

# Daily Current Affairs



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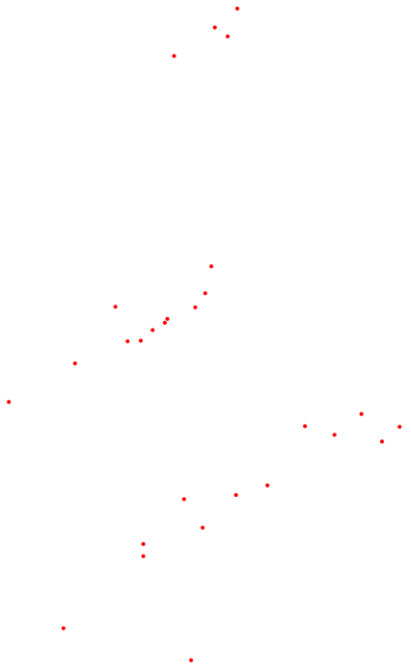


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10 MCQ QUIZ

We must all suffer one of two  
things: the pain of discipline or  
the pain of regret.

*- Jim Rohn*



**INQUIRY ORDERED**  
Eight killed in blast at firecracker unit in A.P.  
STATES » PAGE 3



**LOGGED IN**  
Kerala to be declared fully digital literate  
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**'DELIBERATE ATTACK'**  
Russia targeted Indian firm's warehouse: Kyiv  
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Stagnant incomes, rising prices  
City residents struggle to meet expenses  
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**CONTRASTING WINS**  
MI pips DC in thriller, RCB eases past RR  
SPORT » PAGE 16

**INSIDE**



**Top Trump aide and NSA puts off his visit to India**

**NEW DELHI**  
Amidst turmoil in Washington over communication security breaches by the National Security Council, U.S. National Security Adviser Michael Waltz has put off his visit to India slated for three weeks, a number of sources said. » PAGE 5

**16 arrested after clashes during procession in M.P.**

**BHOPAL**  
At least 16 people have been arrested so far in connection with clashes that took place between members of two communities during Hanuman Jayanti procession in Madhya Pradesh on Saturday, said the police on Sunday. » PAGE 4

**China tells U.S. to cancel reciprocal tariffs completely**

**BEIJING**  
China on Sunday called on the United States to "completely cancel" its reciprocal tariffs after Washington announced exemptions for key chipmaking equipment and consumer electronics. » PAGE 14

**21 killed as Israel attacks Gaza on Palm Sunday**

**DEIR AL-BALAH**  
A wave of Israeli strikes across Gaza on Sunday hit a hospital, a municipal building, an arena, killing at least 21 people, as Israel vowed to expand its security presence in the strip, on Palm Sunday, drawing condemnation as Holy Week began in mourning. » PAGE 14

**Kerala temple opens sacred space to all sections**

Previously restricted to specific communities, the inner quarter of the centuries-old Pillicode Ravaramangalam temple in Kasaragod district has been opened to all sections of society for the first time following a reformist campaign

**The Hindu Bureau KASARAGOD**

In a landmark move, devotees from all communities entered the *nalambalam* — the sacred inner quarter — of the centuries-old Pillicode Ravaramangalam temple in Kasaragod district of Kerala for the first time, ending restrictions based on caste. Previously restricted to specific communities, the sacred space in the temple managed by the Malabar Devaswam Board was opened to all communities following a campaign led by a reformist organisation.



**Evolving norms:** Devotees come out of the centuries-old Pillicode Ravaramangalam temple in Kasaragod. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Around 8 a.m. on Sunday, a day before the Vishu festival, a group of 16 devotees stepped into the inner quarter of the temple. Others who had gathered to witness the

moment followed, marking a significant shift in the temple's practices. K.V. Rajesh, a member of the group, said that only people from the Brahmin, Marar, and Warrior communities were allowed to enter the space earlier. Manyani, Nair, Vaniya and a few other communities were allowed entry during the festival period. He said the initiative spearheaded by the reformist body Pillicode Ninav Purush Swayamsabha Sangham, a men's self-help group, gained momentum with its resolution advocating for universal entry rights. This was followed by the formation of the Janakiya Samithi, a people's committee comprising socio-cultural and political organisations, which petitioned the *Tantri* (head priest), State Devaswom

**Baisakhi cheer**



**Bojant hepar:** Devotees at the Golden Temple in Amritsar to mark the harvest festival Baisakhi on Sunday. Wheat is being harvested in Punjab and Haryana. » output is expected to be higher than the past year in the two States. » (REPORT ON PAGE 6)

**CAPF deployed in Murshidabad; situation under control, says DGP**

Congress calls for all-party meeting, BJP takes to the streets in Kolkata. Trinamool alleges spread of misinformation; over 150 arrested in connection with the violence; BJP MP urges Amit Shah to declare select districts a 'disturbed area'

**Shiv Sahay Singh KOLKATA**

Seventeen companies of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) were deployed in Murshidabad district of West Bengal on Sunday following violent protests over the Waqf (Amendment) Act that claimed three lives on Saturday. Over 150 people were arrested, and one person who sustained a bullet injury was admitted to a State-run health facility, the police said. Director-General of Police, West Bengal, Rajeev Kumar held meetings with senior police officials in Murshidabad. He said the situation was "very much under control". Ananda Roy, Superintendent of Police, Jangipur, appealed to people not to believe in rumours and ap-



**On alert:** BSF personnel near the wreckage caused during the violence in Murshidabad, on Sunday. ANI

proach the police in case they need any clarifications. The SP said 155 persons had been arrested so far in connection with the violence. A total of 23 high-ranking officers from the State police and other agencies have been deployed in the violence-affected district. Karni Singh Shekhawat, Inspector-General of Police, Border Security Force, was among those present in the district. Nine companies of the BSF have been moved to the strife-torn areas. Eighteen police personnel were injured in the violence. Almost the entire lead-

ership of the State BJP unit took to the streets in Kolkata on Sunday in protest against the violence. BJP MP Jyotirmoy Singh Mahanta wrote the Union Home Minister Amit Shah urging the Centre to declare select border districts of West Bengal "disturbed areas". State BJP president Sukanta Majumdar alleged that the violence was a "conspiracy of radical outfits such as the Popular Front of India (PFI) and the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI)". A section of BJP leaders also claimed that hundreds of Hindus from Bhujain in Murshidabad have been forced to take shelter across the river at Bahubhagar in neighbouring Malda district. EDITORIAL » PAGE 8

**Kerala will seek to have pending Bills deemed as passed**

**K.S. Sudhi KUCHI**

Armed with the Supreme Court's landmark judgment on Bills kept pending by the Governors and the President, Kerala is set to contend in the top court that all the Bills pending with the President be deemed as passed. The Supreme Court last week deemed Bills kept pending by Tamil Nadu Governor R.N. Ravi to have received assent. Kerala will approach the Supreme Court next month seeking similar relief. The Supreme Court had ruled that the prolonged refusal of Mr. Ravi to give assent to the Bills was "illegal" and "erroneous in law". Kerala had earlier approached the top court against similar acts of former Governor Arif Muhammad Khan. It had also moved the court against President Droupadi Mur-

**The State is set to contend in the top court that the action on some Bills was 'erroneous in law'**

mur's act of withholding assent to a few Bills. Kerala will contend that the Bills pending with Ms. Murmu, including those for which she had withheld assent, be deemed as passed since the very act of the Governor sitting on them and later referring them to the President was "erroneous in law". The State will also highlight the fact that the President had assigned no reasons for withholding consent for the Bills. The SC, legal experts pointed out, had made it clear that the President would be required to assign clear and detailed reasons while withholding assent to a Bill.

**Pause, review, and repeal amendment to the RTI Act: Ramesh urges Vaishnav**

**The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI**

In a letter to Union Information Technology Minister Ashwini Vaishnav on Sunday, Congress Rajya Sabha member Jairam Ramesh warned that the proposed amendment to the Right to Information Act, 2005, would have a "devastating" effect on the transparency law. He urged Mr. Vaishnav to "pause, review, and repeal" the change. The letter was in response to Mr. Vaishnav's assurance to an earlier letter by Mr. Ramesh, in which the Congress leader had expressed concern over Section 44 (3) of the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023, which would place a blanket ban on sharing any "personal information" with RTI applicants.



**JAIRAM RAMESH**  
Congress general secretary

Mr. Vaishnav had responded to Mr. Ramesh, saying that the amendment was aimed at preventing "misuse" of the law and that "information that is specifically required to be disclosed (such as salaries of public officials) would remain accessible. Four points Making four points by way of a counter-response to the Minister, Mr. Ramesh said: "I would therefore strongly again urge you to pause, review, and repeal the amendment made to the RTI Act, 2005. As this issue has also exercised a broad spectrum of people from age-old rituals, traditions, and political parties." Along with Mr. Ramesh,

130 Opposition MPs have signed another letter demanding a reversal of the amendment. Civil society groups voiced concerns regarding the amendment, which would strike out all but the first six words in Section 80(D), which exempts "information which relates to personal information the disclosure of which has no relationship to any public activity or interest, or which would cause unwarranted invasion of the privacy of the individual unless officials are convinced that the 'larger public interest justifies the disclosure of such information: Provided that the interest which cannot be denied to the Parliament or the State Legislature shall not be denied to any person'". "Thanking the Union Minister for his response, Mr. Ramesh said, "I now wish to make four points." "First, Section 3 of the DPDP Act, 2023, cited in your letter as protecting disclosures under the RTI Act, 2005, is wholly irrelevant since Section 80(D) of the RTI Act, 2005 itself has been amended drastically," he said. "Section 3 of the

DPDP Act will now only protect disclosures as per the amended RTI Act, which exempts all personal information from being accessible." Second, the operation of the RTI Act, 2005 — informed by several judgments by the Supreme Court and various High Courts — has demonstrated that the law is able to withhold the disclosure of personal information which has no relationship to any public activity or public interest, Mr. Ramesh said. Third, the deletion of the proviso in Section 80(D) of the RTI Act which recognises the citizens' right to information as being at par with that of legislators is "completely unwarranted", the Congress general secretary said in the letter to Mr. Vaishnav. "In fact, that proviso is applicable not just to the personal information exemption, but all exemptions in Section 80(D) of the RTI Act, 2005." "Fourth, you mention the *Puttaswamy* judgment of the Supreme Court. Please do remember that nowhere in this judgment is it mentioned that the RTI Act, 2005 itself needs to be amended."

## Dharmadam is Kerala's first poverty-free constituency

The Hindu Bureau  
KANNUR

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Sunday declared Dharmadam Kerala's first extreme poverty-free constituency, paving the way for the State to achieve full eradication of extreme poverty by November 1, 2025.

The Chief Minister, speaking at an event at the Pinarayi Convention Centre, said the milestone marks a significant step to eliminate extreme poverty through coordinated interventions. The project identified 64,002 individuals living in extreme poverty and implemented plans to improve their lives.

## Eight killed in blast at firecracker unit in A.P.; Naidu orders inquiry

Condition of two of the eight injured is said to be critical; Chief Minister to extend ₹15 lakh as ex gratia to the next of kin of the deceased, says Home Minister Anitha; exact cause of accident yet to be ascertained; Collector to conduct probe

Harish Gilai  
ANAKAPALLI

Eight persons were killed and as many injured in an explosion at a firecracker unit at Kallaspattanam of Anakapalli district in Andhra Pradesh on Sunday.

The condition of two of the injured is said to be critical.

As per the district police, the blast occurred 45 minutes past noon.

Sixteen workers were present on the unit's premises at the time, as per preliminary enquiries. The



Fatal explosion: The site where the explosion occurred in Anakapalli district on Sunday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

accident site is located about two km from the village, and residents rushed there on hearing the blast. Later, the police, along

with emergency services and fire tenders, rushed to the spot and doused the fire. The rescue operations were monitored by District

Collector Vijaya Krishnan and Superintendent of Police Tuhin Sinha.

The injured persons were shifted to a Primary Health Centre nearby, and then to hospitals in Narasipatnam and Anakapalli. Five persons have been shifted to King George Hospital in Visakhapatnam for advanced treatment.

Among them, three were severely injured with 90%, 50% and 30% burns, respectively, while another sustained fractures. The fifth person had no major injuries, doctors said.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister

N. Chandrababu Naidu has asked the Collector to conduct an inquiry and submit a report.

Home Minister V. Anitha said that the Health Minister of Parliament C.M. Ramesh inspected the accident site. Ms. Anitha told reporters that though the exact cause of the accident was yet to be ascertained, they suspect it to be the fallout of "extra pressure applied in the preparation of the firecrackers."

"The CM has agreed to provide ₹15 lakh as ex gratia to the next of kin of the deceased," she added.



Clearing the air: Maharashtra Deputy CM Eknath Shinde said issues, if any, will be sorted out through discussions. (I.P. JAYARAJ)

## BJP leader defends Shinde amid 'discord' within ruling alliance

Abhinav Deshpande  
MUMBAI

Senior BJP leader and former Minister Sudhir Mangantwar on Sunday extended support to Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde amid reports of discord within Maharashtra's ruling Mahayuti alliance.

The development comes amid speculation that Mr. Shinde's raised concerns about the functioning of the alliance during Union Home Minister Amit Shah's recent visit to the State.

"Sources indicate growing discontent in Mr. Shinde's Shiv Sena faction over two key issues: delays in clearing files related to Sena-held Ministries currently pending with Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, who controls the finance portfolio; and Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis's reversal of certain decisions taken during Mr. Shinde's previous tenure as Chief Minister.

Under these circumstances, Mr. Shah's visit to

Rajgad Fort on Saturday for an event commemorating Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's 458th death anniversary created a buzz in the alliance circles.

Mr. Mangantwar dismissed there was any contentious discussions between Mr. Shah and Mr. Shinde. "Mr. Shinde is a capable leader who would address concerns directly with Deputy CM Pawar rather than through other channels," the BJP leader stated. This marks the first official BJP comment on the speculated meeting.

Shinde dismisses buzz Mr. Shinde too dismissed the buzz of any rift within the Mahayuti and said everything is hunky-dory in the ruling alliance. He said issues, if any, will be sorted out through discussions.

"If Mr. Shinde has to say something he will directly talk to me or the Chief Minister (Devendra Fadnis). We share good relations," Mr. Pawar told prespersians.

## All logged in, Kerala to be declared fully digital literate

S.R. Praveen  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

For the past few months, 67-year-old K. Sarana, a Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) worker from Pullampara in Thiruvananthapuram, has been using her leisure time to video-call her relatives and watch YouTube videos.

In Mavattupuzha, 75-year-old Krishnakumar is now using WhatsApp to mobilise people for an anti-drugs campaign. Until recently, both of them were "digital illiterates" for whom technology was a

hard nut to crack.

The two are now part of the over 21 lakh people who have completed the Local Self-Government Department's "Digi Kerala" digital literacy programme, making the first State to achieve total digital literacy. Speaking to *The Hindu*, LSG Minister M.B. Rajesh said the government was waiting for President Droupadi Murmu's confirmation for an event to make the official announcement.

