

# Daily Current Affairs



जनसक्ता



The Indian EXPRESS

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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, appearing to be in a meeting or collaborative work session. 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" क्यूरेटेड 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%**

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# Step 3



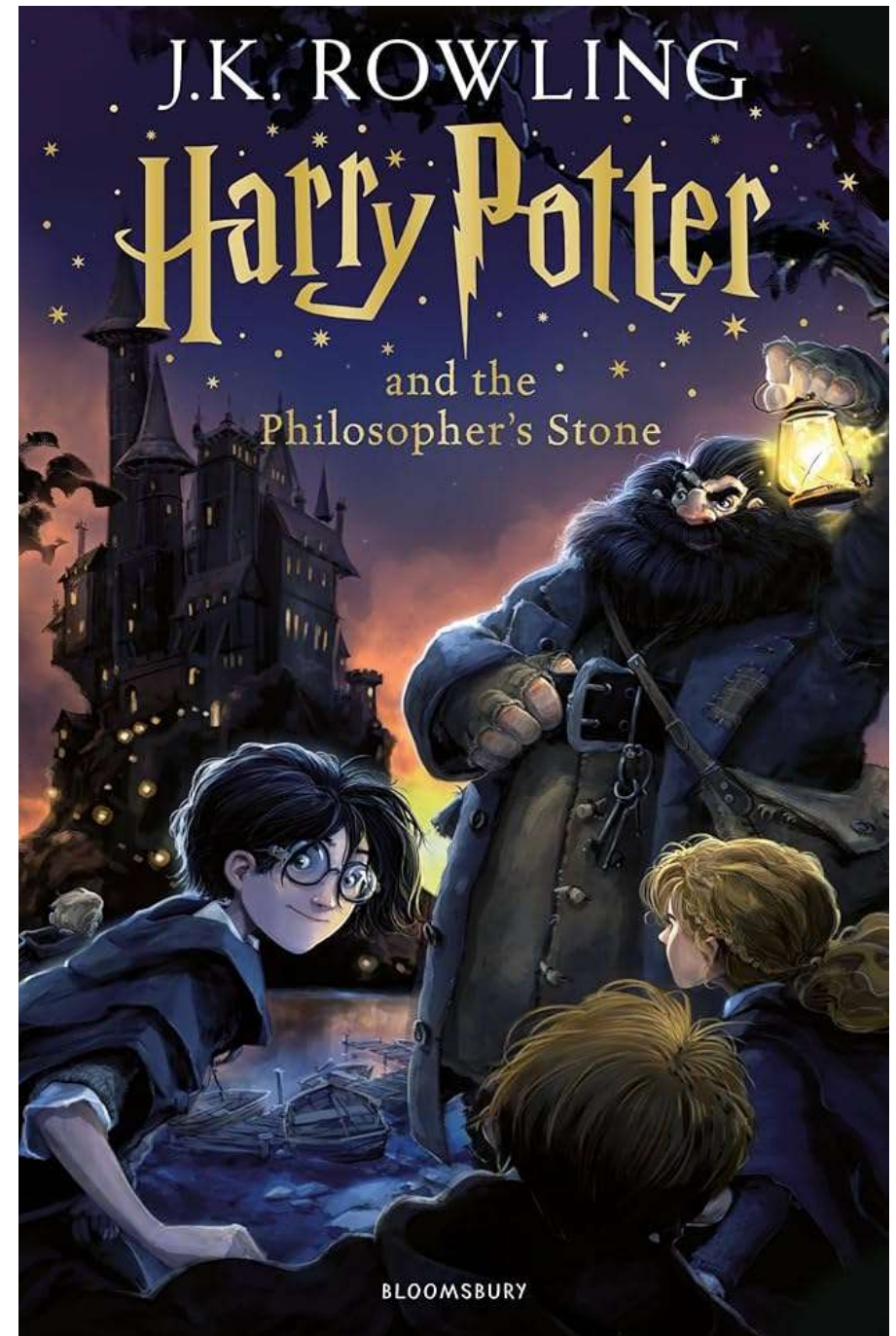
# Step 4





*“It does not do to dwell on dreams and forget to live.” –*

- J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*



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**WEST BANK**  
**'A cauldron that could explode any moment'**  
Israeli Indologist David Shulman predicts a third Palestinian 'uprising', suggests a confederation as path to peace with Israel  
NEWS 2 PAGE 4

**INDIA**  
Narendra Modi's first day as Prime Minister was marked by a series of key events, including the swearing-in ceremony and the first cabinet meeting. The Prime Minister addressed the nation, outlining his vision for India's future and the challenges ahead. He also met with various leaders and officials, discussing the government's priorities and the path forward for the country.

**Nicaragua**  
Nicolas Maduro's return to power in Venezuela was met with mixed reactions. Supporters celebrated the end of the long tenure of the previous administration, while critics expressed concerns about the political and economic challenges ahead. The international community remains divided on the issue, with some countries recognizing Maduro's government and others supporting the opposition.

**India**  
The Ministry of External Affairs has announced a series of diplomatic initiatives aimed at strengthening India's relations with its neighbors and global partners. This includes high-level visits, bilateral talks, and participation in international forums. The government is committed to promoting peace, stability, and economic growth in the region and beyond.

**INSIDE**

**Sanjay Raut says his party will go solo in civic polls**  
The Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi in Maharashtra has filed another petition with the state Election Commission, requesting a separate list for the party in the upcoming municipal corporation elections in Mumbai and Nagpur. Raut said the party intends to go solo in the upcoming elections in Mumbai and Nagpur. **NEWS 2 PAGE 2**

**Trade unions slam L&T chief's work week call**  
Central trade unions on Saturday condemned a comment by the chairman and managing director of Larsen & Toubro, S N Subramanyam, requesting a 90-hour work week with employees working on Sundays too 'rather than staring at' their spouses at home. **NEWS 2 PAGE 4**

**Bangladesh riots mostly political in nature, police say**  
The Bangladesh Police have filed a report saying that "majority" of the cases of attacks that had taken place in the country following the ouster of then Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in August 2024 were "not community motivated" but had "political" overtones. **NEWS 2 PAGE 12**

**China's Wang Yi visits Maldives, meets Maldivian Foreign Minister**  
Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi made a surprise visit to the Maldives on Friday while on his way back from a tour, during which he held talks with Maldivian Foreign Minister and discussed the state of bilateral relations, amid Malé's recent elections. **NEWS 2 PAGE 12**

**3 more bodies retrieved from Assam coal mine**

Multiple agencies keep up work to locate five other trapped miners; the body of a worker from Nepal was recovered on Wednesday, authorities continue to pump out water from nearby mines. Congress MP and Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha Gaurav Gogoi writes to Prime Minister seeking probe by a Special Investigation Team

**Rahul Barmahar**  
IMRANGDI  
Rescue workers retrieved the bodies of three workers from a flooded rat-hole coal mine in Dima Hasao district of Assam on Saturday afternoon, taking the death toll to four in the accident that took place on January 6. Five workers are still missing.  
Officials at the site in Kalamati area, about 26 km from the industrial town of Umrangdi, said an Army and National Disaster Response Force team recovered the bodies between 7.30 a.m. and 12.40 p.m.  
The deceased have been identified as Ljen Magor

(37) of Kalamati village close to the mine, Khushi Mohan Rai (37) from Fakirguri in Kokrajhar district of western Assam and Sarat Goyari (37) of Thajajara in Sonitpur district of north-central Assam. The body of Ganega Bahadur Shrivastha (48), a resident of Udayapur district in Nepal, was recovered on Wednesday.  
Efforts by multiple agencies, including the Navy, to rescue the five miners still trapped in the 90-metre pit continued for the fifth day, as the water level in the mine was almost 30 metres for the first three days, but the technicians managed to bring it down by 7 metres on Friday.  
A few days ago, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said the mine prima facie appeared illegal. Later, he said the mine had been abandoned 12 years ago, after being run

by the State's Mines and Minerals Department.  
A case connected with illegal mining was registered at the Umrangdi police station on Tuesday. The leaseholder of the mine, identified as Pratik Shukla, was subsequently arrested.  
The second arrest was made on Friday after the police caught Himanta Lakkar, a financier of the operations, from the 3 Kilo area, the nearest major habitation from the mine.  
This tragedy is not an isolated incident. The issue of illegal mining in the region has been ongoing for years with numerous such accidents reported in the past," he wrote.

**SFT probe sought**  
Assam Congress MP and Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha, Gaurav Gogoi on Friday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, seeking a probe by a Special Investigation Team (SIT) into the Dima Hasao incident and rampant illegal rat-hole coal mining despite the National Green Tribunal's blanket ban in April 2014.  
"This tragedy is not an isolated incident. The issue of illegal mining in the region has been ongoing for years with numerous such accidents reported in the past," he wrote.

**Twin peaks**

**Under fire**  
The Storm bridge over the Yamuna in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, shrouded in a blanket of dense fog on Saturday as severe cold weather continues in northern India. **PHOTO**

**HAL asks civil operators to ground Dhruv helicopters**  
IndiGo Aeronautics Ltd. has asked civilian operators to ground the indigenous Dhruv advanced light helicopter Mark III until the cause of a crash in Porbandar last week is identified.  
The armed forces have grounded all their 330 Dhruvs following the January 4 crash of an Indian Coast Guard helicopter during a training sortie that killed all three crew members onboard.  
"HAL has asked civilian operators to ground the indigenous Dhruv advanced light helicopter Mark III until the cause of a crash in Porbandar last week is identified.  
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**HAL asks civil operators to ground Dhruv helicopters**  
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**Several trapped as waiting hall caves in at Kannauj station**

**Rescue operation under way as the Kannauj railway station on Saturday. Six persons have been shifted to hospital. PHOTO**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
LAKHNOW  
A partially built waiting hall suddenly collapsed at the Kannauj railway station in Uttar Pradesh on Saturday, trapping several construction workers and railway staff under the debris. At least seven people suffered serious injuries and have been referred to the local government hospital.  
The two-storey building was under construction at the station, which is being renovated under the Amrit Bharat scheme.  
A ceiling slab of the waiting hall suddenly collapsed. It is believed that nearly 80 people were present on the site at the time, of which at least 20 have been rescued so far.  
A rescue operation has been launched by the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), the Government Railway Police (GRP), the Railway Protection Force (RPF), and the district administration.  
"Our focus is to rescue the workers who are trapped. We are using all resources at our disposal for the rescue efforts," Kannauj District Magistrate

**BJP attempting to enrol fake voters on a 'large scale' to 'manipulate' Delhi Assembly election, says AAP**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI  
The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Saturday accused the BJP of submitting fake voter registrations applications on a "large scale" to "manipulate" the Delhi Assembly election process. It said such practices raise doubts on the conduct of free and fair elections in the national capital.  
The party said it had brought these fake applications to the notice of the Election Commission (EC).  
At a press conference on Saturday, AAP National Spokesperson Sanjay Singh alleged that several voter registration applications using the residential

addresses of BJP leaders and addresses of small shops and businesses across the New Delhi constituency were sent to the poll panel.  
"Abuse applications" "An application has been filed to register 35 voters from the official MP's residence occupied by BJP candidate (New Delhi) seat Parvati Verma, who was supposed to vacate his house after his term ended. From a two-bedroom flat at 212 VP House, applications have been made for 24 voter registrations. It is also clear that the BJP's desperate manipulation," Mr. Singh said.  
He alleged that over 20 names have been sent

not in some distant part of the country but under the alias of the MP's office," Mr. Singh said.  
He urged the media to check how many voters from these addresses were listed their names in the Lok Sabha election held recently and how many fresh applications were submitted in the past 15 days.  
"In making these claims based on official statements. Each of these cases can be investigated. Applications have been submitted, and it is the responsibility of the election officer to resolve these irregularities. It should be done by them, catching these irregularities, is unfortunately being carried out by us," Mr. Singh said.  
"All these addresses are

**IN BRIEF**



**BPSFC sends legal notice to JSP founder Prashant Kishor**

The Bihar Public Service Commission (BPSFC) has sent a legal notice to JSP founder Prashant Kishor with regard to the allegations levelled by him on the commission. The commission has demanded evidence within seven days on the allegations of corruption levelled against the commission by him and his team. While speaking to *The Hindu*, BPSFC secretary Satya Prakash Sharma said, "It was necessary to send him a legal notice because the kind of allegation he has levelled against the BPSFC was unfavourable. The kind of atmosphere he has created was sending the wrong message among the genuine candidates."

