

Daily Current Affairs



जनसत्ता



The Indian EXPRESS

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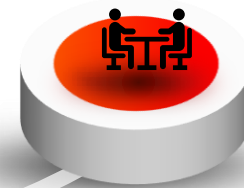
7
PIB, PRS & Other newspaper



2
The Indian Express



0
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10 MCQ QUIZ

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

Top 10 MCQ from the session for
every exam

- What is the primary objective of the **SpaDeX Mission** launched by ISRO?
इसरो द्वारा लॉन्च किए गए **स्पाडेक्स मिशन** का मुख्य उद्देश्य क्या है?
- **A. To study Mars' atmosphere / मंगल के वायुमंडल का अध्ययन करना**
- **B. Demonstrate spacecraft docking technologies / अंतरिक्ष यान डॉकिंग तकनीकों का प्रदर्शन करना**
- **C. Launch satellites for weather monitoring / मौसम निगरानी के लिए उपग्रह लॉन्च करना**
- **D. Test reusable rocket technology / पुनः प्रयोज्य रॉकेट तकनीक का परीक्षण करना**

- . The SpaDeX mission involved which launch vehicle?
स्पाडेक्स मिशन में कौन सा लॉन्च वाहन शामिल था?
- **A. PSLV C60 / पीएसएलवी सी60**
- **B. GSLV Mk III / जीएसएलवी एमके III**
- **C. ASLV / एसएलवी**
- **D. SLV-3 / एसएलवी-3**

- Where was the SpaDeX mission launched from?
स्पाडेक्स मिशन कहाँ से लॉन्च किया गया?
- **A. Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre / विक्रम साराभाई अंतरिक्ष केंद्र**
- **B. Satish Dhawan Space Centre / सतीश धवन अंतरिक्ष केंद्र**
- **C. Thumba Equatorial Rocket Launching Station / थुंबा भूमध्य रॉकेट प्रक्षेपण स्टेशन**
- **D. Chandipur Integrated Test Range / चांदीपुर एकीकृत परीक्षण रेंज**

- What is the historical significance of SpaDeX for India?
स्पाडेक्स का भारत के लिए ऐतिहासिक महत्व क्या है?
- **A. India's first mission for Mars exploration / भारत का मंगल अन्वेषण के लिए पहला मिशन**
- **B. India's first mission to master docking technology / डॉकिंग तकनीक में महारत हासिल करने के लिए भारत का पहला मिशन**
- **C. India's first satellite communication experiment / भारत का पहला उपग्रह संचार प्रयोग**
- **D. India's first reusable rocket test / भारत का पहला पुनः प्रयोज्य रॉकेट परीक्षण**

- The SpaDeX mission satellites, SDX01 and SDX02, were placed in which orbit?
स्पाडेक्स मिशन के उपग्रह SDX01 और SDX02 को किस कक्षा में स्थापित किया गया?
- **A. Geostationary orbit / भूस्थैतिक कक्षा**
- **B. Polar orbit / ध्रुवीय कक्षा**
- **C. Circular orbit at 475 km / 475 किमी की गोलाकार कक्षा**
- **D. Low Earth orbit at 200 km / 200 किमी की निम्न पृथ्वी कक्षा**

- What advanced module was signed under the defense contract related to Scorpene submarines?
स्कोर्पीन पनडुब्बियों से संबंधित रक्षा अनुबंध के तहत किस उन्नत मॉड्यूल पर हस्ताक्षर किए गए?
- **A. Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) module / एयर इंडिपेंडेंट प्रोपल्शन (AIP) मॉड्यूल**
- B. Heavyweight electronic torpedoes / भारी इलेक्ट्रॉनिक टॉरपीडो**
- C. Nuclear propulsion module / परमाणु प्रोपल्शन मॉड्यूल**
- D. Advanced navigation system / उन्नत नेविगेशन प्रणाली**

- The integration of electronic heavyweight torpedoes is in collaboration with which country?

इलेक्ट्रॉनिक भारी टॉरपीडो का एकीकरण किस देश के साथ सहयोग में है?

