant.
- In some cases, the ovaries and fallopian tubes are also removed.
 - If both ovaries are taken out, the woman will enter menopause.



Common reasons : Fibroids, Pelvic organ prolapse, Very heavy or painful periods, Endometriosis, Uterine, cervical, or ovarian cancer.

Health Impact: Unnecessary hysterectomies cause severe physical, social, and mental health burdens.

- Premature menopause, weight gain, and increased health risks like heart disease and diabetes are some of the consequences

- **Supreme Court Intervention:** The Supreme Court has directed states to implement guidelines to monitor unnecessary hysterectomies, addressing issues in Bihar, Chhattisgarh, and Rajasthan.

Geographical Distribution of Overseas Indians




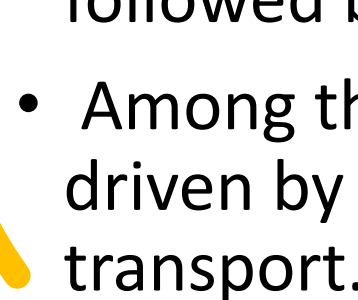
Country	Overseas Indian
USA	5,409,062
UK	1,864,318
UAE	3,568,848
South Africa	1,700,000
Saudi Arabia	2,463,509
Myanmar	2,002,660
Malaysia	2,914,127
Kuwait	995,528
Oman	686,635
Canada	2,875,954

- **Classification of Diaspora:**
- **Non-Resident Indians (NRIs):** NRIs are **Indians who are residents of foreign countries.** A person is considered NRI if:
 - A person is a **non-resident** if they are in India for **less than 182 days** in a year or **less than 365 days** in the preceding 4 years and less than 60 days in the current year.

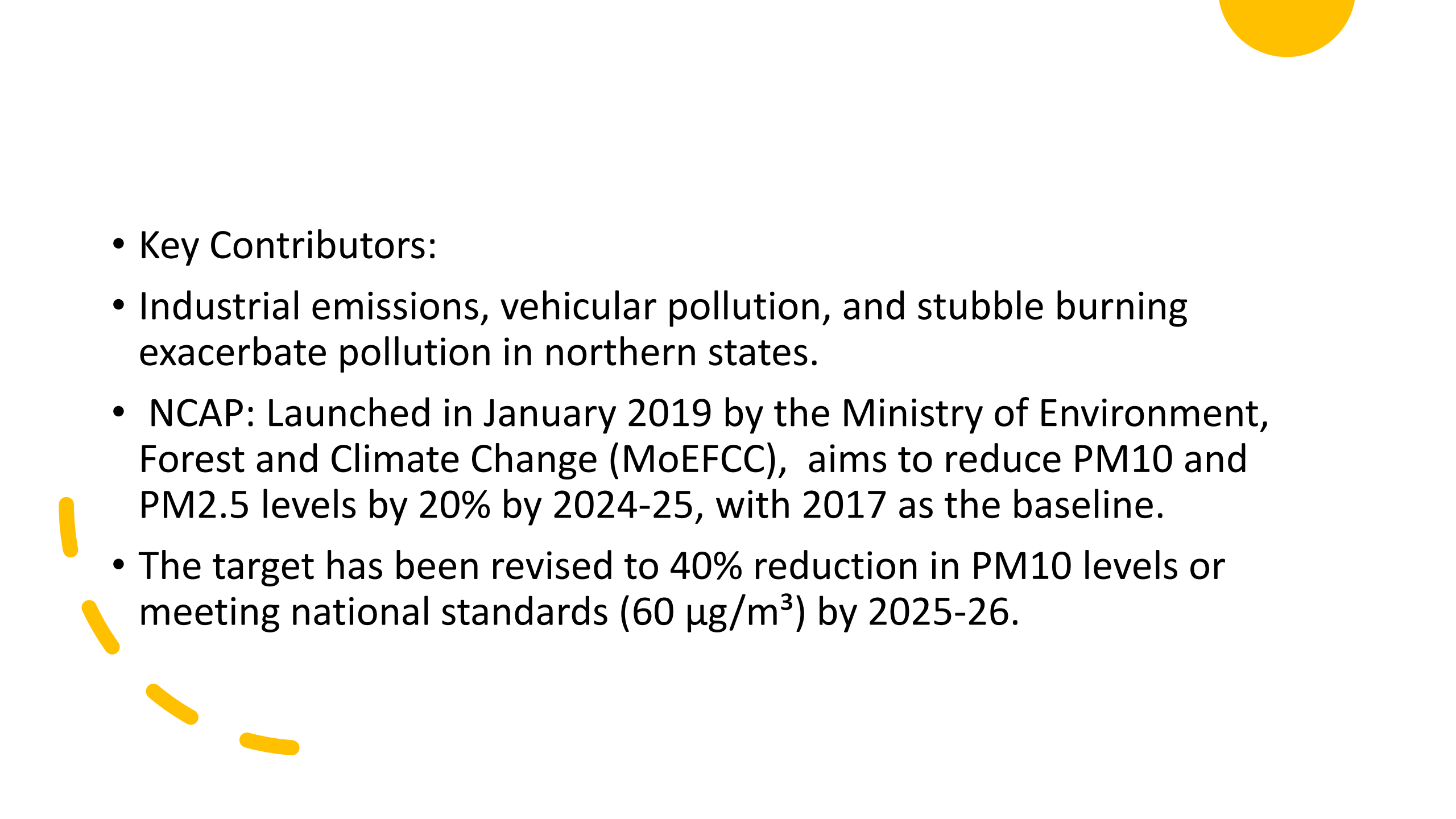
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- **Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs):**
 - **PIO refers to a foreign citizen (previously held an Indian passport) who or their parents/grandparents born in India or who is a spouse of a citizen of India or a PIO.**
 - **Nationals of Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, Iran, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Nepal are not included in the PIO classification.**
 - **The PIO category was abolished in 2015 and merged with the OCI category.**