**30 fraudsters held in Jaipur under 'Operation Cyber Shield'**

In a major campaign under the ongoing 'Operation Cyber Shield', the Rajasthan Police on Saturday arrested 30 alleged cyber fraudsters after searches at 40 places in the police station area of Jaipur. The accused had conducted transactions worth \$20 crore in defrauded unsuspecting people. Besides indulging in nefarious activities, the cybercriminals were preparing a new batch of fraudsters to cheat the people with new methods. Deputy Commissioner of Police Anil Kumar told *The Hindu* that three of the fraudsters had cheated people in the guise of monks and astrologers offering to conduct rituals for them.

**Two dead in accident at construction site in Raipur**

Two workers were killed while six sustained injuries when a centering frame on an under-construction building collapsed here on Saturday. The accident was reported around 3 p.m. on VJP Street, metres away from the VJP Road, a stretch that connects the city to the Raipur airport. The residential building has three multi-storey towers, each at a different stage of construction. While the project is run by a prominent construction firm from the State, those at the site said that it subcontracted various contractors. The work to remove the debris from the site was going on till late Saturday night.

**Manufacturers of medical devices seek MRP monitoring**

Medical device manufacturers have called for monitoring of maximum retail prices (MRP) of imported medical devices into India so that domestic consumers can get affordable rates. In a pre-budget memorandum to the Union Ministry of Finance, the Association of Indian Medical Device Industry (AIMDI) has highlighted that the government's efforts to reduce import duty on devices goes in vain since consumers/patients pay "10-30 times the landed price of imported devices". AIMDI, an umbrella association of Indian manufacturers of medical devices, said that in the current scenario it "agitates Indian manufacturers in every way".

**SUDOKU**

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		6	5				
1	6		4	9			2
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							5

Difficulty Rating: ★★☆☆☆

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

3	7	2	5	7	9	3	4	8
6	9	8	4	1	2	5	3	7
8	1	5	6	3	9	8	7	2
2	5	4	3	8	1	6	7	9
7	6	3	9	1	5	4	8	2
4	8	1	2	6	7	5	3	9
9	2	1	2	6	7	5	3	4

**Civil operators told to ground Dhruv copters after January 5 crash**

Armed forces have already grounded all 330 choppers in their fleet. HAL has issued the advisory to BSF, Jharkhand govt., Mauritius Police Force.

Jagjit Chandra  
NEW DELHI

**H** Indian Aeronautics Ltd. has advised civilian operators to ground the indigenous Dhruv advanced light helicopter Mark-II until the cause of the crash in Forbaird last week is identified. The armed forces have already temporarily grounded all their 330 Dhruvs following the January 5 crash of an Indian Coast Guard helicopter during a training sortie that killed all three crew members. Commandant Jagjit Chandra, Deputy Commandant S.K. Yadav and Prashant Nankh Bhandal.



**Precaution ride:** There have been nearly 20 crashes involving the ALH over the past two decades. (AP Photo)

2023 to be used by the Mauritius Police Force. The Coast Guard has constituted a Board of Inquiry into the accident, which is the third crash of a Dhruv in the past two years. In September, one crashed during a medical evacuation off the Forbaird coast, killing all three aboard. In March 2022, a Dhruv of the Coast Guard crashed shortly after take-off in Kochi. There were no fatalities. "There have been nearly 20 crashes involving the ALH over the past 24 years. While some of these have

been due to operational reasons because of the extreme conditions the chopper flies in such high altitudes and low visibility conditions at night, there have also been concerns over control rods, which were found to be broken. Subsequently, the rods were changed with an upgraded material. The inquiry spearheaded by the ICG will reveal whether the cause of the crash was due to operational circumstances or a manufacturing flaw." Wing Commander Unnikrishnan Pillai (Retd), former chief test pilot at HAL, told *The Hindu*.

**New National Museum in Delhi to display artefacts in chronological and thematic order**

Saxena/Ankur Chakrabarty

North Block and South Block in the national capital, which are set to house the new National Museum, will have artefacts arranged chronologically and thematically, according to a draft proposal under consideration of the Union Culture Ministry. North Block, which is likely to be the first one of the buildings where retrospective will be completed, is expected to house the artefacts in a chronological order, while South Block is likely to have theme-based sections, sources told *The Hindu*. India agreed a memorandum of understanding with France on December



Plans made: India signed an agreement with France on December 19 last year for the development of the new museum.

**India joins UN panel on data for official statistics**

Press Trust of India  
NEW DELHI

India has joined the UN Committee of Experts on Big Data and Data Science for Official Statistics, a statement by Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation said. The panel was created to further investigate the challenges of big data in including the potential for monitoring and reporting on Sustainable Development Goals. India will contribute to shaping global standards and practices in harnessing Big Data and data science for official statistical purposes. "This membership is a strategic opportunity for India to align its domestic advancements in Big Data and data science.

19 last year for the development of the new museum, at the Grand Palais, and the Hotel de la Marine. This approach mirrors France's Grand Project initiative that transformed government buildings into scenic cultural spaces. The chronological arrangement will have 80 sections each with 8-10

**Kolkata second in global list of cities with slowest traffic; Bengaluru third**

Serika/Nandini  
HYDERABAD

Kolkata's roads were the second most congested in the world in 2024, and the most congested in Asia, the latest survey by the Netherlands-based location technology firm TomTom said. According to the report, drivers in the city spent an average of 34 minutes and 33 seconds to travel a distance of 10 km. Kolkata was followed closely by Bengaluru, where drivers spent 34 minutes and 17 seconds to cover 10 km. Pune finished third with a travel time of 31 minutes and 22 seconds for the same distance, leaving India with three cities in the global top five. Hyderabad (31.4 minutes) and five other Indian cities in the top 20 globally,

**Denotified tribes' anger growing amid a stagnating scheme, classification issues**

Abhinav Lakshman  
NEW DELHI

With the Centre's SEED scheme for denotified tribes only now taking off, caste certificates being denied to them in 22 States, and the late Commission's 2017 recommendations, anger among the denotified tribes (DNT), semi-nomadic tribes (SNT), and nomadic tribes (NT) is growing across States such as Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, and Gujarat. This anger is now also extending towards the Union government's Development and Welfare Board for DNTs, SNTs, and NTs (DWB/NTS), and NT and DNT quotas in public education and employment. The DNT commission had concluded there were a total of 1,524 DNT, NT, and SNT communities across the country, of which 300 were not yet categorised as SC, ST, or OBC.

**Fresh attempts made to push for the implementation of the Idete Commission recommendations**

Ramp Idete, which had put out a final report in 2017, calling for the government to expedite the final classification of these communities, count their population by including a caste census column in the 2023 census, and provide a sub-quota for them under SC/ST/OBC quotas in public education and employment. The Idete commission had concluded there were a total of 1,524 DNT, NT, and SNT communities across the country, of which 300 were not yet categorised as SC, ST, or OBC.

**Certificate sought**

B.K. Lodhi, who was Member Secretary in the Idete Commission and is now chairing the Idete committee, and Arun Ghuman in Jharkhand Vikas Parishad (AJV) Bharatpur in Uttar Pradesh, said, "We were first to react to the orders and branded criminal for it. How can the government not sort out these basic issues like DNT certificates across States?"

Uttar Pradesh is among the seven States that technically have begun issuing DNT community certificates. But Dr. Lodhi who attended the national

workshop in New Delhi last week, said, "They are saying they have issued some 200-300 certificates and painting it as some huge achievement. It strikes at a core area, denying our identity. If the government cannot get States to issue certificates, they might as well brand us criminal again, at least we will get our identity."

**Welfare measures**

The SEED scheme (Scheme for the Economic Empowerment of DNT/NT/SNT communities) was meant to be the Centre's flagship scheme for these communities. Launched in February 2022, the scheme of forced assistance for health, education, healthcare, and housing. But it took over two years for the scheme to take off.

In a meeting of top officials, chaired by Member Secretary in the Idete Commission and is now chairing the Idete committee, and Arun Ghuman in Jharkhand Vikas Parishad (AJV) Bharatpur in Uttar Pradesh, said, "We were first to react to the orders and branded criminal for it. How can the government not sort out these basic issues like DNT certificates across States?"

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**Rijju to ink pact for Haj pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia**

Press Trust of India  
NEW DELHI

Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijju on Saturday embarked on a five-day visit to Saudi Arabia to sign a bilateral agreement for the Haj pilgrimage of 2028, where India is seeking an additional quota for 10,000 pilgrims. Mr. Rijju is scheduled to meet Saudi Arabian Minister of Hajj and Umrah Affairs, Abdulrahman bin Abdulrahman Al-Nabhan on Monday when the two leaders are expected to sign the bilateral agreement. "I look forward to visiting the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to sign the bilateral agreement on Hajj 2028 and strengthen the people-to-people ties between our two great nations," Mr. Rijju said in a post on X.

Mr. Rijju will also meet Saleh Al-Jasser, the Saudi Minister of Transport and Logistics Services and discuss Haj flight operations and the pilgrimage-related bus and train services with him.

He will visit the Jeddah Haj Terminal, used by Indian pilgrims, where the government has dedicated an office space for facilitation.

India's Haj quota for 2025 was fixed by Saudi Arabia at 17,025 pilgrims and the government is seeking an additional 10,000 quota.

Mr. Rijju will also visit Medina. Out of the total Haj pilgrims quota allocated to India, 70% would be handled by the Haj Committee of India (HCCI) while the remaining 30% will be allocated to various Haj group organisers, according to the government's Haj Policy for 2025.

In 2024, the HCCI was allotted 80% while the private Haj group organisers got 20% of the quota.

rooms and this ground 800 galleries in total. The thematic section would have displays based on different artefacts such as literature, architecture, and art. There would also be galleries with augmented reality, educational centres and children's corner.