- **A. Russia / रूस**
- B. France / फ्रांस**
- C. USA / अमेरिका**
- D. Israel / इज़राइल**

- What is **Sevdalinka**, recently recognized by UNESCO?
हाल ही में यूनेस्को द्वारा मान्यता प्राप्त सेवडलिनका क्या है?
- **A. A cultural dance form from India / भारत की सांस्कृतिक नृत्य शैली**
- **B. A melancholic urban love song from Bosnia / बोस्निया का उदास शहरी प्रेम गीत**
- **C. A traditional tribal art from Africa / अफ्रीका की पारंपरिक जनजातीय कला**
- **D. A martial art from Japan / जापान की एक मार्शल आर्ट**

- What is the purpose of UNESCO's National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage?
यनेस्को की अमूर्त सांस्कृतिक विरासत की राष्ट्रीय सूची का उद्देश्य क्या है?
- **A. To safeguard endangered cultural practices / संकटग्रस्त सांस्कृतिक प्रथाओं की रक्षा करना**
- **B. To promote global tourism / वैश्विक पर्यटन को बढ़ावा देना**
- **C. To establish global trade agreements / वैश्विक व्यापार समझौतों को स्थापित करना**
- **D. To ensure environmental sustainability / पर्यावरणीय स्थिरता सुनिश्चित करना**

- What are the main symptoms of Metabolic Dysfunction-Associated Steatotic Liver Disease (MASLD)?
मेटाबोलिक डिसफंक्शन-संबंधित स्टीयोटिक लिवर डिजीज (MASLD) के मुख्य लक्षण क्या हैं?
- **A. Fatigue and right upper abdominal ache / थकान और दाहिनी ऊपरी पेट में दर्द**
- **B. Yellowing skin and swelling / पीली त्वचा और सूजन**
- **C. Advanced cases may lead to cirrhosis / उन्नत मामलों में सिरोसिस हो सकता है**
- **D. All of the above / उपरोक्त सभी**

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By Bhunesh Sir

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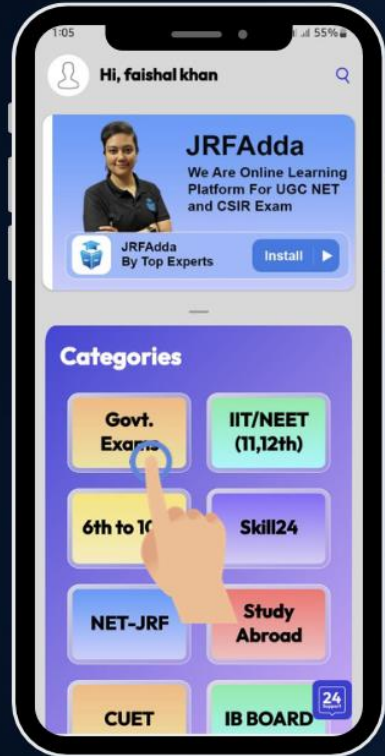
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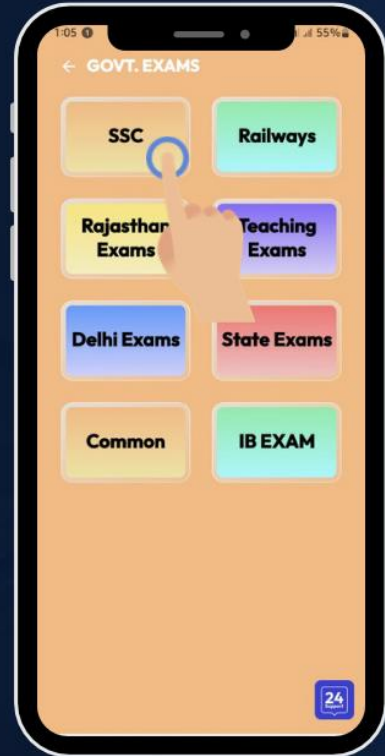
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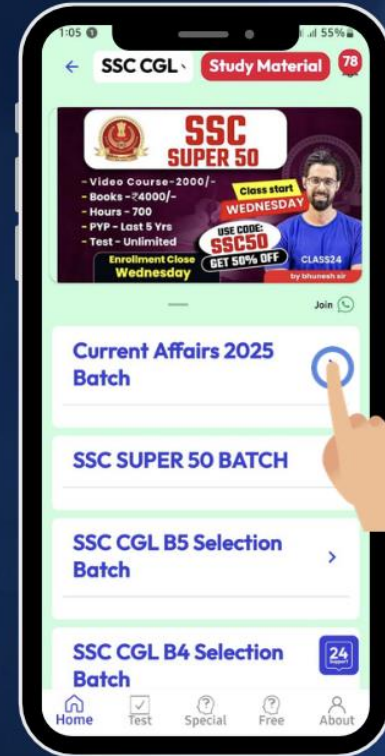
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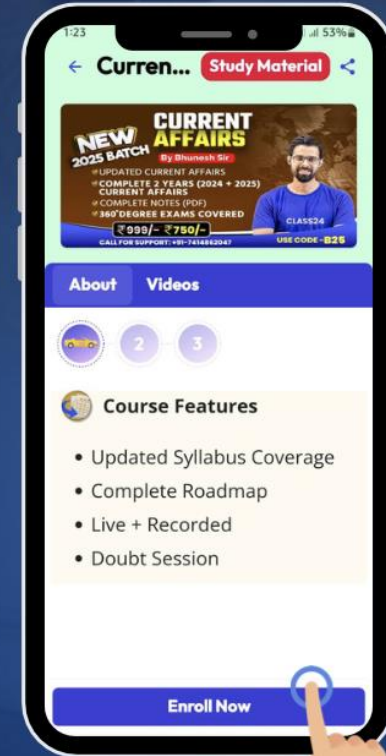
Step 2



