

# Daily Current Affairs



**जनसत्ता**



**The Indian EXPRESS**

**THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS**



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**The Hindu**



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**PIB, PRS & Other newspaper**



3  
**The Indian Express**



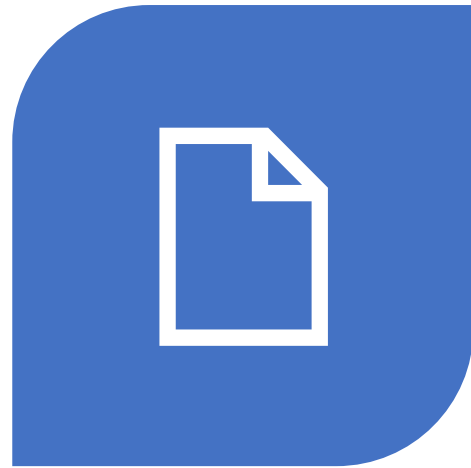
0  
**Jansatta**



3  
**Financial Express**



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PDF



10 MCQ QUIZ

MCQ

- **Who has been appointed as the new Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) of India?**
- **भारत के नए मुख्य चुनाव आयुक्त (CEC) के रूप में किसे नियुक्त किया गया है?**
- **A. Sushil Chandra / सुशील चंद्रा**
- **B. Gyanesh Kumar / ज्ञानेश कुमार**
- **C. Rajiv Kumar / राजीव कुमार**
- **D. Vivek Joshi / विवेक जोशी**

- Under which new law was the appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) made?
- मुख्य चुनाव आयुक्त (CEC) की नियुक्ति किस नए कानून के तहत की गई है?
- A. Election Commission (Reforms) Act, 2024 / चुनाव आयोग (सुधार) अधिनियम, 2024
- B. Electoral Appointments and Service Act, 2023 / चुनाव नियुक्ति और सेवा अधिनियम, 2023
- C. Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023
- D. Representation of the People (Amendment) Act, 2023 / जन प्रतिनिधित्व (संशोधन) अधिनियम, 2023

- Which new official has been appointed as an Election Commissioner along with the CEC?
- CEC के साथ किसे चुनाव आयुक्त के रूप में नियुक्त किया गया है?
- A. Anil Chauhan / अनिल चौहान
- B. Vivek Joshi / विवेक जोशी
- C. Alok Kumar / आलोक कुमार
- D. Pradeep Rawat / प्रदीप रावत

- The Finance Ministry is considering increasing the deposit insurance limit from ₹5 lakh to what amount?
- वित्त मंत्रालय ₹5 लाख की जमा बीमा सीमा को किस नई राशि तक बढ़ाने पर विचार कर रहा है?
- A. ₹10 lakh / ₹10 लाख
- B. ₹7.5 lakh / ₹7.5 लाख
- C. ₹15 lakh / ₹15 लाख
- D. ₹20 lakh / ₹20 लाख



- Which organization provides deposit insurance in India?
- भारत में जमा बीमा किस संगठन द्वारा प्रदान किया जाता है?
- A. Reserve Bank of India (RBI) / भारतीय रिजर्व बैंक (RBI)  
B. Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) / भारतीय बीमा नियामक और विकास प्राधिकरण (IRDAI)  
C. Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC) / जमा बीमा और क्रेडिट गारंटी निगम (DICGC)  
D. Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) / भारतीय प्रतिभूति और विनियम बोर्ड (SEBI)

- . Where was the epicenter of the recent 4.0 magnitude earthquake in Delhi?
- दिल्ली में हाल ही में आए 4.0 तीव्रता के भूकंप का केंद्र कहां था?
- A. Rohini / रोहिणी
- B. Jheel Park / झील पार्क
- C. Dwarka / द्वारका
- D. Saket / साकेत

- Delhi falls under which seismic zone as per the National Centre for Seismology?
- राष्ट्रीय भूकंप विज्ञान केंद्र (NCS) के अनुसार दिल्ली किस भूकंपीय क्षेत्र में आती है?
- A. Zone II (Low risk) / क्षेत्र II (कम जोखिम)  
B. Zone III (Moderate risk) / क्षेत्र III (मध्यम जोखिम)  
C. Zone IV (High risk) / क्षेत्र IV (उच्च जोखिम)  
D. Zone V (Very high risk) / क्षेत्र V (अत्यधिक उच्च जोखिम)

- What is the name of the joint military exercise between India and Japan taking place in Mount Fuji, Japan?
- भारत और जापान के बीच माउंट फुजी, जापान में आयोजित हो रहे संयुक्त सैन्य अभ्यास का नाम क्या है?
- A. Exercise Yudh Abhyas / अभ्यास युद्ध अभ्यास
- B. Exercise Dharma Guardian / अभ्यास धर्म गार्जियन
- C. Exercise Shakti / अभ्यास शक्ति
- D. Exercise Malabar / अभ्यास मलाबार

- The Aravali Safari Park is planned to be developed in which Indian state?
- अरावली सफारी पार्क भारत के किस राज्य में विकसित किया जा रहा है?
- A. Rajasthan / राजस्थान
- B. Haryana / हरियाणा
- C. Gujarat / गुजरात
- D. Madhya Pradesh / मध्य प्रदेश

- The Indian Navy is participating in which multilateral naval exercise hosted by Indonesia?
- भारतीय नौसेना इंडोनेशिया द्वारा आयोजित किस बहुपक्षीय नौसेना अभ्यास में भाग ले रही है?
- A. Exercise RIMPAC / अभ्यास रिमपैक
- B. Exercise La Perouse / अभ्यास ला पेरूज
- C. Exercise Komodo / अभ्यास कोमोडो
- D. Exercise Malabar / अभ्यास मलाबार

Railway Recruitment Board (RRB)

Class24

# NTPC

(गैर-तकनीकी लोकप्रिय श्रेणियाँ)

20 मॉडल पेपर्स

CBT (कंप्यूटर आधारित टेस्ट)-1

- सामान्य जागरूकता
- गणित
- सामान्य बुद्धि और तर्कशक्ति

20 OMR SHEETS सहित

— विशेषताएँ —

- परीक्षा की दृष्टि से अतिमहत्वपूर्ण प्रश्नों का व्याख्या सहित हल
- नवीनतम पाठ्यक्रम पर आधारित प्रश्नों का समावेशन
- विगत वर्ष के प्रश्नपत्रों के विश्लेषण पर आधारित प्रश्न



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व्याख्यात्मक हल YouTube चैनल पर उपलब्ध

Railway Recruitment Board (RRB)

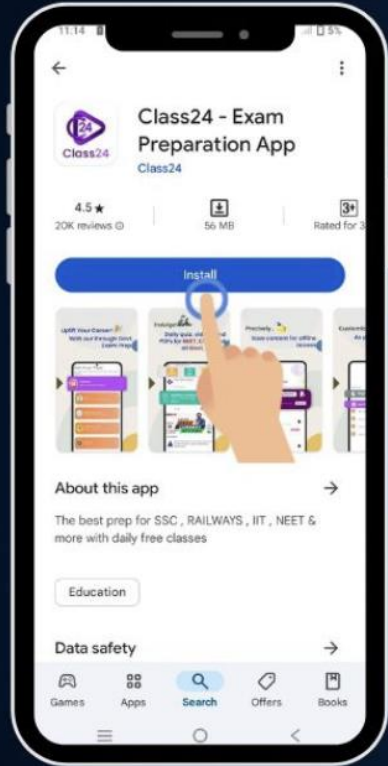
# NTPC

(गैर-तकनीकी लोकप्रिय श्रेणियाँ)

20 मॉडल पेपर्स

Price  
Rs 199

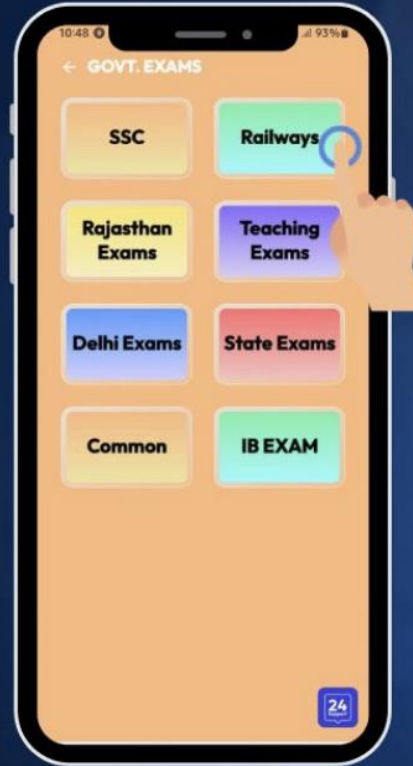
# Step 1



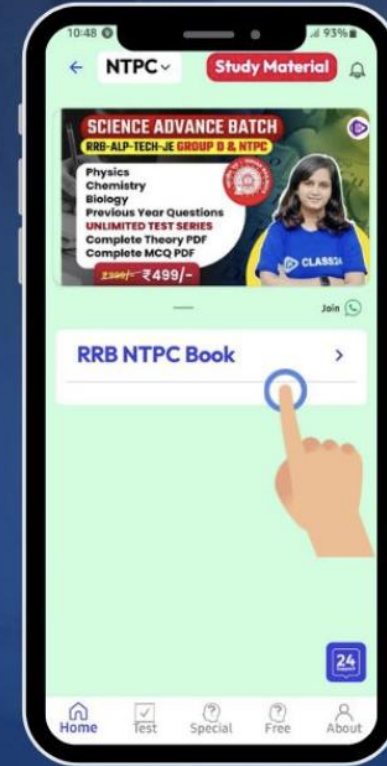
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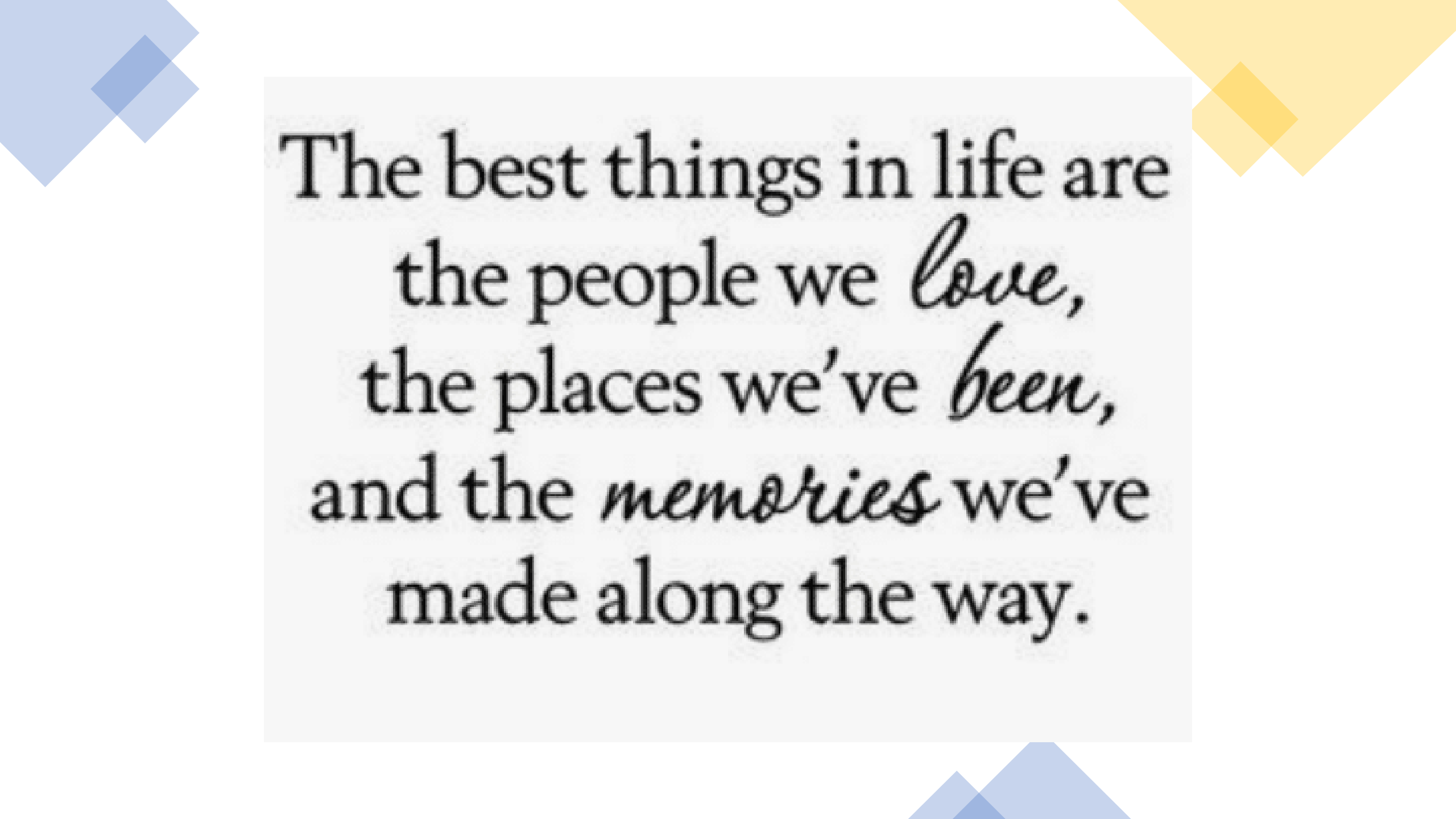
# Step 3



# Step 4







The best things in life are  
the people we *love*,  
the places we've *been*,  
and the *memories* we've  
made along the way.

**YOUTUBER ROW**  
**SC prevents arrest but raps 'filthy language'**  
NEWS » PAGE 4

**Iran Foreign Minister slams Trump's Gaza proposal**  
NEWS » PAGE 5

**LABOUR SURVEY**  
**Slight dip in urban unemployment rate**  
NEWS » PAGE 6

**GAME OF CONTROL**  
**The danger of a digital censor board**  
**Legality not standing in the way of censorship**  
OPINION » PAGE 9

**CHAMPIONS TROPHY**  
**Pakistan takes on NZ in the opener**  
SPORT » PAGE 16

**INSIDE**



**Odisha orders probe into death of Nepali student**

**BHUBANESHWAR**  
Following protests of students from Nepal over the death of a girl, the Odisha government on Tuesday initiated a three-member committee to ascertain the circumstances leading to the death. » PAGE 2

**Iran FM, Houthi envoy discuss Nimisha case**

**MUSCAT**  
A day after meeting External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi on Monday said he had made an appeal on behalf of the Indian nurse on death row in Yemen, with a senior Houthi envoy. » PAGE 3

**HC allows trial disposal of Union Carbide's waste**

**BHOPAL**  
The Madhya Pradesh HC on Tuesday allowed the State government to conduct three trial runs for the elimination of toxic waste from 40 years ago removed from the Union Carbide factory. » PAGE 5

**Hamas and Israel agree on release of living captives**

**JERUSALEM**  
Hamas and Israel announced a deal on Tuesday for the release of six living hostages from Gaza and the return of four captives' bodies — including the remains of two young boys, the militants said. » PAGE 14

**India, Qatar elevate ties to strategic partnership**

Modi, visiting Emir of Qatar discuss possibility of a bilateral FTA, and West Asian developments; both sides sign double taxation avoidance pact, agree to deepen relations in trade and security; the two sides resolved to double trade; the visit also presented a challenge, as Purnendu Tiwary, an ex-Indian Navy commander, remains in Qatari custody

**Khalid Bhattacharjee**  
NEW DELHI  
Qatar, a major energy supplier to India, on Tuesday signed an agreement to elevate India-Qatar relationship to the level of a strategic partnership, officials here said.  
The Ministry of External Affairs announced that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the visiting Emir, Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani, discussed multiple issues, including the ongoing Israel-Palestine conflict in the Gaza Strip. Both sides are also exploring the possibility of finalising a Free Trade Agreement (FTA).  
"Strategic partnership elevates the present state of bilateral relation to the deliberation level. We are look-



Warmer ties: Narendra Modi with the Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani, in New Delhi on Tuesday. AP/WIDE WORLD

ing at deepening cooperation in the fields of trade, investment, energy, security as well as in the regional and international fora," said Arun Kumar Chatterjee, Secretary (CP&GIA), while briefing the media following the bilateral discussion. The two sides also signed a double taxation avoidance treaty.  
"India and GCC are negotiating about having an FTA. Both India and Qatar are [also] exploring the signing of a FTA in the future," said Mr. Chatterjee, announcing that India is considering going ahead with a bilateral FTA with Qatar as discussion for an India-GCC FTA continues.  
The Indian side also said that the strategic partnership would have a security component, though a clear timeline for such a process

was not articulated.  
**Bilateral trade**  
A total of 38 Qatari entities representing retail, finance, and energy sector participated in the deliberations where the two sides resolved to double bilateral trade to \$28 billion.  
The visit also presented a challenge for both sides, as Purnendu Tiwary, an ex-Indian Navy commander, remains in Qatari custody, even though seven other detainees from the same 2022 case were repatriated in February 2024. "His case still remains sub-judice in the local courts," said Mr. Chatterjee elaborating on the condition of Commander Tiwary. The seven former Indian navy officials who returned in February 2024 has written to the Qatari authorities seeking repatriation of Commander Tiwary.  
Mr. Chatterjee informed that the Indian diaspora is the largest working force in Qatar and that at present around 600 Indians are in Qatari prisons. "About 85 Indians have received such parole in 2024," he said, highlighting that Qatar has the provision of granting pardon. India already has now

signed strategic partnerships with Kuwait, Oman, United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia, within the Gulf Cooperation Council member states.  
The official also confirmed that the situation in the West Asian region featured in the official talks saying, "both sides conveyed their mutual positions on Israel-Hamas issue. India conveyed its own position, the Qatari side conveyed their own position."  
The visit of the Qatari Emir has drawn attention as it is being held just two days prior to the five Arab states summit in the Saudi capital Riyadh which will participate in a Joint Business Forum which drew participation of top business elites of Qatari and Indian sides.