**2,00,000 artefacts**  
North Block houses the Ministries of Finance and Home Affairs, while South Block houses the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministries of Defence and External Affairs.

Offices in both the buildings are being moved to the Common Central Secretariat (CCS) building on Janpath as part of the Central Vista plan. The new museum,

which has been named 'Yag Vigraha Bharat' (Yag Vastu), will be able to house an estimated 25,000-30,000 artefacts and is expected to be the largest art museum in the world when completed.

As of now, the National Museum has 2,00,000 artefacts in total, out of which 1,000-8,000 are on display. "We have sought artefacts from all museums across the country for display in the upcoming new museum. While they are most welcome to send artefacts on a permanent basis, we can also display them on a temporary basis and keep rotating them," B.K. Modi, Director General of the National Museum, told *The Hindu*.

their average travel time and congestion level. The study used Floating Car Data (FCD) to calculate travel times.

Conditions in Kolkata, if Barranquilla's 256 minutes, six seconds in Colombia took the top spot and London (33.17 seconds) rounded up the top five of the rankings. While 100 hours were lost per year due to traffic

conditions in Kolkata, it took 17 hours in Barranquilla, 10 hours in Pune and 85 hours in Hyderabad.

Featuring 500 cities across 62 countries on six continents, the findings of TomTom Traffic Index evaluated cities by

making the 10th spot. Barranquilla's 256 minutes, six seconds in Colombia took the top spot and London (33.17 seconds) rounded up the top five of the rankings. While 100 hours were lost per year due to traffic

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conditions in Kolkata, it took 17 hours in Barranquilla, 10 hours in Pune and 85 hours in Hyderabad.

# Kolkata second in global list of cities with slowest traffic; Bengaluru third

**Serish Nanisetti**

HYDERABAD

Kolkata's roads were the second most congested in the world in 2024, and the most congested in Asia, the latest survey by the Netherlands-based location technology firm TomTom said. According to the report, drivers in the city spent an average of 34 minutes and 33 seconds to travel a distance of 10 km.

Kolkata was followed closely by Bengaluru, where drivers spent 34 minutes and 10 seconds to cover 10 km. Pune finished third with a travel time of 33 minutes and 22 seconds for the same distance, leaving India with three cities in the global top five.

Hyderabad (31.5 minutes) was the other Indian city in the top 20 globally,



**Rush hour:** Bengaluru is notorious for its traffic jams that can leave drivers waiting on roads for hours. FILE PHOTO

taking the 18th spot.

Barranquilla City (36 minutes, six seconds) in Colombia took the top spot and London (33 minutes, 17 seconds) rounded up the top five of the rankings.

While 110 hours were lost per year due to traffic

conditions in Kolkata, it was 117 hours in Bengaluru, 108 hours in Pune and 85 hours in Hyderabad.

Featuring 500 cities across 62 countries on six continents, the 14th edition of TomTom Traffic Index evaluated cities by

their average travel time and congestion level. The study used Floating Car Data (FCD) to calculate travel times.

Chennai was 31st in the list, with drivers spending 30 minutes and 20 seconds to cover 10 km while Mumbai (29 minutes, 26 seconds) was 39th.

Areas with the highest congestion in Hyderabad were Ameerpet, Khairatabad, Erragadda, Balanagar, Somajiguda, and Begumpet. Comparatively, the western and eastern parts of the city remained relatively free of congestion. On Saturday, while jokes about empty streets in Hyderabad owing to families leaving for their home towns flooded social media, the traffic map still blinked in red, showing congestion in many areas.

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## Overview

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Kolkata has been ranked the second most congested city globally and the most congested in Asia in 2024 by the **TomTom Traffic Index**.

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कोलकाता 2024 में **टॉमटॉम ट्रैफिक इंडेक्स** द्वारा एशिया में सबसे अधिक और वैश्विक स्तर पर दूसरा सबसे अधिक ट्रैफिक जाम वाला शहर बना।

## Key Statistics

### Kolkata Traffic Details

- **Time to Travel 10 km:** 34 minutes and 33 seconds.
- **Annual Time Lost in Traffic:** 117 hours.
- **10 किमी की यात्रा का समय:** 34 मिनट 33 सेकंड।
- **वार्षिक ट्रैफिक में खोया समय:** 117 घंटे।

## Bengaluru Traffic Details

Ranked **third globally**.

**Time to Travel 10 km:** 34 minutes and 10 seconds.

**Annual Time Lost in Traffic:** 117 hours.

बेंगलुरु वैश्विक स्तर पर तीसरे स्थान पर है।

10 किमी की यात्रा का समय: 34 मिनट 10 सेकंड।

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## Other Indian Cities

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**Pune:** Ranked fifth globally with a time of 33 minutes and 22 seconds for 10 km travel.

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**Hyderabad:** Ranked 18th globally.

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**पुणे:** 10 किमी यात्रा के लिए 33 मिनट 22 सेकंड का समय लेकर पांचवें स्थान पर।

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**हैदराबाद:** 18वें स्थान पर।





- **Top Ranked Cities**

- **Barranquilla, Colombia:** First place with 36 minutes, six seconds for 10 km travel.
- **London, UK:** Third place with 33 minutes, 17 seconds.
- **बरनक्विला, कोलंबिया:** 10 किमी यात्रा के लिए 36 मिनट 6 सेकंड।
- **लंदन, यूके:** 33 मिनट 17 सेकंड।

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## 1.Chennai and Mumbai

1. Chennai ranked 31st (30 minutes 20 seconds for 10 km).
2. Mumbai ranked 39th (29 minutes 26 seconds).
3. चेन्नई: 31वां स्थान (30 मिनट 20 सेकंड)।
4. मुंबई: 39वां स्थान (29 मिनट 26 सेकंड)।

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- **Broader Observations**

- The rankings featured **500 cities across 62 countries**.

- **TomTom Traffic Index** provides insights into travel times and congestion.

- यह रैंकिंग **62 देशों के 500 शहरों** पर आधारित है।

- **टॉमटॉम ट्रैफिक इंडेक्स** यात्रा समय और ट्रैफिक की जानकारी देता है।

# India joins UN panel on data for official statistics

**Press Trust of India**

NEW DELHI

India has joined the UN Committee of Experts on Big Data and Data Science for Official Statistics, a statement by Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation said.

The panel was created to further investigate the challenges of Big Data, including the potential for monitoring and reporting on Sustainable Development Goals. India will contribute to shaping global standards and practices in harnessing Big Data and data science for official statistical purposes.

This membership is a strategic opportunity for India to align its domestic advancements in Big Data and data science.

**MADE IN INDIA**  
Companies look to localise data storage  
NEWS 4 PAGE 6

**YOUTH SHARIF**  
Youth power will make India a developed nation: PM  
NEWS 7 PAGE 8

**TALKS WITH EU**  
Saudi Arabia calls for lifting Syria curbs  
WORLD 8 PAGE 14

**DATA POINT**  
Is Trump's fiat for the EU to buy U.S. oil justified?  
EU had already turned to U.S., to stay off Russia  
OPINION 8 PAGE 9

**BREEZING THROUGH**  
Sabalenka and Zverev ease into round two  
SPORT 8 PAGE 14

**INSIDE**

**Jai Shankar to attend Trump's swearing-in**

**NEW DELHI**  
External Affairs Minister L. Jai Shankar has been invited to represent the government of India at the swearing-in of U.S. President-elect Donald Trump on January 20. Mr. Jai Shankar will also meet with officials of the incoming administration during the visit. **PAGE 4**

**RAMSWARAM**  
In a fresh incident, eight fishermen from Ramaswaram and Thangachanasi in Ramaswaram district of Tamil Nadu were arrested in the early hours of Sunday by the Sri Lankan Navy on charges of poaching near Nedunkiluvu lake. **PAGE 8**

**Biden pushes for Gaza hostage deal before term ends**

**WASHINGTON**  
U.S. President Joe Biden on Sunday pushed for Israel-Egypt-Mediation efforts to halt the fighting in Gaza, a source familiar with the matter said, as U.S. officials race to reach a hostage and ceasefire deal before Mr. Biden leaves office. **PAGE 14**

# Docking trial: ISRO overcomes drift, nudges satellites closer

By bringing Chaser and Target within three metres of each other before moving them to a safe distance, the agency has overcome last week's setback caused by an unexpected drift, docking will be done after analysing trial data, says the agency

The Hindu Businessline

**T**rying to dock two satellites in space for the first time, the Indian Space Research Organisation announced early on Sunday that they were brought within three metres of each other in a trial attempt. It then moved them back to a safe distance.

**SpaceX Docking Update:** A trial attempt to reach up to 15m and then to 3m in space. Moving back spacecraft to safe distance. The docking process will be done after analysing data. Further, the space agency posted on X.

An important project of the ISRO, the GSAT docking mission was designed to develop and demonstrate the technology needed for space-



A PSLV C60 rocket had carried the satellites to space on December 30.

craft rendezvous, docking and undocking using two small satellites. A PSLV C60 rocket carried the GSAT (Chaser) and GSAT (Target) to space from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriha-

rikota on December 30. Earlier on Sunday, the ISRO said the two satellites were within 15 metres of each other. "GSAT (Chaser) and GSAT (Target) - in space from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriha-

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# Los Angeles fires growing despite efforts to contain

Firefighters battled on Sunday to get on top of massive wildfires around Los Angeles as winds ramped up, pushing the flames inward previously untouched neighbourhoods.

At least 10 persons were confirmed dead from fires that have ripped through tens of thousands of firefighters — and millions of California residents. Despite heroic efforts, including precision strikes from aerial crews, the Falladales Fire continued to grow, pushing east towards the priceless collection of the Getty Center art museum and north to the densely populated San Fernando Valley.

**Fire warning**  
A hot tail in the wind was rapidly giving way to gusts that forecasters warned would feed the flames for days to come.

**Critical fire weather conditions**  
will unfortunately persist through Sunday for southern California and last through at least early next week.

**Weather Service said.** "This may lead to the spread of ongoing fires as well as the development of new ones."

**The Falladales Fire** was contained on Saturday but had grown to 23,800 acres, while the Eaton Fire was at 14,000 acres and 15% contained.

**Trump reacts**  
Meanwhile, President-elect Donald Trump on Sunday accused California officials of incompetence over their handling of the deadly wildfires.

"The fires are still raging in L.A. The incompetent politicians have no idea how to put them out," Mr. Trump said on his Truth Social platform.

"This is one of the worst catastrophes in the history of our Country. They just can't put out the fire. Who's wrong with them?" he wrote.

With just over a week before he returns to the White House, Mr. Trump has launched a series of evidence-free broadsides accusing California's Democratic Governor Gavin Newsom of failures in response to the flames.

Mr. Newsom has meanwhile invited Mr. Trump to visit Los Angeles and survey the devastation with him.