Step 3



Step 4



Franklin D. Roosevelt, *Various speeches*

“The only limit to our realization of tomorrow will be our doubts of today.” –



21 DAYS LATER

Zenat to be returned to Simlipal

Q4 CONDITIONS
Status quo on rates for small savings
BUSINESS » PAGE 12

Biren expresses 'regret' for violence in Manipur

The Chief Minister apologises for lives lost and people displaced, hopes for peace in 2025; Congress demands a similar apology from Prime Minister, says he and Union Home Minister should also take responsibility; Indigenous Tribal Forum says 30 women were injured when Central armed forces dispersed 'peaceful protesters' on the same day

India scores high on social hostilities index

Violence over religion results in a 9.3 score
OPINION » PAGE 9

Bengal regains the Santosh Trophy

SPORT » PAGE 16

INSIDE



Atishi, L-G spar over religious structures

NEW DELHI
Delhi Chief Minister Atishi and Lieutenant-Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena got into a war of words on Tuesday after she alleged that several religious places in Delhi had been put on a list of structures to be demolished. The L-G office denied her claim. » PAGE 2



Kashmir cold wave continues to intensify

NEW DELHI
Cold wave conditions intensified across Kashmir on Tuesday, with the IMD predicting fresh squalls of light to moderate snowfall in the valley during the week, while Uttar Pradesh saw a sharp fall in temperature. » PAGE 5

Quad members to work towards a 'free' Indo-Pacific

NEW DELHI
India and other Quad member nations on Tuesday reaffirmed the grouping's steadfast commitment to work towards a free, open, stable, and peaceful Indo-Pacific amid China's increasing military muscle-flexing in the region. » PAGE 4



S. Korean court issues warrants to detain Yoon

SEOUL
A South Korean court issued warrants on Tuesday to detain impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol and search his office and residence over allegations of rebellion in connection with his short-lived declaration of martial law. » PAGE 14



Biren expresses 'regret' for violence in Manipur

The Chief Minister apologises for lives lost and people displaced, hopes for peace in 2025; Congress demands a similar apology from Prime Minister, says he and Union Home Minister should also take responsibility; Indigenous Tribal Forum says 30 women were injured when Central armed forces dispersed 'peaceful protesters' on the same day

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI/NEW DELHI

Manipur Chief Minister Nongthombam Biren Singh has apologised to the people of the State for the loss of hundreds of lives during the past 20 months of ethnic violence.