People of all ages have achieved much beyond the guidelines stipulated by the National Digital Literacy Mission for dig-



Bridging the gap: Over 21 lakh senior citizens completed the government's 'Digi Kerala' digital literacy programme. I.K. NITHYAN

ital literacy, which require training to be imparted only for those up to 60 years of age. This programme has included people of all ages," Mr. Rajesh says. The Digi Kerala idea be-

came for the first time, when the government calls as well as video calls using smartphones, use WhatsApp, access government services, carry out internet banking and use popular social media platforms.

Classes by volunteers

The government later decided to expand the programme across the State. Through a series of 21 lakh participants were identified as digitally illiterate. A large army of 2.57 lakh volunteers, including members of the Self-Help Group members, Kudumbaree members, Kerala State Literacy Mission Preraks,

members of the Library Council and self-organisations coordinated to organise classes for them in households, NGOs, work sites, libraries and community centres.

"After the training, the trainees were evaluated. As many as 98% of the participants passed the evaluation. A party verification was done by the Statistics Department to ensure that the figures are accurate. In wards where over 10% variation was seen, re-training was conducted. Offline training was provided in areas of low connectivity," says an official who coordinated the training programme.

## Waking up to plastic 'konna'

The Hindu Bureau  
BENGALURU



Making do: Plastic 'konna' flowers kept for sale at a shop in Kozhikode on the eve of the Vishu festival. The Indian labourers blossoms are a must-have for the celebration, but in many places, they have become rare or no longer bloom in time for the festival. K. RAJESH

## 1,978 boats anchored as fishing ban starts in Vizag

The Hindu Bureau  
VISAKHAPATNAM

A total of 1,978 boats will be anchored along the 24-km-long Visakhapatnam coast between Bhimli and Yarada beaches during the 61-day annual fishing ban period starting from April 15 to June 14.

The ban, aimed at sustaining the fishing industry, will see 675 mechanised boats anchored at the fishing harbour.

With the ban, fishermen are facing financial challenges and have yet to receive the Matsyakara Bhara's financial aid of ₹20,000 for last year.

## During caste census in Karnataka, some desisted from giving details, some did not know their caste

Sharath S. Srivataa  
BENGALURU

While the caste-wise population identified in the Socio-Economic and Educational Survey (Caste census) conducted by the Karnataka State Commission for Backward Classes had led to a furor, a small percentage of the population had either refused to provide caste details during the census or did not know their caste to provide the details.

A total of 73,399 families, including 53,241 in urban areas, which accounted for about 2.53 lakh (including 1.12 lakh women), or 0.425% of the State population, re-

Fact sheet

Total projected population in 2015	6.35 crore
Total population covered	5.98 crore
People who refused to identify their castes	2.53 lakh
People who said they are 'caste-free'	3.36 lakh
People not knowing their caste	1.36 lakh
Castes and communities that could not be identified	3,958

fused to identify their caste during the enumeration, show data available in the survey report accepted by the Cabinet on Friday.

The full report is yet to be released by the government, and it will be disclosed at a special Cabinet meeting on April 17. As many as 35,845 families, including 27,535 living

in urban areas, have stated that they do not belong to any caste or are 'caste-free'.

Their population is pegged at 1.34 lakh or about 0.225% of the State's population. These data have emerged at a time when caste groups are lobbying to state that their numbers

have reduced or on the names of the castes have become wrong.

As many as 5.98 crore people of about a projected population of 6.35 crore in Karnataka from about 1.35 crore households were covered under the survey conducted in 2015. The survey is being seen as an important document containing data set that would realign the political calculations as well as allow the government to recalibrate its focus on the populations that have continued to not receive the reservation benefits.

About 52,273 families, including 44,912 families in urban areas, have marked themselves under the "if at

all does not know the caste" category. Their population is pegged at 1.94 lakh or about 0.324% of the total population. Castes and communities could not be identified for 3,755 persons belonging to 967 households in the State.

Commission sources said that those who did not have castes are not part of the final number calculated for reservation.

"Some people did not know their caste or their caste was not ascertained or due to nomadic nature, some castes were not included in the population register. Moreover, we cannot compel anyone to provide details," they said.

## SC sub-categorisation into 3 groups takes effect in Telangana from today

The Hindu Bureau  
HYDERABAD

Categorisation of the Scheduled Caste community into three groups will come into effect in Telangana from Monday, coinciding with the birth anniversary of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.

A Cabinet sub-committee, headed by Irrigation and Civil Supplies Minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy and co-chaired by Health Minister C. Damodar Raju, met on Monday for a meeting with senior officials on Sunday for giving the final touches to the Government Order.

Formal release today  
The order will be formally released on Monday. The first copy presented to



Finishing touches: Cabinet sub-committee during the meeting on Sunday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy.

Mr. Uttam Kumar Reddy said the government finalised the order keeping in view the recommendations made by the one-man commission headed by the retired judge Justice Shastry.

The categorisation of 59

vide 1% reservation to these sub-castes.

The second group comprising 18 sub-castes constituting 62.74% of the population and in receipt of marginal benefits, had been given 0% reservation.

The third group, with 26 sub-castes and constituting 33.26% of the population and found to be relatively forward compared with other groups, was given 5% reservation.

Mr. Uttam Kumar Reddy recalled that the State government had constituted the one-man commission immediately after the Supreme Court's historic verdict on categorisation, and the commission conducted an in-depth study on the status of these sub-castes, SC population. It was accordingly decided to pro-

## Differences emerge over caste census in Karnataka Congress

The Hindu Bureau  
BENGALURU

Differences seem to be cropping up in the Karnataka government and the ruling Congress over the Socio-Economic and Educational Survey report ahead of the Cabinet meeting on April 17.

On Sunday, senior Lingayat leader and Heavy Industries Minister M.B. Patil said that the Lingayat population in the State was more than one crore as against the 66.35 lakh indicated in the survey report. "It is not a simple issue. It is not the mistake of H. Kanahtraj [Commission].



We are also responsible for the reduced population. People have registered without reference to Lingayat as per the reservation in 2A category. However, our population is more than one crore," he said.

# All logged in, Kerala to be declared fully digital literate

**S.R. Praveen**

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

For the past few months, 67-year-old C. Sarasu, a Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) worker from Pullampara in Thiruvananthapuram, has been using her leisure time to video-call her relatives and watch YouTube videos.

In Muvattupuzha, 75-year-old Krishnakumar is now using WhatsApp to mobilise people from the neighbourhood for an anti-drugs campaign. Until recently, both of them were “digital illiterates” for whom technology was a

hard nut to crack.

The two are now part of the over 21 lakh people who have completed the Local Self-Government Department’s “Digi Kerala” digital literacy programme, making Kerala the first State to achieve total digital literacy. Speaking to *The Hindu*, LSG Minister M.B. Rajesh said the government was waiting for President Droupadi Murmu’s confirmation for an event to make the official announcement.

## People of all ages

“We have achieved much beyond the guidelines stipulated by the National Digital Literacy Mission for dig-



**Bridging the gap:** Over 21 lakh senior citizens completed the government’s ‘Digi Kerala’ digital literacy programme. R.K. NITHIN

ital literacy, which require training to be imparted only for those up to 60 years of age. This programme has included people of all ages,” Mr. Rajesh says.

The Digi Kerala idea be-

gan as a pilot initiative of the Pullampara grama panchayat in the capital in 2022 to impart digital literacy to all residents. The trainees, most of whom were using digital equip-

ment for the first time, were taught to make voice calls as well as video calls using smartphones, use WhatsApp, access government services, carry out Internet banking and use popular social media platforms.

## Classes by volunteers

The government later decided to expand the programme across the State. Through surveys, 21.88 lakh participants were identified as digitally illiterate. A large army of 2.57 lakh volunteers, including National Service Scheme members, Kudumbasree members, Kerala State Literacy Mission Preraks,

members of the Library Council, and youth organisations coordinated to organise classes for them in households, MGNREGS work sites, libraries and Kudumbasree groups.

“After the training, the trainees were evaluated. As many as 98% of the participants passed the evaluation. A party verification was done by the Statistics Department to ensure that the figures are accurate. In wards where over 10% variation was seen, re-training was conducted. Offline training was provided in areas of low connectivity,” says an official who coordinated the training programme.

# Kerala's Digital Literacy Initiative



## Pilot Launch

The initiative begins in Pullampara grama panchayat in 2022.

Over 21 lakh people complete digital literacy training.

## Training Completion

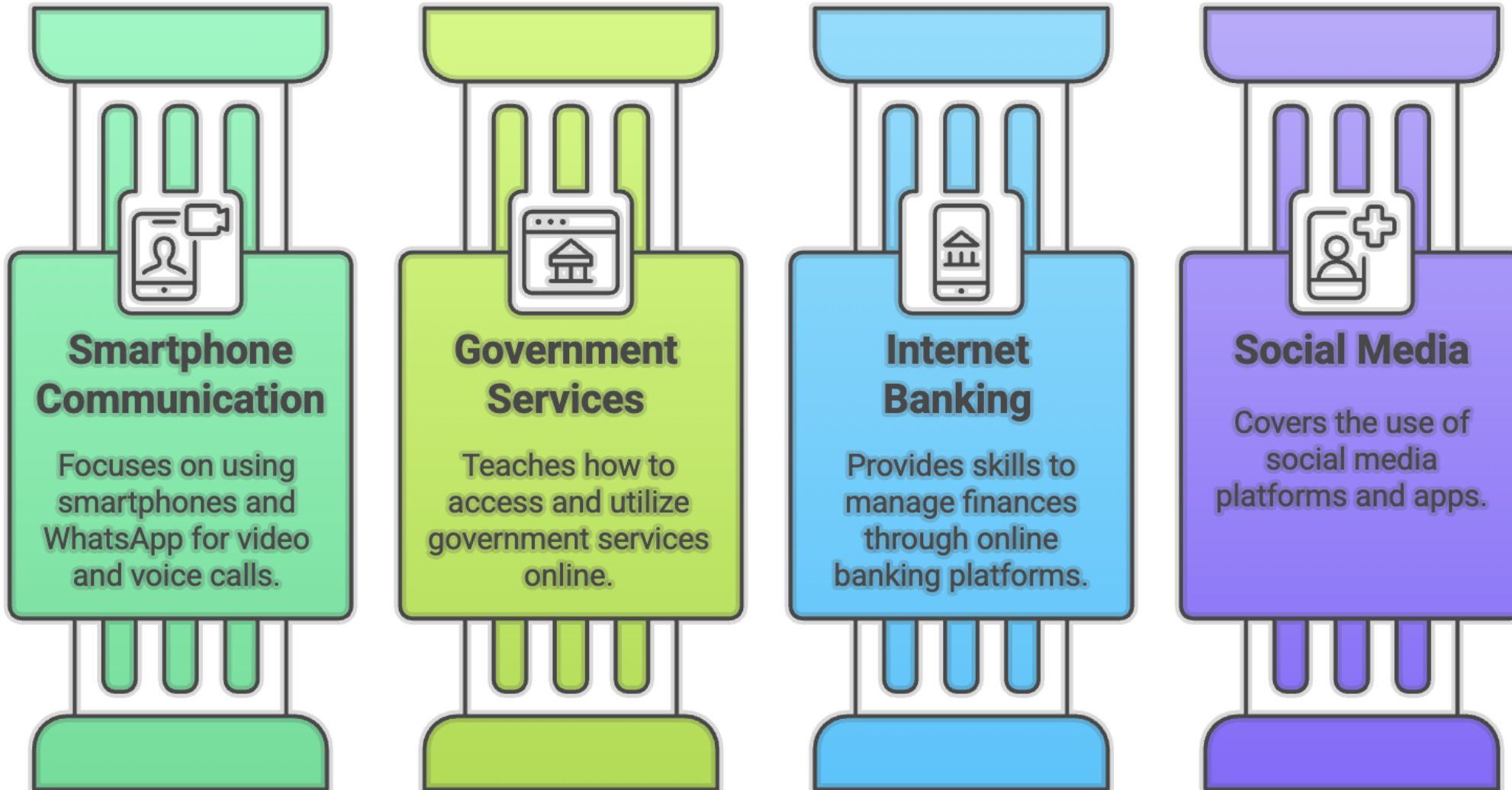


## Official Declaration

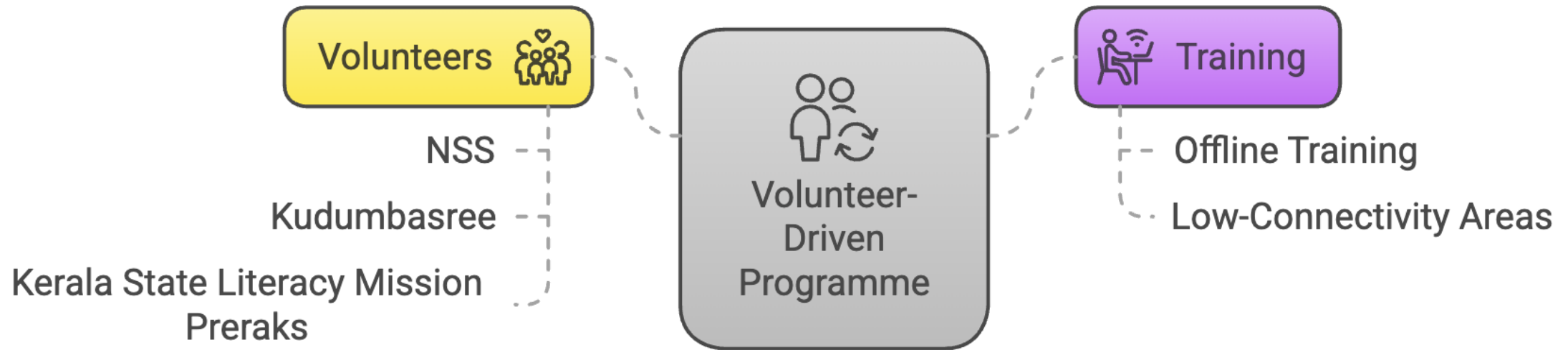
President Droupadi Murmu's confirmation is awaited for the official announcement.