## Kumbh confluence



Preparations in full swing in the Sangam area of Prayagraj on Sunday, the eve of the start of the 45-day Maha Kumbh being held after 12 years. The first major bathing ritual, or Shahi Snan, will be held on Monday. **PHOTO BY AP/WIDEWORLD**

## Bangladesh 'concerned' over border tensions

Khalid Bhattacharjee, New Delhi

The interim government of Bangladesh on Sunday expressed "deep concern" about the prevailing situation along the India-Bangladesh border. Dhaka's message came after the Adjunct Home Affairs, Jadhav Alam Chowdhury, in a letter to the Indian High Commission in Dhaka has been seeking focus along on the border.

**FULL REPORT ON PAGE 9**

# Kerala's maternal mortality ratio climbs as fertility levels fall to a new low

C. MARY  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala's maternal mortality ratio, the lowest in the country at 10 per one lakh live births, is now climbing steadily, much to the consternation of the State Health Department. The reasons for the increase may be beyond the control of officials.

The latest Sample Registration System special bulletin on maternal mortality in India (2018-20) brought out by the Registrar General of India, put Kerala's MMR at 10. However, while it depended on a sample survey to arrive at the figure, the State Health Department's actual estimates of maternal deaths in Kerala has risen 100% institutional deliveries — put the figure at 25.

Except through 2020-21, when Kerala lost many women to COVID-19 during pregnancy and childbirth, the State had consistently held a firm grip over mater-

nal mortality. Ironically, the current spike is not because more women are dying but because there are fewer childbirths than ever in the State. The State has now hit a low of 3,09,351 births from an average of 3.5 lakh annually earlier, show the latest data of the Economics and Statistics Department of the State. It is this dip in the denominator that is pushing the MMR up and not necessarily an actual spike in maternal deaths.

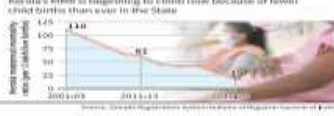
The Health Department puts live births in the State between 3.4 lakh and 3.9 lakh currently. The full vital statistics report (VSR) for 2023 is expected by January-end.

**Impact on social fabric.** The decline in fertility levels and changing demographics, many fear, are having an irrevocable impact on the State's social fabric. The State's heart of many policy-level discussions in Kerala, espe-

cially in the past three years. From an average of 5.5 lakh annual births since the 1980s, the graph went below the five-lakh mark for the first time in 2016, when 4,96,262 live births were recorded. Since 2018, the figure has been plummeting steadily, never going above the five-lakh mark again. The last published VSR (2021) recorded the total number of live births as 4,19,767.

"As part of the sustainable development Goals, Kerala was targeting an MMR of 10 by 2030. However, that looks quite unlikely now, given that births are falling steeply. We reached the state's MMR of 2024-25 — has already climbed to 32," says V.P. Pally, a senior consultant in Obstetrics and Gynaecology. "It would now be a Herculean task to hold the MMR at 20. Because, while we have successfully addressed all major medical

## A worrying trend



causes of maternal mortality, the rates that are impacting the state's MMR now are not something essentially within our control. We are seeing the impact of demographic changes in Kerala much earlier than we thought we would," Dr. Pally says. "It has been three decades since the birth rate began falling in Kerala and the steep fall in the number of children born now is part of a larger trend. But the problem is that once the fertility rate comes

down, the graph rarely goes up because demographic transition is hard to reverse," says S. Irudaya Rajan, Chairman of the International Institute of Migration and Development (IIMAD).

**Demographic transition** Kerala led the demographic transition in the South, attaining the replacement level fertility rate of 2.1 in 1967-68. Replacement level fertility is the average number of children a woman needs to have to replace

herself and her generation, so that the population is stable.

The State's total fertility rate (TFR) went below the replacement level in 1991 and remained stagnant at 1.8-1.7 for years, before touching 1.6 in 2020.

The current TFR of Kerala (2021-22) is 1.46. This is a sharp drop from the reproductive age in Kerala has been steadily falling and sometimes none. It is possible that the TFR will drop to 1.35 once the latest data on live births are accounted for. "Already, the impact of migration, especially the increase in the reproductive age group are going abroad for higher education or jobs and choosing to settle down there, and the economic impact of the loss of a young workforce and the replacement level fertility rate of 2.1 in 1967-68. Replacement level fertility is the average number of children a woman needs to have to replace

it is expected to go above that of children and the losses to the care and well-being of this population is huge," Dr. Rajan says.

But the birth rate is expected to plummet further and the consequences will be starkly evident in the next two decades, health officials say.

Not just declining birth rates, the State is also beginning to see the consequences of a higher age at marriage and delayed childbearing. The proportion of women aged 40 and above in pregnancy-related morbidities in this group and their reproductive health issues are becoming a major concern, though the State is yet to address hard evidence to substantiate this.

"It has been over 35 years since we attained the replacement level fertility rate and the cohort of women in the reproductive age of 15-49 we had then has now been re-

placed by a new cohort. The fertility is low in this new cohort of women, either by will or by nature, so naturally, the number of children will be fewer. And even the number of women in this cohort has begun to shrink. Kerala's B. Nair, social scientist, Population Research Centre, says.

**'Data not available'** By the Census 2011, the female population in the reproductive age group of 15-49 in Kerala was 93,32,494 and the Registrar General's projected figure for 2021 was 92,25,500. Meanwhile, the State had not published the VSR after 2021, claiming that there were reporting issues. There is also an ongoing debate about whether Kerala is registering its births properly and on time and the actual data on child births in the State collected by various agencies are not available in the public domain now.

# Kerala's maternal mortality ratio climbs as fertility levels fall to a new low

C. Maya  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala's maternal mortality ratio, the lowest in the country at 19 per one lakh live births, is now climbing steadily, much to the consternation of the State Health Department. The reasons for the increase may be beyond the control of officials.

The latest Sample Registration System special bulletin on maternal mortality in India (2018-20), brought out by the Registrar-General of India, put Kerala's MMR at 19. However, while it depended on a sample survey to arrive at the figure, the State Health Department's actual estimates of maternal deaths – Kerala has near 100% institutional deliveries – put the figure at 29.

Except during 2020-21, when Kerala lost many women to COVID-19 during pregnancy and childbirth, the State had consistently held a firm grip over mater-

nal mortality. Ironically, the current spike is not because more women are dying but because there are fewer childbirths than ever in the State.

The State has now hit a low of 3,93,231 births from an average of 5-5.5 lakh annually earlier, show the latest data of the Economics and Statistics Department of the State. It is this dip in the denominator that is pushing the MMR up and not necessarily an actual spike in maternal deaths.

The Health Department puts live births in the State between 3.4 lakh and 3.9 lakh currently. The full Vital Statistics Report (VSR) for 2023 is expected by January-end.

## Impact on social fabric

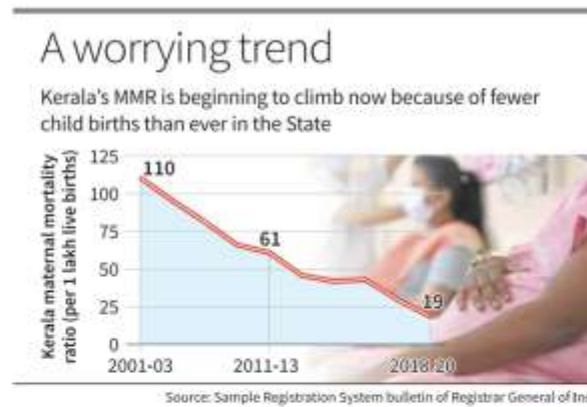
The decline in fertility levels and changing demographics, many fear, are having an irrevocable impact on the State's social fabric, and have been at the heart of many policy-level discussions in Kerala, espe-

cially in the past three years.

From an average of 5.5 lakh annual births since the 1980s, the graph went below the five-lakh mark for the first time in 2016, when 4,96,262 live births were recorded. Since 2018, the figure has been plummeting steadily, never going above the five-lakh mark again. The last published VSR (2021) recorded the total number of live births as 4,19,767.

"As part of the Sustainable Development Goals, Kerala was targeting an MMR of 20 by 2030. However, that looks quite unlikely now, given that birth rates are falling steeply. We reckon the State's MMR in 2024-25 has already climbed to 32," says V.P. Paily, a senior consultant in Obstetrics and Gynaecology.

"It would now be a herculean task to hold the MMR at 20. Because, while we have successfully addressed all major medical



causes of maternal mortality, the issues that are impacting the State's MMR now are not something essentially within our control. We are seeing the impact of demographic changes in Kerala much earlier than we thought we would," Dr. Paily says.

"It has been three decades since the birth rate began falling in Kerala and the steep fall in the number of children born now is part of a larger trend. But the problem is that once the fertility rate comes

down, the graph rarely goes up because demographic transition is hard to reverse," says S. Irudaya Rajan, Chairman of the International Institute of Migration and Development (IIMAD).

## Demographic transition

Kerala led the demographic transition in the South, attaining the replacement level fertility rate of 2.1 in 1987-88. Replacement level fertility is the average number of children a woman needs to have to replace

herself and her generation, so that the population is stable.

The State's total fertility rate (TFR) went below the replacement level in 1991 and remained stagnant at 1.8-1.7 for years, before touching 1.5 in 2020.

The current TFR of Kerala (2021 VSR) is 1.46. This means that a couple of reproductive age in Kerala mostly have only one child and sometimes none. It is possible that the TFR will drop to 1.35 once the latest data on live births are accounted for.

"Already, the impact of migration, especially the fact that a chunk of those in the reproductive age group are going abroad for higher education or jobs and choosing to settle down there, and the economic impact of the loss of a young workforce and changing attitudes regarding marriage and fertility are hurting us. In the next 10 years, the proportion of elderly population in Kerala

is expected to go above that of children and the magnitude of the issues related to the care and welfare of this population is likely to overwhelm us," Dr. Rajan says.

But the birth rate is expected to plummet further and the consequences will be starkly evident in the next two decades itself.

Not just declining birth rates, the State is also beginning to see the consequences of a higher age at marriage and delayed childbearing. The proportion of older mothers and the increase in pregnancy-related morbidities in this group and their reproductive health issues are emerging concerns, though the State is yet to adduce hard evidence to substantiate this.

"It has been over 35 years since we attained the replacement level fertility rate and the cohort of those women in the reproductive age of 15-49 we had then has now been re-

placed by a new cohort. The fertility is low in this new cohort of women, either by will or by nature, so naturally, the number of childbirths will go down. And even the number of women in this cohort has begun to dwindle," Sajini B. Nair, social scientist, Population Research Centre, says.

## 'Data not available'

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- **Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) Overview | मातृ मृत्यु दर (MMR) का अवलोकन**

- Kerala records the lowest MMR in India at **19 per 1 lakh live births**, but it has begun rising.

केरल की मातृ मृत्यु दर **19 प्रति 1 लाख जन्म** है, जो भारत में सबसे कम है, लेकिन इसमें वृद्धि हो रही है।

- The rise is attributed to **declining birth rates**, not an increase in maternal deaths. वृद्धि का कारण **जन्म दर में कमी** है, मातृ मृत्यु दर में वृद्धि नहीं।

- Maternal mortality rates rely on **total live births**, which have reduced to **3.9 lakh** annually from **5.5 lakh** in the 1980s.