A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a large, round, woven basket. The basket is intricately decorated with horizontal bands of colorful beads in shades of blue, orange, yellow, red, and green. The person holding the basket is wearing a garment with a bold, geometric pattern in yellow, red, green, and black. The background is a soft-focus green, suggesting an outdoor setting. The text "India's Progress Under NCAP" is overlaid in white, sans-serif font across the center of the image.

India's Progress Under NCAP

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- India achieved a 26.84% reduction in nationwide Particulate Matter (PM) levels from 2019 to 2024, with National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) cities showing a 24.45% improvement due to targeted interventions.
 - Top Performers: Varanasi led with a 76.4% reduction in pollution, followed by Moradabad (58%) and Kanpur (51.2%).
 - Among the major cities, Kolkata saw a 21.5% reduction in pollution, driven by stricter industrial regulations and improved public transport.
- 

- Southern and western cities, like Bengaluru (8%) and Chennai (9.2%), steadily reduced pollution levels.
- Challenges: Cities like Delhi (PM 2.5 at 107 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) and Byrnihat in Assam (PM 2.5 at 127.3 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) remain the most polluted cities.
- Cities like Gurugram, Faridabad, and Ghaziabad require urgent interventions.

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- Key Contributors:
 - Industrial emissions, vehicular pollution, and stubble burning exacerbate pollution in northern states.
 - NCAP: Launched in January 2019 by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), aims to reduce PM10 and PM2.5 levels by 20% by 2024-25, with 2017 as the baseline.
 - The target has been revised to 40% reduction in PM10 levels or meeting national standards ($60 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) by 2025-26.

Air Pollutants

Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂)



It comes from the consumption of fossil fuels (oil, coal and natural gas). Reacts with water to form acid rain.

Impact: Causes respiratory problems.

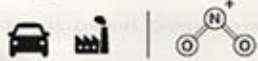
Ozone (O₃)



Secondary pollutant formed from other pollutants (NO_x and VOC) under the action of the sun.

Impact: Irritation of the eye and respiratory mucous membranes, asthma attacks.

Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂)



Emissions from road transport, industry and energy production sectors. Contributes to Ozone and PM formation.

Impact: Chronic lung disease.

Carbon Monoxide (CO)



It is a product of the incomplete combustion of carbon-containing compounds.

Impact: Fatigue, confusion, and dizziness due to inadequate oxygen delivery to the brain.

Ammonia (NH₃)



Produced by the metabolism of amino acids and other compounds which contain nitrogen.

Impact: Immediate burning of the eyes, nose, throat and respiratory tract and can result in blindness, lung damage.

Lead (Pb)



Released as a waste product from extraction of metals such as silver, platinum, and iron from their respective ores.

Impact: Anemia, weakness, and kidney and brain damage.

Particulate Matter (PM)



PM10: Inhalable particles, with diameters that are generally 10 micrometers and smaller.

PM2.5: Fine inhalable particles, with diameters that are generally 2.5 micrometers and smaller.

Source: Emitted from construction sites, unpaved roads, fields, fires.

Impact: Irregular heartbeat, aggravated asthma, decreased lung function.