On New Year's Eve, he expressed the hope that 2025 would usher in peace and normalcy in Manipur.

"I want to say sorry to the people of the State for what happened since May 3 last year (2023). Many people lost their loved ones, many left their homes. I really feel regret and would like to apologise to all natives," he told journalists in the State's capital Imphal on Tuesday.



Whatever happened has happened. We have to forgive and forget the past mistakes and make a new beginning for a peaceful and prosperous Manipur.

N. BIREN SINGH, Chief Minister

Why can't the Prime Minister go to Manipur and say the same thing there? He has deliberately avoided visiting the State since May 4th, 2023, even as he jets around the country and the world.

JAIRAM RAMESH, Congress leader

77% of Northeast violence cases are from Manipur

NEW DELHI
Manipur accounted for 77% of violent incidents that took place in northeastern India in 2023, according to the Union Home Ministry's annual report for 2023-24 published on Monday. » PAGE 4

Houthi factor makes India cautious on Nimisha case

Kallol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

India is handling the "sensitive" case of the death sentence awarded to Nimisha Priya from Kerala in Yemen with great caution as New Delhi does not maintain any official contact with the Houthis, who control the Yemen capital, Sana'a, sources here indicated on Tuesday.

SC gives Punjab three more days to shift Dallewal

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Punjab government informed the Supreme Court on Tuesday that protesting farmers had written to the Centre, saying their leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal, who has been on a hunger strike for 35 days, would seek medical help only if the Centre invited them for talks.

Welcome 2025



Festivities begin! Fireworks exploding over the Sydney Opera House and Harbour Bridge as the New Year dawns in the Australian city. AP

Kerala CM Vijayan supports Sivagiri Math's call to end practice of removing shirts at temples



Festivities begin! Fireworks exploding over the Sydney Opera House and Harbour Bridge as the New Year dawns in the Australian city. AP

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Tuesday said the Sivagiri Math had broadcast a powerful social reformist message by suggesting that devotees abandon the regressive practice of removing shirts before entering temples.

Inaugurating the 92nd Sivagiri pilgrimage at Yarkala, near here, Mr. Vijayan said Math president Swamy Sachthandan had said that the practice was anachronistic and out of tune with modern progressive values. "His words echoed the reformist thought, life and message of Sw. Narayana Guru," he said.

Mr. Vijayan said temples associated with the Guru's movement had abandoned the questionable custom. He hoped other temples would follow suit.

There is no need to force anybody. Nevertheless, progressive change is inevitable. Sivagiri has historically led reformist social movements.

PNASAKI VIJAYAN, Chief Minister of Kerala

In his speech, Mr. Vijayan said the attempt to portray the Guru as a champion of *Sanatana Dharma* ran counter to the renaissance leader's humanist message.

Challenging tenets
The Guru challenged the tenets of *Sanatana Dharma*, he noted. He said *Sanatana Dharma* "celebrated monarchy, feted the oppressive dominance of the Brahminical pecking order and advanced the social and economic hierarchy based on a rigid caste-

based public order". "The 18th-century king of the erstwhile princely State of Travancore, Marthanda Varma, ruled in the name of *Sanatana Dharma*," Mr. Vijayan said the *Mahabharata* was ambiguous about the principle of universal justice as espoused by *Sanatana Dharma*. At the epic's end, "righteous Yudhishthira and morally wrong Duryodhana" gain a champion of *Sanatana Dharma* in the form of Krishna.

The State's Advocate-General, Gurjinder Singh, explained that its efforts to hospitalise Mr. Dallewal mobilised 2,000 personnel by the farmers' bandh on Monday. He said Punjab had decided to hold its bandh after the farmers' letter to the State Narayana Guru harshly questioned the text's ambivalence about the concept of justice, Mr. Vijayan said.

He said some entities were misreading the public by claiming that restoration order and *Sanatana Dharma* was a panacea for socioeconomic inequalities.