मातृ मृत्यु दर **कुल जीवित जन्मों** पर निर्भर करती है, जो 1980 के दशक में **5.5 लाख** से घटकर **3.9 लाख** हो गई है।



- **Fertility Rates and Demographic Transition | प्रजनन दर और जनसांख्यिकीय परिवर्तन**

## **1. Current Total Fertility Rate (TFR) | वर्तमान कुल प्रजनन दर (TFR)**

1. **1.46** (2021 VSR), below the replacement level of **2.1** since 1991.

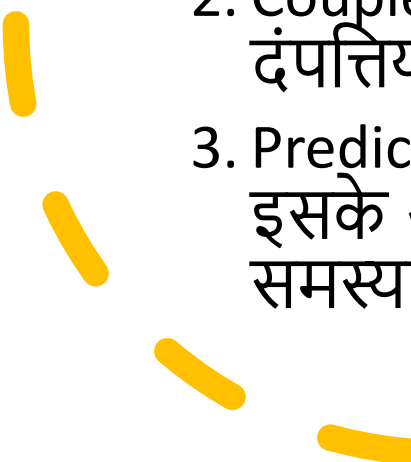
**1.46** (2021 VSR), जो 1991 से प्रतिस्थापन स्तर **2.1** से कम है।

2. Couples typically have **one child or none**.

दंपतियों के पास आमतौर पर **एक बच्चा या कोई नहीं** होता है।

3. Predicted to fall further to **1.35**, exacerbating demographic issues.

इसके और गिरकर **1.35** तक पहुंचने की संभावना है, जिससे जनसांख्यिकीय समस्याएँ बढ़ेंगी।





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## 1. Historical Perspective | ऐतिहासिक दृष्टिकोण

1. Kerala led the **demographic transition in South India** during the 1980s.  
1980 के दशक में केरल ने दक्षिण भारत में **जनसांख्यिकीय परिवर्तन** का नेतृत्व किया।
2. Achieved replacement-level fertility earlier than most other states.  
अधिकांश अन्य राज्यों से पहले प्रतिस्थापन स्तर की प्रजनन दर प्राप्त की।

## 2. Challenges | चुनौतियाँ

1. High **migration** among the reproductive-age group.  
प्रजनन आयु वर्ग में अधिक **प्रवासन**।
2. Rising **age at marriage** and delayed childbirth are contributing to fewer births.  
**विवाह की आयु में वृद्धि** और देर से मातृत्व के कारण जन्म दर कम हो रही है।

## Social and Economic Impacts | सामाजिक और आर्थिक प्रभाव

Declining fertility has significant implications for Kerala's **social fabric**:  
प्रजनन दर में गिरावट केरल के सामाजिक ढांचे पर गंभीर प्रभाव डाल रही है:

- Loss of a young workforce.  
युवा कार्यबल की कमी।
- Economic burden from an aging population.  
वृद्ध आबादी से आर्थिक बोझ।
- Rising proportion of **older mothers**, increasing pregnancy complications.  
**बुजुर्ग माताओं** का अनुपात बढ़ने से गर्भावस्था की जटिलताएँ बढ़ रही हैं।

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- **Goals and Projections | लक्ष्य और प्रक्षेपण**

- 1. Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) | सतत विकास लक्ष्य (SDG)**

1. Targeted MMR of **20** by 2030; currently at **32**.  
2030 तक MMR को **20** तक लाने का लक्ष्य है; वर्तमान में यह **32** है।
2. Likely unachievable due to declining birth rates.  
घटती जन्म दर के कारण यह संभव नहीं लग रहा है।

- 2. Population Projections | जनसंख्या प्रक्षेपण**

1. Female population in the reproductive age (15–49) was **93.32 lakh** in 2011, marginally reducing to **92.23 lakh** in 2021.  
प्रजनन आयु (15–49) की महिला जनसंख्या 2011 में **93.32 लाख** थी, जो 2021 में घटकर **92.23 लाख** हो गई।
2. Indicates demographic stagnation.  
यह जनसांख्यिकीय ठहराव को इंगित करता है।

- **Data Gaps | डेटा का अभाव**
- The **Vital Statistics Report (VSR)** for 2023 is delayed.  
**वाइटल स्टैटिस्टिक्स रिपोर्ट (VSR) 2023 में देरी हुई है।**
- Concerns exist over underreporting of data and discrepancies in childbirth figures.  
**डेटा की कम रिपोर्टिंग और जन्म के आंकड़ों में विसंगतियों को लेकर चिंताएँ हैं।**
- **Birth registration practices** need improvement for accurate public domain data.  
**जन्म पंजीकरण प्रथाओं में सार्वजनिक डोमेन डेटा को सही करने के लिए सुधार की आवश्यकता है।**

# India's data protection rules need some fine-tuning

## Centralising control

The Centre must not attempt to run universities by proxy, officials warn

In a federal setup, attempts at undermining any stakeholder in the subject matter of education, whether it is to the detriment of students or otherwise, will prove disruptive. The Draft UGC (Minimum Qualifications for Appointment and Promotion of Teachers and Academic Staff in Universities and Colleges and Measures for the Maintenance of Standards in Higher Education) Regulation, 2023, seeks to do precisely that. Determining the Centre's penchant for facilitating control over institutions through governmental processes, it proposes to divert State governments of their role in the selection process for Vice-Chancellor (VC) of universities. All powers are sought to be vested in the Chancellor - i.e., the Governor in most State universities, by taking away the functions of constituting the search-cum-selection committee from the higher education departments. Such a committee would comprise a nominee each of the Chancellor/UGC Chairman and of the respective university/regulator/boards. The Chancellor would appoint the VC out of those as five names recommended by the committee. Any violations, the draft warns, could attract disqualification from participating in UGC schemes and denial of funding under the UGC Act. This comes against the backdrop of conflicts between State governments and Raj Bhavan on appointing VCs, which have deepened several universities, notably in Tamil Nadu, of leadership. Naturally, opposition has come from several States, including Tamil Nadu, which passed a House resolution urging the Centre to immediately withdraw the draft. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. K. Stalin argued that the draft is not only against the basic federal principles enshrined in the Constitution but also poses a threat to the higher education system. Senior Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, the AIADMK and the CPI(M) have endorsed this stance.

A proposal to make non-academic officials for the VC's job has also drawn criticism. The draft says such non-academic might have experience for at least 10 years at a senior level in industry, public administration, public policy and/or public sector undertakings. The record of such officials of significant academic or scholarly contributions. Mr. Vijayan fears such officials could be appointees of Sangh Parivar loyalists. However, universities have benefited from the scholarship of non-academics such as former President K.R. Narayanan and recently V. Natarajan, appointing academics does not guarantee visionary leadership. The proposal to extend the VC's tenure from the typical three to five years is welcome. The UGC would do well to remove any ambiguity from the draft regulations and allay apprehensions on other provisions. In the long run, it should aim for reforms to alter any government role in university administration, except maybe, for funding, and elevate them to truly autonomous institutions that nurture excellence.

## Law by reflex

Good implementation, not stringency of laws, will deter crimes

It is a tendency to make existing laws more stringent in an administrative reflex action often occasioned by political patrimonialism set off by particular crimes. The amended norms enacted by the Tamil Nadu Assembly to criminalise loss or sexual crimes against women fall under this category. In response to the Opposition moves to amend the DMK regime's earlier law within the premises of Anna University in Chennai, the government has moved to enhance punishments under the penal provisions. That the perpetrator is a DMK sympathiser and that some details of the crime were overlooked added political sharpness in the general criticism over such an offence happening inside the campus. At pains to deny any political bias and overcome the setback to its image after the Madras High Court formed a special investigation team, the DMK government has chosen to amend the law based on the theory that more stringent laws deter serious criminal action and instil belief is not founded on any statistical or empirical evidence, but is often invoked by those in government. This invariably means that the law is a reactive power to send out a political message that the administration is committed to women's safety. After all, necessary amendments need not have to wait for a breach of law or a public outcry.

This is not to say the amendments are unreasonable; they enhance punishments for a range of offences and send a message that the government turns to such offences as well as those under the POCSO Act. Also welcome is the new provision for passing binding protection orders to women perpetrators do not contact survivors by any means. The identical provision has been included in a three-page act that results in the victim being released to a vegetative state. On the other hand, the newly introduced definition of harassment of women to cover the use of digital and electronic means and even non-verbal means may be too broadly worded and prone to misuse, as would disagree with the enhancement of jail terms for rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking and voyeurism, but a question does arise: whether or not the mere increase in the quantum of punishment increases the probability of conviction or reduces the incidence of those crimes. The onus of treating offenders as criminals, gathering credible evidence and proving it in court remains the same. Impartial investigation and restoring pressure for a cover-up while effectively implementing existing laws are more crucial for demonstrating commitment to women's safety. Making workplaces, public spaces and buses safer for women will work better than merely adding to the severity of laws.

On January 3, 2023, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) released the much-anticipated Draft Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Rules - a key moment in India's journey to regulate digital personal data. This step follows the passage of the DPDP Act, 2023, in laying India closer to operationalising its framework for safeguarding personal data.

The draft rules represent a departure from the earlier and controversial Personal Data Protection Bill, which many deemed too overly restrictive and even hostile to industry interests. The Bill underwent extensive framing, refining and consultations over nearly a decade, only to be shelved when consultations and government stakeholders widely decided it was untenable.

In contrast, the positive response to the DPDP Act and its accompanying rules, reflected in conversations with businesses and in media coverage, stems from the less prescriptive, principles-based approach of the draft rules. Unlike the earlier rush to regulate under the so-called "Bansal Effect", where global digital rulemaking mirrored the European Union's GDPR, India has taken a more pragmatic stance. The EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), once hailed as a gold standard by privacy experts, now faces criticism for unintended consequences - favouring well-resourced corporations, stifling smaller enterprises, and failing to significantly enhance public life in the internet. India's measured approach thus offers a refreshing alternative to Europe's interventionist policies.

The hits as pragmatism and flexibility. One of the draft rules' standout features is their principled, stakeholder-centric approach. While the GDPR has cumbersome requirements, such as notifying users of indirect data acquisition, cross-border data transfers, and automated decision-making processes, India's rules emphasise simplicity and clarity. This helps reduce "consent fatigue", a significant issue in Europe, where users are inundated with unnecessary details, such as the location of data processing - information of little practical use.

In 2023, the European Commission introduced the Cookie Notice Directive to address growing frustration over unnecessary consent pop-ups. However, such cookie correction would have been unnecessary had the EU taken a less invasive approach to regulating user interfaces. The very existence of the Cookie Notice Directive for the same data, creates the risk of regulatory arbitrage, similar to the lighter regime to gain an unfair advantage. These inconsistencies may deter investment and drive business out of India. The localisation provision likely stems from the challenges faced by law



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enforcement agencies in accessing cross-border data for investigations. While these agencies undoubtedly need access to such data, a narrower sectoral approach to localisation could prove more effective than a centralised one. The Reserve Bank of India's 2018 mandate for financial institutions to store customer data in a secure manner is a prime example of proportionate localisation. Tailored specifically to the financial sector, it effectively addresses legitimate industry concerns without causing too many business disruptions. Applying this approach to personal data could balance security and compliance with economic competitiveness.