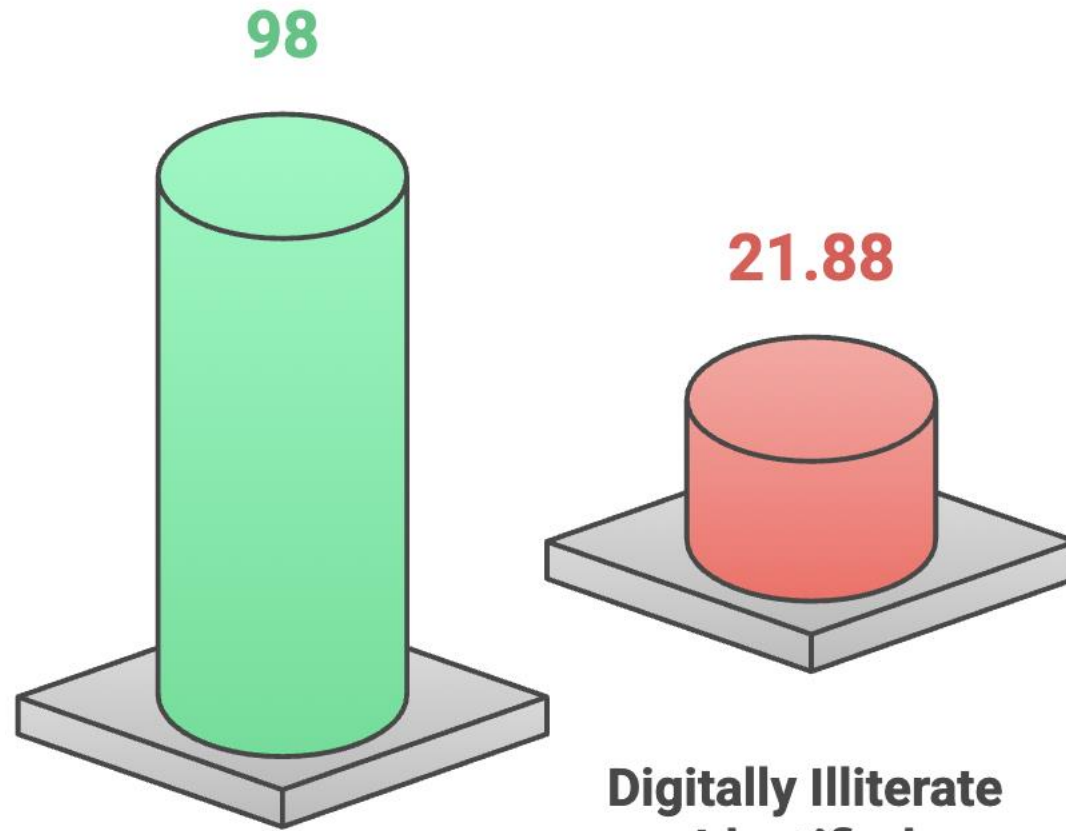
# Empowering Communities Through Comprehensive Digital Literacy Training



# Volunteer-Driven Programme Implementation



# Digital Literacy Training Program Results



## **Trainees Passed**

High success rate in evaluations

## **Digitally Illiterate Identified**





Initial assessment of digital literacy



**Q. With reference to Kerala's digital literacy mission, consider the following statements:**

1. Kerala is the first Indian state to achieve total digital literacy.
2. The 'Digi Kerala' programme initially targeted only citizens below 60 years of age.
3. The digital literacy campaign was implemented primarily by IT professionals hired by the state government.
4. The campaign began as a pilot initiative in a grama panchayat.

**Which of the above statements is/are correct?**

- (a) 1 and 2 only
  - (b) 1 and 4 only
  - (c) 2 and 3 only
  - (d) 1, 2 and 3 only
- 
- 
- 
- 

# Dharmadam is Kerala's first poverty-free constituency

**The Hindu Bureau**

KANNUR

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Sunday declared Dharmadam Kerala's first extreme poverty-free constituency, paving the way for the State to achieve full eradication of extreme poverty by November 1, 2025.

The Chief Minister, speaking at an event at the Pinarayi Convention Centre, said the milestone marks a significant step to eliminate extreme poverty through coordinated interventions. The project identified 64,002 individuals living in extreme poverty and implemented plans to improve their lives.

IN BRIEF



**FPIs withdraw ₹31,575 crore from equities this month**

Foreign investors have pulled out ₹31,575 crore from the country's equity markets so far this month, in the wake of turbulence created by sweeping tariffs imposed by the U.S. on most nations, including India. This came following a net investment of ₹30,927 crore in the six trading sessions from March 21 to 28. This infusion helped reduce the overall outflow for March to ₹3,573 crore, according to data from the depositories. Compared to previous months, this marks a notable improvement. In February, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) took out ₹34,574 crore, while in January, the outflow was even higher at ₹78,027 crore. This shift in investor sentiment highlights the volatility and evolving dynamics in global financial markets. The total withdrawn by FPIs has reached ₹1.48 lakh crore in 2025. **PH**

**2 operatives of terror module held with explosives in Punjab**

Two operatives of a terror module were arrested with a 2.8-kg improvised explosive device (IED) containing 1.6 kg of RDX and a remote control, a senior Punjab police officer said on Sunday. Punjab Director General of Police (DGP) Gaurav Yadav said the accused — identified as Jagges Singh and Manjinder Singh — were key operatives of the terror module operated by Germany-based Gurpreet Singh, alias 'Chhillon', who is a close associate of Goldy Brar-Lawrence Bishnoi gang. Preliminary investigation revealed that the IED was intended for a targeted terror attack, he added. A case has been registered under the Explosive Substances Act. Mr. Yadav said the NIA has declared a reward of ₹10 lakh on Dhillo. **PH**

**India, Africa maritime engagement + exercise begins off Tanzania coast**

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

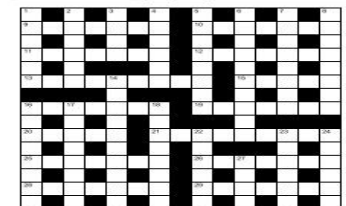
The inaugural edition of the large-scale multilateral exercise Africa India Key Maritime Engagement (AIKEYME) began on Sunday off Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania.

Coinciding with the naval exercise, offshore patrol vessel *INS Suryavriksh*, designated as Indian Ocean Ship (IOS) SAGAR and sailing with 44 naval personnel from 11 friendly nations, reached the port on Saturday. AIKEYME aims to develop collaborative solutions to common regional maritime challenges. This maiden initiative by the Indian Navy seeks to enhance interoperability and synergise combined operations among the maritime forces of partner nations," the Navy said in a statement. "It also highlights the strong and friendly relations between India and the African nations." The



*INS Chennai* arrives in Dar-es-Salaam for the inaugural edition of the large-scale multilateral exercise AIKEYME. **PH**

**THE CROSSWORD 14458**



- Across**
- 9 Loves to protect the tall enders in play (7)
  - 10 Material for soldiers - new incursion into Palestine area? (7)
  - 11 Internal pressure is same - acting all around leading to a gridlock (7)
  - 12 Take it as supreme manifestation (7)
  - 13 International rating agency's copy right to even things out (5)

**Punjab, Haryana farmers eye bumper wheat harvest after a favourable winter**

Experts say the yield in both States could surpass the figures of 2023-24; untimely rain and hailstorms over the past two days have raised concern that the standing crop may be damaged

Vikas Vasudevan  
CHENNAI

**F**avourable winter and the weather conditions during the rabi season in the key wheat-producing States of Punjab and Haryana are expected to boost wheat yields this harvest, experts say. However, untimely rain and hailstorms in parts of both States over the past two days have raised concern among farmers about the potential damage to the standing crop, which could lead to losses.

The harvesting of wheat, the main rabi crop sown between late October and December, has already commenced in Punjab and Haryana. According to government data, wheat production in Punjab in 2023-24 was over 18 lakh tonnes, while Haryana saw nearly 124 lakh tonnes of wheat output. Agricultural experts expect the harvest in both States to be higher than that of the previous year.

Ratan Tiwari, Director, Indian Institute of Wheat and Barley Research, Karnal, Haryana, said the two States were heading for a good harvest this season on account of the preced-



Beautiful harvest: Farmers engaged in threshing the freshly harvested wheat crop at a village on the outskirts of Gurugram on April 4. **PH**

ing favourable weather and climate. "Weather conditions were conducive all through the winter. Temperatures, particularly the minimum (temperature), remained favourable. Secondly, the days were relatively bright, and there were fewer foggy days when compared with the previous years. Although the maximum temperature has been fluctuating, the climate resilient varieties have sustained well," Mr. Tiwari told *The Hindu*. "Last year, the average yield in Punjab was 50 quintal per hectare. This

year, it could be over 60 quintal per hectare. Similarly, last year, the average yield in Haryana was around 46 quintal per hectare, which this year could go up to 50 quintal per hectare," he added. Punjab and Haryana are major contributors of wheat to the Central procurement pool. "There was fairly widespread rain, accompanied by hail and winds during the past 48 hours in parts of Punjab and Haryana. However, clear weather conditions are expected now in the coming days," Sunder Paul, Director, IMD, Chandigarh, said.

Intermittent, timely rains have resulted in good development of grain, which will boost the per-hectare yields of wheat," Mr. Rangil said. "The parliamentary panel also pointed out that the scheme has been plagued by chronic delays in wage payments, leading to uncertainty for the workers. It has recommended that the current compensation rate for delayed wages should be increased. The Committee strongly recommended that timely disbursement of these payments was essential to maintain trust in the scheme and ensure uninterrupted execution of work."

**DRDO tests laser weapon system that can disable missiles and drones +**

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) on Sunday announced the successful trial of the Mk-IIA Laser-Directed Energy Weapon (LDEW) system "mastering the technology of disabling missiles, drones and smaller projectiles".

The success has put India in the exclusive club of nations which have the high-power Laser-Directed Energy Weapon (LDEW) system, the DRDO said in a statement. "Indigenously designed and developed Mk-IIA LDEW system was demonstrated in its entire spectrum of capabilities by engaging the fixed wing drones at long range,



A view of the Laser-Directed Energy Weapon system developed by the DRDO to shoot down aerial targets in Kurnool. **ANI X**

thwarting a multiple drone attack and destroying enemy surveillance sensors and antennae," the statement said. "The lightning speed of engagement, the precision and the lethality delivered at the target within few seconds made it the most potent counter drone system."

"Cost of firing it for few seconds is equivalent to the cost of couple of litres of petrol. Therefore, it has the potential to be a long-term and low-cost alternative to defeat the target," the DRDO said. "Detailing the functioning of the system, the statement said once detected by a radar or by its inbuilt Electro Optic (EO) system, laser-Dew can engage targets at the speed of light and use an intense laser beam to cut through the target, leading to structural failure or more impactful results if the warhead is targeted. This type of cutting-edge weaponry has the potential to revolutionise the battlespace by reducing the reliance on expensive ammunition, while also lowering the risk of collateral damage, it stated. The trial was carried at the National Open Air Range, Kurnool in Andhra Pradesh.

**Undertake survey to assess MGNREGS effectiveness: panel**

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Rural Development has recommended an independent survey to assess the effectiveness of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) and its shortcomings.

The survey, the panel said, should focus on worker satisfaction, wage delays, participation trends, and financial irregularities within the scheme. The panel's report was tabled on April 4, the concluding day of the Budget Session of Parliament. The panel, headed by Congress MP Suresh Kumar Jaiswal, has argued that such a survey should focus on the necessary policy reforms, and should be introduced based on the insights from the survey.

The panel also said that despite the stated objective of the scheme to uplift marginalised communities, the participation of women workers and those from the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes remained "inconsistent across districts". "A district-wise study must be conducted to ensure that these communities receive equal work opportunities and benefits under the scheme, thereby



The panel pointed out that the scheme has been plagued by delays in wage payments.

fulfilling its intended goal of social and economic inclusion," the report said. The panel also stressed the need to revamp the scheme, keeping in view the "changing times and emerging challenges". "This committee urges the Ministry to explore the options that could increase the number of guaranteed working days under MGNREGA to at least 150 days from the current 100 days," the report said. The parliamentary panel also pointed out that the scheme has been plagued by chronic delays in wage payments, leading to uncertainty for the workers. It has recommended that the current compensation rate for delayed wages should be increased. The Committee strongly recommended that timely disbursement of these payments was essential to maintain trust in the scheme and ensure uninterrupted execution of work."

**SUDOKU**

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

Solution to previous puzzle

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

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

**FAITH**

**Tamil New Year significance**

Our sstras say Brahma created the world during the sunrise on the first day of the Tamil month of Chittirai. This day is celebrated as the Tamil New Year, based on the calculation of the rotation of the earth around the sun. From the sun enters the Tamil zodiac of Meshaam to its subsequent movement to all the other signs of the zodiac, before returning to Meshaam on the first day of Chittirai, it is considered to be the start of new beginnings, filled with auspiciousness and positive energy, said Tirukkandathai Dr. Venkatesh. The month of Chittirai is a salubrious one (also known as Vasantha season) and it is human nature to expect an end to the heat of troubles and onset of better times on all fronts. To this end, people turn to their favourite deities, praying for benign grace and benediction and temple visits are highly efficacious. The reading of the almanac is another highlight of the new year. Our sstras say that one should read the almanac every day before setting out of the house for the day's grind. However, due to various reasons, if one is unable to do so, one should listen to vedics reading the almanac on this day, in temples and other places of congregation. As the new year dawns, one should do tarpan and appease one's pitrus and seek their blessings. Preparations for the Tamil New Year begin a day early in most houses, with feasts made of mango leaves going up. The New Year feast should include mango flowers, fresh mango, thin buttermilk, vada and payasam, as a symbolic acceptance that life will be a mix of sweet moments and bitter experiences, but with god's grace, one can find the strength to overcome everything.

# India, Africa maritime engagement exercise begins off Tanzania coast

**The Hindu Bureau**

NEW DELHI

The inaugural edition of the large-scale multilateral exercise Africa India Key Maritime Engagement (AIKEYME) began on Sunday off Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania.

Coinciding with the naval exercise, offshore patrol vessel *INS Sunayna*, designated as Indian Ocean Ship (IOS) SAGAR and sailing with 44 naval personnel from nine friendly nations, reached the port on Saturday.

“AIKEYME aims to develop collaborative solutions to common regional maritime challenges. This maiden initiative by the Indian Navy seeks to enhance interoperability and syner-



*INS Chennai* arrives in Dar-es-Salaam for the inaugural edition of the large-scale multilateral exercise AIKEYME. PTI

gise combined operations among the maritime forces of partner nations,” the Navy said in a statement.

“It also highlights the strong and friendly relations between India and the African nations.” The

six-day AIKEYME exercise from April 13 to 18 includes participation from Comoros, Djibouti, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles and South Africa, alongside the co-hosts India and Tanza-

nia. “This initiative aligns with the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, promoting Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions (MAHASAGAR),” the Navy said.

The *Indian Naval Ship Chennai* (destroyer) and *INS Kesari* (Landing Ship Tank - Large) arrived in Dar-es-Salaam ahead of the exercise, and the inauguration ceremony of AIKEYME was co-hosted onboard, along with the Tanzanian Peoples’ Defence Force (TPDF).

A Ceremonial Guard was also paraded onboard *INS Chennai* with TPDF and Indian Navy band playing in unison the national anthems of respective countries.

# Africa India Key Maritime Engagement (AI-KEYME)

## Participating Countries

- Comoros
- Djibouti
- Kenya
- Madagascar
- Mauritius
- Mozambique
- Seychelles
- South Africa

## Co-hosts

- India
- Tanzania



## Vessels Participating

- INS Chennai
- INS Kesari
- INS Sunayna

## Date & Venue

- April 13, 2024
- Coast of Dar-es-Salaam



**Q. With reference to the Africa India Key Maritime Engagement (AI-KEYME) 2024, consider the following statements:**

1. AI-KEYME 2024 was co-hosted by India and Kenya in the Indian Ocean.
2. The exercise aims to enhance maritime interoperability between India and African nations.
3. It aligns with India's MAHASAGAR vision which promotes mutual security and growth across regions.
4. INS Vikrant participated in the first edition of the AI-KEYME exercise.