Note: These major air pollutants are included in the Air quality index for which short-term National Ambient Air Quality Standards are prescribed.

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

Top 10 MCQ from the session for
every exam

- **1. What was the significant legal development involving Donald Trump in 2024?**
2024 में डोनाल्ड ट्रंप से संबंधित महत्वपूर्ण कानूनी घटनाक्रम क्या था?
- **A. He was acquitted in all cases / उन्हें सभी मामलों में बरी कर दिया गया।**
- **B. He was sentenced for falsifying business records / उन्हें व्यावसायिक रिकॉर्ड को गलत साबित करने के लिए सजा दी गई।**
- **C. He became the first U.S. President to win a case in court / वह पहले अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति बने जिन्होंने अदालत में मामला जीता।**
- **D. He resigned from his political career / उन्होंने अपने राजनीतिक करियर से इस्तीफा दे दिया।**

- What is the primary aim of the BHARATPOL portal?
BHARATPOL पोर्टल का मुख्य उद्देश्य क्या है?
- **A. Promote financial inclusion / वित्तीय समावेशन को बढ़ावा देना**
- **B. Coordinate real-time action against transnational crimes / अंतरराष्ट्रीय अपराधों के खिलाफ वास्तविक समय की कार्रवाई का समन्वय करना**
- **C. Enhance e-commerce in rural areas / ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में ई-कॉमर्स को बढ़ावा देना**
- **D. Improve India's cybersecurity infrastructure / भारत की साइबर सुरक्षा संरचना में सुधार करना**

- **3.** Which historical craft is highlighted in the Republic Day "At Home" curated gift box?
गणतंत्र दिवस "एट होम" क्युरेटेड गिफ्ट बॉक्स में कौन सा ऐतिहासिक शिल्प प्रदर्शित किया गया है?
- **A.** Kalamkari on Bamboo Box / बांस बॉक्स पर कलमकारी
- **B.** Channapatna Toys / चन्नपटना खिलौने
- **C.** Madhubani Paintings / मधुबनी पेंटिंग्स
- **D.** Pattachitra Art / पटचित्र कला

- **4. What is the focus of India's National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence in the defense sector?**
रक्षा क्षेत्र में भारत की राष्ट्रीय कृत्रिम बुद्धिमत्ता रणनीति का ध्यान किस पर है?
- **A. Establishing AI-powered missile systems / एआई-संचालित मिसाइल सिस्टम स्थापित करना**
- **B. Modernizing military capabilities / सैन्य क्षमताओं का आधुनिकीकरण**
- **C. Increasing cybersecurity measures / साइबर सुरक्षा उपायों को बढ़ाना**
- **D. Improving medical facilities for soldiers / सैनिकों के लिए चिकित्सा सुविधाओं में सुधार करना**

- **5. What is the significance of the sex ratio at birth data for Haryana in 2024?**
2024 में हरियाणा में जन्म के समय लिंगानुपात के डेटा का महत्व क्या है?
- **A. It reached its highest in eight years / यह आठ वर्षों में अपने उच्चतम स्तर पर पहुंच गया।**
- **B. It dropped to its lowest since 2016 / यह 2016 के बाद से अपने सबसे निचले स्तर पर पहुंच गया।**
- **C. It achieved gender parity / इसने लिंग समानता हासिल की।**
- **D. It surpassed the national average / यह राष्ट्रीय औसत से अधिक हो गया।**

- **6. What climate milestone was breached in 2024, as per global data?**
वैश्विक डेटा के अनुसार, 2024 में कौन सा जलवायु मील का पत्थर पार किया गया?
- **A. Global temperatures crossed the 1.5°C threshold / वैश्विक तापमान ने 1.5° C सीमा को पार किया।**
- **B. Sea levels rose by 10 meters / समुद्र स्तर 10 मीटर तक बढ़ गया।**
- **C. Arctic ice completely melted / आर्कटिक बर्फ पूरी तरह से पिघल गई।**
- **D. CO2 emissions reached an all-time low / CO2 उत्सर्जन अब तक के सबसे निचले स्तर पर पहुंच गया।**

- **7. What is the PM reduction target under the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) by 2025-26?**
2025-26 तक राष्ट्रीय स्वच्छ वायु कार्यक्रम (NCAP) के तहत पीएम कटौती का लक्ष्य क्या है?
- **A. 20%**
- **B. 30%**
- **C. 40%**
- **D. 50%**