Some areas will require greater clarity. Businesses need guidance to verify whether users requesting information about data processing are legitimate. This necessity is acknowledged even in the GDPR. However, India's draft rules do not address scenarios where businesses face incessant information requests to provide scope for businesses to charge a reasonable fee for requests which are excessive or even unfounded. A related ambiguity is whether the government can demand access to sensitive business data. If so, how will it ensure the protection of such information from falling into the hands of competitors? What if this information is a trade secret? These gaps highlight the need for thinking about procedural integrity.

**What lies ahead** According to DMU, data breaches cost Indian businesses an average of 21.38 crore (21.38 million) in 2024. Compliance with data protection laws should not be seen as a regulatory obligation, but an critical to protecting business reputation and ensuring continuity.

India must also move beyond reliance on notice-and-consent mechanisms to safeguard citizens' privacy in future laws. Notice and consent originate from the medical profession, where they can still be deemed to work effectively in controlled settings. However, in environments such as malls, airports, or even beaches, individuals have little opportunity to provide consent. With the convergence of the Internet of Things (IoT), and artificial intelligence enabling hyper-personalised data collection, India must envision privacy frameworks that do not exclusively rely on the fallible practice of consent. As public consultation refines the draft rules, prioritising preservation of the framework's flexibility and industry-specific accommodations is key. This approach will help maintain a balance between economic growth and individual rights - something not many jurisdictions have managed to get right.

## Understanding the DPDP Act



Transparency is undermined by the government's decision to sidestep public consultation, precluding public discourse and counter-arguments. The controlled feedback process resembles a "corporate consultation" rather than a public use. In its stead, the Data Protection Rules build on a framework of intentional vagueness and executive dominance. Many compliance obligations are either self-imposed by companies handling personal data or left to government discretion. The draft rules govern consent notices. It mandates "clear and plain language" but fails to define these terms, leaving interpretation to India's idiosyncratic and comprehension diversity. Without specific standards, notices may include overly generic or overinflated, omitting critical details. Similarly, while the Rules require an "explicit" description of data, they do not clarify whether this includes categories such as financial or health data or to specific data points such as an account number, or whether this includes metadata and inferred data. Nor do they define timelines for data breach notifications to users, raising the possibility of adverse situations. Such ambiguities, if purely administrative, should have been resolved by the standard setting powers of an independent regulatory authority that does not exist.

## Understanding the DPDP Act



Executive overreach, scant transparency in rulemaking typically beset by legislation, and the draft Data Protection Rules are no exception. The draft rules are overreaching and vague governance. Some earlier drafts have been reputation for these rules are a conscientious pupil in observance of its master. Here, its parent is the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, that was rammed through Parliament as "a product of the subversion of the democratic process". There is more than a mere lack of trust in how the law was created, for its substantive provisions advance a broader policy of "centralised control" - a digital leash to shack us and make us stand in line to serve the prosaic objectives of the Constitution of India. It provides an idiosyncratic regime, granting broad discretion under the nebulous phrase "as may be prescribed". Despite the Act's swift passage on August 9, 2023, its implementation remains in limbo, with the government's latest draft rules have been unveiled for consultation. But are they truly consultative? Published as a "draft" and not in Hindi/English as a gazette notification, with a three-page explanatory note that reads as AI jargon, the draft is a simple and vague summary offers little insight into the policy choices during drafting. Comments can only be submitted through the MyGov platform that might encourage expert input but restricts broader participation.

# Draft digital data protection rules and authoritarianism

The largely positive response to the Draft Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Rules flows from its less prescriptive, principles-based approach

Apar Srinivas is an advocate and the founder-director of the Internet Freedom Foundation

The views expressed are personal

## Letters to the Editor

**Belt-hole mining** The tragic loss of lives in Assam's Dima Hasao mine disaster highlights the need to enact safety regulations. The continued reliance on dangerous belt-hole mining practices is unacceptable. (Page 1, January 12). The government must prioritise the loss of lives by investing in safer extraction methods, improving the safety of mines and ensuring that mining is a safe profession. (Page 1, January 12). The

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# India's data protection rules need some fine-tuning

**O**n January 3, 2025, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) released the much-anticipated Draft Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Rules – a key moment in India's journey to regulate digital personal data. This step follows the passage of the DPDP Act, 2023, bringing India closer to operationalising its framework for safeguarding personal data.

The draft rules represent a departure from the earlier and controversial Personal Data Protection Bill, which many deemed was overly restrictive and even hostile to industry interests. The Bill underwent extensive framing, reframing and consultations over nearly a decade, only to be rescinded when committees and government stakeholders wisely decided it was untenable.

In contrast, the positive response to the DPDP Act and its accompanying rules, reflected in conversations with businesses and in media coverage, stems from the less prescriptive, principles-based approach of the draft rules.

Unlike the earlier rush to regulate under the so-called "Brussels Effect", where global digital rulemaking mirrored the European Union (EU)'s interventionist regulatory ethos, India has taken a more pragmatic stance. The EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), once hailed as a gold standard by privacy experts, now faces criticism for unintended consequences – favouring well-resourced corporations, stifling smaller enterprises, and failing to significantly enhance public trust in the Internet. India's measured approach thus far offers a refreshing alternative to Europe's interventionist policies.

## The hits as pragmatism and flexibility

One of the draft rules' standout features is their principles-based framework for notice and consent. While the GDPR has cumbersome requirements, such as notifying users of indirect data acquisition, cross-border data transfers, and automated decision-making processes, India's rules emphasise simplicity and clarity. This helps reduce "consent fatigue", a significant issue in Europe, where users are inundated with unnecessary details, such as the location of data processing – information of little practical use.

In 2023, the European Commission introduced the Cookie Pledge Initiative to address growing frustration over incessant consent pop-ups. However, such course correction would have been unnecessary had the EU taken a less invasive approach to regulating user interfaces and consent mechanisms. The very existence of this pledge highlights the burdens created by prescriptive regulation.

India's DPDP Rules sidestep these pitfalls by focusing on outcomes rather than processes, empowering users without drowning businesses and consumers in unnecessary complexities. The



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The largely positive response to the Draft Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Rules flows from its less prescriptive, principles-based approach

rules avoid dictating how entities should enable users to exercise their rights to correction, erasure, nomination, withdrawal of consent and to seek information from entities. They require only the publication of relevant information on apps and websites. In contrast, the GDPR is prescriptive about how similar information should be presented, including instances where entities may need to provide this information orally to users. Why should the state dictate every aspect of an app or website's design or user interface? India's approach, thankfully, respects business autonomy and innovation.

The processing of children's personal data requires stricter protection compared to other types of data processing – which the rules provide for. However, as more children engage with digital technologies online, they increasingly benefit from certain activities, such as monitoring and tracking, which are of value in specific contexts. Take the case of educational institutions, including supplementary education and vocational training services. They rely on activities such as behavioural monitoring and tracking to deliver targeted interventions tailored to students' academic performance. These practices leverage the benefits of learning management systems, which personalise instruction and improve educational outcomes. Recognising this, the rules thoughtfully allow exemptions for specific industries. Educational institutions, clinical and mental health establishments, allied health-care providers, and child-care centres are not required to verify parental consent for tracking and behavioural monitoring, as long as they adhere to guardrails. The exemption for such industries demonstrates a nuanced understanding of industry-specific needs, reflecting the principles of thoughtful policymaking.

## The misses as data localisation, overreach

However, the draft rules are not without flaws. Their provisions for restricting cross-border data flows introduce unnecessary complexity and ambiguity. Significant Data Fiduciaries (SDFs) – large enterprises handling substantial data volumes – face potential localisation mandates that extend beyond the legislation's original scope. While the DPDP Act allows the government to restrict personal data transfers, it limits such action to specific notified countries. Differentiating between SDFs and smaller entities, where the second enjoy relaxed transfer rules for the same data, creates the risk of regulatory arbitrage. Smaller entities could exploit the lighter regime to gain an unfair advantage. These inconsistencies may deter investment and drive businesses out of India. The localisation provision likely stems from the challenges faced by law

enforcement agencies in accessing cross-border data for investigations. While these agencies undeniably need access to such data, a narrower sectoral approach to localisation could prove more effective than a centralised one. The Reserve Bank of India's 2018 mandate for localising payment data is a prime example of proportionate regulation. Tailored specifically to the financial sector, it effectively addressed legitimate industry concerns without causing too many business disruptions. Applying this approach to personal data could balance security and compliance with economic competitiveness.

Some areas still require greater clarity. Businesses need safeguards to verify whether users requesting information about data processing are legitimate. This necessity is acknowledged even in the GDPR. However, India's draft rules do not address scenarios where businesses face incessant information requests or

provide scope for businesses to charge a reasonable fee for requests which are excessive or even unfounded. A related ambiguity is whether the government can demand access to sensitive business data. If so, how will it ensure the protection of such information from falling into the hands of competitors? What if this information is a trade secret? These

gaps highlight the need for thinking about procedural integrity.

## What lies ahead

According to IBM, data breaches cost Indian businesses an average of ₹19.5 crore (\$2.35 million) in 2024. Compliance with data protection laws should not be seen as a regulatory obligation, but as critical to protecting business reputation and ensuring continuity.

India must also move beyond reliance on notice-and-consent mechanisms to safeguard citizens' privacy in future laws. Notice and consent originate from the medical profession, where they can still be deemed to work effectively in controlled settings. However, in environments such as malls, airports, or even beaches, individuals have little opportunity to provide consent. With the convergence of the Internet of Things, 5G, and artificial intelligence enabling unprecedented data collection, India must envision privacy frameworks that do not exclusively rely on the fallible principle of consent. As public consultations refine the draft rules, prioritising preservation of the framework's flexibility and industry-specific accommodations is key. This approach will help maintain a balance between innovation, economic growth, and individual rights – something not many jurisdictions have managed to get right.



**UNDERSTANDING THE DPDP ACT**

- 
- **Introduction:** The rules operationalize the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, aimed at safeguarding personal data.

**परिचय:** ये नियम डिजिटल व्यक्तिगत डेटा संरक्षण अधिनियम, 2023 को लागू करते हैं, जिसका उद्देश्य व्यक्तिगत डेटा की सुरक्षा करना है।

- **Principles-Based Approach:** Unlike stringent global regulations like GDPR, India's rules emphasize simplicity and clarity, avoiding unnecessary data-sharing requirements.

**सिद्धांत आधारित दृष्टिकोण:** GDPR जैसे कड़े वैश्विक नियमों के विपरीत, भारत के नियम सादगी और स्पष्टता पर जोर देते हैं और अनावश्यक डेटा-साझाकरण आवश्यकताओं से बचते हैं।

- **Focus Areas:** Rules dictate how entities handle rights to erase, access, or withdraw consent for personal data. The approach supports businesses and innovation.