"We will not comment

ing this period pointed to "good progress" in tackling the issue.

"The Centre provided enough security personnel and funds to help the displaced families. Altogether 7,549 people of 2,058 families have been resettled," he said.

Speaking to prespers, Mr. Ramesh said, "It has taken 19 months for the Chief Minister to say what he has said today. And it's not enough. The real issue is not what the Chief Minister says or doesn't say. For 19 months, the Prime Minister has not spoken. He has travelled all over the country, he has travelled all over the world, but he has not found time to go to Manipur. That's the issue."



The Punjab government told the court that its efforts to hospitalise Dallewal was thwarted by the farmers' bandh on Monday. PTI

on anything about negotiations or the law-and-order situation. If something happens that is acceptable to the farmers and all stakeholders, we will be happy," Justice Kartikey said.

In the previous hearing on December 28, the court gave the Punjab government time till December 31 to take Mr. Dallewal to hospital. The Punjab Chief Secretary and the Director-General of Police are facing contempt action for their inability to comply with the court orders.

"Taking into consideration the totality of the circumstances and in the interest of justice, we are inclined to accept the request for more time for compliance of the court's directions," the court recorded in its order.

Efforts in vain: govt.
"We had our interventions and negotiators go there. We did make efforts for compliance. We had even mobilised 2,000 personnel right next to the site. But the bandh was total. There were blockades all over Punjab. We were hindered," the Advocate-General told the court.

On December 28, the Punjab government apprehended that a "forcible evacuation" of Mr. Dallewal to a hospital would lead to "collateral damage" between the police personnel and the agitating farmers.

India treads carefully on death sentence to woman in Yemen

Kallol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

India is handling the "sensitive" case of the death sentence awarded to Nimisha Priya from Kerala in Yemen with great caution as New Delhi does not maintain any official contact with the Houthis, who control the Yemeni capital, Sana'a, sources here indicated on Tuesday.

Ms. Nimisha received the death sentence after being convicted of killing her Yemeni business partner Talal Abdul Mahad.

Many in charge Officials familiar with the case said Yemen was being run by three different groups, with the Houthis in charge of the capital and capable of influencing all important institutions of the country located in Sana'a, making the case unique.

Earlier, the official spokesperson, Randhir Jaiswal, had said the Ministry of External Affairs was aware that the family of Ms. Nimisha was exploring relevant options".

Apart from its internal political breakdown, Yemen's major cities, including Sana'a, are being bombed by Israel, U.S. and U.K. fighter jets that are targeting the Houthis, which is complicating the case.



Nimisha Priya

"The government is extending all possible help in the matter", said Mr. Jaiswal in a statement.

In 2014, Ms. Nimisha had reportedly received support from Talal to start a hospital business but ties between the two soured subsequently to such an extent that she accused him of abuse and intimidation.

In 2017, acting on the suggestion of at least one local person, Ms. Nimisha allegedly administered sedatives to Talal to retrieve her travel documents which led to his death.

Some sources indicated that negotiation is currently under way to reach a settlement through blood money, a standard procedure within the Yemeni legal system.

However, they pointed out significant uncertainty in the case, with the Houthis being in control on the ground and in active conflict with major Western powers.

'Manipur accounts for 77% of Northeast violence cases'

State recorded 137 incidents in 2022, which rose to 187 in 2023 and 203 till November-end in 2024, according to Home Ministry; counter-insurgency operations led to 33 insurgent deaths in 2023

Vijlata Singh
NEW DELHI

Manipur accounted for 77% of violent incidents that took place in northeastern India in 2022, according to the Union Home Ministry's annual report for 2023-24.

There were 243 violent incidents reported in the Northeast in 2023, of which 187 were in Manipur. The Union government released ₹247.26 crore to Manipur in 2023 to operate relief camps and rehabilitate people affected by the State's "law and order crisis".

The Home Ministry report, published on Monday, said that the rise in incidents of violence in Manipur was due to the prevailing ethnic strife between Meitei and Kuki communities, and the resultant increase in casualties among civilians and security personnel in comparison to 2022.