Palestinians of the region should be shifted out to neighbouring countries like Egypt and Jordan has drawn attention. India has not so far made its position on this new approach. MEA officials also avoided giving a clear answer to this approach which has drawn criticism as it would tantamount to ethnic cleansing.  
India supports two-state solution in bringing an end to the Israel-Palestine crisis and had welcomed the ceasefire that currently holds that was announced shortly before the swearing-in ceremony of President Trump on January 20.  
The Qatari side also participated in a Joint Business Forum which drew participation of top business elites of Qatari and Indian sides.

**Tarmac turmoil**



**Belly-up:** A Delta Airlines plane lies overturned on the snow-covered tarmac after crashing while landing at Toronto Pearson Airport, Canada, on Monday, leaving 18 people injured. AFP/REUTERS

**Inlandmark talks, Russia, U.S. agree to work towards ending the war in Ukraine**

**Associated Press**  
RIYADH  
Russia and the U.S. on Tuesday agreed to start working towards ending the war in Ukraine and improving the diplomatic and economic ties, America's top diplomat said after talks that reflected an extraordinary about-face in U.S. foreign policy under President Donald Trump.  
U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said the two sides agreed broadly to pursue three goals: to restore staffing at their respective embassies in Washington and Moscow, to create a high-level team to support Ukraine peace talks, and to explore closer relations and economic cooperation.  
However, that the talks — which were also attended by his Russian counterpart, Sergey Lavrov — marked the beginning of a conversation.  
Rubio said the talks were also attended by his Russian counterpart, Sergey Lavrov — marked the beginning of a conversation.  
"We not only listened, but also heard each other," said Mr. Lavrov. "And I have reason to believe that the American side has leagued the country is slower to understand our position, which we have once again outlined in detail, using specific examples, based on President Putin's repeated speeches."  
Tuesday's meeting was also meant to pave the way for a summit between Mr. Putin and Russian President Vladimir Putin. After the talks wrapped, Mr. Putin's foreign affairs advisor, Yuri Ushakov, told Russia's channel One that no date has been set yet for that summit but that it was "un-

likely" to take place next week.  
Mr. Rubio said on Tuesday that ending the conflict would require concessions from all sides and that Europe would be a part of talks. In talking about sanctions against Russia, Mr. Rubio noted that the measures have come from the U.S.'s allies as well. "The European Union is going to have to be at the table at some point because they have sanctions as well that have been imposed," he said.  
Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov on Tuesday said that Mr. Putin has repeatedly expressed readiness for peace talks, and noted that a durable settlement and Russian President Vladimir Putin would be impossible without "a comprehensive consideration of security issues" in Europe.  
**FRACTURED ALLIANCE**  
» PAGE 15

**Midnight appointment of CEC 'disrespectful' while case is being challenged in court: Rahul**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI  
The Leader of the Opposition (LoP) in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, on Tuesday slammed the midnight appointment of Gyanesh Kumar as the new Chief Election Commissioner (CEC), calling it "disrespectful" amid an ongoing Supreme Court challenge to the selection process and committee composition.  
Mr. Gandhi, a member of the selection committee alongside Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, shared his dissent note on X. "It is both disrespectful and discourteous for the PM and HM to make a midnight decision on selecting the new CEC when the

By removing the Chief Justice of India from the committee, the Modi government has exacerbated the concerns of hundreds of millions of voters over the integrity of our electoral process," he noted.  
Mr. Gandhi said that during the selection meeting, he presented a dissent note that stated: "The most fundamental aspect of an independent Election Commission free from executive interference is the process of choosing the Election Commissioner and Chief Justice of India." Election Commissioner and Mr. Gandhi, in his dis-

sent note, cited the speech of E.R. Ambedkar, who had warned about (Ambedkar) executive interference in India's democracy and the affairs of the Election Commission, while speaking in the Constituent Assembly in June 1949 to discuss the setting up of an independent Election Commission.  
Mr. Gandhi also pointed out that in a judgment on March 2, 2023, a Constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court ordered that the appointment of the CEC and Election Commissioners (ECs) should be undertaken by a committee comprising the Prime Minister, LoP, and the Chief Justice of India.  
"The Supreme Court judgement reflected the larger concern among hun-

# India, Qatar elevate ties to strategic partnership

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|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Capital</b><br>and largest city            | <b>Doha</b><br> <span><span><span><span><span>25°18′N</span> <span>51°31′E</span></span></span><span><span>﻿</span> / <span>﻿</span></span><span><span>25.3°N 51.5°E</span><span><span>﻿</span> / <span>25.3; 51.5</span></span></span></span></span> |
| <b>Official languages</b>                     | <b>Arabic</b> <sup>[1]</sup>   |
| <b>Ethnic groups</b><br>(2019) <sup>[2]</sup> | 49% <b>Arab</b><br>43% <b>South Asian</b> <sup>[3]</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>21.8% <b>Indian</b></li><li>12.5% <b>Bangladeshi</b></li><li>4.7% <b>Pakistani</b></li><li>4.35% <b>Sri Lankan</b></li></ul> 7% <b>other</b>  |
| <b>Religion</b> (2020) <sup>[4]</sup>         | 65.5% <b>Islam (official)</b><br>15.1% <b>Hinduism</b><br>14.2% <b>Christianity</b><br>3.3% <b>Buddhism</b><br>1.9% <b>other</b>   |
| <b>Demonym(s)</b>                             | <b>Qatari</b>  |
| <b>Government</b>                             | Unitary parliamentary <b>semi-constitutional monarchy</b> under an <b>authoritarian</b> <sup>[5][6]</sup> state <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Emir</b> <b>Tamim bin Hamad</b></li><li>• <b>Deputy Emir</b> <b>Abdullah bin Hamad</b></li><li>• <b>Prime Minister</b> <b>Mohammed bin Abdulrahman</b></li></ul>          |
| <b>Legislature</b>                            | <b>Consultative Assembly</b>   |
| <b>Establishment</b>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Qatar National Day</b> <b>18 December 1878</b></li><li>• <b>Declared independence</b> <b>1 September 1971</b></li><li>• <b>Independence from the United Kingdom</b> <b>3 September 1971</b></li></ul>   |

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| <b>Area</b>            |   |
| • <b>Total</b>         | <b>11,581 km<sup>2</sup></b><br><b>(4,471 sq mi)</b> ( <b>158th</b> ) |
| • <b>Water (%)</b>     | <b>negligible</b>   |
| <b>Population</b>      |   |
| • <b>2023 estimate</b> | <b>3,063,005</b> <sup>[7]</sup> ( <b>139th</b> )                      |
| • <b>2010 census</b>   | <b>1,699,435</b> <sup>[8]</sup>                                       |
| • <b>Density</b>       | <b>264/km<sup>2</sup></b> (683.8/sq mi) ( <b>76th</b> )               |
| <b>GDP (PPP)</b>       | 2024 estimate   |
| • <b>Total</b>         | <b>▲ \$356.0 billion</b> <sup>[9]</sup> ( <b>60th</b> )               |
| • <b>Per capita</b>    | <b>▲ \$115,075</b> <sup>[9]</sup> ( <b>4th</b> )                      |
| <b>GDP (nominal)</b>   | 2024 estimate   |
| • <b>Total</b>         | <b>▲ \$221.4 billion</b> <sup>[9]</sup> ( <b>55th</b> )               |
| • <b>Per capita</b>    | <b>▲ \$71,568</b> <sup>[9]</sup> ( <b>8th</b> )                       |
| <b>Gini</b> (2007)     | <b>41.1</b> <sup>[10]</sup><br>medium inequality                      |
| <b>HDI</b> (2022)      | <b>▲ 0.875</b> <sup>[11]</sup><br><b>very high</b> ( <b>40th</b> )    |
| <b>Currency</b>        | <b>Qatari riyal (QAR)</b>   |
| <b>Time zone</b>       | <b>UTC+3:00 (AST)</b>   |
| <b>Drives on</b>       | <b>Right</b> <sup>[12]</sup>  |



IRAN



*Persian Gulf*

BAHRAIN

QATAR

o Doha

SAUDI ARABIA

UAE







**India and Qatar have elevated their bilateral relations to a strategic partnership.**



The agreement was signed during Emir Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani's visit to India, covering:

- **Bilateral trade & investment (द्विपक्षीय व्यापार एवं निवेश)**
- **Energy cooperation (ऊर्जा सहयोग)**
- **Defense & security (रक्षा एवं सुरक्षा)**
- **Israel-Palestine conflict (इज़राइल-फिलिस्तीन संघर्ष)**


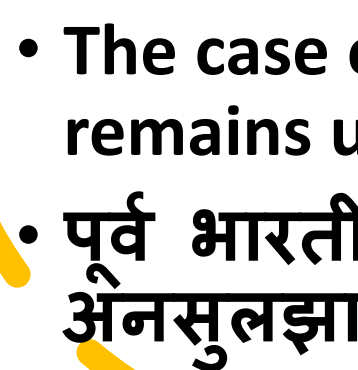


- 
- **1. Free Trade Agreement (FTA) Negotiations (मुक्त व्यापार समझौता वार्ता)**
  - **India and Qatar** are exploring a **bilateral FTA**, while talks continue for a larger **India-GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) FTA**.
  - भारत और कतर एक द्विपक्षीय मुक्त व्यापार समझौते (FTA) पर विचार कर रहे हैं, जबकि भारत-जीसीसी (GCC) FTA पर भी चर्चा जारी है।
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- **2. Bilateral Trade & Investment (द्विपक्षीय व्यापार एवं निवेश)**
  - **38 Qatari companies from retail, finance, and energy sectors participated in discussions.**
  - **38 क़तरी कंपनियों ने खुदरा, वित्त और ऊर्जा क्षेत्रों में चर्चा की।**
  - **Both sides resolved to double bilateral trade to \$28 billion.**
  - **दोनों पक्षों ने द्विपक्षीय व्यापार को \$28 बिलियन तक दोगुना करने का संकल्प लिया।**
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- **3. Energy Cooperation (ऊर्जा सहयोग)**
  - **Qatar is one of the largest suppliers of LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas) to India.**
  - **कतर भारत को तरलीकृत प्राकृतिक गैस (LNG) का सबसे बड़ा आपूर्तिकर्ता है।**
  - **Discussions included new energy investments & long-term agreements.**
  - **नई ऊर्जा निवेश योजनाओं एवं दीर्घकालिक समझौतों पर चर्चा हुई।**
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- **4. Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (दोहरा कराधान निवारण समझौता)**
- **A treaty was signed to prevent double taxation for businesses and individuals.**
- **व्यवसायों और व्यक्तियों के लिए दोहरे कराधान को रोकने हेतु संधि पर हस्ताक्षर किए गए।**

- 
- 5. Indian Diaspora & Purnendu Tiwary Case (भारतीय प्रवासी एवं पुरनेंदु तिवारी मामला)
  - 600 Indians are in Qatari prisons, with 85 pardons granted in 2024.
  - कतर की जेलों में लगभग 600 भारतीय कैदी हैं, जिनमें से 2024 में 85 को माफी मिली।
  - The case of Commander Purnendu Tiwary, an ex-Indian Navy officer, remains unresolved.
  - पूर्व भारतीय नौसेना अधिकारी पुरनेंदु तिवारी का मामला अभी भी अनसुलझा है।
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- **6. Israel-Palestine Conflict & Regional Security (इज़राइल-फिलिस्तीन संघर्ष एवं क्षेत्रीय सुरक्षा)**
  - **India and Qatar shared views but did not reach a common stance.**
  - **भारत और कतर ने अपने विचार साझा किए लेकिन एक सामान्य दृष्टिकोण तक नहीं पहुंचे।**
  - **India supports a two-state solution.**
  - **भारत दो-राष्ट्र समाधान का समर्थन करता है।**

**IN BRIEF**

**Major inland waterways terminal launched in Assam**

Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal on Tuesday inaugurated an inland waterways terminal on the bank of the Joghopa in Assam. The Minister flagged off two ships, mv Padma Navigation II and mv Trishul, and two barges, *Alay* and *Dikshu*, which set sail for Bangladesh carrying 110 tonnes of coal and stone chips. The new terminal built at a cost of ₹2.03 crore will play a major role in logistics and connectivity of eastern India and boost trilateral trade among India, Bhutan and Bangladesh, Mr. Sonowal said. "It's strategic position allows it to play the role of an economic multiplier for the region..." he said.

**11 killed as trucks hit vehicles in separate accidents in M.P.**

At least 11 people were killed and over 20 injured in two road accidents in Madhya Pradesh on Tuesday after trucks rumbled into vehicles in Bhind and Rewa districts, officials said. In Bhind, seven people lost their lives, and about 20 were injured after a dumper truck crashed into a tractor stationary van from behind on a highway near Jawaharpura village around 5.30 a.m. Chief Minister Mohan Yadav announced solatium of ₹4 lakh to families of the deceased, and ₹1 lakh each to the critically injured. In Rewa district, four men of a family died and one was injured after their two motorcycles were hit by a truck coming from the opposite side. In both cases, the driver was on the run.

**Murmu grants sanction to prosecute AAP leader**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI  
President Droupadi Murmu on Tuesday accorded sanction to prosecute Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader and former Delhi Minister Satyendar Jain in a money-laundering case being investigated by the Directorate of Enforcement (DE). A senior government official said on Friday. The prosecution sanction against Mr. Jain (60) was sought by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) under Section 218 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) last week, the official said. The case stems from an August 2017 FIR filed against Mr. Jain and others by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on charges of possession of disproportionate assets.

**Slight dip in unemployment rate in urban areas: survey**

The rate of unemployment for persons of age 15 and above is at 6.4% for the period of October to December 2024, says the Periodic Labour Force Survey; Gujarat has the lowest rate at 3%

**A.M. Higeesh**  
NEW DELHI

The unemployment rate in urban areas of the country was 6.4% for the period of October to December in 2024 for persons of age 15 and above, says the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) released by the Statistics and Programme Implementation Ministry here on Tuesday.

**Faint glimmer**

The chart shows the employment rate (in %) in urban areas for persons of age 15 years and above



For men, the unemployment rate was 5.8%, and for women, 8.1%. In 2023, during the corresponding quarter, the unemployment rate for the cohort was 6.5%, while in the July-to-September 2024 quarter, it was 6.4%. The female unemployment rate last year was 8.6%.

**Himachal tops the list**  
Among the States, Himachal Pradesh had the highest unemployment rate of 10.4% and Gujarat the lowest at 3%. The female unemployment rate too was the highest in Himachal Pradesh at 24%. The lowest was 1.3% in Delhi.

The PLFS defines unemployment rate as the percentage of unemployed persons in the labour force in current weekly status (CWS) — the number of persons either employed or unemployed on an average in a week. The Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR), the percentage of population in the labour force, was 39.6% for people of all ages. It was 39.2% in the corresponding quarter last year. The LFPR for women has increased by 0.1 percentage point to 20% from last year's 19.9%. However, the LFPR decreased from last quarter's figure of 20.3%.

The lowest LFPR for all people and for women was in Bihar at 30.7% and 9.9%, respectively. The PLFS was done among 1,70,487 people in 45,074 households. Increase in WPR The Worker Population Ratio (WPR) in urban areas has increased from 69.8% in October to December of 2023, to 47.2% in October to December in 2024. In these categories, 39.5% were self-employed, 49.4% were regular employees and 10.7% were casual labourers. As much as 5.5% of the workers were in agriculture sector, 31.8% in the secondary sector, including mining, and 62.7% in the tertiary sector that includes service sectors.



Seeking prospects: Job seekers participating in a job fair in Hyderabad. NAGARA GOPAL

**HC allows for trial disposal of Union Carbide's toxic waste**

**Mehul Malani**  
BHOPAL

The Madhya Pradesh High Court on Tuesday allowed the State government to conduct three trial runs for the elimination of toxic waste from 40 years ago removed from the Union Carbide factory, disposing of 358 tonnes of toxic waste in Pithampur. A total of 358 tonnes of waste awaits disposal.



A total of 358 tonnes of the toxic waste from Bhopal awaits disposal in Pithampur.

A Division Bench of Chief Justice Suresh Kumar Kait and Justice Vivek Jain directed the Madhya Pradesh government and other authorities to undertake the trial runs on February 27, March 4 and March 10 at different burning rates, increasing it after each successful trial run, following all necessary safety protocols.