**मुख्य क्षेत्र:** नियम तय करते हैं कि संस्थाएं व्यक्तिगत डेटा के लिए मिटाने, एक्सेस करने या सहमति वापस लेने के अधिकार को कैसे संभालें। यह दृष्टिकोण व्यवसायों और नवाचार का समर्थन करता है।

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- **Strengths:**

- **सक्षमताएं:**

- 1. Pragmatism and Flexibility:**

1. Simplified consent mechanisms.

2. Exemptions for startups and smaller businesses, easing compliance.

- व्यावहारिकता और लचीलापन:**

3. सहमति तंत्र को सरल बनाया गया है।

4. स्टार्टअप्स और छोटे व्यवसायों के लिए छूट, अनुपालन में आसानी।

- 2. Business-Friendly:** Encourages innovation while offering clarity for users.

- व्यवसाय-अनुकूल:** उपयोगकर्ताओं के लिए स्पष्टता प्रदान करते हुए नवाचार को बढ़ावा देता है।



- **Areas Needing Fine-Tuning:**

- **सुधार की आवश्यकता वाले क्षेत्र:**

- 1. Protection for Minors:**

1. Children's data-processing rules need alignment with educational and mental health needs.

**नाबालिगों की सुरक्षा:**


2. बच्चों के डेटा प्रसंस्करण नियमों को शैक्षिक और मानसिक स्वास्थ्य की आवश्यकताओं के साथ संरेखित करने की आवश्यकता है।

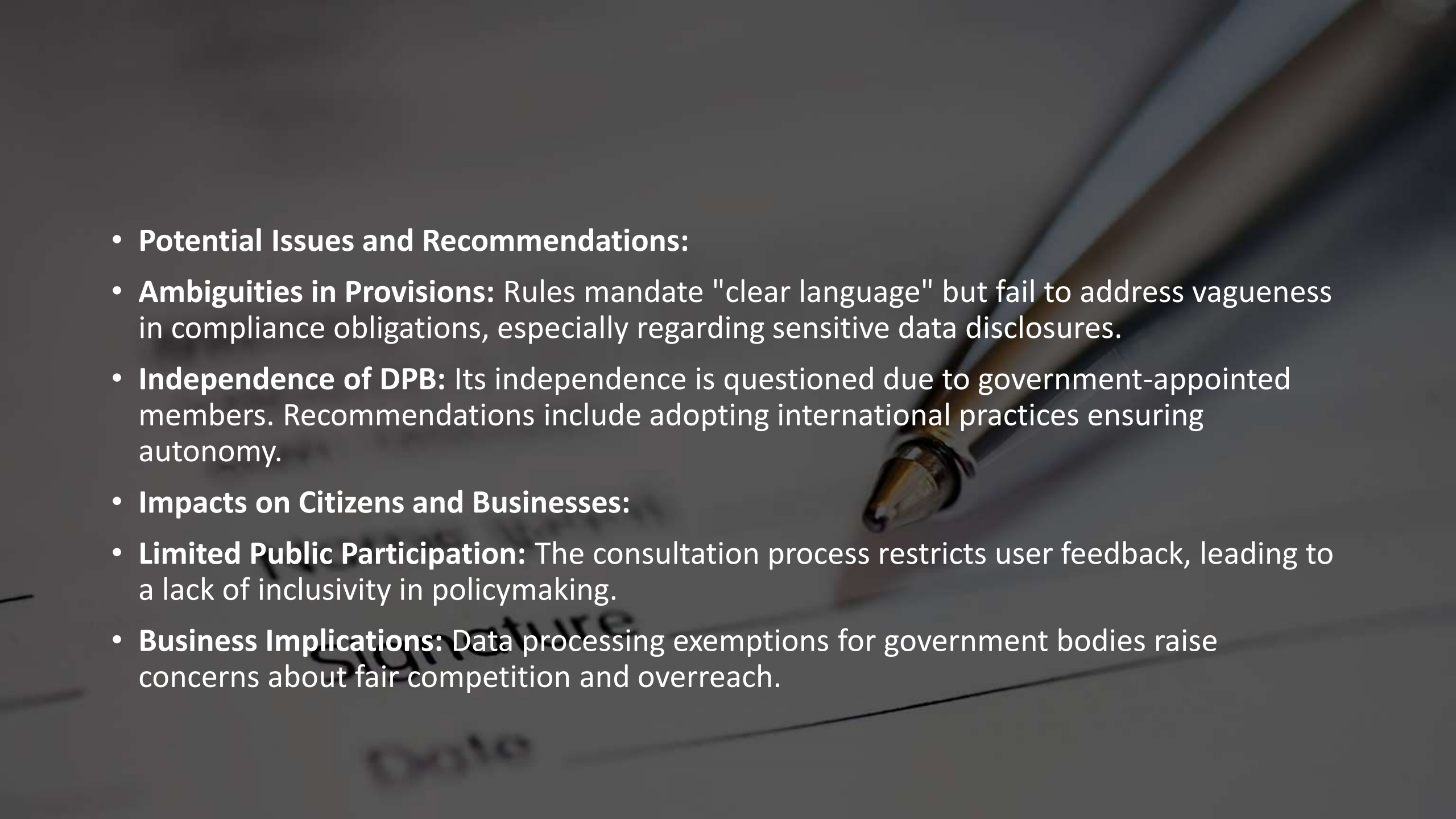
- 2. Data Localization Ambiguity:**

1. Ambiguity about cross-border data flows requires attention to avoid stifling businesses.

**डेटा स्थानीयकरण अस्पष्टता:**

2. सीमा पार डेटा प्रवाह पर अस्पष्टता को व्यवसायों को बाधित करने से बचाने के लिए ध्यान देने की आवश्यकता है।

- 
- **Privacy as a Fundamental Right:** The 2024 Draft Digital Data Protection Rules are based on privacy as a constitutional right, reaffirmed by the K.S. Puttaswamy judgment.
  - **Criticisms of Executive Overreach:** Concerns about centralized decision-making and ambiguous provisions undermining trust and democratic principles.
  - **Transparency and Enforcement Issues:** The lack of accountability mechanisms in the Data Protection Board (DPB) compromises the effective regulation of breaches.

- 
- **Potential Issues and Recommendations:**
  - **Ambiguities in Provisions:** Rules mandate "clear language" but fail to address vagueness in compliance obligations, especially regarding sensitive data disclosures.
  - **Independence of DPB:** Its independence is questioned due to government-appointed members. Recommendations include adopting international practices ensuring autonomy.
  - **Impacts on Citizens and Businesses:**
  - **Limited Public Participation:** The consultation process restricts user feedback, leading to a lack of inclusivity in policymaking.
  - **Business Implications:** Data processing exemptions for government bodies raise concerns about fair competition and overreach.

# Insurance reforms to see 100% FDI & composite licence

RUN-UP TO THE  
**BUDGET**  
2025-26

PRASANTA SAHU  
New Delhi, January 12

**THE MUCH-AWAITED INSURANCE (Amendment) Bill** to allow 100% foreign direct investment (FDI) in the sector may see the light of the day in the Budget session of Parliament. The proposed major amendment follows the tweaking of the Insurance Act in 2021, when the FDI limit was raised from 49% to 74%.

The current Bill was to be introduced in the Winter session but was deferred. According to sources, the latest amendment will not only let foreign insurers and other funds with financial muscle operate independently in India, but also include a clutch of other reforms like allowing insurers to offer life and non-life policies via a single entity under a composite licence.

Another change is the facility for insurance agents to sell products from multiple companies. Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman is likely to make an announcement about the Bill in her Budget speech.

The department of financial services released a brief consultation paper on the Bill in December 2024. The department said the proposed

## WIDER COVERAGE



amendments aimed to ensure accessibility and affordability of insurance for citizens, foster expansion and development of the insurance industry, and streamline business processes. The sector requires capital inflows to grow and raise the insurance penetration level in the country.

Continued on Page 5

# Devajit, Prabhtej elected BCCI secretary, treasurer

DEVENDRA PANDEY,  
Mumbai, January 12

**DEVAJIT SAIKIA**, AN advocate and a former wicket-keeper batsman from Assam, would succeed Jay Shah as the new secretary of the Indian cricket board (BCCI). He was elected unopposed—a poll was not contested as there were no contestants, electoral officer A K Joti stated in his declaration of results—to the seat left vacant after Shah assumed the office of the International Cricket Council chairman in December last year. Saikia will remain in his post for the next ten months, until the next round of elections for the office-bearers.

Similarly, Prabhtej Singh Bhatia from Chhattisgarh State Cricket Sangh (CSCS) would be the new treasurer as he replaced Ashish Shelar, who became the Information and Technology minister in Maharashtra government. Both are relatively unfamiliar names, but come with a wealth of experience in multiple streams.

As a cricketer, Saikia's career lasted one season and four games, which yielded only 53 runs in six innings, eight catches and a stumping. Soon, he burned his cricketing ambitions and traded the gloves and bat for a degree in law. In 1997, six years after his last Ranji game at the age of 21, he quit his job at the RBI and began legal practice, specialising in criminal and



Devajit Saikia (left) and Prabhtej Singh Bhatia

insurance laws at the Guwahati High Court.

After years of legal tussles and more allegations, a new regime took over the association, with Saikia as its secretary, in 2019. Two years later, he was appointed the state's youngest ever Advocate General of Assam.

A classmate of Assam's chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, he was appointed as senior standing counsel of the State in 2019 and represented the government in the High Court and Supreme Court. Apart from cricket association, he is into administrating other sports bodies too. He is the secretary of the 115-year-old Guwahati Town Club as well as the Guwahati Sports. An adventure enthusiast, he rode a Harley Davidson along the famous Route 66. He regularly hits the Manali-Spiti Valley route too.

In 2022, he was elected

joint-secretary of the BCCI. When Shah vacated, he became the acting secretary till the board found its outgoing secretary's nomination. Now, he succeeds Shah in a crucial time for Indian cricket, when the red-ball team is in flux and the captain-coach combo of Rohit Sharma and Gautam Gambhir under intense scrutiny.

Unlike Saikia, Prabhtej does not wear too many hats. Son of former CSCS president Baldev Singh Bhatia, who played an important role in the State getting full-member status in 2016, he has served as Apex Council member in BCCI's 2019-2022 tenure.

He was among the three-member committee that probed into the allegation of Wriddhiman Saha receiving threats from a journalist. The 33-year-old, though, has not held any posts since.

## Devajit Saikia:

**Position:** Succeeds Jay Shah as the Secretary of BCCI.

## Career Background:

- Former wicket-keeper batsman from Assam.
- Played one season and four games, with a modest cricket career (53 runs and eight catches).
- Transitioned into law, specializing in criminal and insurance law.
- Became the youngest Advocate General of Assam.

## Sports Administration:

- Secretary of the Guwahati Town Club.
- Actively involved in sports development beyond cricket.

## Unique Traits:

- A passionate adventurer who frequently explores Manali-Spiti and Route 66 on his Harley Davidson.
- Brings a diverse set of skills to cricket governance.