Rising violence In comparison to the 187 incidents reported in 2023, which resulted in the deaths of 35 civilians and seven security personnel, there were 17 insurgency-related incidents registered in the State in 2022.



Unresolved conflict: The police firing tear gas shells at protesters in Imphal in July 2023. FILE PHOTO

In which five civilians and one security force personnel lost their lives. According to the Ministry's data for 2024, until November 30, 203 incidents of violence had been reported, which led to three security personnel and 28 civilians being killed.

The counter-insurgency operations in 2023 also resulted in 33 insurgents being killed, while 184 insurgents were arrested and 49 were reported to have been recovered. Another 80 members of insurgent outfits surrendered with 31 weapons, the report said.

On November 29, 2023, the Ministry and the Manipur government signed a peace agreement with one of the factions of the United National Liberation Front (UNLF), the oldest armed Valley-based Meitei insurgent group. The group advocates for secession of Manipur and largely operates from Myanmar.

Central deployment In response to the 187 incidents reported in the State on May 3, 2023, more than 250 people have been killed. In just the first three months, between May 3 and July 30, 2023, as many as 3,023 first information

reports (FIR) pertaining to rape, sexual offences against women, murder, loot, and arson were registered in the State.

Through the issue of violation primarily relates to the maintenance of public order which is under the domain of the State, the Union government took a series of immediate and sustained actions to handle the situation, it said.

On June 4, 2023, the Union government appointed a Commission of Inquiry headed by a retired High Court Chief Justice, to inquire into the causes and spread of the violence.

Nigerians top list of deported in 2023-24: Home Ministry data

Vijlata Singh
NEW DELHI

The highest number of foreigners deported from India were from Nigeria, followed by Bangladesh and Uganda, the Union Home Ministry said in its annual report for 2023-24.

A total of 2,331 foreigners were deported by the Foreigners Regional Registration Officers (FRROs) from April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024. Of these, 1,470 people belonged to Nigeria, 411 people were from Bangladesh and 78 belonged to Uganda. The FRRO maintains the records of foreigners who enter India on valid documents. The deportation can be for overstaying the visa and flouting visa conditions among others.

During the same period, 112 Long-Term Visas (LTVs) were granted by the Home Ministry for minority communities from Pakistan, LTVs, ranging from a year to five years, are precursors to citizenship.

Since 2019, all citizenship applications are being processed online and between April 1, 2023 and March 31, 2024, a total of 1,699 citizenship certificates have been granted by the Union as well as State governments. The Home Ministry has delegated powers to State government officials in 31 districts



During the period, 1,112 Long-Term Visas were granted to those from minority communities from Pakistan.

In nine States to grant citizenship to foreigners under the provisions of the Citizenship Act, 1955. "Out of this, 1,278 were granted by registration under Section 5 and 421 were granted by naturalisation under Section 6 of the Citizenship Act, 1955," the report said.

The data does not reflect the number of citizenship certificates granted under the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (CAA).

Around 98 lakh foreigners visited India during the period and the highest number of visitors were from Bangladesh (21,08,734), followed by United States of America (17,37,949), United Kingdom (9,86,954), Australia (4,72,913), Canada (4,00,417), Sri Lanka (2,85,664), and Malaysia (2,80,278).

Nepal (2,39,270) and Singapore (2,00,708).

Woman loses ₹1.25 crore in digital arrest case

Press Trust of India
MUMBAI

A 68-year-old woman was duped of ₹1.25 crore by cyberfraudsters who coerced her into paying the money by accusing her of being involved in a financial fraud, the police said on Tuesday.

The victim is a resident of Goregaon city and lives with her husband.

In her complaint lodged at the cyber police station of the crime branch in November, she received a call from an unidentified woman, who introduced herself as an executive of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), an official said.

She threatened the victim of filing a case for not clearing off her credit card dues and asked her to speak to the Hyderabad police. The caller then transferred her number to another man, who posed himself as a police officer.