The court asked the authorities to submit a compliance report of the three runs during the next hearing on March 27. The court's directions after it had granted the State six weeks' time on January 6 to build consensus among the local public of Pithampur and its vicinity, following all necessary safety protocols. The court's directions after it had granted the State six weeks' time on January 6 to build consensus among the local public of Pithampur and its vicinity, following all necessary safety protocols. The court's directions after it had granted the State six weeks' time on January 6 to build consensus among the local public of Pithampur and its vicinity, following all necessary safety protocols.

any "fake news". A compliance report of the government's outreach initiatives was submitted in the court on Tuesday. The authorities plan to incinerate the first batch of waste at a feed (burning rate of 135 kilograms per hour, analyse its results and satisfactory, increase the feed rate to 180 kg an hour and 270 kg for the next two trial batches, respectively. Before being submitted to the court, the results of the trial runs will be reviewed by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), which will recommend a fixed feed rate for the incineration of the remaining waste. Noting that H local representatives had requested the Dhar Collection for trial runs, the court ordered for the results to be shared with the public.

**Centre revamps websites, creates multilingual AI hub for better scheme outreach**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Union government has begun revamping its official websites and the work for an artificial intelligence hub to distribute information on government initiatives. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) released a Digital Brand Identity Manual on Tuesday, seeking to create a cohesive design language for government websites. The initiative, to "harmonise the government's digital footprint", was announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who asked Ministry Secretaries to improve their websites at a recent meeting, according to a government spokesman. S. Krishnan, As digital platforms emerge as a "first



The revamp aims to 'harmonise digital footprint' and create a cohesive brand.

point of contact", the new manual says that "a cohesive and compelling brand presence is essential to engage with the national and global audiences effectively". **Multilingual AI hub** The initiative, to "harmonise digital footprint", was announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who asked Ministry Secretaries to improve their websites at a recent meeting, according to a government spokesman. S. Krishnan, As digital platforms emerge as a "first

an AI hub to enable effective and efficient dissemination of information on various government initiatives. "The platform will also have the facility for multilingual translation of contents to enable effective outreach to the masses across the country," said a senior government official. The hub has not yet been formally inaugurated. Other initiatives include: Digital India Bhashini, a language translation platform; BharatGen, the world's first government-funded multimodal large language model (LLM) initiative launched in 2024; the Sarvam-1 AI LLM, Chitraksha, an open-source video transcription platform; and the multilingual AI hub, which caters to various Indian languages.

**India prepares to submit updated greenhouse gas inventory to UN**

**Jacob Koshy**  
NEW DELHI

India is in the final stages of preparing its first ever Biannual Transparency Report (BTR), part of its commitment as a signatory to the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change. Environment Ministry officials told *The Hindu*. This report will be India's official position on its greenhouse gas emissions inventory, key sectors and sources, and steps taken to improve energy efficiency and use, as well as the transition to renewable energy sources and the availability of required resources. While India has been periodically submitting such information in the form of "national communications" and "Biannual Update Reports" (BUR), the BTR is a document that will be subject to technical re-



The Biannual Transparency Report is part of a commitment made at COP-21, but countries started submitting it only by 2024. FILE PHOTO

view by independent, non-Indian, UNFCCC-accredited experts. The UNFCCC, or the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, is the core agreement on which rest commitments by countries that adhere to the prescribed format. While all countries were to have submitted their BTRs by December 2024, several — including India — failed to meet that deadline.

"The main feature of the upcoming BTR submission is that it will have data up to 2022. In the BUR, the data submitted reflected the emissions inventory of 2020. The other aspect is that this will be reviewed by an external set of experts," a Ministry official, who declined to be identified, told *The Hindu*. In its latest BUR, India reported that in 2020, its total GHG emissions fell 7.93% from 2019. "One of the factors was a reduction in energy consumption due to COVID-19 induced lockdowns. The forthcoming BTR is likely to show an increase in total emissions, just as is the trend in other countries. India's share of emissions, however, continues to be 4% to 8% of the globe and, in per-capita terms, less than a third of global per-capita emissions," the official added.

**THE CROSSWORD 14412**

To solve this puzzle online, get access to our crossword site at <https://www.thehindu.com/crossword>

- Across**  
1 Two months in the last quarter? Concentrate! (6)  
4 Opportunities to head into ship (6)  
10 The vic Yemori, casting malicious look (4,3)  
11 Trained agent putting love behind with rose! (7)  
12 Ballot for appointment of a military chief? (7,8)

- 13 Ordinary, innocuous spice, most ordered! (13)  
14 You cannot keep sitting on this instruction! (8,5)  
15 Played by all fat fans too! It is not a real competition! (7,8)  
22 Give up control over half of Gallic nation? (7)  
23 Clues about a forgotten legend of dribble (7)  
24 This Greek art could provide rationale (6)  
25 See southern parts blast (6)  
**Down**  
1 Basically to delve, remove earth, dig ground, excavate (6)  
2 Life energy's almost gone anyway, by opening of nail and rod roll of hair on nose of nose! (7)  
3 Ice here's animated greeting (7)  
5 Some delicate chunks of resin (7)  
6 Rest inside Alexander's adversary's territory (7)  
7 Editor going in without chairs (6)  
8 Making fresh arrangement by correcting, taking time out for girl! (1,3)  
9 Hero's last manoeuvres involved King's decoy (8-5)  
10 Unfelt, universal, kind of musical (7)  
14 A raga in flowing river (7)  
17 Rope from Spooner's leo? (7)  
18 Tolerant English girl ignoring backside spasm (7)  
19 Disruptible girlfriend or Church? That's some weight! (6)  
20 Inactive agent has cover (6)

**SUDOKU**

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to previous puzzle

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

**FAITH**

**The power of listening**  
Tiruvalluvar says, "The wealth of all wealth is the wealth of listening. It outtops all other wealth." Be it saint poets or scriptures, the power of listening to good things is unparalleled, especially in Kali Yuga, when people are constantly pressed for time and find it difficult to engage with the divine at length. True wisdom and full spiritual awareness come only when one hears discourses, with whatever resources one has at hand, said S. Perumdevi.  
Parikshit benefited more from listening to the discourse of sage Shuka, than the discourse himself. Sage Narada spoke eruditely on various things, including the efficacy of devotional service to the Lord, and Prahlada, who heard it still in his mother's womb, imbibed it all and went on to live a virtuous life, gaining Vishnu's protection. S. Sukhmini is another torchbearer of the efficacy of *shravanam* (listening to discourses), as detailed in Sriramad Bhagavatam. About to be given away in marriage to Sisupala, at the insistence of Rakuni, her brother, Rakuni sent a messenger with her prayers to Krishna, the only one she wanted to wed. She sent a minuscule of seven verses, saying, "I have acquired any merit by the worship of the Supreme Being, through the practice of charities, religious rites, and the teachings of elders and teachers, may my marriage be held in wedlock by none but Krishna." Krishna answered her prayers. Anjaneya is the ultimate exemplar of *shravanam*. When Lord Rama invited him to accompany him to Valmiki on completion of His mission in this world, Anjaneya opted to remain on earth, it being the only place where he could hear spiritual discourses and Krishna's nam. To him, *shravanam* is heaven.

# India prepares to submit updated greenhouse gas inventory to UN

**Jacob Koshy**

NEW DELHI

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This report will be India's official position on its greenhouse gas emissions inventory, key sectors and sources, and steps taken to improve energy efficiency use, as well as the transition to renewable energy sources and the availability of required resources.

While India has been periodically submitting such information in the form of 'national communications' and 'Biannual Update Reports' (BUR), the BTR is a document that will be subject to technical re-



The Biannual Transparency Report is part of a commitment made at COP-21, but countries started submitting it only by 2024. FILE PHOTO

view by independent, non-Indian, UNFCCC-accredited experts. The UNFCCC, or the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, is the core agreement on which rest commitments by countries to take climate action.

Historically, only developed countries have been required to submit BTRs. The reports are part of the commitment made by all signatories at the

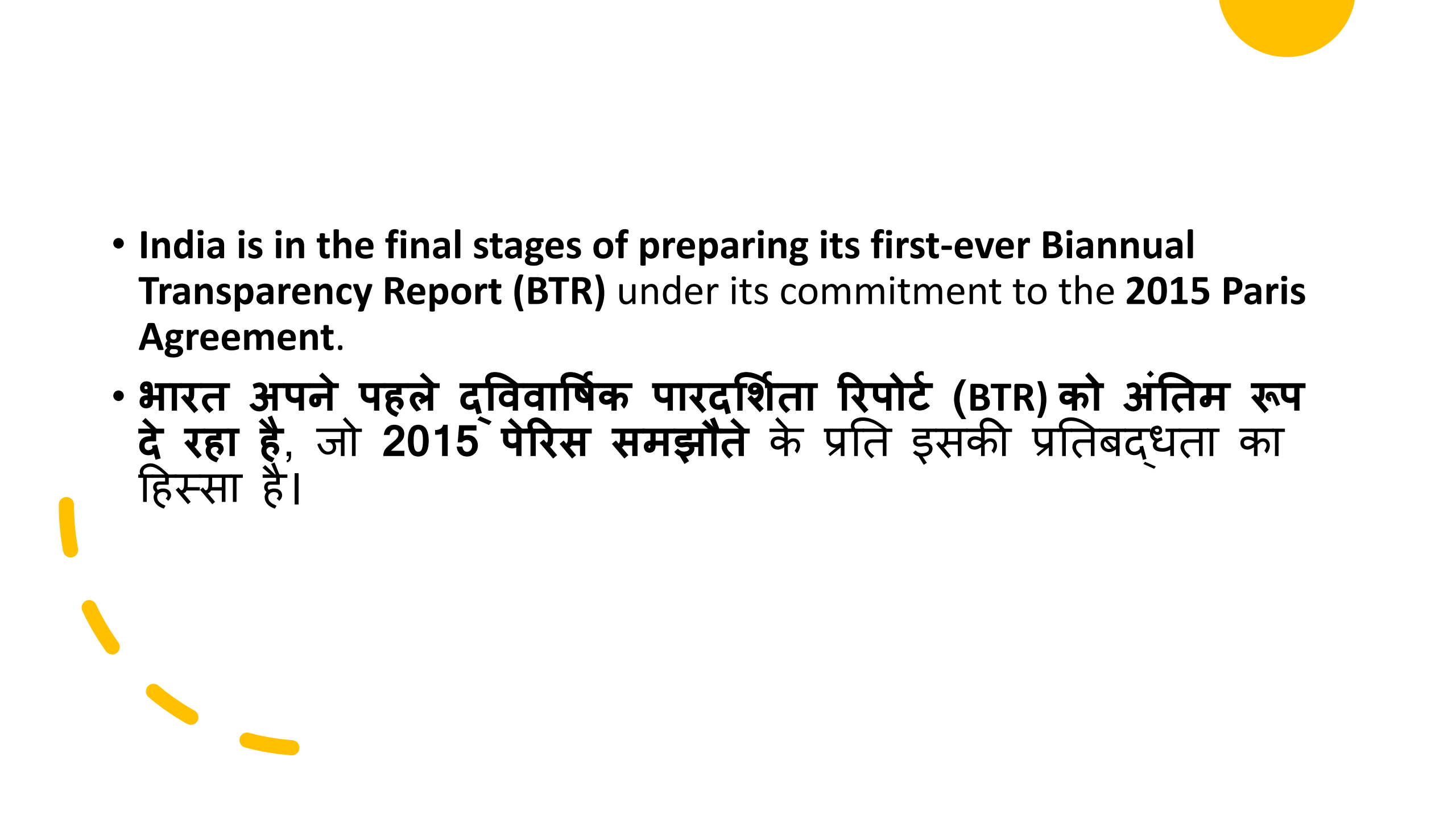
UNFCCC's 21st Conference of Parties (COP), held in Paris in 2015, in a bid to increase transparency.

However, it was only at the 2024 COP in Baku that countries actually began submitting BTRs that adhered to the prescribed format. While all countries were to have submitted their BTRs by December 2024, several – including India – failed to meet that deadline.

“The main feature of the upcoming BTR submission is that it will have data up to 2022. In the BUR, the data submitted reflected the emissions inventory of 2020. The other aspect is that this will be reviewed by an external set of experts,” a Ministry official, who declined to be identified, told *The Hindu*.

In its latest BUR, India reported that in 2020, its total GHG emissions fell 7.93% from 2019. “One of the factors was a reduction in energy consumption due to COVID-19 inducted lockdowns. The forthcoming BTR is likely to show an increase in total emissions, just as is the trend in other countries. India's share of emissions, however, continues to be 4% to 5% of the globe and, in per-capita terms, less than a third of global per-capita emissions,” the official added.



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- **India is in the final stages of preparing its first-ever Biannual Transparency Report (BTR) under its commitment to the 2015 Paris Agreement.**
  - **भारत अपने पहले द्विवार्षिक पारदर्शिता रिपोर्ट (BTR) को अंतिम रूप दे रहा है, जो 2015 पेरिस समझौते के प्रति इसकी प्रतिबद्धता का हिस्सा है।**

- **What is the Biannual Transparency Report (BTR)? (द्विवार्षिक पारदर्शिता रिपोर्ट (BTR) क्या है?)**
- **It is an official report on India's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions inventory, including:**
  - **Major emitting sectors & sources (प्रमुख उत्सर्जन क्षेत्र और स्रोत)**
  - **Steps taken to improve energy efficiency (ऊर्जा दक्षता सुधारने के लिए उठाए गए कदम)**
  - **Transition to renewable energy (नवीकरणीय ऊर्जा में बदलाव)**
- **यह भारत की ग्रीनहाउस गैस उत्सर्जन सूची पर आधिकारिक रिपोर्ट है, जिसमें प्रमुख उत्सर्जन स्रोत, ऊर्जा दक्षता में सुधार के कदम और नवीकरणीय ऊर्जा में बदलाव शामिल हैं।**

- **Why is India Submitting the BTR? (भारत यह रिपोर्ट क्यों प्रस्तुत कर रहा है?)**
- Under the **UNFCCC's 2015 Paris Agreement**, all signatory countries must submit their **BTRs** for transparency in climate action.
- **2015 पेरिस समझौते** के तहत, सभी हस्ताक्षरकर्ता देशों को अपनी **BTRs** प्रस्तुत करनी होती है ताकि जलवायु कार्रवाई में पारदर्शिता बनी रहे।
- **Developed nations have been submitting BTRs earlier, but developing countries like India have recently started.**
- **विकसित देश पहले से ही BTR जमा कर रहे थे, लेकिन भारत जैसे विकासशील देशों ने हाल ही में इसे शुरू किया है।**

- **Key Highlights of India's BTR (भारत की BTR की मुख्य बातें)**
- **✓ Covers emissions data until 2022 (2022 तक के उत्सर्जन डेटा को कवर करता है)**
- **✓ Reviewed by independent UNFCCC-accredited experts (संयुक्त राष्ट्र UNFCCC द्वारा मान्यता प्राप्त विशेषज्ञों द्वारा समीक्षा की जाएगी)**
- **✓ Reflects India's climate policies & energy transition efforts (भारत की जलवायु नीतियों और ऊर्जा परिवर्तन प्रयासों को दर्शाता है)**

- 
- **Current Emissions Trends in India (भारत में मौजूदा उत्सर्जन प्रवृत्तियाँ)**
  - ✚ **India's total GHG emissions fell by 7.93% in 2020 due to COVID-19 lockdowns.**  
✚ **2020 में भारत के कुल GHG उत्सर्जन में 7.93% की गिरावट आई थी, जो COVID-19 लॉकडाउन के कारण हुआ।**
  - ✚ **Upcoming BTR may show an increase in emissions, aligning with global trends.**  
✚ **आगामी BTR में उत्सर्जन में वृद्धि दिख सकती है, जो वैश्विक प्रवृत्तियों के अनुरूप है।**
  - ✚ **India's share of global emissions is 4-5%, but per capita emissions are less than one-third of the global average.**  
✚ **भारत का वैश्विक उत्सर्जन में हिस्सा 4-5% है, लेकिन प्रति व्यक्ति उत्सर्जन वैश्विक औसत का एक-तिहाई से भी कम है।**

## TARGETS FOR PARIS AGREEMENT



### INDIA

Emission intensity of GDP **33-35%** below 2005 levels by 2030, Power capacity to be 40% non fossil fuel based

Source: uefcc.int



### CHINA

Emission intensity of GDP **60-65%** below 2005 levels by 2030. Peak emissions around 2030. Non-fossil fuel to be 20% of primary energy consumption by 2030



### USA

Absolute emissions **26-28%** below 2005 levels by 2025



### EU (28)

Absolute emissions **40%** below 1990 levels by 2030

# INDIA'S CLIMATE TARGETS: EXISTING AND NEW

| Target (for 2030)   | Existing: First NDC (2015)   | New: Updated NDC (2022)      | Progress   |
|---|--|------------------------------|--|
| Emission intensity reduction                                | 33-35 per cent from 2005 levels  | 45 per cent from 2005 levels | 24 per cent reduction achieved in 2016 itself. Estimated to have reached 30 per cent |
| Share of non-fossil fuels in installed electricity capacity | 40 per cent  | 50 per cent                  | 41.5 per cent achieved by the end of June this year                                  |
| Carbon sink   | Creation of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of additional sink through afforestation | Same as earlier              | Not clear.   |

# Quakes may well sharpen India's seismic readiness

Two years ago, on February 6, 2023, the people of Turkey and Syria were jolted out of their sleep. At least 17,000 were killed, with their numbers mounting within minutes, as a great earthquake shook those countries in the early hours after 4 a.m., at 7.8 on a scale of 0 to 10. A second jolt came like a collaborator of the first, nine hours later, destroying whatever buildings stood on or around the scene of the first trauma.