**Which of the above statements is/are correct?**

- (a) 2 and 3 only
- (b) 1 and 4 only
- (c) 1, 2 and 3 only
- (d) 2, 3 and 4 only

# DRDO tests laser weapon system that can disable missiles and drones

**The Hindu Bureau**

NEW DELHI

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) on Sunday announced the successful trial of the Mk-II(A) Laser-Directed Energy Weapon (DEW) system “mastering the technology of disabling missiles, drones and smaller projectiles”.

The success has put India in the exclusive club of nations which have the high-power Laser-DEW system, the DRDO said in a statement.

“Indigenously designed and developed Mk-II(A) DEW system was demonstrated in its entire spectrum of capability by engaging the fixed wing drones at long range,



A view of the Laser-Directed Energy Weapon system developed by the DRDO to shoot down aerial targets in Kurnool. ANI X

thwarting a multiple drone attack and destroying enemy surveillance sensors and antennae,” the statement said.

“The lightning speed of engagement, the precision and the lethality delivered at the target within few se-

conds made it the most potent counter drone system.”

“Cost of firing it for few seconds is equivalent to the cost of couple of litres of petrol. Therefore, it has the potential to be a long-term and low-cost alterna-

tive to defeat the target,” the DRDO said.

Detailing the functioning of the system, the statement said once detected by a radar or by its inbuilt Electro Optic (EO) system, laser-DEW can engage targets at the speed of light and use an intense laser beam to cut through the target, leading to structural failure or more impactful results if the warhead is targeted.

This type of cutting-edge weaponry has the potential to revolutionise the battlespace by reducing the reliance on expensive ammunition, while also lowering the risk of collateral damage, it stated. The trial was carried at the National Open Air Range, Kurnool in Andhra Pradesh.

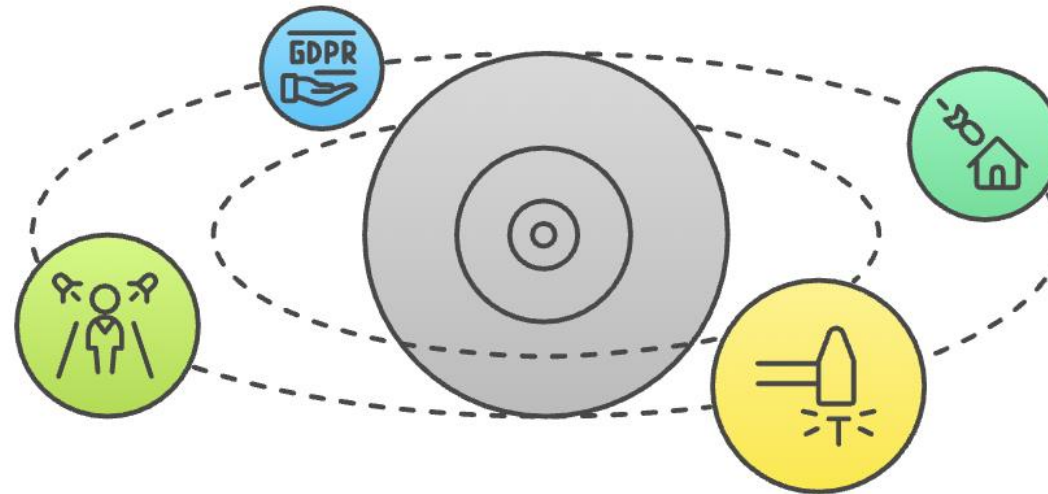
# Components of the Mk-II(A) Laser-DEW System

## Organization Involved

Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)

## Functionality

Disables missiles, drones, and small projectiles



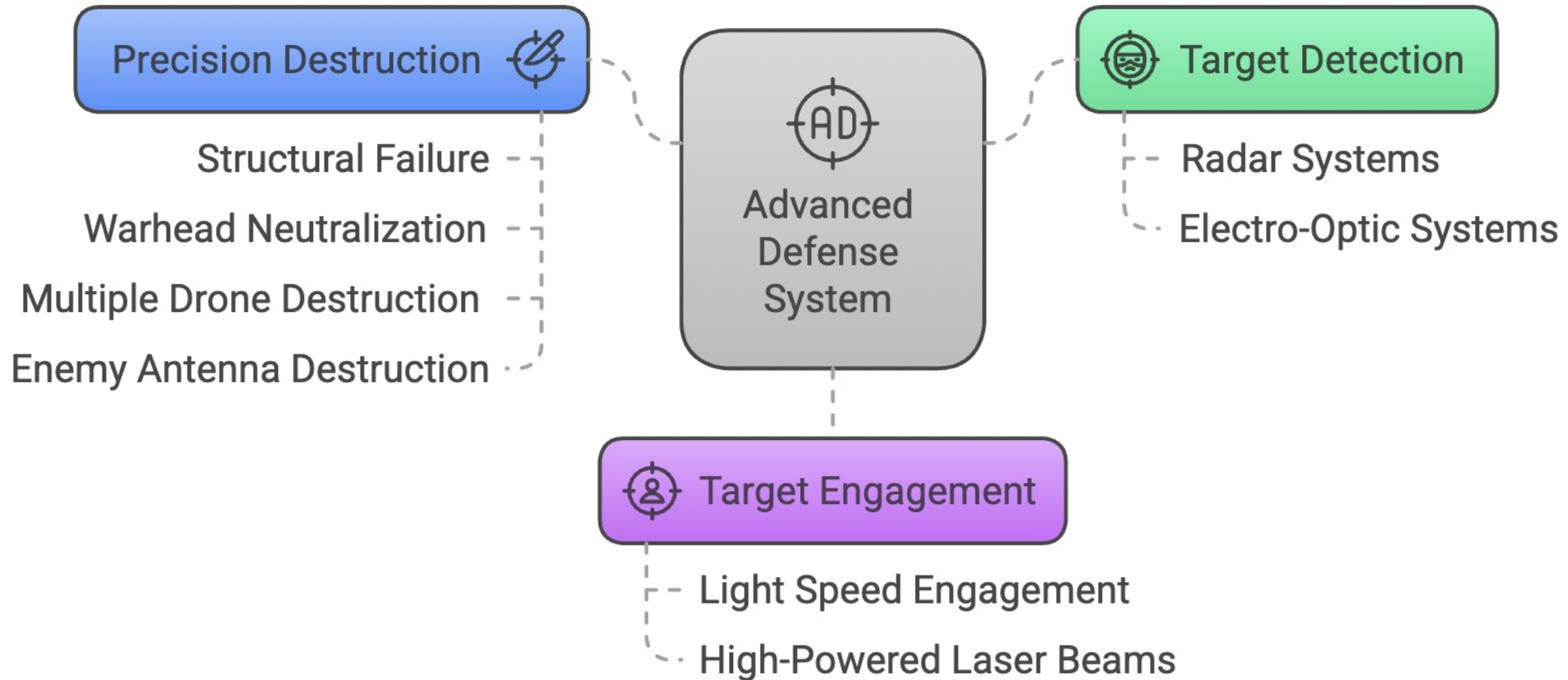
## Location of Trial

National Open Air Range, Kurnool

## Technology Used

Laser technology

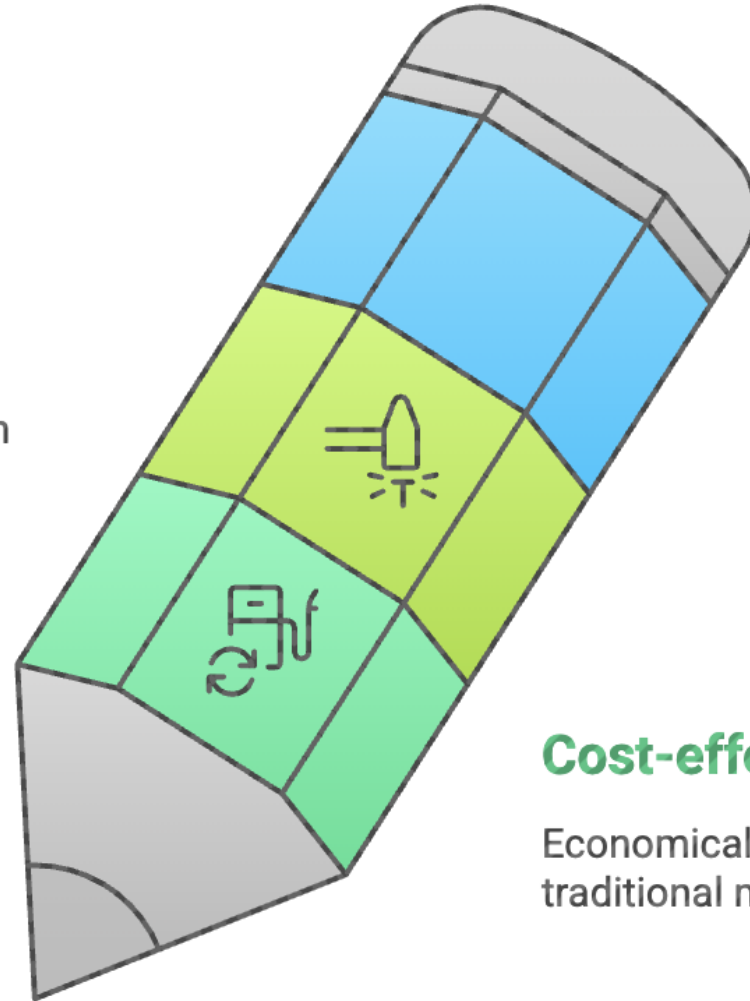
# Advanced Defense System Capabilities



# Advantages of Indigenous Defense Technology

## Low collateral damage

Minimizes unintended harm



## Self-reliance

Promotes national independence in defense

## Cost-effectiveness

Economical compared to traditional methods

**Q. With reference to the Laser-Directed Energy Weapon (Laser-DEW) system developed by DRDO, consider the following statements:**

- 1.The Mk-II(A) Laser-DEW system can neutralize aerial targets like drones and missiles using an intense laser beam.
- 2.The firing cost of the DEW system is significantly higher than conventional ammunition due to energy usage.
- 3.The system uses both radar and Electro-Optic (EO) technology for target detection and engagement.
- 4.The recent test of the Mk-II(A) system was conducted at Pokhran Range, Rajasthan.

**Which of the above statements is/are correct?**

- **(a)** 1 and 3 only
- (b)** 2 and 4 only
- (c)** 1, 2 and 4 only
- (d)** 1, 3 and 4 only

# BatEchoMon: India's first automated bat monitoring, detection system

BatEchoMon is programmed to activate at sunset, when bats begin flying, and continuously listens and analyses audio. Its Raspberry Pi microprocessor processes data captured by an ultrasonic detector, isolating bat calls from other noises, and then uses a neural network to identify the species

Nikhil Sreekandan

For her PhD research, bat biologist Kadambari Deshpande made overnight recordings of bat echolocation calls in the Western Ghats. A "good night" would generate about 30 GB of data from 11 hours of recording with a bat detector. To process the data, Deshpande would go through several one-minute recordings, scanning every millisecond for bat calls, and make notes on the species and other information on their behaviour and ecology.

"It took me 11 months to process 20 nights of data," Deshpande said. "BatEchoMon can probably give me that in a few hours."

BatEchoMon, short for 'Bat Echolocation Monitoring,' is an autonomous system capable of detecting and analysing bat calls in real-time. It is India's first automated bat monitoring system, developed by Deshpande and Vedant Barje under the guidance of Jagdish Krishnaswamy, at the Long-Term Urban Ecological Observatory in the School of Environment and Sustainability at the Indian Institute for Human Settlements (IHS), Bengaluru.

Deshpande is a postdoctoral fellow at the Observatory and the School; Barje, who leads the WildTech Project at the Wildlife Conservation Trust, is a consultant there.

BatEchoMon marks a new chapter for bat research in the country, according to Deshpande. The monitoring system allows scientists who study bats to "go beyond data processing and towards asking interesting questions about bat ecology."

"Not only will it lead to a smoother workflow, it will help people transition to recording bats in different parts of the country, allowing us to gain more insights on the natural history and ecology of different bat species," Rohit Chakravarty, a bat researcher and conservationist at the Nature Conservation Foundation, said.

"I don't know of any device internationally with an inbuilt recording plus call classifying unit. If my knowledge serves me well, BatEchoMon is a milestone in bat research globally."

**The bat in the machine**

Aside from a recording device, BatEchoMon includes components to record, store, process, and analyse species-wise bat activity on the fly. "In [BatEchoMon], Audiomoth, a popular low-cost ultrasonic detector, has been configured to work as an ultrasonic microphone," Barje said.

BatEchoMon is programmed to activate



Kadambari Deshpande and Vedant Barje with two BatEchoMon units. *VIEW HASRAGAR*

automatically at sunset, when bats begin flying, and continuously listens and analyses audio. The device's brain is a Raspberry Pi microprocessor, which processes the data captured by Audiomoth. "It first isolates bat calls from other ultrasounds, such as those of insects or anthropogenic and environmental noises. Then the peak frequency and structure of a bat call are analysed to match a known pre-trained model, which helps identify the bat species," Deshpande explained.

"The system uses a [convolutional neural network] based algorithm to do this," Barje added. The output from the device is a spectrogram – a visual representation of the frequencies of an audio signal as it varies with time – of all detected bat calls, along with audio recordings of the portions with just the calls. The system also generates statistical data on which species has been most active through the night, which species was active when, and so on.

"Earlier, all of this needed to be interpreted manually, after painstakingly combing through hours of data," Deshpande said.

The Raspberry Pi and its associated processing components are enclosed in a box measuring 200 mm x 80 mm x 80 mm. Other auxiliary components in the device include a solar panel plus battery and a WiFi communication unit for power supply and data transmission, respectively. In the absence of the sun, the device can last for up to eight days, according to Barje. BatEchoMon also has



Currently, the system can identify six to seven common Indian bat species. Going forward, we would like to include as many bat species as possible

a modular design, and its battery, charging apparatus, and the level of automation and data relay can be customised to the space it is installed in. But the team was reluctant to reveal more about the setup process.

"Suddenly, it became possible" Bat ecology and acoustics is a nascent field in India, with just a handful of bat researchers recording bat calls and analysing them for ecological studies. Global bat-call databases such as ChiroVox and Xeno-Canto have few recordings submitted by Indians.

Deshpande has been using bat detectors since 2008 and has observed their evolution worldwide. In Europe, she said, detectors equipped with the associated software and reference libraries have saved scientists a lot of time. Since then she has wanted to develop something similar, but customised for the insectivorous bats that are more common in India.

After a chance meeting with fellow researcher Barje, the duo started iterating through numerous designs, different microprocessors, algorithms, and power

solutions – before arriving at the current version of BatEchoMon.

The core system of BatEchoMon costs a third of advanced detectors and similar systems, according to Barje. He didn't wish to disclose exact numbers, however.

**The main challenge**

In the last few months, BatEchoMon has successfully completed pilot tests in an IHS site in Nashik. The team plans to test it for longer durations and in diverse conditions as well as beta test the device with select users outside the organisation.