- **8. What is the historical significance of Interpol, as mentioned in the document?**
दस्तावेज़ में इंटरपोल का ऐतिहासिक महत्व क्या है?
- **A. Founded during World War II / द्वितीय विश्व युद्ध के दौरान स्थापित किया गया।**
- **B. It was established as the International Criminal Police Commission / इसे अंतर्राष्ट्रीय आपराधिक पुलिस आयोग के रूप में स्थापित किया गया।**
- **C. It was the first organization to combat cybercrimes / यह साइबर अपराधों से लड़ने वाला पहला संगठन था।**
- **D. It focuses exclusively on terrorism / यह विशेष रूप से आतंकवाद पर केंद्रित है।**

- **9. What is a hysterectomy?**
हिस्टेरेक्टॉमी क्या है?
- **A. Removal of the ovaries / अंडाशय को हटाना।**
- **B. Removal of the uterus / गर्भाशय को हटाना।**
- **C. Removal of the fallopian tubes / फालोपियन ट्यूब को हटाना।**
- **D. A diagnostic test for fertility / प्रजनन क्षमता के लिए एक निदान परीक्षण।**

- **10.** What significant reduction in pollution was achieved by Varanasi under NCAP?
NCAP के तहत वाराणसी द्वारा प्रदूषण में कितनी महत्वपूर्ण कमी हासिल की गई?
- **A. 50%**
- **B. 58%**
- **C. 60%**
- **D. 76.4%**



Fun Fact

Ban on Tobacco

- one of the world's strictest **anti-tobacco laws**. Selling tobacco is prohibited, and smoking in public is heavily restricted.



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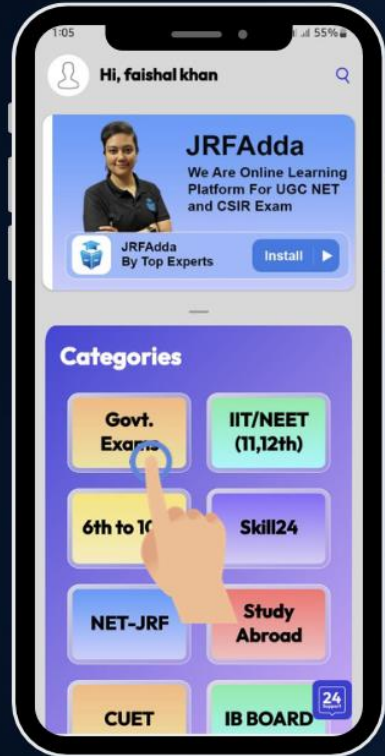
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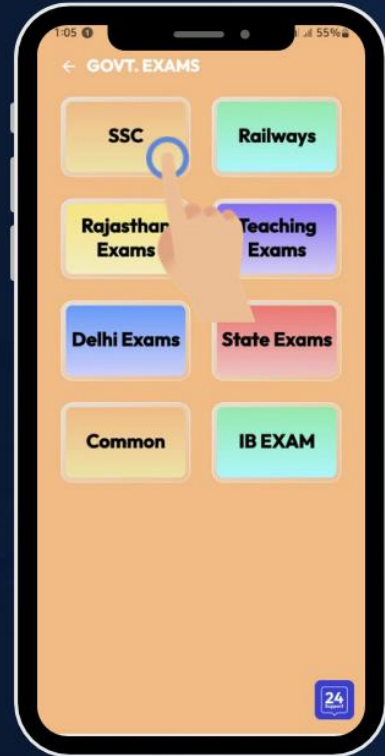
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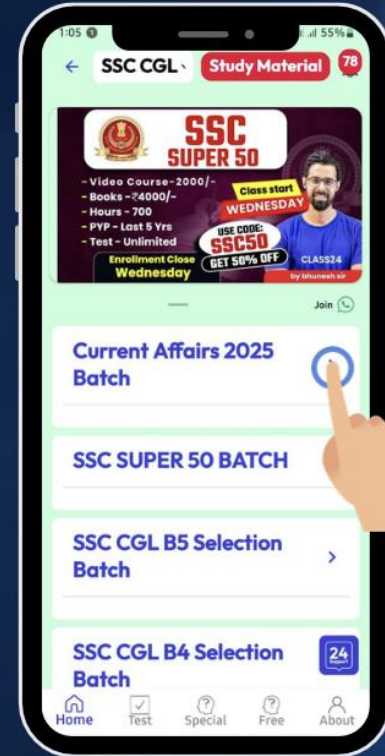
Step 1



Step 2




Step 3



Step 4



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

Thank you
guys.