**Gopalkrishna Gandhi** is a former education minister, diplomat and Governor

"Fault lines" is an expression that we come across and use when we might "glaciers" or "deserts". That is, without realising that it refers to an intensely volatile and totally unpredictable phenomenon, the temper of the proverbial sleeping dragon or demon. Fault lines lie between the five log-jammed major tectonic plates on which the earth's thin crust sits.

These lines can slumber for decades, even centuries, quietly, one may say so "sweetly", that their very existence can be forgotten by all except seismologists. Until... the fault line stirs, rises, shakes and then go on to mutilate, destroy and kill whatever lies on and along those lines.

Depending on the degree of the awakened one's temper, the fury lasts or abates till such time as it lasts or abates.

**Nature's brewing tension**  
India's Indian Plate pressing onto the Eurasian Plate sculpted the Himalaya. The fault line involved runs right along the great Himalayan arc that stretches from Kashmir to the North East, it also implicates adjacent tracts in Pakistan, the Tibetan Autonomous Region of China, Nepal and Bhutan.

We are but dimly aware of this. For those of us who do not live in those stunningly beautiful tracts, that region means and evokes snow, pure air, capital waters, holidays and leisure. But we must know, must understand, the concurrent "scene" which is about potential rubble, ravaged hill sides, mutilated rivers courses.

We must shake ourselves out of our dangerous illusion, our false assurance about the reality beneath our feet. Seismologists tell us that the two great tectonic plates, the Indian and the Eurasian, have now slept their really deep sleep long enough now and that the built-up pressure in the Indian Plate cannot be expected to hold its tension much longer.

Sure enough, a little over just one month ago, on January 7, 2025, at 9:02 P.M., an earthquake measuring Mw 7.1 struck Shigatse city of the Tibet

Autonomous Region of Southwestern China. Between 126 and 400 people were reported killed and 338 were injured. Unmindful of national borders and oblivious of time of actual or notional control, the quake made itself felt in Nepal and in Northern India.

**In the media**  
On January 10, The Hindu had an editorial, "Damage control", that said, "If the epicentre had been located closer to India, the damage could have been manifold. And as earthquakes in the Himalayas evoke a special kind of dread in the country." The comment was right. Dread they do cause, first, for the closing and rolling back of intense and urgent planning that is needed? Do they occasion national alertness, mobilisation and action? The Editorial went on to say,

"Unfortunately, predicting the day and time is outside the ambit of current science. Thus, the best we can hope for is insulation against the projected damage. It is in this context that infrastructure development in the Himalayan region must be viewed. While several of these projects are intended to smooth the movement of people and goods, the recurrent landslides and glacial lake outbursts that have awed dams, hydropower projects, and roads serve as a constant reminder of the inherent fragility of the region. Every form of infrastructure in the region - power plant or dam - must take into account the imminence of a major earthquake and the associated danger to dislocated populations."

The Editorial said, "Adhering to already existing building codes in the Himalayas but in the surrounding Indo-Gangetic plains, can go a long way in limiting the inevitable damage." If such adherence was good enough as a response one month ago, the earthquakes that shook the air, capital waters, holidays and leisure, in Bihar, Sivan in Bihar, suggest that adherence to existing codes is not enough. Not enough by half. Social media told us that there were people in Delhi who said they had never felt a tremor so strong. In impressions that come from real sensations under one's feet are real in a way that reports and reconstructed accounts are not. We must not say "today Delhi and Bihar, tomorrow West Bengal." It was a warning to the Government of India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, barely back from his brief visit to the United States, reaching out to our age of Artificial Intelligence that we take precautionary steps. The really meaningful

precautions are not within the means of the people. They must come from government, from the state.

We are now in a contingency that must take into account: high probability; high financial and physical cost; if provided for, and inculcated higher if not provided for.

The principle is the same as in any insurance arrangement: the higher the risk the higher the premium.

**Time to act, not quickly**  
We need, not just quickly, not just urgently but quite immediately, to provide for state expenditure, first, for the closing and rolling back of enterprises that weaken the earth's crust, especially rocky terrain, in India's seismic risk zones in the ascending calibration of II, III and IV.

Second, super-imposing on the existing seismic zonation maps which show seismicity plates, new carefully drawn mapped-plans for the protection (which can include evacuations, demolitions and re-building of highly vulnerable structures, and assessing the seismic status of high follow-on secondary risk structures such as like byed projects and atomic reactors (Narora in Uttar Pradesh is located in the IV).

Third, setting up a seismic building insurance scheme wherein premiums for insuring against the risk are to be offered and collected.

Fourth, doing an assessment of the costs of rescue, temporary sheltering and rehabilitation zone-wise, of dislocated populations.

Fifth, fast-forwarding collaboration with countries that are experts in the field of earthquake anticipation through sensors, and architecture nostrums. This would involve expenses on hardware and software.

All this sounds grim. But we should tell ourselves that the "ghosts" of the new year we are, as of this moment, ahead of the big seismic shock that has been anticipated by seismologists. We are capable of planning with some composure, even as we recover from the shock of February 17, not in a post-shock agony but accompanied by fiscal crippling. And, we have an institutional advantage in the shape of a Ministry of Earth Sciences and a Disaster Management Authority waiting to be harnessed in any scheme towards seismic readiness.

The "motto" is brief: earthquakes are not to be prevented, they can scarcely be predicted, even if our age of Artificial Intelligence that they can be prepared for. Is anyone doing that?

## Time and timing

The validity of the CEC selection process needs early adjudication

Once again, the manner of appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and Election Commissioners (EC) has become controversial, with the government going ahead with the process laid down in its Decernber 2023 law, which is under challenge before the Supreme Court. Last week, the Court had deferred the hearing to February 19, while observing that if there was any development in the interim, it would meet the consequences of a subsequent decision on the validity of the Act. Ignoring a request from the Leader of the Opposition (LoP), Rahul Gandhi, the panel elevated Gyanesh Kumar as the CEC and inducted Vivek Joshi as the third member, following the retirement of CEC Rajiv Kumar. The question is whether the Act of 2023 goes against a 2022 Constitution Bench verdict that put in place a committee comprising the Prime Minister, the LoP and the Chief Justice of India (CJI) to select the persons to helm the Election Commission of India (ECI). The Act, however, includes a Union Minister in the committee instead of the CJI. The government argues that the Court's panel was only an ad hoc measure until Parliament came forward with its own law, as required in the Constitution. The petitioners maintain that the thrust of the 2022 judgment is that the appointment process should be insulated from executive interference so that its functioning will be truly independent.

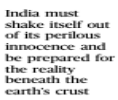
Whether the CJI leads the part of the selection committee is debatable, but there is little doubt that the 2:1 majority seated in the executive orders any selection vulnerable to the criticism that those chosen in that manner would not be seen as independent. The BJP-led government has been making appointments in the midst of court hearings, the process being insulated from executive interference so that its functioning will be truly independent. The government had appointed Arun Goel as the CEC in the middle of the Constitution Bench hearing, and two ECs in March 2024. The government's general election to replace Mr. Goel, who had resigned, and another EC who had retired. Few will disagree that the public perception of the ECI as a fearless and fiercely independent institution has been on the decline. If elections are to be free and fair by the whole electorate and not merely followers of the winners, the Court should not delay this matter any further. It has to adjudicate the question of whether the procedure set out in the law falls short of the level of independence envisaged in the Constitution. Bench verdict for members of the ECI.

## Eroding federalism

Central funding for States in education should be delinked from the NEP

By withholding Tamil Nadu's central share of Samagra Shiksha funds for rejecting the National Education Policy (NEP) in 2020, the Union Government is flexing its muscles to coerce States into submission. This move also undermines the intent of the Samagra Shiksha scheme (2018-19), which consolidated the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan, and Teacher Education programmes. The scheme was designed to ensure equitable access to quality education for all schoolchildren. Since last year, Tamil Nadu has repeatedly flagged this unduly disruptive measure, warning that the funding shortfall has severely strained its school education infrastructure, affecting nearly 40 lakh students and 32,000 staff members. Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has explicitly blamed the State for the impasse, declaring that the funds will be released only if Tamil Nadu implements the NEP in "letter and spirit". In addition to the fire, he has insisted that the State adopt the three-language formula, mandating Tamil, English, and a regional language in schools. This stance disregards Tamil Nadu's long-standing opposition to the trilingual system since 1957. The firm commitment to a two-language policy of Tamil and English since 1968. Going a step further, Mr. Pradhan has accused Tamil Nadu's leadership of being divisive and politically motivated. He even suggested that the State needs to "come to terms with the Indian Constitution" and adhere to the "rule of law", implying, quite unwarprisingly, that the State was not being run in line with the statute.

Unsurprisingly, the response in Tamil Nadu has been swift and sharp, especially on the language issue, which remains non-negotiable for most political parties in the State. Chief Minister M.K. Stalin has rightly questioned which constitutional provision mandates the three-language policy and warned that such blatant coercion will not be tolerated. While the NEP claims it does not impose Hindi, successive governments have, until now, respected Tamil Nadu's autonomy over its language policy. Policies governing subjects in the Concurrent List of the Constitution require flexibility and dialogue to ensure successful implementation across diverse regions. A rigid, one-size-fits-all approach risks undermining cooperative federalism and fostering resentment among States, which are equal stakeholders in central schemes. A more pragmatic approach would be to delink Samagra Shiksha and the Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India (PM SHRI) scheme from the NEP and instead tie funding to generic performance indicators. At the same time, Tamil Nadu would do well to finalise and roll out its long-pending State Education Policy as a viable alternative to the NEP, ensuring academic continuity and stability for its students.



**Furqan Qamar** is a professor of management who has served at various institutions (education) at the Planning Commission and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Rajasthan and the Central University of Himachal Pradesh



**Sumner Ahmad Khan** is a research scholar in the faculty of management studies of Jamia Millia Islamia, focusing on citizenship behaviour in educational institutions

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

**CEC appointment**  
Riding roughshod over the pillars of democracy government has been the practice of the government of the day. As the face off between the executive and the judiciary comes to a head, the manner of the appointment of the new Chief Election Commissioner of India is likely to invite the ire of the Prathu Raj R., Bengaluru

In executive appointments and the sanctity of each pillar of democracy has to be maintained. It would be more appropriate for the Congress to engage with the government in the spirit of collaboration.  
**Sridhar S., Bengaluru**

**Amid fervour, fifth**  
It is alarming that there is a serious concern among the population that the Central Pollution Control Board, in consultation with the Green Tribunal, has recorded "high levels of faecal coliform (microbes from human and animal

3.63 million (45.46%) over the decade. This means that the decline began only recently, so much so that the decline in the population of the relevant age group explains the 60.36% decline in enrolment. The finding is further corroborated by the fact that the number of schools in the country has also declined by 79,109, from 1.58 million schools in 2017-18 to 1.47 million in 2023-24, a decline of 5.1%. These are in sync with the fact that India's fertility rate declined to 2.01 in 2022, which is far below the replacement level of 2.10.

**Government and private schools**  
The data further show that enrolment in government and government-aided schools, which accounted for 79% of the total school enrolment (and the mainstay of the poor and marginalised sections of society), recorded a significantly higher decline of 19.89 million (33.8%) and 4.95 million (16.41%), respectively. In these schools, the enrolment at the elementary level has been rather pronounced: 21.78 million (48.31%) in government schools and 2.85 million (34%) in government-aided schools. They have also experienced lower enrolment at the secondary level.

**The official line versus the reality**  
India hopes to reap its demographic dividend due to its burgeoning youth population. Demographers and policy planners always knew that this window of opportunity would remain open, but only for a limited time, marking the beginning of the end of this period. This means that India may become older even before becoming rich.

It is no wonder that the Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+) data for 2022-23 and 2023-24, which was released by the Ministry of Education on December 30, 2024, has caused much consternation as it showed a 15.5 million drop (6%) in school enrolment since 2018-19.

Private unaided schools have been an externalised source of revenue, which has been used by 1.61 million, or 2.03%. Notably, however, they registered only a marginal increase in elementary enrolment, while enrolment in government and senior secondary-level enrolment surged by 1.41 million (55.55%), which, if not for the secondary-level enrolment that was not recorded, would have been a significant positive correlation between

school enrolment and the estimated population of the relevant age group, so much so that the decline in the population of the relevant age group explains the 60.36% decline in enrolment. The finding is further corroborated by the fact that the number of schools in the country has also declined by 79,109, from 1.58 million schools in 2017-18 to 1.47 million in 2023-24, a decline of 5.1%. These are in sync with the fact that India's fertility rate declined to 2.01 in 2022, which is far below the replacement level of 2.10.

**The social impact**  
A burgeoning youth population is necessary for economic growth, which India has been experiencing until recently. It has now entered the phase when the population is shifting to the right. Since the process began only recently, it is reflected rather sharply in elementary-level enrolment. The effect will gradually be felt in secondary and senior secondary-level enrolment, and will finally impinge on higher education.

As is already the case in most developed countries, we will soon face the annals of a shrinking working-age population. This is disconcerting because it is happening sooner than expected.

Ideally, a country must reap as much demographic dividend as possible to generate much-needed income and wealth to support and sustain the burden of an ageing population. India will likely see its population ageing even before becoming rich.

The declining school enrolment has less to do with the change in data collection method than a shift in the demographic bulge to the right. Unless the 2023-24 data shows a different trend, it could mark the beginning of the end of the demographic dividend for India.

note that simple living and high thinking add lustre to one's position in life (February 16).  
**Mam Natarajan,** Chennai

The list was shocking — 27 kg of gold jewellery, 1.526 acres of land in several districts, bank deposits worth 330 crore, a golden crown and a sword, to name just a few. One only hopes that the high contrast between the confiscated "assets" are utilised for the benefit of those in need in the rural areas. There needs to be a clear message sent to those in public life with this case.  
**Tharaka S. Fernando,** Chennai

**War and peace**  
The Russia-Ukraine war has become the focal point of global jostling. The Ukrainian President appears to be protecting his sovereignty. One waits to see whether there will be a resolution to the satisfaction of all sides.  
**R. Raju,** Barwani, Madhya Pradesh  
Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the postal address.



# Quakes may well sharpen India's seismic readiness

**T**wo years ago, on February, 6, 2023, the people of Türkiye and Syria were jolted out of their sleep. At least 17,000 were killed, with their numbers mounting within minutes, as a great earthquake shook those countries in the early hours after 4 a.m., at 7.8 on a scale of 0 to 10. A second jolt came like a collaborator of the first, nine hours later, destroying whatever buildings stood on or around the scene of the first trauma.

'Fault lines' is an expression that we come across and use as we might 'glaciers' or 'deserts'. That is, without realising that it refers to an intensely volatile and totally unpredictable phenomenon, like the temper of the proverbial sleeping dragon or demon. Fault lines lie between the 15 log-jammed major tectonic plates on which the earth's thin crust sits.

These lines can slumber for decades, even centuries, quietly, one may say so 'sweetly', that their very existence can be forgotten by all except seismologists. Until...the fault line stir, rise, shake and then go on to mutilate, destroy and kill whatever lies on and along those lines. Depending on the degree of the awakened one's temper, the fury lasts or abates till such time as it lasts or abates.

## Nature's brewing tension

India's Indian Plate pressing onto the Eurasian Plate sculpted the Himalaya. The fault line involved runs right along the great Himalayan arc that stretches from Kashmir to the North East. It also implicates adjacent tracts in Pakistan, the Tibetan Autonomous Region of China, Nepal and Bhutan.

We are but dimly aware of this. For those of us who do not live in those stunningly beautiful tracts, that region means and evokes snow, pure air, clear waters, holidays and leisure. But we must know, must understand, the concurrent 'scene' which is about potential rubble, ravaged hill sides, mutilated river courses. And trauma.

We must shake ourselves out of our dangerous illusion, our perilous innocence about the reality beneath our feet. Seismologists tell us that the two great tectonic plates, the Indian and the Eurasian, have now slept their really deep sleep long enough now and that the built-up pressure inside their folds cannot be expected to hold its tension much longer.

Sure enough, a little over just one month ago, on January 7, 2025 at 9:05 a.m., an earthquake measuring Mw 7.1 struck Shigatse city of the Tibet



**Gopalkrishna Gandhi**

is a former administrator, diplomat and Governor

India must shake itself out of its perilous innocence and be prepared for the reality beneath the earth's crust

Autonomous Region of Southwestern China. Between 126 and 400 people were reported killed and 338 were injured. Unmindful of national borders and oblivious of lines of actual or notional control, the quake made itself felt in Nepal and in Northern India.