BatEchoMon's primary obstacle is the limited availability of reference libraries for the calls of many bat species. "Currently, the system can identify six to seven common Indian bat species. Going forward, we would like to include as many bat species as possible," Deshpande said.

They also said they hope the device in its present form will be able to identify the species commonly seen in urban, peri-urban, and human-modified forested areas. The main challenge is to create robust training datasets to make good detection models for different species.

Fortunately, collaborations among Indian researchers are improving because of initiatives like the "State of India's Bats" workshop conducted by the Nature Conservation Foundation and Bat Conservation International, according to Chakravarty.

*(Nikhil Sreekandan is an independent journalist. n.sreekandan@gmail.com)*

## THE GIST

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## BIG SHOT



A herd of deer cools off under a sprinkler in its enclosure amid heatwave conditions at the National Zoological Park, in New Delhi, on April 9, 2025. *PTI*

## WHAT IS IT?

### Zoos: not just a showcase

Associated Press

At the Barcelona Zoo, a 40-year-old African elephant places her foot through the metal barrier where a zookeeper gently scrubs the sole – the beloved pachyderm gets her "pedicure," along with apple slices every day.

The treatment is part of the zoo's specialised geriatric care for aging animals that cannot be reintroduced into the wild as zoos worldwide increasingly emphasise lifelong care. Zoos have undergone a rethink in recent decades with the emphasis on the conservation of species and education, moving away from the paradigm in which exotic animals are displayed as a spectacle.

The new approach includes knowing how to adapt to the needs of aging animals, which has led zoos to create bigger, more nature-like enclosures, such as the Sahel-Savannah area at the zoo in the Spanish city of Barcelona.

Along with breeding programmes to reintroduce fit animals into nature, zoos today want to ensure that animals living longer due to advancements in veterinary care can age gracefully, said Martin



Two old African elephants, Bully (left) and Susi, at the Barcelona Zoo in Spain on March 27, 2025. *AP*

Zordan, CEO of the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums.

Zordan said that just like older people, elderly animals require more care: regular health checks, arthritis treatment, softer foods or nutritional supplements, adapted living spaces, and monitoring of mental and behavioral health. "We care about these animals living comfortably and leading lives with dignity," Zordan said.

Several zoos in the United States also highlight their treatment of older animals, such as those in Baltimore and Baton Rouge.

For feedback and suggestions for Science, please write to science@thehindu.co.in with the subject "Daily paper"

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## THE GIST

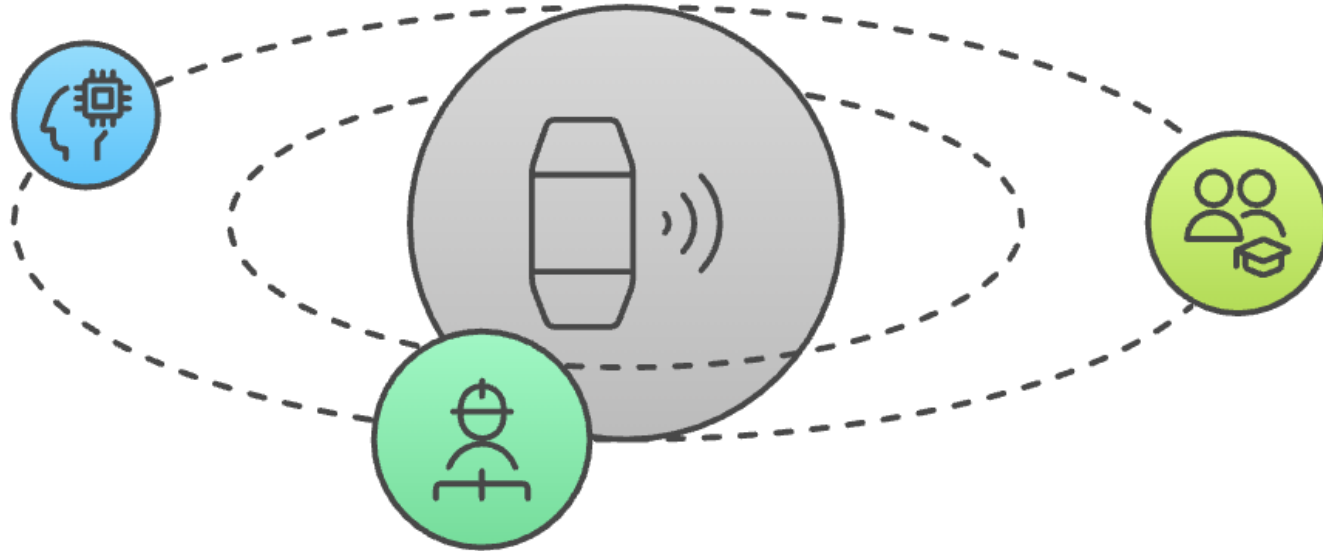
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# BatEchoMon Development Overview



## Developers

Kadambari  
Deshpande &  
Vedant Barje

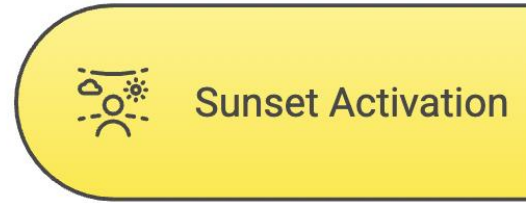
## Supervisor

Jagdish  
Krishnaswamy

## Institution

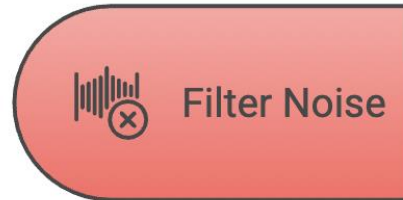
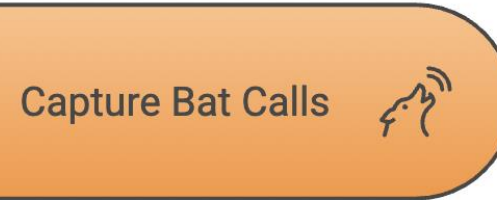
LTEO & IIHS

# BatEchoMon Device Operation



The device automatically activates at sunset.

The ultrasonic microphone captures bat calls.



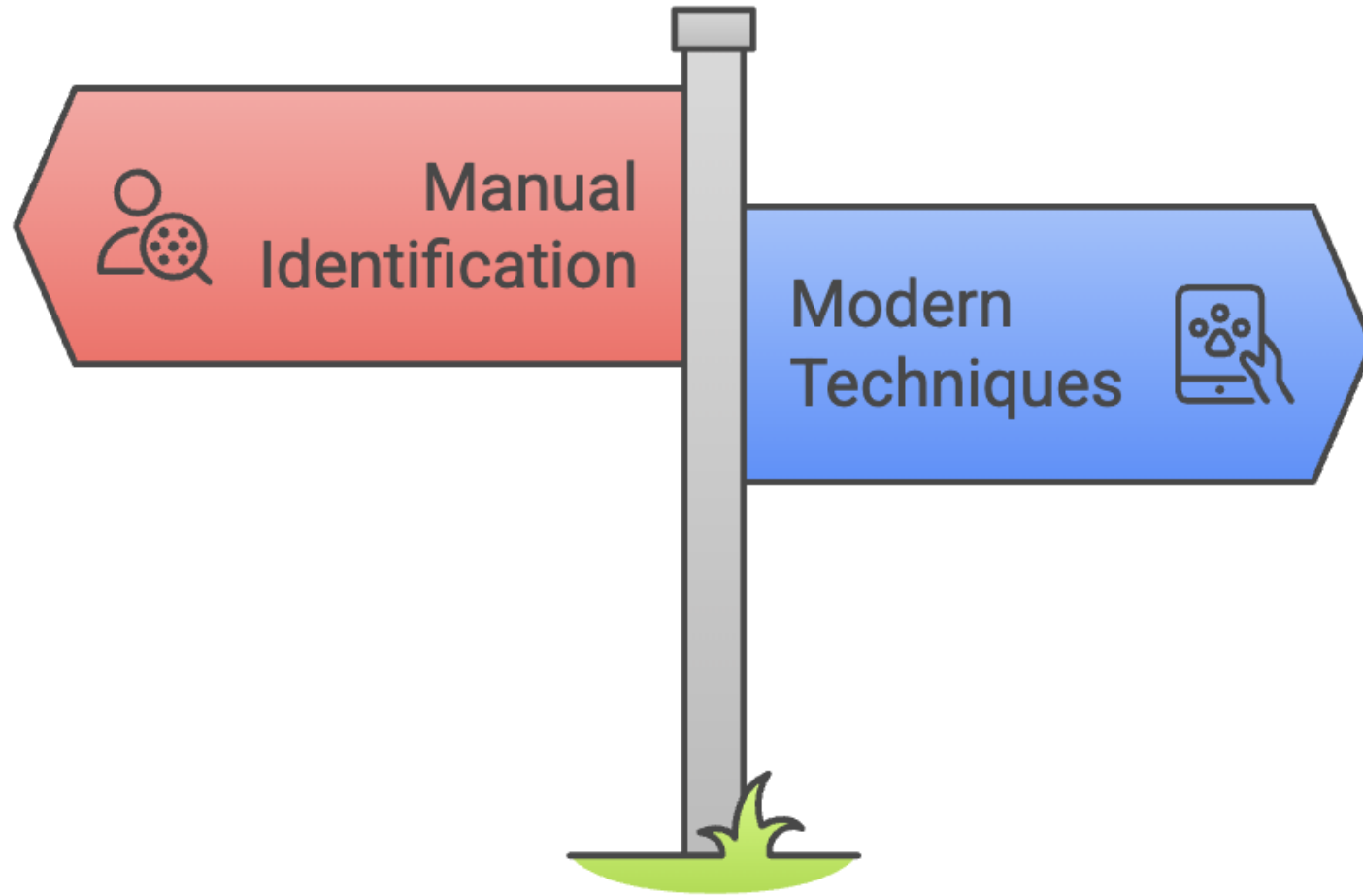
Background noise is filtered out.

Neural network identifies up to 7 bat species.

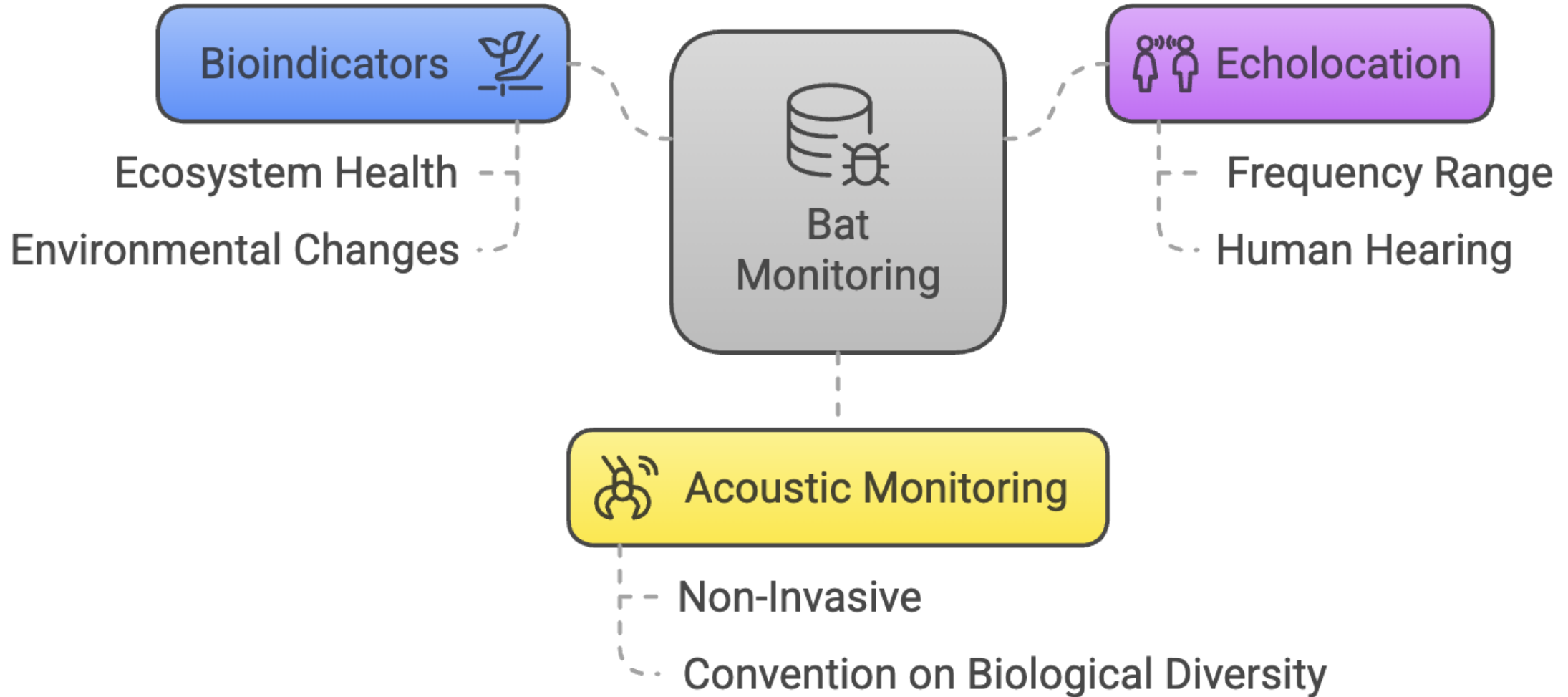


Analysis is performed in real time.