## Prabhtej Singh Bhatia:

**Position:** Treasurer of BCCI.

## Background:

- Replaces Ashish Shelar, who took on a ministerial role in Maharashtra.
- Son of Baldev Singh Bhatia, instrumental in securing full-member status for Chhattisgarh in BCCI in 2016.

## Contributions:

- Actively participated in BCCI's 2019-2022 tenure as an Apex Council member.
- Known for his involvement in resolving allegations of journalist harassment in 2022.



**Election Details:** Both were elected unopposed.

Saikia takes over in a critical phase for Indian cricket, with the captain-coach duo under scrutiny and the team in transition.

A large school of fish, likely scorpene, swimming in deep blue water. The fish are silvery and elongated, moving in a coordinated pattern. The background is a gradient of blue, darker at the bottom and lighter at the top, suggesting depth and light penetration. The text "Scorpene Class Submarine" is overlaid in the center in a white, sans-serif font.

# Scorpene Class Submarine

- India's Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) recently handed over the sixth Scorpene-class submarine, Vaghsheer, to the Indian Navy under Project P-75.
- **About Scorpene Class Submarines:**
- **What are Scorpene Submarines?**
  - Scorpene-class submarines are **diesel-electric attack submarines** designed for stealth operations, targeting adversary vessels, and intelligence gathering.
- **Launched under:** The submarines were built under **Project P-75**, signed in 2005 as a \$3.75 billion agreement between MDL and the French defense firm **Naval Group**, involving transfer of technology.

## Submarines in Project P-75:

INS Kalvari (commissioned in 2017)

INS Khanderi (commissioned in 2019)

INS Karanj (commissioned in 2021)

INS Vela (commissioned in 2021)

INS Vagir (commissioned in January 2023)

INS Vaghsheer (delivered in 2024 after sea trials in 2023)

## Features of Scorpene Submarines:

Capabilities: Equipped for Anti-Surface and Anti-Submarine Warfare, intelligence gathering, and area surveillance. Can launch torpedoes and tube-launched anti-ship missiles.

- **Propulsion System:**

- **Diesel-electric propulsion** with an endurance of ~50 days.
- Retrofit with **Air Independent Propulsion (AIP)** systems starting 2024 for extended stealth and underwater endurance.

- **Advanced Systems:**

- High-level automation with Integrated Platform Management and Combat Management Systems.
- Features indigenously developed **Air Conditioning Plant** and **Internal Communication System** (from INS Vaghsheer onwards).

- **Stealth Technology:**

- Designed with superior stealth features to avoid detection by adversaries.



# Silver Notice



Interpol has introduced its first-ever Silver Notice, a groundbreaking initiative to track and recover laundered assets across international borders.

### About the Silver Notice:

What it is: A colour-coded alert by Interpol to track and recover criminally acquired assets such as properties, vehicles, financial accounts, and businesses.



## How it works:

- Member countries can issue a Silver Notice to request **information about assets** linked to criminal activities.
- Facilitates the **identification, location, seizure, confiscation, or recovery** of assets under national laws.
- **Reviewed by Interpol's General Secretariat** to ensure compliance with its rules and prevent misuse for political purposes.

## Need for Such Notices:

- Addresses the challenge of **transnational organized crime** and recovers illicit wealth.
- Helps combat fraud, corruption, drug trafficking, and other financial crimes

# INTERPOL NOTICES



**RED NOTICE**  
WANTED PERSONS



**YELLOW NOTICE**  
MISSING PERSONS



**BLUE NOTICE**  
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION



**BLACK NOTICE**  
UNIDENTIFIED BODIES



**GREEN NOTICE**  
WARNINGS AND INTELLIGENCE



**ORANGE NOTICE**  
IMMINENT THREAT



**PURPLE NOTICE**  
MODUS OPERANDI



**SILVER NOTICE (Pilot Phase)**  
IDENTIFICATION AND TRACING OF CRIMINAL ASSETS



**INTERPOL-UN SECURITY COUNCIL SPECIAL NOTICE**  
ENTITIES AND INDIVIDUALS SUBJECT TO UNSC SANCTIONS



# Cuba

- 
- India has extended humanitarian assistance to Cuba in the wake of Hurricane Rafael, providing essential medicines like antibiotics, painkillers, ORS, and muscle relaxants.



- **About Cuba:**
- **Location:** Cuba is located at the confluence of the **Caribbean Sea, Gulf of Mexico, and Atlantic Ocean.**
- **Neighbours:**
  - **East:** Hispaniola (Haiti/Dominican Republic).
  - **West:** Yucatán Peninsula (Mexico).
  - **North:** Florida (USA) and the Bahamas.
  - **South:** Jamaica and Cayman Islands.

Capital: Havana.

Geographical Features:

- Major Rivers: Cauto (longest river) and Toa.
- Minerals: Rich in **nickel, cobalt, iron ore, copper, and petroleum.**
- Climate: Tropical, seasonally humid with maritime influences.



# Blue Flag Certification



- **Kerala's Kappad and Chal beaches** in Kozhikode and Kannur districts, have been bestowed with the **Blue Flag certification**.
- **Blue Flag Certification**
- **Given By:** Foundation for Environment Education in Denmark (FEE) accords the globally recognized eco-label – Blue Flag certification.
- **Stringent Criteria:** FEE gives the award to beaches, marinas, and boating operators that meet **33 criteria**.

- Broadly, they are divided into **four categories**, covering **water quality, environmental management, safety, and environmental information and education**.
- The standards were established by the **Copenhagen-based Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) in 1985**.
- The certification is **updated annually**, and locations must continue to meet the criteria to retain their Blue Flag status.
-

- **Blue Flag Beaches:**

- There are over 4000 Blue Flag certified beaches across the world, with Spain leading with a total of 729 blue flag sites, followed by Greece.
- **India** has 13 such beaches, the **Chandrabhaga beach on the Konark coast of Odisha** is the **first in Asia to get the Blue Flag certification.**

A blurred background image of a modern office interior. Several people are seated around a long wooden table, engaged in a meeting. 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

- Which city ranked first globally in the TomTom Traffic Index for shortest travel time for 10 km?  
10 किमी की सबसे कम यात्रा समय के लिए टॉमटॉम ट्रैफिक इंडेक्स में कौन सा शहर वैश्विक स्तर पर पहले स्थान पर रहा?
- **A. London, UK / लंदन, यूके**
- **B. Mumbai, India / मुंबई, भारत**
- **C. Barranquilla, Colombia / बरनक्विला, कोलंबिया**
- **D. Chennai, India / चेन्नई, भारत**

- Which Indian state records the lowest Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR)?  
कौन सा भारतीय राज्य सबसे कम मातृ मृत्यु दर (MMR) दर्ज करता है?
- **A. Tamil Nadu / तमिलनाडु**
- B. Kerala / केरल**
- C. Gujarat / गुजरात**
- D. Punjab / पंजाब**

- What is the current Total Fertility Rate (TFR) in India according to 2021 VSR?

2021 VSR के अनुसार भारत में वर्तमान कुल प्रजनन दर (TFR) क्या है?

- **A. 2.1**
- B. 1.46**
- C. 1.8**
- D. 1.35**

- Under which project was the sixth Scorpene-class submarine, Vaghsheer, handed over to the Indian Navy?  
छठी स्कॉर्पेन-क्लास पनडुब्बी, वाघशीर, भारतीय नौसेना को किस परियोजना के तहत सौंपी गई?
- **A. Project-75 / प्रोजेक्ट-75**
- **B. Project-76 / प्रोजेक्ट-76**
- **C. Project-78 / प्रोजेक्ट-78**
- **D. Project-80 / प्रोजेक्ट-80**



- What propulsion system does the Scorpene-class submarine use?  
स्कोर्पेन-क्लास पनडुब्बी किस प्रणोदन प्रणाली का उपयोग करती है?
- **A. Diesel-electric propulsion / डीजल-इलेक्ट्रिक प्रणोदन**
- B. Nuclear-powered propulsion / परमाणु-संचालित प्रणोदन**
- C. Hybrid propulsion / हाइब्रिड प्रणोदन**
- D. Steam propulsion / स्टीम प्रणोदन**

- Which Kerala beaches were recently awarded Blue Flag certification?  
केरल के किन समुद्र तटों को हाल ही में ब्लू फ्लैग प्रमाणन से सम्मानित किया गया?
- **A. Varkala and Kovalam / वर्कला और कोवलम**
- B. Kappad and Chal / काप्पड़ और चैल**
- C. Bekal and Payyambalam / बेकल और पय्यम्बलम**
- D. Alappuzha and Marari / अलाप्पुझा और मारारी**

- What organization provides the globally recognized Blue Flag certification?

वैश्विक स्तर पर मान्यता प्राप्त ब्लू फ्लैग प्रमाणन कौन सा संगठन प्रदान करता है?

- **A. UNESCO**

**B. Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) / पर्यावरण शिक्षा के लिए फाउंडेशन (FEE)**

**C. World Wildlife Fund (WWF)**

**D. International Maritime Organization (IMO)**

- What is the significance of Chandrabhaga Beach in Odisha?  
ओडिशा में चंद्रभागा समुद्र तट का महत्व क्या है?
- **A. First in Asia to receive Blue Flag certification / एशिया में ब्लू फ्लैग प्रमाणन प्राप्त करने वाला पहला**
- B. Longest beach in India / भारत का सबसे लंबा समुद्र तट**
- C. Known for coral reefs / कोरल रीफ्स के लिए प्रसिद्ध**
- D. Popular for turtle conservation / कछुआ संरक्षण के लिए लोकप्रिय**

- Which natural disaster prompted India to send humanitarian assistance to Cuba?

किस प्राकृतिक आपदा ने भारत को क्यूबा को मानवीय सहायता भेजने के लिए प्रेरित किया?

- **A. Earthquake / भूकंप**
- B. Hurricane Rafael / तूफान राफेल**
- C. Tsunami / सुनामी**
- D. Floods / बाढ़**

- What is a key feature of the Blue Flag certification criteria?  
ब्लू फ्लैग प्रमाणन मानदंड की एक प्रमुख विशेषता क्या है?
- **A. Focus on water quality and safety / जल गुणवत्ता और सुरक्षा पर ध्यान केंद्रित करना**
- **B. Promotion of tourism infrastructure / पर्यटन अवसंरचना को बढ़ावा देना**
- **C. Development of sustainable housing / टिकाऊ आवास का विकास**
- **D. Conservation of mangroves / मैंग्रोव संरक्षण**



Fun Fact

# Cyclone Shelters

- Bangladesh has a vast network of **cyclone shelters** to protect its population from frequent natural disasters. The country's disaster management system is considered a global model for resilience





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# Word of the day

## **Diminution:**

change toward something smaller or lower; the act of decreasing or reducing something

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**Synonyms:** decline, decrease, reduction, step-down

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**Usage:** *The tumour shows no sign of diminution.*

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## **Pronunciation:**

newsth.live/diminutionpro

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## **International Phonetic**

**Alphabet:** /dɪmɪ'njuːʃən/

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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, with some wearing suits. The background is blurred, showing more people and a window. An orange horizontal bar is located in the top left corner.

Thank you  
guys.

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