## In the media

On January 10, *The Hindu* had an editorial, "Damage control", that said, 'If the epicentre had been located closer to India, the damage could have been manifold.' And added, 'Earthquakes in the Himalayas evoke a special kind of dread in the country.' The comment was right. Dread they do cause. But have they occasioned the kind of intense and urgent planning that is needed? Have they occasioned national alertness, resolve and action? The Editorial went on to say, 'Unfortunately, predicting the day and time is outside the ambit of current science. Thus, the best we can hope for is insulation against the projected damage. It is in this context that infrastructure development in the Himalayan region must be viewed. While several of these projects are intended to smooth the movement of people and goods, the recurrent landslides and glacial lake outbursts that wash away dams, hydropower projects, and roads serve as a constant reminder of the inherent fragility of the region. Every form of infrastructure in the region – power plant or dam – must take into account the imminence of a major earthquake and the associated costs factored into planning.'

The Editorial said, 'Adhering to already existing building codes, not only in the Himalayas but in the surrounding Indo-Gangetic plains, can go a long way in limiting the inevitable damage.' If such adherence was good enough as a response one month ago, the earthquakes that shook the national capital on February 17, and within four hours, Siwan in Bihar, suggest that adherence to existing codes is not enough, Not enough by half.

Social media told us that there were people in Delhi who said they had never felt a tremor so big. This was impressionistic, perhaps, but impressions that come from real sensations under one's feet are real in a way that reports and reconstructed scenes are not. One post said 'today Delhi and Bihar, tomorrow West Bengal...'

It was salutary and sobering to see a post from Prime Minister Narendra Modi, barely back from his brief visit to the United States, reaching out to the people of Delhi, asking them to stay calm and take precautionary steps. The really meaningful

precautions are not within the means of the people. They must come from government, from the state.

We are now in a contingency that must take into account: high probability; high financial and physical cost if provided for, and incalculably higher if not provided for.

The principle is the same as in any insurance arrangement: the higher the risk the higher the premium.

## Time to act, and quickly

We need, not just quickly, not just urgently but quite immediately, to provide for state expense on, first, fore-closing and rolling back engineering enterprises that weaken the earth's crust, especially rocky terrain, in India's seismic risk zones in the ascending calibration of II, III and IV.

Second, super-imposing on the existing seismic zonation maps which are really x-ray plates, new carefully drawn mapped-plans for the protection (which can include evacuations, demolitions and re-building) of highly vulnerable structures, and assessing the seismic status of high follow-on secondary risk structures such as like hydel projects and atomic reactors (Narora in Uttar Pradesh is located in Zone IV).

Third, setting up a seismic building insurance scheme wherein premiums for insuring against collapse can be offered and encouraged.

Fourth, doing an assessment of the costs of rescue, temporary sheltering and rehabilitation zone-wise, of dislocated populations.

Fifth, fast-forwarding collaboration with countries that are experts in the field on earthquake anticipation through sensors, and architecture nostrums. This would involve expenses on hiring consultants.

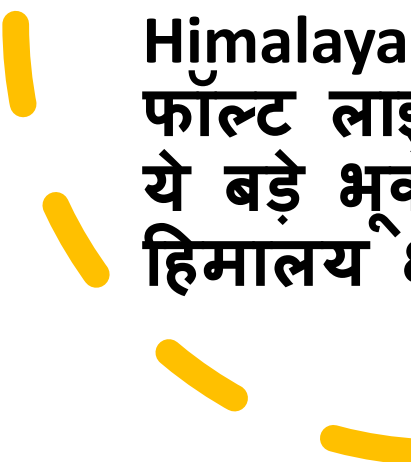
All this sounds grim. But we should tell ourselves that there is the 'good news' that we are, as of this moment, ahead of the big seismic shock that has been anticipated by seismologists. We are capable of planning with some composure, even as we recover from the shock of February 17, not in a post-shock trauma accompanied by fiscal crippling. And, we have an institutional advantage in the shape of a Ministry of Earth Sciences and a Disaster Management Authority waiting to be harnessed in any scheme towards seismic resistance.

The 'motto' is brief: earthquakes are not to be prevented, they can scarcely be predicted, even in our age of Artificial Intelligence. But they can be prepared for. Is anyone doing that?

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- The article highlights how recent earthquakes, particularly in Turkey and Syria, serve as a wake-up call for India's seismic preparedness.

लेख में बताया गया है कि हाल के भूकंप, विशेष रूप से तुर्की और सीरिया में आए भूकंप, भारत की भूकंपीय तैयारियों के लिए एक चेतावनी हैं।

- Fault lines exist for centuries but can trigger massive earthquakes when energy builds up. The Indian and Eurasian plates pose a risk to the Himalayan region and northern India.



फॉल्ट लाइन्स सदियों तक बनी रहती हैं, लेकिन जब ऊर्जा जमा होती है तो ये बड़े भूकंप को जन्म दे सकती हैं। भारतीय और यूरेशियन प्लेट्स हिमालय क्षेत्र और उत्तर भारत के लिए खतरा हैं।

- Infrastructure projects in the Himalayan region need to be re-evaluated considering seismic risks.

हिमालय क्षेत्र में बनियादी ढांचे की परियोजनाओं की भूकंपीय जोखिम को ध्यान में रखते हुए पुनः समीक्षा की जानी चाहिए।

- India lacks a strong system for predicting and mitigating earthquakes. Measures such as risk-mapping, structural reinforcements, and seismic insurance need urgent implementation. भारत में भूकंप की भविष्यवाणी और रोकथाम के लिए मजबूत प्रणाली नहीं है। जोखिम मानचित्रण, संरचनात्मक सुदृढीकरण और भूकंपीय बीमा जैसी योजनाओं को तुरंत लागू करने की आवश्यकता है।

• **Concerns Raised | उठाए गए मुद्दे**

**1. Recent earthquakes in Turkey-Syria and Nepal have demonstrated the devastating impact of seismic activity.**

तुर्की-सीरिया और नेपाल में हाल के भूकंपों ने भूकंपीय गतिविधि के विनाशकारी प्रभाव को उजागर किया है।

**2. India's Indo-Gangetic plains and Himalayan regions are at high risk of earthquakes.**



भारत के इंडो-गंगोटिक मैदान और हिमालय क्षेत्र भूकंप के उच्च जोखिम वाले क्षेत्र हैं।



The absence of proper earthquake-resistant buildings increases the risk of damage.

भूकंप-रोधी भवनों की अनुपस्थिति नुकसान के जोखिम को बढ़ाती है।

There is a need for better emergency response planning and infrastructure reinforcement.

बेहतर आपातकालीन प्रतिक्रिया योजना और बुनियादी ढांचे को मजबूत करने की आवश्यकता है।

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- Recommendations | सुझाव
  - Strict enforcement of building codes, especially in high-risk areas.  
उच्च जोखिम वाले क्षेत्रों में इमारतों के लिए सख्त नियमों का पालन सुनिश्चित करना।
  - Seismic mapping and retrofitting of vulnerable structures.  
जोखिम वाले ढांचों का भूकंपीय मानचित्रण और मजबूतीकरण।
  - Government-backed seismic insurance to provide financial protection.  
भूकंपीय बीमा योजनाओं के लिए सरकारी सहायता प्रदान करना।
  - Public awareness and drills to prepare communities for potential disasters.  
सार्वजनिक जागरूकता और आपदा प्रबंधन के लिए नियमित अभ्यास।
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- **Conclusion | निष्कर्ष**
  - **India must take immediate steps to strengthen its seismic readiness to prevent large-scale destruction in case of future earthquakes.**  
**भारत को भविष्य में बड़े पैमाने पर विनाश को रोकने के लिए अपनी भूकंपीय तैयारियों को मजबूत करने के लिए तत्काल कदम उठाने होंगे।**
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IN BRIEF



TVS Motor unveils 2025 edition Ronin at ₹1.35 lakh

TVS Motor Company has rolled out its 2025 edition 225 cc motorcycle 'Ronin' upgraded with safety features besides adding two new colours priced at ₹1.35 lakh ex-showroom onwards.

SEBI cancels registration of 19 foreign VC firms for violations

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has cancelled the registrations of 19 foreign venture capital institutions after investigations found them having violated capital market regulations.

NPS AUM may double to ₹29.5 lakh crore by 2030

Higher uptake of pension fund through NPS subscriptions may lead to assets under management in the pension fund industry through NPS double to ₹29.5 lakh crore by 2030, according to DSP Mutual Fund.

Govt. is formulating strategies to protect exporters, says MoS

The Centre is formulating strategies to ensure that the interests of exporters and people are protected, Union Minister of State for Commerce and Industry and Electronics and Information Technology Jitin Prasada said on Tuesday.

"Indian exports in 2023-2024 at \$778.21 billion is 67% more than the exports in 2013-2014. These are challenging times but Indian exporters have shown resilience," he said.

"While COVID, climate change and (other) conflicts have affected the world, India is on a strong foundation," Mr. Prasada said at the ICEEP India Na-

Tesla posts job openings in India

EV maker owned by Elon Musk posts 13 openings in Mumbai, days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi met the Tesla CEO in Washington, DC. Tesla is said to have selected showroom locations in Mumbai and Delhi signalling plans to sell in India

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

Electric vehicle maker Tesla on Monday posted 13 job openings in Mumbai, days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi met the EV firm's CEO and founder, Elon Musk in Washington, DC.



Head hunting: While the jobs are listed for Mumbai, descriptions indicate that identical roles are also open in Delhi, Reuters.

The postings on LinkedIn span across business operations, customer service, delivery and order operations specialists, showroom staff, and technicians.

Mr. Musk has also said that Tesla wanted to probe buyer interest with impetus before starting an assembly in India if Mr. Modi and Mr. Musk discussed the issue of tariffs on EVs at their meeting on February 13. Mr. Modi said in a post on X that the two discussed "space, mobility, technology and innovation."

'GDP growth may slow to 6.4%-6.6% in Q3 of FY25'

The Hindu Bureau MUMBAI

India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is expected to grow at a slower pace of 6.4% to 6.6% in the reporting quarter of fiscal 2025 (FY25) as opposed to 6.6% in Q3FY24 as global uncertainties spill over to the Indian economy.

Bank of Baroda (BoB) projected a GDP growth of 6.6% in the reporting quarter while ICRA estimated the economy would expand even slower at 6.4%. However, it will still be a recovery from the seven-quarter low of 5.4% clocked in Q2FY25.

across sectors, she noted

Agriculture and public administration would be the only sectors that would grow faster in the reporting quarter, BoB said.

Growth in farm sector output is likely to come in at 4.5% against 0.4% a year ago while public administration may expand at 8.1% in Q3FY25 as against 7.5%.

Industrial sector growth may come in at 5.9% against 6.2% in the reporting quarter. The slowdown in manufacturing may partially be due to a higher base in Q3FY24, she said. Services may also come in at 6.9% in Q3FY25 against 7.6% in Q3FY24.

Mr. Musk has also said that Tesla wanted to probe buyer interest with impetus before starting an assembly in India if Mr. Modi and Mr. Musk discussed the issue of tariffs on EVs at their meeting on February 13. Mr. Modi said in a post on X that the two discussed "space, mobility, technology and innovation."

Meanwhile a Reuters report, quoting sources, said Tesla had selected locations for two showrooms in New Delhi and Mumbai, moving closer to its long-delayed plans to sell its EVs in India.

LIC unveils Smart Pension Plan with annuity options

The Hindu Bureau HYDERABAD

Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) has introduced a Smart Pension Plan offering a range of annuity options for single as well as joint life type of annuities.

A non-par, non-linked, individual/group, the product's features include single premium, immediate annuity plan, liquidity option against 10-25% withdrawal as per the terms, and incentive for existing policyholder and nominee or beneficiary of the deceased policyholder by way of...

MARKETS

Table with columns: Service, Tuesday, % Change. Rows include Sensex, Nifty 50, Gold, Brent oil.

NIFTY 50

Table with columns: Stock Name, Price, Change. Lists various stocks like Axis Bank, Infosys, etc.

EXCHANGE RATES

Table with columns: Currency, Rate, % Change. Lists rates for USD, EUR, GBP, etc.

Infosys to open global capability unit for Lufthansa

The Hindu Bureau BENGALURU

Infosys, a digital services and consulting firm, on Tuesday announced a long-term collaboration with Lufthansa Group and Lufthansa Systems GmbH (LSY), an airline IT services provider, to accelerate digital transformation and drive innovation in the aviation sector.

Industry sources said the collaboration is likely worth \$300 million. LSY and Infosys will set up a joint global capability Centre here to boost Lufthansa Group's software and product development as well as raise support for Lufthansa's external airline customers.

Piramal Pharma facility gets six U.S. FDA observations

The Hindu Bureau HYDERABAD

Piramal Pharma's facility at Turbhe, Navi Mumbai, has received six observations after a U.S. Food and Drug Administration (U.S. FDA) inspection.

A Form-483 with six observations was issued by the U.S. FDA after the General GMP inspection of the facility from February 11-17. The observations are largely around improvement of procedures and practices not related to data integrity. The company is preparing a detailed response, which will be submitted to agency within stipulated timelines. Piramal Pharma said its products are sold on BSE at ₹196.70 each.

Reliance Consumer Campa brand in the UAE

The Hindu Bureau MUMBAI

Reliance Consumer Products Ltd. the FMCG arm of Reliance Industries Ltd., has introduced an iconic legacy brand, Campa, in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), making its foray into that region.

Since acquiring Campa Cola in the UAE and reintroducing it in India in 2024, the company said it has revived the heritage brand of the 1970s.



New avatar: Since acquiring Campa Cola in 2022, the company said it has revived the heritage brand of the 1970s and 1980s.

Campa Cola is being unveiled in the UAE with partner Arabia Group. Ketan Mody, COO, RCI, said the brand is being introduced for the long-term and see great potential for account growth in the region. We have a track record of delivering innovative and global quality products at affordable prices to customers.

Aurobindo A.P. unit gets 5 U.S. FDA observations

The Hindu Bureau HYDERABAD

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (U.S. FDA) has issued five observations to Aurobindo Pharma's step-down subsidiary Steriles' facility in Andhra Pradesh (A.P.).

The observations were issued after a pre-approval inspection (PAI) conducted in Parawada mandal, Anaparthi district, from February 10-18. The observations are procedural in nature and will be responded to within the stipulated time, Aurobindo Pharma said in a filing on Tuesday.

Reliance Infra draws plans to establish solar, battery units

The Hindu Bureau MUMBAI

Reliance Infrastructure Ltd (RIL Infra) has decided to enter renewable energy sector by setting up integrated solar and battery manufacturing units in India.

As part of its Integrated Solar Manufacturing initiative, the company will set up a facility to boost the production of solar panels and components. Also, its Integrated Battery Manufacturing unit will focus on developing advanced energy storage solutions for grid applications and electric mobility, the company said.

'Insurers can get one time UPI mandate for life, health premia'

The Hindu Bureau HYDERABAD

Insurance regulator IRDAI permitted life and health insurers to get a one-time mandate facility through Unified Payments Interface (UPI) from the life and life insurance customers.

"This service is useful where the customer prefers to authorise a block on (UPI) from the insurance company without immediate debits" even while facilitating, through such a mandate, smoother processing of the transaction leading to issue of the policy, the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority said in a circular on Tuesday.

LANXESS opens India development centre, eyes doubling revenue

The Hindu Bureau MUMBAI

As India gears up to scale up manufacturing, German specialty chemicals major LANXESS announced the opening of its India Application Development Centre (IADC) at Thane, Mumbai to provide India-centric solutions to its industrial customers.

With this, the firm is eyeing to double revenue from India in a few years. The centre will serve as a hub for two businesses - antibiotic Proteinase expansion. It was inaugurated on Tuesday by Matthias Zschert, chairman of the board of management of LANXESS AG.



Namitesh Roy Choudhury LANXESS AG.

"This is a critical growth region offering immense opportunities for collaboration and innovation. Products (antimicrobial, disinfection, and preservative) and another development centre represents our commitment to delivering solutions tailored to the needs of our customers in India. We are excited to see our organic, innovation-led growth. This important facility, therefore, coincides with our 20th anniversary as a company in India. Application Development Centre (IADC) at Thane, Mumbai to provide India-centric solutions to its industrial customers.

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# Tesla posts job openings in India

EV maker owned by Elon Musk posts 13 openings in Mumbai, days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi met the Tesla CEO in Washington, D.C.; Tesla is said to have selected showroom locations in Mumbai and Delhi signalling plans to sell in India

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

**E**lectric vehicle maker Tesla on Monday posted 13 job openings in Mumbai, days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi met the EV firm's CEO and founder Elon Musk in Washington, DC.

The postings on LinkedIn span across business operations, customer service, delivery and order operations specialists, showroom staff, and technicians. While the jobs are listed for Mumbai, the descriptions mention that identical positions are also



**Head hunting:** While the jobs are listed for Mumbai, descriptions indicate that identical roles are also open in Delhi. REUTERS

open in Delhi. An email to Tesla for comment did not yield a response.

The firm has historically withheld a significant pre-

sence from the Indian market. Mr. Musk, who now holds a prominent position in the U.S. government to reshape and cutting down

federal departments, has long held that Indian tariffs on Tesla, were too high.