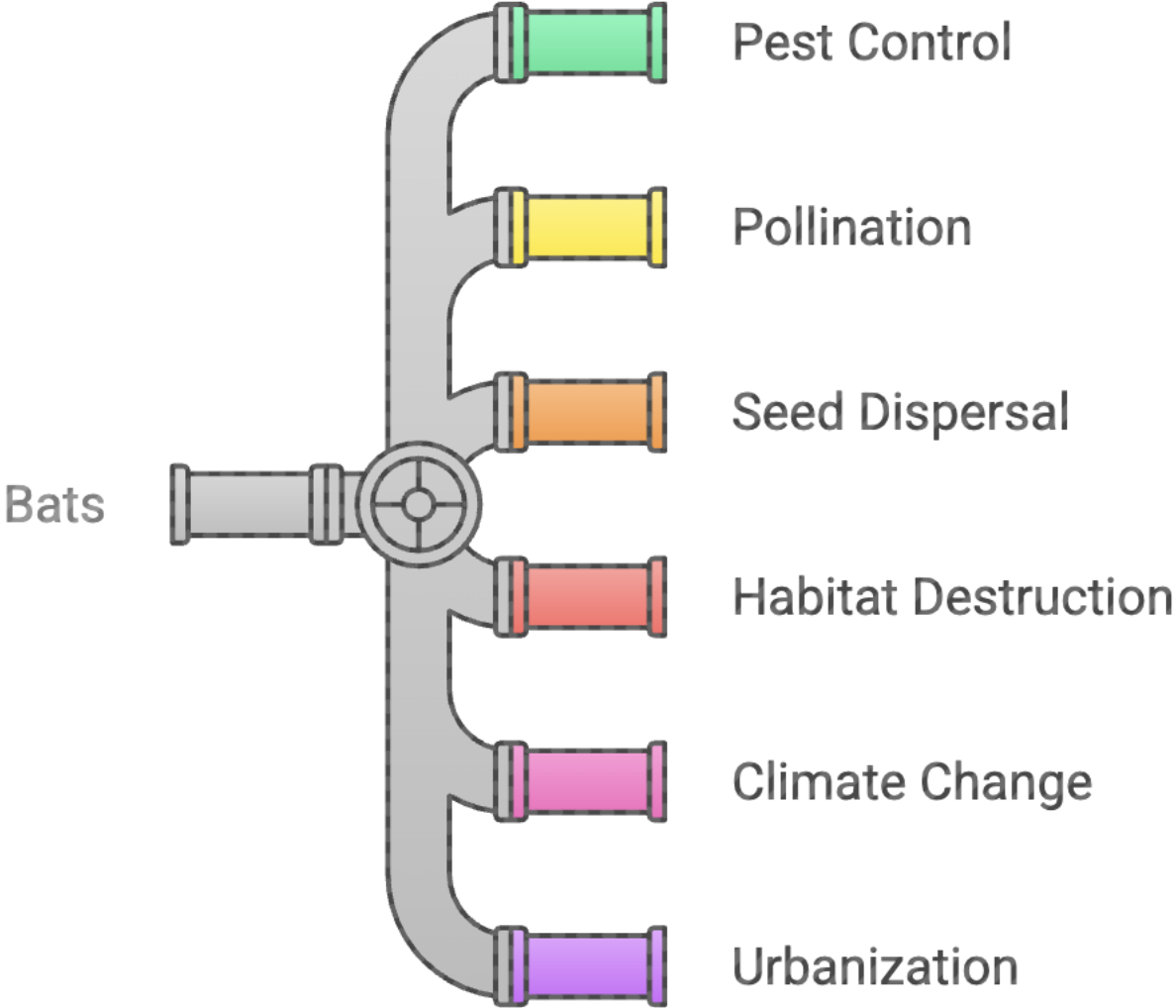
# How to improve bat research in India?



# Bat Monitoring and Ecosystem Health



# The Multifaceted Role of Bats in Ecosystems



**Q. With reference to *BatEchoMon*, India's first automated bat monitoring system, consider the following statements:**

1. It uses an ultrasonic detector and a neural network to identify bat species in real-time.
2. BatEchoMon can identify all bat species found in India based on audio signatures.
3. The system was developed as part of the Long-Term Ecological Observatory (LTEO) initiative.
4. Bats are important bioindicators and pollinators, making their monitoring essential for ecosystem health.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- **(a)** 1 and 3 only
- (b)** 1, 3 and 4 only
- (c)** 2 and 4 only
- (d)** 1, 2, 3 and 4

**INDIA BROADSIDE**  
**Modi says Cong. crushed Constitution for power**  
NEWS » PAGE 5

**PERUVIAN LAUREATE**  
**Nobel-winning novelist Mario Vargas Llosa dies**  
WORLD » PAGE 14

**'INJUSTICE' ALLEGED**  
**RLJP led by Pashupati Kumar Paras quits NDA**  
NEWS » PAGE 4

**DATA POINT**  
**While Israel govt. wants war, most Israelis don't**  
Surveys suggest citizens fear impact on economy  
OPINION » PAGE 9

**TURNING IT AROUND**  
**Dube and Dhoni help CSK snap losing streak**  
SPORT » PAGE 16

**INSIDE**



**Desired demand growth falls to lowest since 2020**

**NEW DELHI**  
Growth in demand for diesel, India's most consumed petroleum product, fell to its lowest since the pandemic in last financial year as the economy expanded at a slower pace and consumption shifts to cleaner fuels. » PAGE 13

**Hamis seeks guarantees to free hostages**

**CAIRO**  
A senior Hamas official said on Monday that the Palestinian group is prepared to release all Israeli hostages in exchange for a "serious prisoner swap" and guarantees that Israel will end the war in Gaza. » PAGE 14

**New tensions flare between France, Algeria**

**PARIS**  
Fresh tensions flared between France and Algeria on Monday as the French Foreign Minister said its former colony had ordered 12 French officials to leave in 48 hours after the arrest of three Algerian nationals in France. » PAGE 14

**Pakistan urges Iran to probe killing of eight**

**ISLAMABAD**  
Islamabad has sought Tehran's "full cooperation" over the killing of eight Pakistani nationals on Saturday in Sistan and Baluchistan province near southeastern Iran, officials said on Monday. » PAGE 14

**Telangana becomes first State to notify sub-categorisation of Scheduled Castes**

**M. Rajeev HYDRABAD**

The Telangana government has notified the implementation of the Telangana Scheduled Castes (Rationalisation of Reservations) Act 2025. The State has issued a gazette notification with April 14, 2025 as the appointed day for categorisation of Scheduled Castes (SC) into three groups. Telangana has become the first State into the country to operationalise the classification of the Scheduled Caste into three groups. The Supreme Court's landmark judgment on August 1 last year upholding the constitutionality of sub-classifying the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) to grant separate quotas for the most marginalised groups within these communities. **Multiple factors** The government took into consideration the contents of the top court's verdict, empirical data, social, economic, educational, employment, and political status of the communities in the categorisation of SCs

into three groups for implementation of the rule of reservation. Accordingly, 15 sub-castes categorised as most backward had been classified as Group-I with 1% reservation. Though these groups constituted 0.5% of the population, the government had decided to provide them with 1% reservation with a view to provide educational and employment opportunities to the most backward among the Scheduled Castes. In all, 38 sub-castes of the total 59 which received marginal reservation were moved to Group-II with 9% reservation while 26 sub-castes were relatively better placed in terms of opportunities had been placed in Group III with 5% reservation. The Cabinet sub-committee headed by Minister for Irrigation N. Uttam Kumar Reddy and co-chaired by Minister for Health C. Damodar Rajanarainha handed over the first copy of the gazette notification to Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Monday. Mr. Rajanarainha said 33 of the 59 sub-castes were continuing in the same group in which they were placed in the past and there was shuffling of only 26 sub-castes constituting 4.43% of SC population. Recruitment to government jobs would be based on the categorisation of the SC communities. Mr. Rajanarainha said, adding the categorisation would not be applicable to the vacancies already notified.

**Bihu beats**



**Rhythmic spirits:** A troupe performs for Bonga Bihu, which marks the Assamese New Year, in Guwahati on Monday. **BITU RAJ KOWAR**

**Loans now cheaper as major banks cut rates**

**Ashokamithran T. MUMBAI**

Major banks have cut their lending and deposit rates following the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) 50-basis point reduction in repo rate in 2025. State Bank of India (SBI) cut the repo rate-linked lending rates by 25 basis points to 8.25% and external benchmark lending rates to 8.65%. Private sector banks cut their deposit interest rates by 25 basis points.

**FULL REPORT ON » PAGE 4**

**Stocks surge after U.S. tariff exemptions even as Trump doubles down on China**

**Agence France Press WASHINGTON**

Stock markets on Monday welcomed U.S. tariff exemptions for electronics, but President Donald Trump signalled the respite would be temporary and warned no country would get "off the hook" in his trade war - especially China. Mr. Trump's trade war has raised fears about an economic downturn as the dollar has tumbled and investors have dumped U.S. government bonds, normally considered a safe-haven investment. But Asian and European stock markets rose firmly on Monday, after days of extreme volatility were several tariff twists and turns since Mr. Trump presented

his "Liberation Day" levis on April 2. The Paris and Frankfurt stock exchanges were up around 2% after midday, and London gained 1.7%, but President Donald Trump signalled the respite would be temporary and warned no country would get "off the hook" in his trade war - especially China. Mr. Trump's trade war has raised fears about an economic downturn as the dollar has tumbled and investors have dumped U.S. government bonds, normally considered a safe-haven investment. But Asian and European stock markets rose firmly on Monday, after days of extreme volatility were several tariff twists and turns since Mr. Trump presented

**Choksi arrested in Belgium as India seeks extradition**

**Fraud fallout**

An overview of the Mehul Choksi case. Bank fraud: Mehul Choksi and Nirav Modi defaulted Punjab National Bank of ₹13,578 crore. Arrest in Dominica: Choksi was arrested in Dominica on April 12, 2025. Latest arrest: On April 12, 2025, Belgian authorities arrested Choksi after India renewed extradition efforts.

**Subhasini Halder Devesh K. Pandey NEW DELHI**

Belgian authorities confirmed on Monday that they have Mehul Choksi, the fugitive diamond businessman, in custody after he was arrested over the weekend. He is wanted, along with his nephew Nirav Modi, in a case by Punjab National Bank alleging loan frauds worth more than ₹13,578 crore. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has been pursuing his extradition since 2018, when he left the country. Mr. Choksi was arrested by the Belgian enforcement agency on April 12, months after India moved a request seeking his extradition. Mr. Choksi is an Antigua citizen now, and had moved to Belgium a few years ago, reportedly for cancer treatment. He was arrested near his home in Antwerp. As per reports, he secured a Belgian passport in November 2023, as his wife is a Belgian citizen. **Extradition request** "Mr. Choksi is being detained in anticipation of further judicial proceedings. Access to his legal counsel has been assured," the Belgian Federal Public

**CHINA'S TRANSFORMATION » PAGE 15**

# Telangana becomes first State to notify sub-categorisation of Scheduled Castes

**M. Rajeev**  
HYDERABAD

The Telangana government has notified the implementation of the Telangana Scheduled Castes (Rationalisation of Reservations) Act 2025. The State has issued a gazette notification with April 14, 2025 as the appointed day for categorisation of Scheduled Castes (SC) into three groups.

Telangana has become the first State into the country to operationalise the classification of the Scheduled Castes after the Supreme Court's landmark judgment on August 1 last year upholding the constitutionality of sub-classifying the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) to grant sepa-



A. Revanth Reddy

rate quotas for the most marginalised groups within these communities.

## Multiple factors

The government took into consideration the contents of the top court's verdict, empirical data, social, economic, educational, employment, and political status of the communities in the categorisation of SCs

into three groups for implementation of the rule of reservation. Accordingly, 15 sub-castes categorised as most backward had been classified as Group-I with 1% reservation. Though these groups constituted 0.5% of the population, the government had decided to provide them with 1% reservation with a view to provide educational and employment opportunities to the most backward among the Scheduled Castes. In all, 18 sub-castes of the total 59 which received marginal benefits have been placed under Group-II with 9% reservation while 26 sub-castes that were relatively better placed in terms of opportunities had been placed in Group III with 5% reservation.

The Cabinet sub-committee headed by Minister for Irrigation N. Uttam Kumar Reddy and co-chaired by Minister for Health C. Damodar Rajanarsimha handed over the first copy of the gazette notification to Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Monday.

Mr. Rajanarsimha said 33 of the 59 sub-castes were continuing in the same group in which they were placed in the past and there was shuffling of only 26 sub-castes constituting 3.43% of SC population.

Recruitment to government jobs would forthwith be based on the categorisation of the SC communities, Mr. Rajanarsimha said, adding the categorisation would not be applicable to the vacancies already notified.



# Telangana's SC Sub-Categorization Process



## Supreme Court Judgment

The Supreme Court upholds the constitutionality of SC/ST sub-categorization.

Telangana enacts the Telangana Scheduled Castes (Rationalisation of Reservations) Act, 2025.

## Telangana Act Enactment



## Gazette Notification

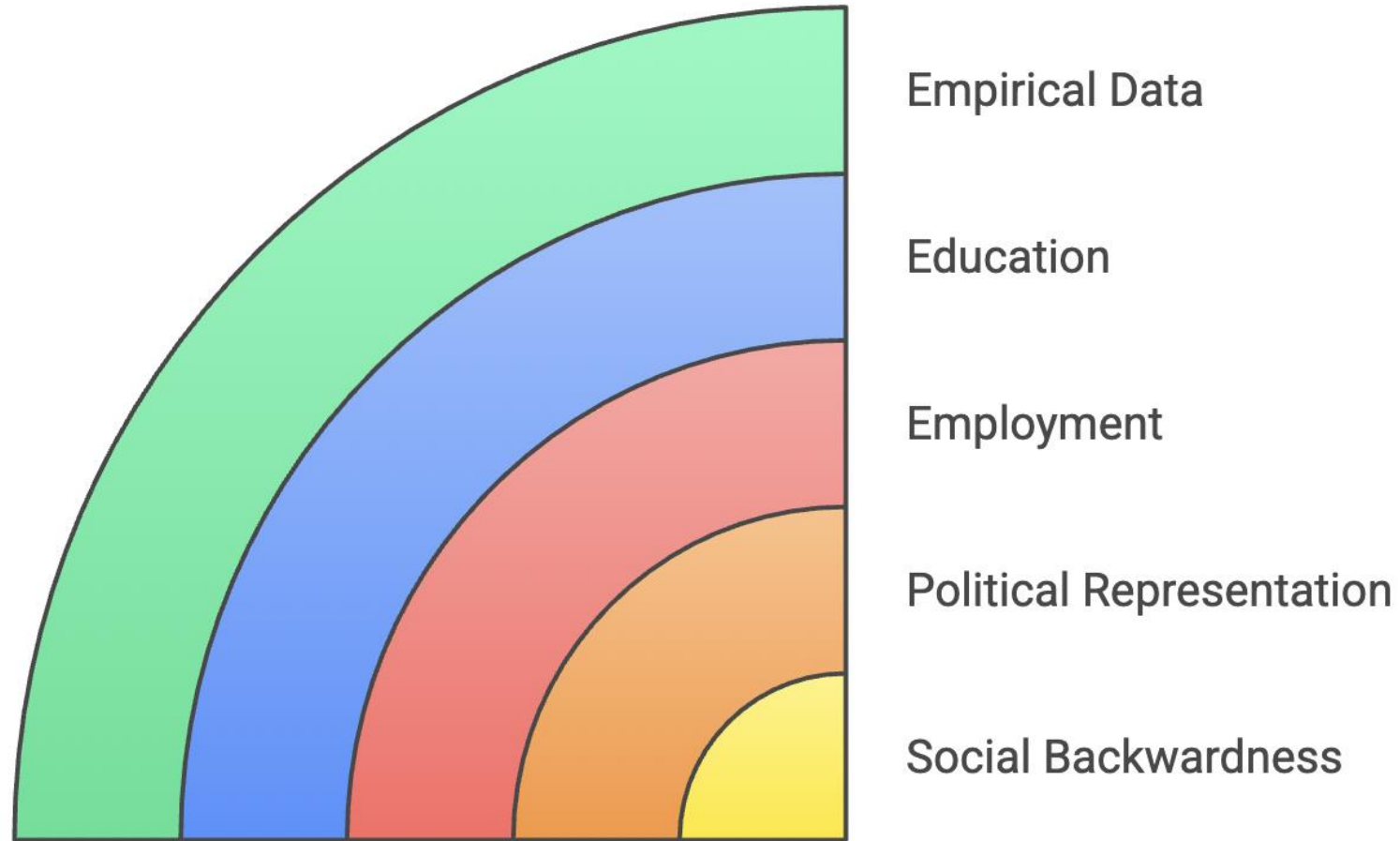
A gazette notification is issued for April 14, 2025, to categorize SCs.