Mr. Musk had also said that Tesla wanted to probe buyer interest with imports before starting assembly in India.

It is unclear if Mr. Modi and Mr. Musk discussed the issue of tariffs on EVs at their meeting on February 13. Mr. Modi said in a post on X that the two discussed “space, mobility, technology and innovation”. Mr. Musk was due to visit India last year before the general elections, a trip during which he was rumoured to announce in-

vestments in India. That meeting was, however, cancelled.

## **Tariffs lowered**

India lowered some tariffs in the weeks leading to the Trump-Modi meeting, including for EV components and minerals used in their batteries. Duties on EVs were restructured, but not substantially reduced.

Meanwhile a *Reuters* report, quoting sources, said Tesla had selected locations for two showrooms in New Delhi and Mumbai, moving closer to its long-delayed plans to sell its EVs in India.

- 
- Tesla posts job openings in India
  - EV maker owned by Elon Musk posts 13 openings in Mumbai, days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi met the Tesla CEO in Washington, D.C. Tesla is said to have selected showroom locations in Mumbai and Delhi signaling plans to sell in India.
  - इंडिया में टेस्ला की नौकरियों के लिए भर्ती  
एलन मस्क की ईवी निर्माता कंपनी टेस्ला ने मुंबई में 13 नौकरियों के लिए आवेदन मांगे, प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी द्वारा वाशिंगटन डी.सी. में टेस्ला सीईओ से मुलाकात के कुछ दिनों बाद। रिपोर्ट के अनुसार, टेस्ला ने मुंबई और दिल्ली में अपने शोरूम के स्थान तैय कर लिए हैं, जिससे संकेत मिलता है कि कंपनी भारत में अपनी कारें बेचने की योजना बना रही है।

- 
- **Tesla has listed 13 job openings in Mumbai, including positions in business operations, customer service, delivery, showroom staff, and technicians.** Identical positions are also open in Delhi.

टेस्ला ने मुंबई में 13 नौकरियों की लिस्ट जारी की है, जिनमें बिज़नेस ऑपरेशंस, कस्टमर सर्विस, डिलीवरी, शोरूम स्टाफ और टेक्नीशियंस के पद शामिल हैं। दिल्ली में भी समान पदों के लिए आवेदन खुले हैं।

- **Tesla has had limited presence in India, but Elon Musk has long held that high import tariffs were a major obstacle.**

टेस्ला की भारत में सीमित उपस्थिति रही है, लेकिन एलन मस्क ने पहले से ही भारत में उंचे आयात शुल्क (इंपोर्ट टैरिफ़) को एक बड़ी बाधा बताया था।

**Tariffs on EV components were restructured recently but not significantly reduced.**

**ईवी (इलेक्ट्रिक व्हीकल) कंपोनेंट्स पर हाल ही में टैरिफ़ में बदलाव किया गया, लेकिन यह बहुत ज्यादा कम नहीं हुआ।**

**Tesla is reportedly planning two showrooms in Delhi and Mumbai, marking a step forward in its long-awaited entry into the Indian market.**

**रिपोर्ट के अनुसार, टेस्ला ने दिल्ली और मुंबई में दो शोरूम खोलने की योजना बनाई है, जिससे भारत में प्रवेश की इसकी पुरानी योजना को बल मिला है।**




- **Potential Market Impact | संभावित बाजार प्रभाव:**

- **If Tesla begins selling in India, it could boost the EV sector and competition.**

अगर टेस्ला भारत में बिक्री शुरू करती है, तो यह ईवी सेक्टर और प्रतिस्पर्धा को बढ़ा सकता है।

- **More investments in EV infrastructure and charging stations may follow.**

ईवी इन्फ्रास्ट्रक्चर और चार्जिंग स्टेशनों में अधिक निवेश की संभावना है।



## ON THE ROAD

■ A LinkedIn post revealed that Tesla is seeking candidates for

13

positions across Mumbai and Delhi

■ These roles include both customer-facing and back-end positions



■ Tesla has long considered India entry but was deterred by high import duties

■ India reduced basic customs duty on luxury cars priced above \$40,000 from 110% to **70%** in March 2024

■ India EV sales barely hit 100,000 units last year versus China's 11 million

■ However, India is growing rapidly, and offers an avenue for Tesla to boost sales

units (CBTIs) of EVs for global sources and delivery operations for automakers that commit a

FAMILY EMERGENCY

India's bowling coach Morkel flies back home



FILE PHOTO BY JITHU RAMALINGAM

India's bowling coach Morkel has left for his home in South Africa due to family emergency on Tuesday... India's bowling coach Morkel has left for his home in South Africa due to family emergency on Tuesday... India's bowling coach Morkel has left for his home in South Africa due to family emergency on Tuesday...

ICC APPROVED

Jamieson replaces injured Ferguson in NZ's CT squad



FILE PHOTO: EMMAUNUEL VOGRI

Nyle Jamieson will replace injured pacer Lockie Ferguson in New Zealand's squad for the Champions Trophy after the ICC's cricketing Technical Committee approved the change on the eve of the campaign opener against Pakistan in Karachi on Wednesday... Kyle Jamieson, 30, has played 13 ODIs.

WELL DONE

Capitals coach Batty praises RCB bowlers and Smriti's captaincy



SPORTSPICS/WPL

Delhi Capitals coach Jonathan Batty praised the RCB bowlers and Smriti Mandhana's captaincy after his team humbled by eight wickets in the WPL on Monday... Delhi Capitals coach Jonathan Batty praised the RCB bowlers and Smriti Mandhana's captaincy after his team humbled by eight wickets in the WPL on Monday...

BREAKING THROUGH

U-19 World Cup hero Kamalini becomes youngest to play at WPL



SPORTSPICS/WPL

G. Kamalini, who was part of the Indian team that won the Under-19 women's T20 World Cup, became the youngest cricketer to play at the WPL... G. Kamalini, who was part of the Indian team that won the Under-19 women's T20 World Cup, became the youngest cricketer to play at the WPL...

Spotlight on Pakistan as long wait for an ICC event ends

The host will look to stop the Black Caps after the loss in the tri-series final recently. India, with Dubai as its base, will start as one of the favourites. Australia, England and SA look to revive form

CHAMPIONS TROPHY S. Dipak Basu DUBAI

When the last Champions Trophy game was played at The Oval in 2017, it was the dream match-up the organisers could wish for... When the last Champions Trophy game was played at The Oval in 2017, it was the dream match-up the organisers could wish for...

Riswan's men can't afford another reverse against the Kiwis in the opener... Riswan's men can't afford another reverse against the Kiwis in the opener... Riswan's men can't afford another reverse against the Kiwis in the opener...

The idea of having only the top eight teams was to guarantee high-quality cricket... The idea of having only the top eight teams was to guarantee high-quality cricket... The idea of having only the top eight teams was to guarantee high-quality cricket...

The return of the Champions

The ICC's 50-over 'mini World Cup' is back after an eight-year gap with the previous edition's winner Pakistan hosting the event, India, the 2017 finalist, will play in Dubai

Table with columns: YEAR, COUNTRY, GROUP. Rows for 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2009, 2013, 2017.

Table with columns: TEAM, W, L, NR, R, 50s, 100s. Rows for India, Pakistan, New Zealand, Bangladesh.

Table with columns: TEAM, W, L, NR, R, 50s, 100s. Rows for Australia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, England, Afghanistan.

Table with columns: NAME, RUNS, WICKETS. Rows for Gayle, Jayawardene, Dhawan, Mills, Malings, Muralitharan, Taylor, Gayle.



We should all enjoy the Champions Trophy as we are having such a big event in Pakistan after a long time... We should all enjoy the Champions Trophy as we are having such a big event in Pakistan after a long time...

Table with columns: DATE, OPPONENT, VENUE. Rows for February 20, February 23, March 2.

Table with columns: YEAR, TYPE, RECORD. Rows for 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2009, 2013, 2017.

Mumbai continues domination over Gujarat

WPL I.K. Ajith Kumar MUMBAI

The head-to-head record in the WPL became even more embarrassing for the Giants on Tuesday night... The head-to-head record in the WPL became even more embarrassing for the Giants on Tuesday night...



Lured to dream: Duttin is stumped by Yastika off Kerr's bowling. SPORTSPICS/WPL

Scoreboard table with columns: TEAM, PLAYER, RUNS, WICKETS. Rows for Gujarat Giants, Mumbai Indians.

Germany outplays India; women too suffer a loss

PRO LEAGUE Uthra Ganesan BHUVANESHWAR

It was a disappointing day for Indian hockey with both the men and women dropping points in their respective FIH Pro League games at the Kalinga Stadium... It was a disappointing day for Indian hockey with both the men and women dropping points in their respective FIH Pro League games at the Kalinga Stadium...



Bright spot: Gurjant scores India's lone goal against Germany. BHUVANESHWAR ROUT

to deflect Deepika's pass in. Two minutes later, the ball traversed the circle from right to left of the Indian circle before Sofia Rogoski found the net... to deflect Deepika's pass in. Two minutes later, the ball traversed the circle from right to left of the Indian circle before Sofia Rogoski found the net...

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## THE ELITE CLUB

- 1998**  
South Africa
- 2000**  
New Zealand
- 2002**  
India & Sri Lanka
- 2004**  
West Indies
- 2006**  
Australia
- 2009**  
Australia
- 2013**  
India
- 2017**  
Pakistan



**●●** We should all enjoy the Champions Trophy as we are having such a big event in Pakistan after a long time. It is hard to say how we will perform on a particular day because we have to play to our optimum level

**MOHAMMAD RIZWAN**  
Pakistan captain

## TEAM SCANNER

### GROUP A

#### INDIA

| M  | W  | L | NR |
|----|----|---|----|
| 29 | 18 | 8 | 3  |

#### PAKISTAN

| M  | W  | L  | NR |
|----|----|----|----|
| 23 | 11 | 12 | 0  |

#### NEW ZEALAND

| M  | W  | L  | NR |
|----|----|----|----|
| 24 | 12 | 10 | 2  |

#### BANGLADESH

| M  | W | L | NR |
|----|---|---|----|
| 12 | 2 | 9 | 1  |

### GROUP B

#### AUSTRALIA

| M  | W  | L | NR |
|----|----|---|----|
| 24 | 12 | 8 | 4  |

#### SOUTH AFRICA

| M  | W  | L  | T |
|----|----|----|---|
| 24 | 12 | 11 | 1 |

#### ENGLAND

| M  | W  | L  | NR |
|----|----|----|----|
| 25 | 14 | 11 | 0  |

#### AFGHANISTAN

The Afghans will be making their Champions Trophy debut



## INDIA'S GROUP PHASE SCHEDULE

|                    |                 |       |
|--------------------|-----------------|-------|
| <b>February 20</b> | vs. Bangladesh  | Dubai |
| <b>February 23</b> | vs. Pakistan    | Dubai |
| <b>March 2</b>     | vs. New Zealand | Dubai |

ALL MATCHES START AT 2.30 P.M. IST

India has played six ODIs at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium. It has won five and tied the other

## RULING THE CHARTS

| BATTING           | Inns | Runs | HS       | 100s/50s |
|-------------------|------|------|----------|----------|
| Gayle (WI)        | 17   | 791  | 133 n.o. | 3/1      |
| Jayawardene (SL)  | 21   | 742  | 84 n.o.  | 0/5      |
| Dhawan (Ind)      | 10   | 701  | 125      | 3/3      |
| BOWLING           | Inns | Wkts | BB       | 4W       |
| Mills (NZ)        | 15   | 28   | 4/30     | 2        |
| Malinga (SL)      | 16   | 25   | 4/34     | 2        |
| Muralitharan (SL) | 15   | 24   | 4/15     | 2        |

**4** India has reached the final the most number of times (2000, 2002, 2013, 2017)

**13** Jerome Taylor (WI, 2006) and Hasan Ali (Pak, 2017) have the best wicket-tally in an edition

**474** Gayle's run-collection in 2006, the biggest in a campaign

## MEN IN BLUE'S RECORD

**1998**  
Semifinal

**2000**  
Final

**2002**  
Joint winners

**2004**  
Group stage

**2006**  
Group stage

**2009**  
Group stage

**2013**  
Winners

**2017**  
Final

■ India, if it qualifies, will play its semifinal in Dubai on March 4

■ The final will be held in Dubai on March 9 if Rohit's men reach the summit clash

## SHINING BRIGHT\*

**MOST RUNS**  
Kohli  
**529**  
12 inns



**HIGHEST**  
Rohit  
**123** n.o.  
vs Bangladesh  
Birmingham,  
2017



**MOST WICKETS**  
Jadeja  
**16**, 10 inns



**BEST BOWLING**  
Jadeja  
**5/36** vs WI, The Oval, 2013

\*Players from the current squad



# High levels of fecal bacteria in Sangam waters: Report

## Alarmed NGT Summons UP Officials

**Kushagra Dixit**  
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: The Sangam waters where millions of devotees have been taking a holy dip every day during the ongoing Maha Kumbh has been found to be contaminated with alarming levels of faecal and total coliform, prompting the National Green Tribunal (NGT) to summon UP govt authorities.

A quality assessment report submitted to NGT by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) on Feb 3 said the coliform levels — a key indicator of the presence of untreated sewage and human and animal excreta — were found to be 1,400 times the standards in the Ganga and 660 times in the Yamuna at some stretches on a particular day, making the river waters unfit for bathing.

According to the CPCB standards, for organised outdoor bathing, the total coliform levels must not exceed 500 MPN (Most Probable Number) per 100ml. However, the pollution watchdog found that by Jan 19, the total



Devotees returning from the Maha Kumbh festival sit inside the luggage coach of a train in Prayagraj on Tuesday

coliform levels had reached a whopping 700,000 MPN/100ml in the Ganga and 330,000 MPN/100ml in the Yamuna. The CPCB analysed the samples on Jan 12, 13, 14, 15 and 19, and the total coliform levels never met the standards.

The CPCB findings not only indicated non-compliance with NGT's earlier directive to maintain critical water quality standards, but also raised concerns over public health and environmental sustainability, the tribunal's principal bench, headed by its chairperson Justice Prakash Shirvastava, noted during a hearing on Feb 17.

The high levels of faecal bacteria in the waters pose significant risks of water-

borne diseases, while excessive organic pollution threatens aquatic life and overall river health.

Pointing out that the UP Pollution Control Board (UPPCB) had not filed any comprehensive action taken report, as directed by the tribunal in Dec last year, the bench ordered the board's member secretary and the state authority responsible for maintaining the water quality in the river Ganga at Prayagraj to appear before it virtually during the next hearing on Feb 19.

The NGT had in Dec asked CPCB and UPPCB to monitor and report the water quality regularly, while also ensuring that untreated sewage did not flow into the two rivers so that the pil-

grims who came for a holy bath did not suffer. It directed the agencies to analyse water samples from the rivers at least twice a week at regular intervals.

In compliance, the CPCB submitted its report, which said that with respect to biochemical oxygen demand (BOD), river water quality did not conform with the bathing criteria during the monitoring carried out on Jan 12-13 at most of the locations. But, after that, organic pollution started to decrease due to freshwater intrusion at upstream locations.

However, river water quality did not conform to the bathing criteria with respect to faecal coliform at all the monitored locations on various occasions, the report stated. "A huge number of people taking bath at Prayagraj during the Maha Kumbh Mela in the river, including auspicious bathing days, eventually leads to an increase in faecal concentration," it added.

Reporting on the sewage treatment plants, the CPCB pointed out that there were ten STPs installed in Prayagraj with a combined treatment capacity of 370 million litres per day (MLD). All the STPs were found operational and complied with the norms, except one with a 10MLD capacity, it stated. The report stated.

- The water at Sangam, where millions bathe during the Maha Kumbh, was found to have dangerous levels of fecal bacteria, making it unsafe for bathing.

महा कम्भ के दौरान संगम में स्नान करने वाले लाखों लोगों के लिए पानी असुरक्षित पाया गया, क्योंकि इसमें मल जीवाणुओं का उच्च स्तर मौजूद है।


- The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) report found coliform levels exceeding limits by 1,400 times in the Ganga and 660 times in the Yamuna at some monitoring points.

केंद्रीय प्रदूषण नियंत्रण बोर्ड (CPCB) की रिपोर्ट में गंगा में कोलीफॉर्म का स्तर 1,400 गुना और यमुना में 660 गुना अधिक पाया गया।

- 
- **NGT (National Green Tribunal) summoned Uttar Pradesh authorities over concerns about public health and environmental sustainability.**  
राष्ट्रीय हरित अधिकरण (NGT) ने जन स्वास्थ्य और पर्यावरणीय स्थिरता को लेकर उत्तर प्रदेश के अधिकारियों को तलब किया।
  - **CPCB found that the water quality at multiple points did not meet bathing standards, despite some reduction in organic pollution.**  
CPCB की रिपोर्ट में पाया गया कि जल गुणवत्ता स्नान के मानकों पर खरी नहीं उतरी, हालांकि जैविक प्रदूषण में कुछ कमी आई।

- 
- High levels of bacteria in the river pose risks of waterborne diseases and threaten aquatic life.