SCs are categorized into three groups based on socio-economic backwardness.

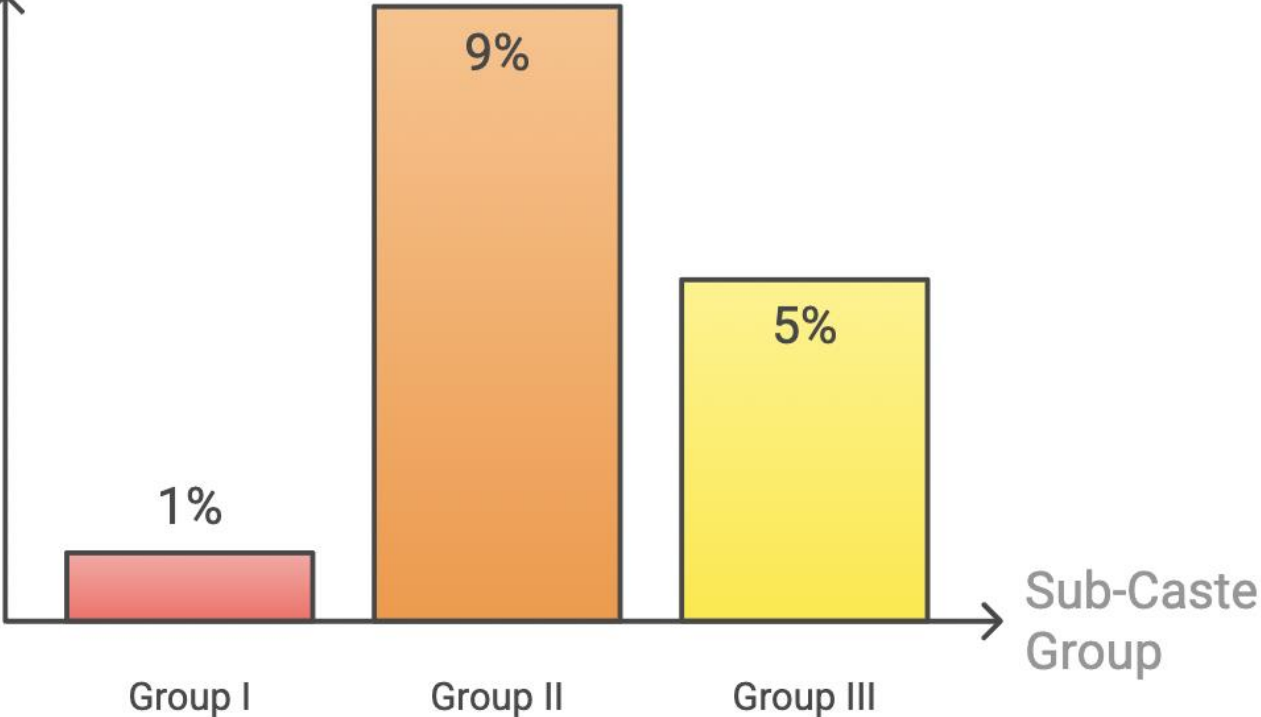
## SC Categorization



## Social Categorisation Framework



Reservation Percentage



Reservation Percentages by Sub-Caste Group



## Historical Background:

Demand for SC sub-categorisation dates back to **Andhra Pradesh (2000s)**, but legal challenges stalled progress.

**Justice Usha Mehra Commission (2007)** and **Justice Ramachandran Commission** explored sub-quotas within SCs.

**Indra Sawhney Case (1992)** allowed sub-categorisation among OBCs, paving way for future similar actions.

**IN BRIEF**

**Govt. frames draft rules for gas meters to ensure transparency**

The Consumer Affairs Ministry has framed draft rules for gas meters under the Legal Metrology (General) Rules, 2011, which make it mandatory for all gas meters used for domestic, commercial, and industrial purposes to undergo testing, verification, and stamping prior to their use in trade and commerce. "The re-verification of these gas meters is also prescribed under the rules to assure their correctness when these are in use," the Ministry said in a press release on Monday. The Ministry said the primary objective of these new rules was to ensure accuracy, transparency, and reliability in the measurement of gas.

**Medical device makers told to submit compliance certificates**

The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) has upgraded its online registration system and has asked all medical device manufacturers to re-submit market standing certificates and non-conviction certificates for registration. The move by CDSCO is aimed at improving ease of doing business and streamlining the regulatory process. The market standing certificate is a document verifying the company's credibility and compliance with regulatory standards. The non-conviction certificate verifies that a medical device manufacturer or importer has not been convicted of offences relating to the safety, quality, or performance of their devices.

**Bengal CM's remarks on Waqf Act not right: Meghwal**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal on Monday said the remarks by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee that the new Waqf Act would not be implemented in the State was "not right". Noting that she had made a similar remark on the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, Mr. Meghwal said, "But GAA was implemented in West Bengal." "If [Waqf Act] is a law enacted by Parliament which is implemented pan-India, if there is a difficulty during its implementation, suggestions can be made during framing of rules," the Law Minister said on the sidelines of a function to mark the 135th birth anniversary of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.

**CPI, YSRCP move top court to challenge constitutional validity of Waqf Act, 2025**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Communist Party of India (CPI) has joined the queue of petitioners who have moved the Supreme Court to challenge the constitutional validity of the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025. The Left party has filed a writ petition through its general secretary D. Raja, in which it has contended that the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025, is unconstitutional. Several petitions have been filed in the top court, which is implementing pan-India. It is there is a difficulty during its implementation, suggestions can be made during framing of rules," the Law Minister said on the sidelines of a function to mark the 135th birth anniversary of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.

**ASI seeks to shed new light on Dwarka through explorations**

A nine-member team of the Underwater Archaeology Wing of the ASI has undertaken onshore and offshore expeditions at Dwarka and Beyt Dwarka to search, document, and study submerged archaeological remains as well as ascertain their age

**Sreeparna Chakrabarty**  
NEW DELHI

In an effort to shed new light on Dwarka, an important part of India's "cultural history", the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has undertaken a project to ascertain the antiquity of objects recovered during expeditions in Gujarat. A nine-member team of the Underwater Archaeology Wing of the ASI has undertaken onshore and offshore expeditions at Dwarka and Beyt Dwarka to search, document, and study submerged archaeological remains as well as ascertain the antiquity of the recovered objects through scientific analysis of sediments, archaeological and marine deposits, a senior ASI official said. Beyt Dwarka, believed to be the home of Lord Krishna, is an island off the coast of Gujarat, where the Dwarkadhish Temple is located. A five-member team of the ASI had carried out regular excavations in the south of the Gomati Creek, located on the eastern side of Dwarka. This investigation was aimed at



A member of the ASI's underwater wing during an expedition in Dwarka from 2005 to 2007. FILE PHOTO

inspecting earlier explored areas and examine them in present condition. It also aimed to identify probable areas for further investigations and study. The selected area was explored by archaeologists and important features were photographed. "Dwarka is an important place from a historical, archaeological and cultural point of view. Dwarka has always been a matter of research being mentioned in ancient literature. It has remained a significant part of our cultural history of India.

Considering its importance, Dwarka has been explored and other objects of historical importance. A large area was scientifically surveyed but underexplored. Archaeological excavations were carried out in a limited area by the archaeologists of the ASI and divers of the Navy. The area for the excavation was well marked and systematic archaeological investigations from 2005 to 2007 at Dwarka. These investigations, both onshore and offshore, revealed important archaeological re-

main, including ancient sculptures, stone anchors, and other objects of historical importance. During the excavation, scattered submerged remains, which had deposited over a thick calcareous deposit,

were cleaned. The excavation revealed clusters of submerged remains. In 2007, a small area near the northern gate of the Dwarkadhish temple was chosen for the excavation. The entire excavation was conducted meticulously to document antiquity in situ. A deposit of about 10 metres having 26 layers was excavated. Antiquities recovered from this small excavation included iron objects, beads, copper objects, rings, and on. Pottery recovered during the excavation was also examined and studied thoroughly.

The present study is planned to cover an excavated area in Okhamandal city. Teams of archaeologists are looking for other potential sites in the area to understand the history of Dwarka. Professor Tripathi said. This study would include archaeological explorations, identification of potential sites and places, scientific study involving diving operations, and collection of archaeological remains, their proper documentation and study involving scientific analysis and studies.

**Salman Khan receives fresh death threat; case booked**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
MUMBAI

Bollywood superstar Salman Khan has reportedly received another death threat, this time in a WhatsApp message sent to the Mumbai Transport Department, the police said. The unidentified sender allegedly threatened to either forcibly enter Mr. Khan's residence or detonate a car bomb targeting the actor. The message was received on a WhatsApp number belonging to the Mumbai Transport Department, prompting immediate police action.

Following the complaint, an FIR was registered at the Worli police station against an unknown person. Authorities have launched an investigation to trace the source of the message. This is not the first time the actor has been targeted. Last November, Mr. Khan was allegedly threatened by members of the Lawrence Bishnoi gang. A message sent to the Mumbai Police traffic control room had demanded an apology at their temple or a ransom of 55 crore, failing which the actor would be assassinated. Earlier, a 22 crore ransom had also been demanded from the actor.

**Logo, mascot of Khelo India Youth Games 2025 unveiled**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
PATNA

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar unveiled the official logo of the Khelo India Youth Games 2025 in Patna on Monday. Union Sports Minister Mansukh Mandavya unveiled the Games mascot during the programme organised at the Sarvadharm Hall of the Chief Minister's Secretariat. Mr. Kumar said that it was a matter of great happiness that the Khelo India Youth Games 2025 would be held in the State for the first time from May 4 to 15. Mr. Kumar said that it was a matter of great happiness that the Khelo India Youth Games 2025 would be held in the State for the first time from May 4 to 15.

**Working groups of taskforce set up by SC to identify causes of students' suicides**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The second meeting of the National Task Force on the Mental Health Concerns of Students and the Prevention of Suicides in Higher Educational Institutions held here on Saturday, has decided to form three working groups for looking after different tasks assigned to them. The Union Education Minister said in a release that the key areas of focus of these working groups include identifying predominant causes leading to student suicides, analysing the effectiveness of existing student welfare and support mechanisms, and proposing reforms to strengthen institutional frameworks and create a supportive ac-

**Reviewing previous reports, examining existing laws are also among tasks assigned to working groups**

Academic pressure, disconnection from family, and the stigma surrounding mental health are considered as predominant causes for student suicides. Compiling and reviewing previous reports, examining existing laws, and developing a methodology for designing questionnaires are also the tasks assigned to the working groups. The Supreme Court constituted the National Task Force under the chairmanship of Justice S. Ravindra Bhat, former Supreme

Court judge, along with other experts from various domains as members, to discuss and deliberate on issues related to mental health concerns among students, the prevention of suicides in educational institutions, and to recommend preventive measures. During the meeting, actions taken so far were reported and discussed in detail. Agenda points included developing a portal/website for data collection, reports and people guidelines dissemination of questionnaires; gathering support from different sectors; and boarding of officers from the Department of School Education and Literacy and Union Health Ministry; coordination with institutions, among others.

**THE CROSSWORD 14459** (set by Arden)

To solve this puzzle online, get access to our crossword site @ <https://qzoo.puzz.link/#/p/14459>

**Across**  
1 Running after businesses for protection (6)  
4 A helmsman crossing stream, here in Texas (8)  
10 Confines credit notes - keen to succeed (8)  
11 Country in between Argentina, Uruguay (5)  
12 Polite, set to drink essentially one peg (7)

**Down**  
1 Lot of noise over club's indifference (8)  
2 Ministers can't be sacked accepting bribe at the centre (7)  
3 Straight away active - follow inner layer (2,3,4)  
5 Side dish prepared atop homesteads (6,8)  
6 Managed church property (5)  
7 Randomly slept around without stop - refuse to wash (7)  
8 Witty judge missing as one could see (6)  
9 In short, Indian usually allowing to take shower - part of child rearing (6,8)  
16 Simon Cole used to key (9)  
17 Physically at home, each issue follows (2,6)  
18 Stone setter came up with real rough diamonds (7)  
19 It's even fiver, provide a reprint (7)  
22 Reduce time spent, gift to expose all of them (6)  
24 Some closed items gave rise to surges (5)

**SUDOKU**

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

**DIFFICULTY RATING** ★★★★★

**Solution to previous puzzle**

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

**Solution to yesterday's Sudoku**

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

**FAITH**  
**Blessed Baisakhi**

In Punjab, Baisakhi is of tremendous cultural, religious, social and spiritual significance at myriad levels. It demonstrates the rich heritage of the people of Punjab, said Prof. Kumool Abbi.

Baisakhi holds special significance for the Sikhs; historically, it marks the birth of the Khalsa order by Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru of the Sikhs, on April 13, 1699. During that time, Punjab resided under religious persecution and tyranny of the Moghul rule. After the execution of Guru Tegh Bahadur for refusing to convert to Islam under the order of Moghul emperor Aurangzeb, Guru Gobind Singh became the tenth Guru of the Sikhs. He initiated the formation of the new order of the Khalsa (meaning pure) at Takht Kesgarh Sahib on Baisakhi by baptising the five *pur* *gurus* (volunteers) with the sacred nectar. He asked them to partake *amrit* from the same bowl, to emphasise egalitarianism and lack of discrimination of the new religion on the basis of caste, creed or gender. The baptised were given the title of Singh or lion. They had to adorn the five *kes*: kesh, kangha, kachha, kada and kirpan on their person. The inclusive and pluralistic philosophy of the Khalsa order urged them to be valiant, selfless warriors.

To commemorate the occasion, people pay their absence in Gurdwara, partaking the sacramental *karha prasad* and *langar* (community kitchen). The festival of Baisakhi carries forward the robust, resilient spirit and vitality of the Punjabiyat. Baisakhi marks the first day of the month of Vaisakh and is traditionally celebrated on the thirteenth or fourteenth of April. Traditionally, it synchronises with the celebration of spring harvest in north India.

# Logo, mascot of Khelo India Youth Games 2025 unveiled

**The Hindu Bureau**

PATNA

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar unveiled the official logo of the Khelo India Youth Games 2025 in Patna on Monday.

Union Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya unveiled the Games mascot during the programme organised at the Samvad hall of the Chief Minister's Secretariat.

Mr. Kumar and Mr. Mandaviya jointly released the theme song of the Youth Games, which will be held in the State for the first time from May 4 to 15.

Mr. Kumar said that it was a matter of great happiness that the Khelo India Youth Games is being organised in Bihar and that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the event in Patna on May 4.