नदी में उच्च स्तर के जीवाणु जलजनित बीमारियों का खतरा बढ़ाते हैं और जलीय जीवन को प्रभावित कर सकते हैं।






- **Actions Taken | उठाए गए कदम**

- **NGT asked CPCB and UPPCB (Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board) to regularly monitor water quality and prevent untreated sewage from entering the river.**

**NGT ने CPCB और यूपीपीसीबी को नियमित रूप से जल गुणवत्ता की निगरानी करने और नदी में अनुपचारित सीवेज के प्रवेश को रोकने का निर्देश दिया।**




- The report mentioned that during auspicious bathing days, fecal concentration increases due to the high number of pilgrims.  
रिपोर्ट के अनुसार, शुभ स्नान के दिनों में बड़ी संख्या में श्रद्धालुओं के कारण मल जीवाणुओं की मात्रा बढ़ जाती है।
- Three sewage treatment plants (STPs) in Prayagraj were found to be operating, but one did not meet pollution control norms.  
प्रयागराज में तीन सीवेज ट्रीटमेंट प्लांट (STP) संचालित पाए गए, लेकिन एक प्लांट प्रदूषण नियंत्रण मानकों को पूरा नहीं कर सका।


- 
- **Potential Impact | संभावित प्रभाव**
  - **Unclean river water can lead to severe health hazards, including gastrointestinal diseases.**  
अस्वच्छ नदी जल गंभीर स्वास्थ्य समस्याओं का कारण बन सकता है, जिसमें गैस्ट्रोइंटेस्टाइनल रोग शामिल हैं।
  - **If corrective measures are not taken, it could affect the religious and tourism significance of the Maha Kumbh.**  
यदि सुधारात्मक कदम नहीं उठाए गए, तो इससे महाकुंभ की धार्मिक और पर्यटन महत्ता प्रभावित हो सकती है।

## About Fecal Coliform:

A subgroup of coliform bacteria that primarily originate from the **intestinal tracts of warm-blooded animals**, including humans.



Limit: The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) standards have set a **permissible limit of 2,500 units** of faecal coliform per 100 ml of water, while for drinking water, E. coli must be absent.



Types of Bacteria: Includes **Escherichia coli ( coli)**, with certain strains like E. coli **O157:H7** being harmful and capable of causing intestinal infections.







- What its Presence Indicates?

- **Sewage contamination** of water sources.

- Potential presence of **disease-causing pathogens** such as those responsible for **typhoid, hepatitis A, and gastroenteritis**.



- **Poor waste management**, leakage from **septic systems**, or **agricultural runoff** polluting water bodies.

- 
- **BOD Increase**: Fecal coliform bacteria decompose organic waste, consuming dissolved oxygen and raising Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD), leading to oxygen depletion and aquatic life suffocation.
  - **COD Increase**: Contaminants from sewage and industrial discharge raise Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD), indicating non-biodegradable pollutants, lowering water quality and harming ecosystems.
- 

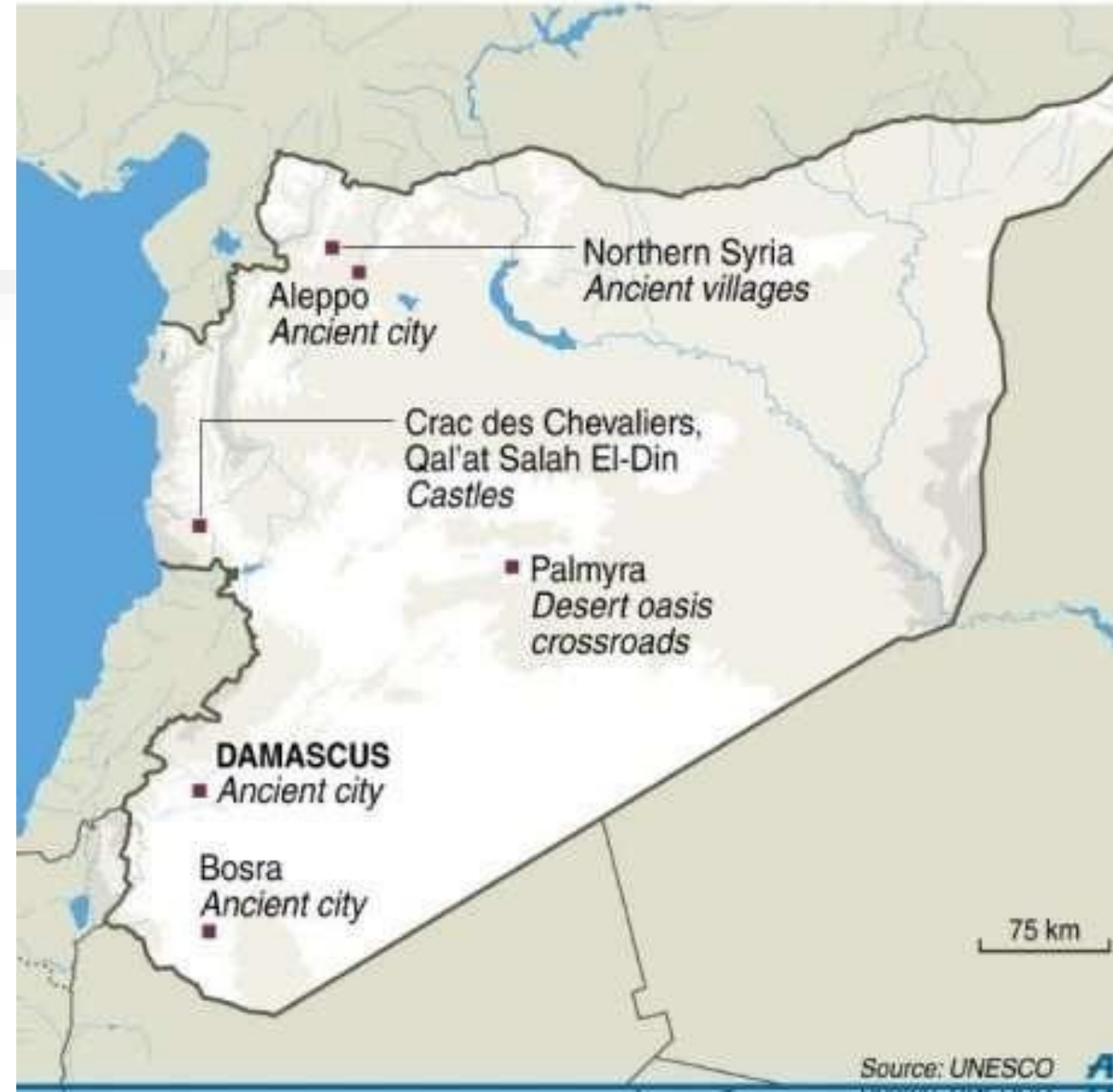
# Syria World Heritage Site



- Experts are initiating efforts to restore war-ravaged heritage sites like **Palmyra** and **Crac des Chevaliers**, aiming to revive tourism and boost Syria's economy.

## Syria World Heritage in danger


UNESCO on Thursday warned of six ancient sites threatened by civil w





- **About Syria World Heritage Site in News:**

## **1. Palmyra**

1. **Location:** Situated in the Syrian desert, Homs Governorate, Syria.
  2. **Features:** A UNESCO World Heritage Site, famous for 2,000-year-old Roman-era ruins, temples, and colonnaded streets.
  3. **Historical Significance:** A key Silk Road hub, capital of the Palmyrene Empire under Queen Zenobia in the 3rd century.
- 

# From 2026, CBSE to hold Class X Boards twice a yr

## To Unveil Draft Rules On Mon For Public Opinion

**Manash.Gohain**  
@timesofindia.com

**New Delhi:** Hit by the Covid pandemic, albeit later than intended, CBSE will roll out twice-a-year board exams for class X from 2026 and introduce the CBSE Global Curriculum for 260 foreign schools affiliated to it from 2026-2027.

The education ministry held a discussion, led by minister Dharmendra Pradhan, with CBSE officials and heads of National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS) and Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS), where draft schemes, set for public consultation on next Monday, were thoroughly deliberated.

Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has announced plans to implement multiple board exams annually, allowing students to take their exams twice and retain their best score. This reform aligns with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which emphasises flexibility and a student-centric approach.

According to a ministry official, "The initiative aims at reducing the high-pressure, one-time examination system and provide students with an opportunity to improve their performance



Are You Ready. Chalkboard on a wooden background

without the stress of a single high-stakes test. By offering multiple attempts, CBSE seeks to create a more supportive learning environment that prioritizes conceptual understanding over rote memorisation."

The policy advocates for competency-based evaluations over traditional summative assessments, shifting focus to formative learning and skill mastery. "CBSE is encouraging a shift towards formative learning, where students can focus on skill mastery and self-improvement rather than mere exam performance. This model also aligns with global best practices, such as the SAT system in the US, which allows students to take tests multiple times and submit their best scores," said the official.

The move also supports

NEP's goal of inclusivity, accommodating students facing challenges such as exam anxiety or illness. Providing multiple attempts ensures students from diverse backgrounds have a fair chance to showcase their abilities. CBSE is also scaling up teacher training to ensure a smooth transition toward this progressive assessment model.

Pradhan emphasised that the new format is a crucial step towards a stress-free learning environment. "Examination improvement and reform is a key step towards this. This reform will help mitigate exam-related stress and ensure a more balanced evaluation system," he said.

In addition, CBSE will launch its Global Curriculum for foreign schools in 2026-2027.

- **Starting from 2026, CBSE will conduct Class X board exams twice a year, allowing students to retain their best scores.**  
2026 से, सीबीएसई कक्षा 10 की बोर्ड परीक्षाएं साल में दो बार आयोजित करेगा, जिससे छात्रों को अपना सर्वश्रेष्ठ स्कोर बनाए रखने का मौका मिलेगा।
- **This initiative is aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which promotes flexibility and a student-centric approach.**  
यह पहल राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति (NEP) 2020 के अनुरूप है, जो लचीलेपन और छात्र-केंद्रित दृष्टिकोण को बढ़ावा देती है।

- The move aims to reduce stress caused by single high-stakes exams and promote conceptual understanding over rote learning.  
इस कदम का उद्देश्य एक ही परीक्षा से होने वाले तनाव को कम करना और रटने की बजाय संकल्पनात्मक समझ को बढ़ावा देना है।
- CBSE is also introducing a Global Curriculum for 260 foreign-affiliated schools from 2026-27.  
सीबीएसई 2026-27 से 260 विदेशी संबद्ध स्कूलों के लिए एक वैश्विक पाठ्यक्रम भी शुरू करेगा।



- **Benefits of the Change | बदलाव के लाभ**
- **Students can take exams twice and choose their best score, similar to the SAT system in the US.**  
छात्र दो बार परीक्षा दे सकते हैं और अपना सर्वोत्तम स्कोर चुन सकते हैं, ठीक वैसे ही जैसे अमेरिका की SAT प्रणाली में होता है।
- **The focus will shift from summative assessments to formative learning and skill mastery.**  
परीक्षा प्रणाली को समग्र मूल्यांकन (summative assessments) से हटाकर कौशल विकास और अवधारणात्मक (conceptual) समझ की ओर ले जाया जाएगा।

- The change supports inclusivity, especially for students facing exam anxiety or illness.

यह कदम समावेशन (inclusivity) को बढ़ावा देगा, विशेष रूप से उन छात्रों के लिए जो परीक्षा के तनाव या बीमारियों से जूझ रहे हैं।

- CBSE will provide teacher training to ensure a smooth transition to this new format.

सीबीएसई शिक्षकों के लिए प्रशिक्षण की व्यवस्था करेगा ताकि इस नई परीक्षा प्रणाली में सुचारु रूप से बदलाव हो सके।


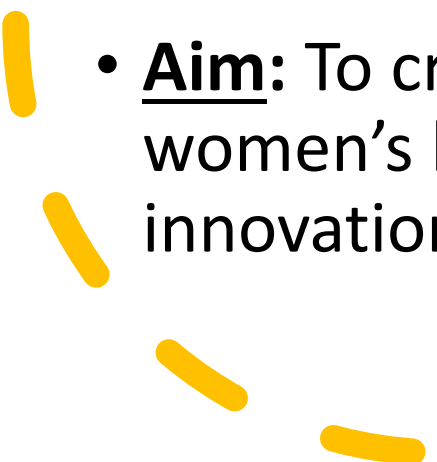
- **Government's Perspective | सरकार का दृष्टिकोण**
- **Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan emphasized that the reform will reduce stress and create a balanced evaluation system.**  
**शिक्षा मंत्री धर्मेंद्र प्रधान ने जोर दिया कि यह सुधार परीक्षा के तनाव को कम करेगा और एक संतुलित मूल्यांकन प्रणाली बनाएगा।**
- **The draft scheme will be released for public consultation next Monday before final implementation.**  
**इस योजना का मसौदा अगले सोमवार को सार्वजनिक परामर्श के लिए जारी किया जाएगा, उसके बाद इसे अंतिम रूप दिया जाएगा।**

“Imagine a World with  
More Women in  
Science” Campaign




- UNESCO launched the “Imagine a World with More Women in Science” campaign in February, marking the 10-year anniversary of the International Day of Women and Girls in Science.



- 
- **What it is:** A global awareness campaign highlighting the **importance of gender balance in STEM fields** and encouraging participation of women in scientific innovation.
  - **Launched by:** UNESCO, with support from Canada's International Development Centre (IDRC).
  - **Aim:** To create a gender-balanced scientific community, increase women's leadership in STEM, and promote inclusive research and innovation.
- 





- **Features:**

- **#EveryVoiceInScience Movement:** Engages global scientists to envision a diverse scientific landscape.
  - **Highlights Gender Disparity:** Women constitute only 22% of STEM jobs in G20 countries and 10% of leadership roles.
  - **Showcases Real-World Consequences:** Emphasizes missed innovations, AI biases, and unequal access to scientific opportunities.
  - **Encourages Social Media Participation:** Invites people to share their views on the impact of women in science.
- 



# Kerala's Plan to Grant Industry Status to Tourism





- 
- The Kerala government is planning to grant ‘industry status’ to tourism, a long-standing demand of the tourism and hospitality sector.
  - **Granting industry status**
  - It provides benefits like reduced power tariffs, water tariffs, and property taxes, promoting investment and job creation.
  - The **Ministry of Tourism** has launched a handbook which aims to serve as a guide to States/UTs to support efforts of States/UTs in granting and implementing ‘industry status’ for the tourism and hospitality sector.
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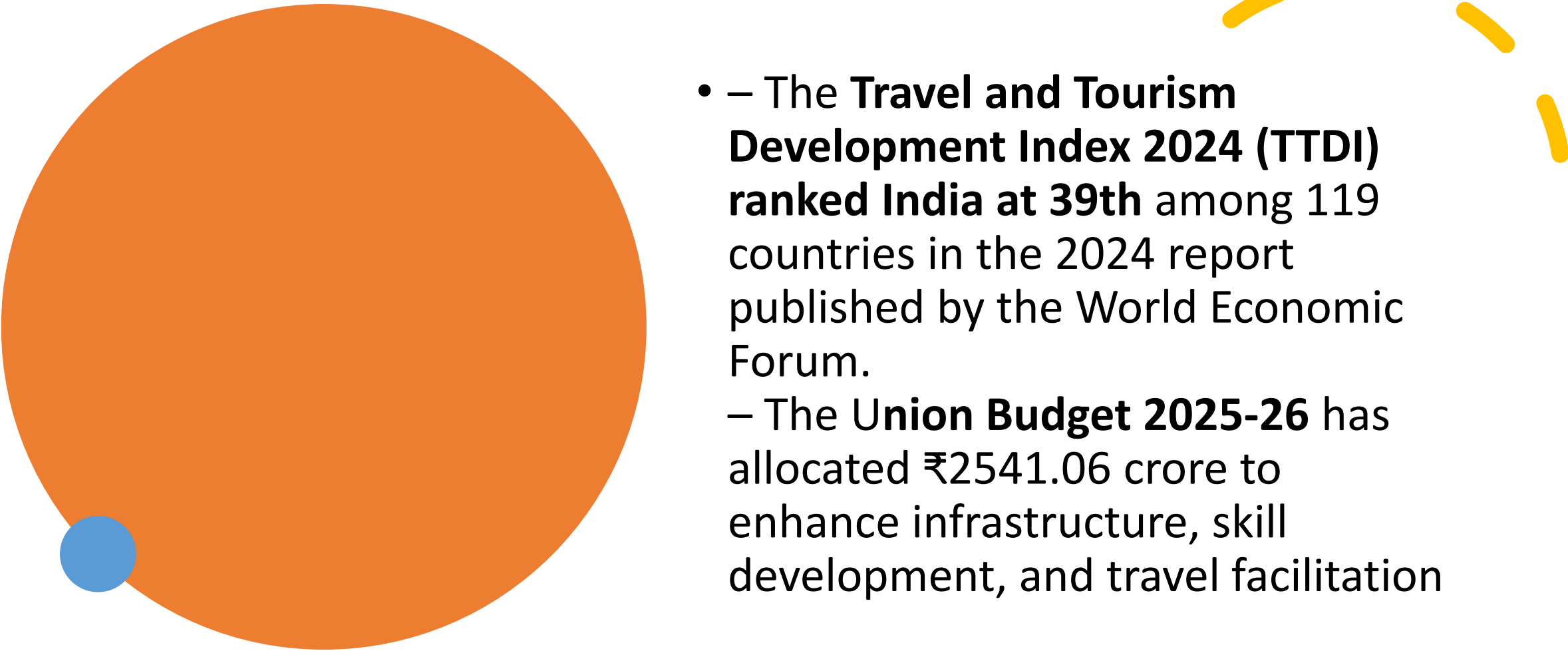
## Objectives and Need

```
graph TD; A[Objectives and Need] --> B[The tourism sector, which employs 5 lakh people directly and 20 lakh indirectly, has struggled due to natural disasters, the COVID-19 pandemic, and a major landslide in 2024.]; B --> C[The recent move aims to boost investment and development in the sector, which contributes around 10% to the State's GDP.];
```

The tourism sector, which employs 5 lakh people directly and 20 lakh indirectly, has struggled due to natural disasters, the COVID-19 pandemic, and a major landslide in 2024.