# China controls 90% of rare earths' refining capacity

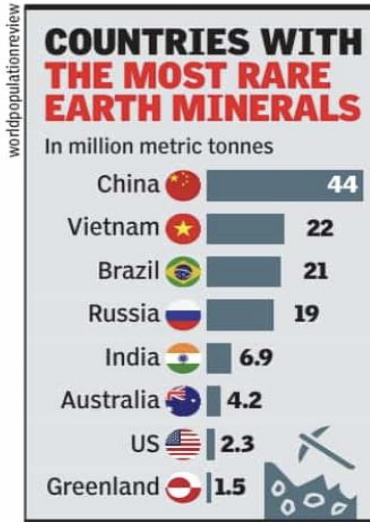
► Continued from P 1

India has the fifth-largest deposits after China, Vietnam, Brazil and Russia, but China has a chokehold because it controls almost 90% of refining capacity. The disruption brought into focus tag-team efforts by US and India to overcome the Chinese monopoly even as Washington scours the globe — from Greenland to Ukraine — for deposits and refining capacity.

Earlier this year, in a bipartisan US effort, the Biden gov't lifted decades-old sanctions on the state-owned Indian Rare Earths Ltd and the incoming Trump administration followed up by announcing during PM Modi's visit to Washington a US-India 'Strategic Mineral Recovery' to recover and process critical minerals.

"Recognising the strategic importance of critical minerals for emerging technologies and advanced manufacturing, India and the US will accelerate collaboration in research and development and promote investment across the entire critical mineral value chain, as well as through the Mineral Security Partnership, of which both the US and India are members," the two sides said in a statement.

Industry experts say that's a start but nowhere near meeting the critical needs of US (and India), given the headstart China has in the field. In fact, even the Pentagon relies on Chinese-processed rare earth elements for components like permanent magnets in F-35 jets, laser target-



ing systems, and missile guidance systems — a shock realisation that has propelled the Trump White House to urgently look for other sourcing.

Elon Musk, who needs rare earths for a range of his tech products from EVs to rockets, was among those who reacted cautiously to China's squeeze. "Important to note that what matters is the ability to refine rare earth elements (which are NOT actually meaningfully rare) and manufacture magnets for use in electric motors. People understandably tend to think that rare earth mineral deposits are what's scarce, given the name. That is false. They're everywhere," Musk said in a post on X, conceding that as with lithium, what China has that others lack is the heavy industry of refining the minerals. In fact, even US-mined material is often sent to China for processing.



# Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar



**Babasaheb Ambedkar-**  
The Father of Indian Constitution

**14 April 1891- 06 December 1956**

- A social reformer, jurist, economist, author and thinker of comparative religions
- Labour member in the **Executive Council of Viceroy (1942)**
- **Chairman** of the **Drafting Committee** for the new Constitution
- **First Law Minister** of India
- Posthumously awarded **Bharat Ratna (1990)**

2.

## Contributions

- Led the **Mahad Satyagraha in 1927** against Hindus
- Participated in **all three Round Table Conferences**
- Signed the **1932 Poona pact with Mahatma Gandhi** to abandon the idea of separate electorates for the depressed classes

*The reserved seats for depressed classes were increased from 71 to 147 in provincial legislatures and to 18% in the Central Legislature.*

- **Opposed the special status of J&K** (Article **370**)
- Supported **Uniform Civil Code**
- Referred **Article 32** as "**soul of the Constitution and very heart of it**"

### 3. Resignation and Buddhism

- Differences over **Hindu Code Bill** led to his resignation from Cabinet in **1951**
- Converted to Buddhism; his death is observed as **Mahaparinirvan Diwas**

### 4. Important Journals

- Mooknayak (**1920**)
- Bahishkrit Bharat (**1927**)
- Samatha (**1929**)
- Janata (**1930**)

### 5. Books

- Annihilation of Caste
- Buddha or Karl Marx
- **The Untouchable**: Who are They and Why They Have Become Untouchables
- The Rise and Fall of Hindu Women

### 6. Organisations

- Estd. '**Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha**' (**1923**)
- Founded **Independent Labour Party** (**1936**)
- Founded **Scheduled Castes Federation** (**1942**)

# Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's Legacy and Recognition

Ambedkar Circuit 

Mhow (Birthplace)

London (Shiksha Bhoomi)

Nagpur (Deeksha Bhoomi)

Mumbai (Chaitya Bhoomi)

Delhi (Mahaparinirvan Bhoomi)

  
Dr. B.R.  
Ambedkar

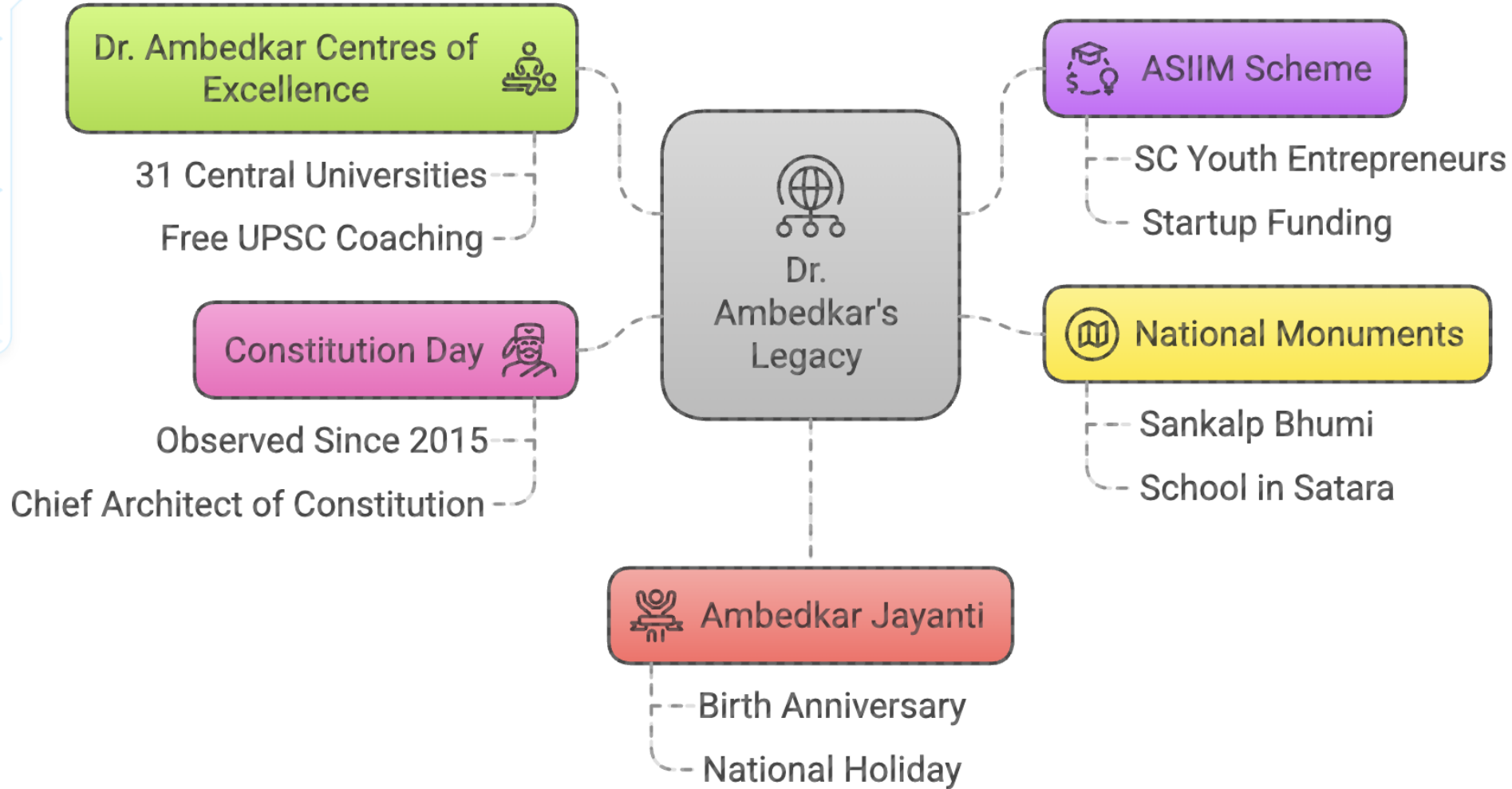


Bharat Ratna

Posthumous Award

Nation-Building Contribution

# Dr. Ambedkar's Legacy: Initiatives and Recognition



**Which of the following parties were established by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar?  
(2012)**

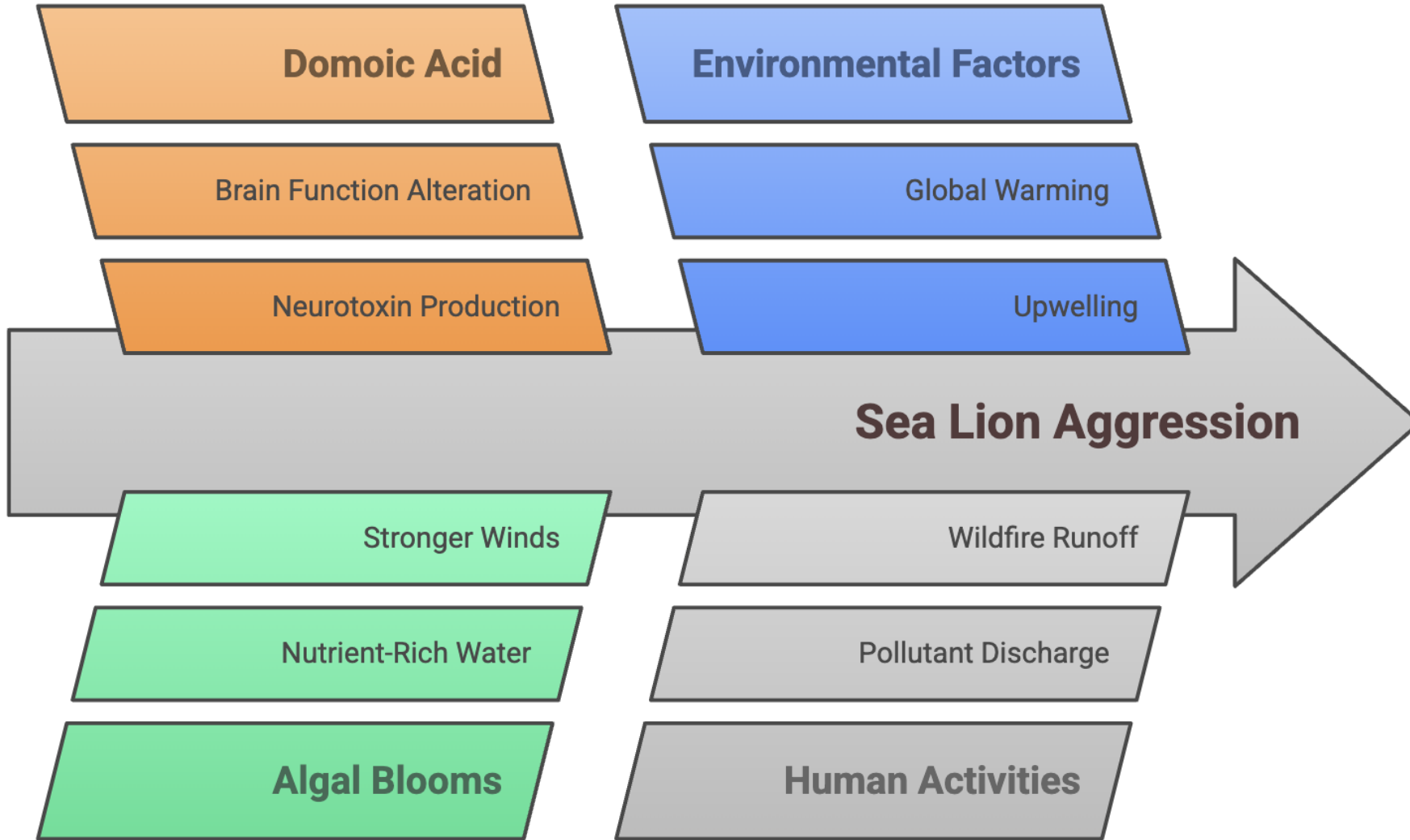
- 1.The Peasants and Workers Party of India
- 2.All India Scheduled Castes Federation
- 3.The Independent Labour Party

**Select the correct answer using the codes given below:**

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

# Toxic Bloom Turns Sea Lions Aggressive

# Causes of Sea Lion Aggression in California





# SEAL

# SEA LION

**BODY SIZE**  
Generally smaller

**EARS**  
Small ear holes,  
no external  
ear flaps

**SOUNDS**  
Quieter  
vocalizations,  
don't bark

**REAR FLIPPERS**  
Push them through the water  
and point away from body;  
uses belly to move on land

**FRONT FLIPPERS**  
Small, thinly  
webbed

**EARS**  
External  
ear flaps

**BODY SIZE**  
Generally larger

**SOUNDS**  
Noisy,  
will bark

**FRONT FLIPPERS**  
Large, elongated,  
used to pull them  
through the water

**REAR FLIPPERS**  
Can rotate under body  
and use with front  
flippers to "walk" on land

## Did you know?

Seals and sea lions are *pinnipeds*  
which means "fin-footed" in Latin.

# CAPTCHA



rd4evz

Type the characters above:

Go

okta

**CAPTCHA (Completely Automated Public Turing test to tell Computers and Humans Apart) is a challenge-response test used to distinguish bots from human users, enhancing online security and protecting user data.**

- **Bots** are automated software programs that **perform repetitive online tasks**


# Evolution of CAPTCHA Technology

 **CAPTCHA Development**

Luis von Ahn creates CAPTCHA to block bots.


Initial CAPTCHA uses distorted text challenges.


**Distorted Text CAPTCHA** 

 **reCAPTCHA Introduction**

reCAPTCHA uses scanned book words for challenges.

Google introduces Invisible reCAPTCHA using behavioral analysis.

**Invisible reCAPTCHA** 






 **Modern CAPTCHA**

Modern CAPTCHA uses image recognition and interaction tracking.

CAPTCHA blocks bots to prevent fake accounts and spam.

**Bot Blocking** 

# PLANT HORMONES

HORMONE	FUNCTION	LOCATION
 Gibberellins	Increase the speed of seed germination; promote stem elongation; induce early blooming of flowers; increase fruit size	Shoot and root apical meristems; seeds
 Auxins	Stimulate stem elongation; control seedling orientation; stimulate root branching; promote fruit development	Apical meristems; immature plant tissue
 Ethylene	Increases the speed at which fruit ripens; stimulates leaf dropping and the death of flowers	All parts of the plant including the fruits
 Abscisic acid	Inhibits growth and reproduction; inhibits seed germination; stimulates closure of stomata	Leaves; fruits; root tips; seeds
 Cytokinins	Cause rapid cell division, in conjunction with auxin; induce seed germination; initiate new branches from lateral buds	Roots and fruits, primarily

# Word of the day

## **Chary:**

characterised by great caution and wariness

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**Synonym:** cagey

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**Usage:** *She had been chary of telling the truth.*

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

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**International Phonetic**

**Alphabet:** /'tʃɛəri/

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A blurred background image showing a group of people in a meeting room, many of whom are clapping. The scene is brightly lit, creating a warm and positive atmosphere. In the foreground, several hands are visible, some reaching out or clapping, adding to the sense of collective appreciation.

Thank you  
guys.

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