The recent move aims to boost investment and development in the sector, which contributes around 10% to the State's GDP.

- 
- – India's tourism sector, rich in heritage, culture, and diversity, is emerging as a global favorite and a key driver of economic growth.
    - The tourism sector's contribution to GDP regained the pre-pandemic level of 5 per cent in FY23. The tourism sector created 7.6 crore jobs in FY23.
- 

- 
- – The **Travel and Tourism Development Index 2024 (TTDI)** ranked India at **39th** among 119 countries in the 2024 report published by the World Economic Forum.
  - The **Union Budget 2025-26** has allocated ₹2541.06 crore to enhance infrastructure, skill development, and travel facilitation

# SAKSHAM Campaign





- 
- Indian Oil Corporation Limited and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited launched a 14-day awareness campaign called **SAKSHAM**.
  - **About**
  - The campaign was launched **on green energy and fuel conservation**.
  - It aims to **raise awareness about fuel conservation** and the judicious use of petroleum products to ensure a safer environment and sustainable energy resources for future generations.
  - The idea is to **convince consumers to switch to cleaner fuels** and bring in behavioural change to use fossil fuel intelligently.



-



# India's Trade with Afghanistan and Nepal

- 
- India recorded an unusual trade deficit with Afghanistan in the year 2023-24. In another development, soybean oil imports from Nepal surged 14-fold (April-November 2024), possibly due to rule-of-origin (RoO) violations
- 





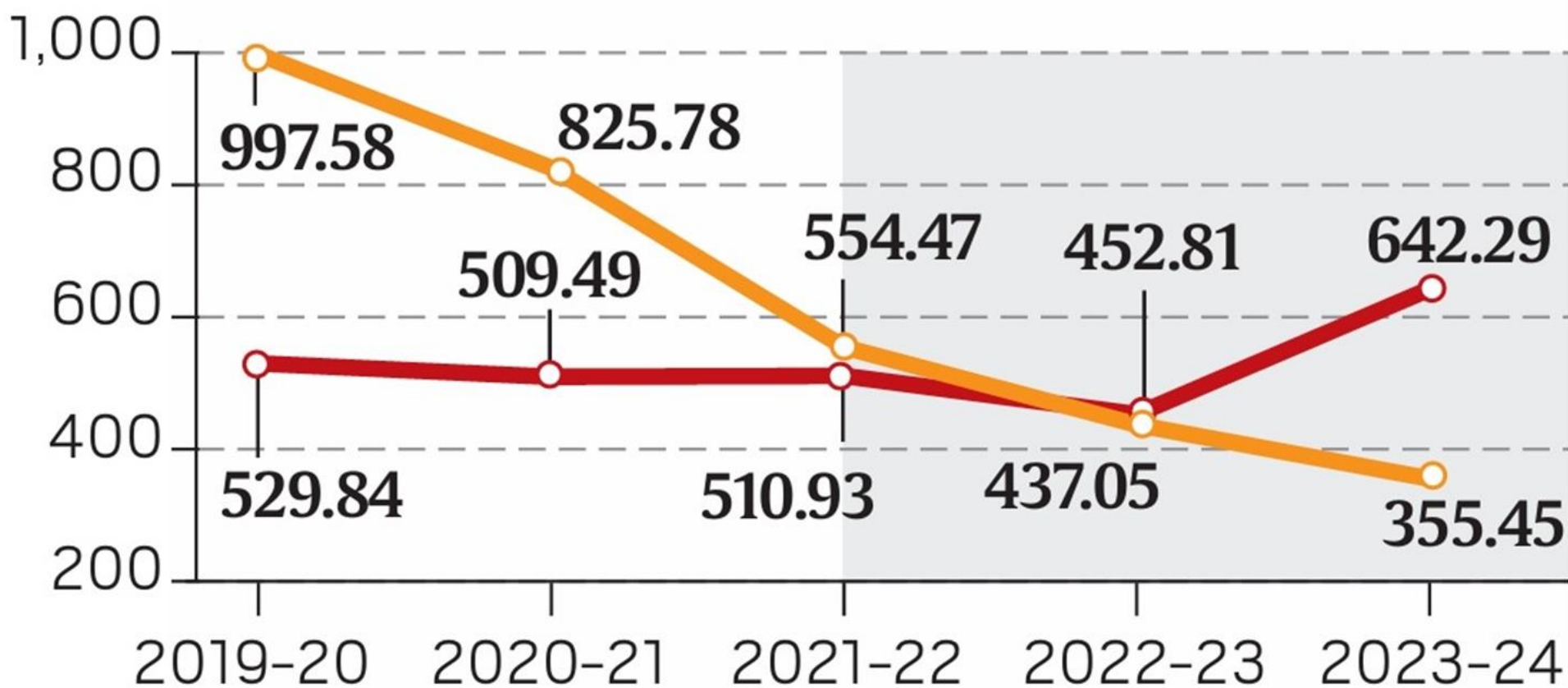
- **Afghanistan: Bilateral Trade**

**Trends:** India's exports to Afghanistan fell from **USD 825.78 million in 2020-21** to **USD 355.45 million in 2023-24**, while imports rose from **USD 509.49 million in 2020-21** to a record **USD 642.29 million in 2023-24**.

- Before this, the last time India saw a **trade deficit (USD 0.73 million)** with Afghanistan was in **2000-01**.
- 

# INDIA'S TRADE WITH AFGHANISTAN

Export Import in \$million



Source: Ministry of Commerce



**Imports:** Agricultural products like **figs, asafoetida, raisins, apples, garlic, saffron, almonds, onions, pomegranates, and walnuts** dominate.



**Exports:** Mainly **medicines, vaccines, soybean meal, and garments**.



**Key Products:** In **2023-24**, Afghanistan was the primary supplier of **asafoetida, raisins, and garlic**.

In 2023-24, Afghanistan became India's **3rd-largest apple supplier**, (surpassed Italy and the US) after **Iran and Turkey**.

- 
- **Nepal:** India's total soybean oil imports rose by 19% to nearly **USD 3 billion (April-November 2024)** from **USD 2.5 billion in 2023**.
    - **Rule-of-Origin Violation:** Nepal imports 98% crude edible oil, refines it, and exports it to India indicating **duty structure exploitation**.
      - Nepal enjoys a **30% tariff advantage** over other exporters due to the **Nepal-India Treaty of Trade (2009)**, allowing **duty-free exports** to India.
- 

10 MCQ

- India and Qatar have recently elevated their bilateral relations to which level?
- भारत और कतर ने हाल ही में अपने द्विपक्षीय संबंधों को किस स्तर तक बढ़ाया है?
- A. Economic Partnership / आर्थिक साझेदारी
- B. Strategic Partnership / रणनीतिक साझेदारी
- C. Free Trade Partnership / मुक्त व्यापार साझेदारी
- D. Diplomatic Alliance / राजनयिक गठबंधन

- Qatar is one of the largest suppliers of which resource to India?
- कतर भारत को किस संसाधन का सबसे बड़ा आपूर्तिकर्ता है?
- A. Crude Oil / कच्चा तेल
- B. Natural Gas (LNG) / प्राकृतिक गैस (LNG)
- C. Uranium / यूरेनियम
- D. Gold / सोना

- What is the purpose of India's Biannual Transparency Report (BTR)?
- भारत की द्विवार्षिक पारदर्शिता रिपोर्ट (BTR) का उद्देश्य क्या है?
- A. To report progress on sustainable development goals (SDGs) / सतत विकास लक्ष्यों (SDG) की प्रगति की रिपोर्ट देना
- B. To track greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and climate actions / ग्रीनहाउस गैस (GHG) उत्सर्जन और जलवायु कार्रवाइयों को ट्रैक करना
- C. To promote carbon credit trading / कार्बन क्रेडिट व्यापार को बढ़ावा देना
- D. To regulate industrial pollution / औद्योगिक प्रदूषण को नियंत्रित करना



- Under which international agreement is India preparing its first Biannual Transparency Report (BTR)?
- भारत अपना पहला द्विवार्षिक पारदर्शिता रिपोर्ट (BTR) किस अंतरराष्ट्रीय समझौते के तहत तैयार कर रहा है?
- A. Kyoto Protocol / क्योटो प्रोटोकॉल
- B. Paris Agreement 2015 / पेरिस समझौता 2015
- C. Montreal Protocol / मॉन्ट्रियल प्रोटोकॉल
- D. Glasgow Climate Pact / ग्लासगो जलवायु संधि

- India's total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions fell by what percentage in 2020 due to COVID-19 lockdowns?
- COVID-19 लॉकडाउन के कारण 2020 में भारत के कुल ग्रीनहाउस गैस (GHG) उत्सर्जन में कितने प्रतिशत की गिरावट आई?
- A. 5.1%
- B. 7.93%
- C. 10.2%
- D. 12.5%

- **What major concern was raised regarding the water quality at Sangam during the Maha Kumbh?**
- **महा कुम्भ के दौरान संगम में जल गुणवत्ता को लेकर प्रमुख चिंता क्या थी?**
- **A. High levels of toxic metals / विषैले धातुओं का उच्च स्तर**
- **B. Dangerous levels of fecal bacteria / मल जीवाणुओं का खतरनाक स्तर**
- **C. Excessive industrial pollution / अत्यधिक औद्योगिक प्रदूषण**
- **D. Severe oxygen depletion in water / जल में ऑक्सीजन की अत्यधिक कमी**

- Which organization has been monitoring pollution levels in the Ganga and Yamuna rivers?
- गंगा और यमुना नदियों में प्रदूषण स्तर की निगरानी कौन सा संगठन कर रहा है?
- A. National Green Tribunal (NGT) / राष्ट्रीय हरित अधिकरण (NGT)
- B. Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) / केंद्रीय प्रदूषण नियंत्रण बोर्ड (CPCB)
- C. Ministry of Jal Shakti / जल शक्ति मंत्रालय
- D. World Health Organization (WHO) / विश्व स्वास्थ्य संगठन (WHO)

- Which company has recently posted job openings in Mumbai and Delhi for its expansion in India?
- किस कंपनी ने हाल ही में भारत में अपने विस्तार के लिए मुंबई और दिल्ली में नौकरियों की घोषणा की है?
- A. Apple / एप्पल
- B. Tesla / टेस्ला
- C. Amazon / अमेज़न
- D. Microsoft / माइक्रोसॉफ्ट

- Which new educational reform has CBSE announced starting from 2026?
- CBSE ने 2026 से कौन सा नया शैक्षिक सुधार लागू करने की घोषणा की है?
- A. Class 10 board exams will be held twice a year / कक्षा 10 की बोर्ड परीक्षा साल में दो बार आयोजित की जाएगी
- B. Introduction of open-book exams for Class 12 / कक्षा 12 के लिए ओपन-बुक परीक्षा शुरू होगी
- C. Abolition of board exams for secondary students / माध्यमिक छात्रों के लिए बोर्ड परीक्षाएं समाप्त की जाएंगी
- D. Implementation of AI-based grading system / एआई-आधारित ग्रेडिंग प्रणाली लागू होगी

- UNESCO has launched which campaign to promote gender balance in STEM fields?
- STEM क्षेत्रों में लैंगिक संतुलन को बढ़ावा देने के लिए UNESCO ने कौन सा अभियान शुरू किया है?
- A. Women in Science Leadership Initiative / विज्ञान नेतृत्व में महिलाएं पहल
- B. Imagine a World with More Women in Science / कल्पना करें एक दुनिया जहाँ विज्ञान में अधिक महिलाएं हों
- C. Global Women in STEM Movement / वैश्विक महिलाएं STEM आंदोलन
- D. Breaking Barriers for Women in Science / विज्ञान में महिलाओं के लिए बाधाएं तोड़ना

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# Word of the day

## **Bulwark:**

an embankment built around a space for defensive purposes; a fencelike structure around a deck; a protective structure of stone or concrete

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**Synonyms:** rampart, wall, seawall

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**Usage:** *The organisers see the event as an important bulwark against extremism.*

---

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

---

**International Phonetic**

**Alphabet:** /'bʊl.wək/

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- 
- **The Real Name of \_\_\_\_\_ Is the Longest City Name in the World**  
**"Krung Thep Maha Nakhon Amon Rattanakosin Mahinthara Yuthaya Mahadilok Phop Noppharat Ratchathani Burirom Udomratchaniwet Mahasathan Amon Piman Awatan Sathit Sakkathattiya Witsanukam Prasit."**

This makes it the **longest city name in the world!**



Red Bull Was Invented in

---

Railway Recruitment Board (RRB)

Class24

# NTPC

(गैर-तकनीकी लोकप्रिय श्रेणियाँ)

20 मॉडल पेपर्स

CBT (कंप्यूटर आधारित टेस्ट)-1

- सामान्य जागरूकता
- गणित
- सामान्य बुद्धि और तर्कशक्ति

20 OMR SHEETS सहित

— विशेषताएँ —

- परीक्षा की दृष्टि से अतिमहत्वपूर्ण प्रश्नों का व्याख्या सहित हल
- नवीनतम पाठ्यक्रम पर आधारित प्रश्नों का समावेशन
- विगत वर्ष के प्रश्नपत्रों के विश्लेषण पर आधारित प्रश्न



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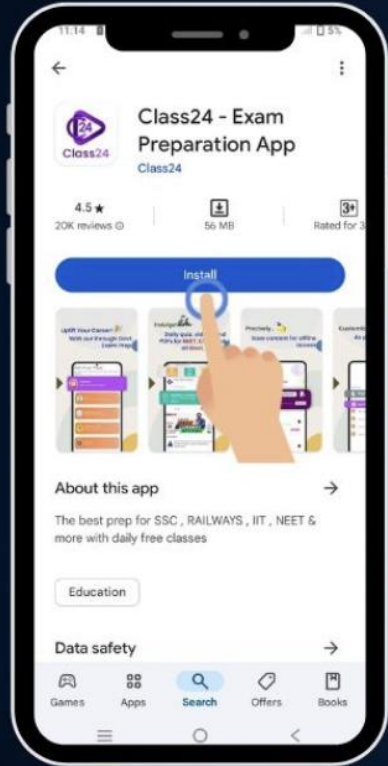
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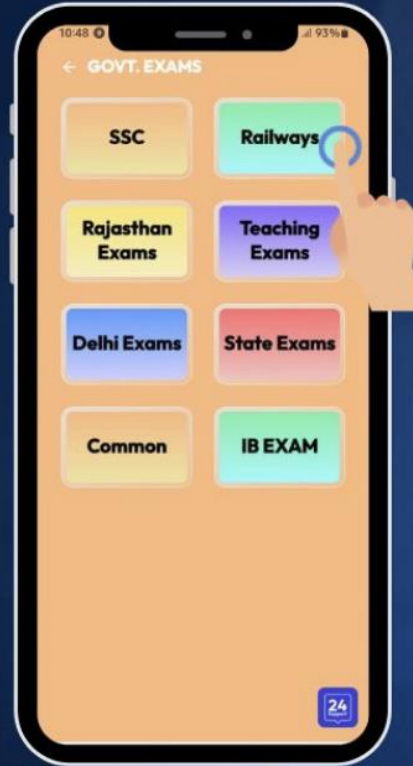
# Step 1



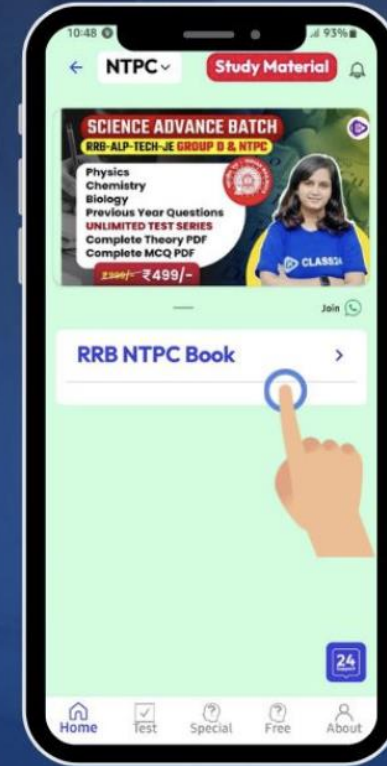
# Step 2




# Step 3



# Step 4





Thank you  
guys.

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