The man claimed that her credit card was used in a financial fraud of ₹500 crore at Hyderabad and ₹20 lakh were deposited into her account. The man then told her that he was transferring the call to a CBI officer, who made a video call to the victim woman and threatened to arrest her, he said.

The fraudsters asked the victim to maintain secrecy about her arrest and her residence. They asked not to inform any relative, including her husband, he added.

The fraudsters then asked her that if she wanted to save herself from being arrested, she had to deposit money in the given bank accounts, following which the woman deposited around ₹1.25 crore in a span of one month, the official said. However, the victim later came across a news item about digital arrest in the newspaper, following which she realised that she was also cheated by the cyberfraudsters.

Training for the big day



Warning up: Navy personnel rehearsing for the Republic Day Parade at Kartavya Path in New Delhi on Tuesday. PTI

Power outage at Delhi data centre disrupts IRCTC, govt. websites

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Several government websites went down on Tuesday following a power outage at the National Informatics Centre's (NIC) data centre in Shaheed Park in northeast Delhi, sources said. While the outage was resolved, the websites continued to be down until 7:30 p.m.

A day ahead of the New Year, the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) website went down, disrupting last-minute attempts by travellers to purchase train tickets for trains departing on January 1.

The IRCTC site was not accessible during the takal booking period the day after Christmas as well due to "a technical issue in the server," the MoI, continued to since error messages remained inaccessible until press time.

While the outage was resolved, the websites continued to be down until 7:30 p.m.

IRCTC officials were not immediately available to comment on the rail booking site's outage on Tuesday.

The sites that went down during the evening include those of the Department of Telecommunications, the External Affairs Ministry, the Press Information Bureau which distributes government announcements to the news media, the Health and Family Welfare Ministry, and the Labour Ministry.

The sites of the MEA and the DoT were back online by 7:30 p.m. The PIB and the MoI, continued to since error messages remained inaccessible until press time.

Quad members vow to work vigorously towards a free, open, and stable Indo-Pacific

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

India and other Quad member nations on Tuesday reaffirmed the group's steadfast commitment to work towards a free, open, and peaceful Indo-Pacific amid China's increasing military muscle-flexing in the region.

Foreign Ministers of the member nations of the grouping made the pledge in a joint statement commemorating the 20th anniversary of the "Quad cooperation".

India, the U.S., Australia and Japan came together 20 years ago to extend assistance in response to the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami, and that coalition subsequently took the form of the Quad.

In the last few years, the Quad would work together to address a wide range of issues, including the future needs of the Indo-Pacific.

"As four partners, we share a vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific that is peaceful, stable and prosperous and underpinned by effective regional institutions," the joint statement said.

The Quad Foreign Ministers talked about the centrality of 10-nation grouping Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in the Indo-Pacific region, including in areas of maritime security, infrastructure and connectivity.

India is scheduled to host the summit likely in the second half of 2025.

The Foreign Ministers of the four nations said the Quad would work together to address a wide range of issues, including the future needs of the Indo-Pacific.

Four workers killed in fire at steel plant in Surat

Press Trust of India
SURAT

Four workers were killed and another was injured in a fire at a steel plant in Gujarat's Surat on Tuesday evening, officials said.

The incident occurred at ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India's (AMNIS India) Surat Commission of Police Anupam Singh Gehlot said.

"We have learnt that the fire spread in one section of the plant, causing coal suddenly spilled over. The resultant blaze killed four workers and injured one on a lift at that time in the plant," he said.

Police are probing into the incident which will be carried out by the police as well as the factory inspector, he said.

An official of the Hazira police station said no accidental death report has been filed so far.

Of the four persons who lost their lives, the bodies of three victims have been brought to the civil hospital in post-mortem examination, an official said.

In a statement, a spokesperson of the company said the incident took place at the Corex plant due to equipment failure.

"We are sorry to report an accident at COREX plant due to equipment failure at AMNS Hazira Operations. The accident occurred around 11 pm

day during the restart of the unit after shutdown. Four contract workers of a private company performing maintenance on a lift (elevator) nearby were embroiled in the impact and could not survive," the spokesperson said in a statement.

One worker suffered a minor injury and was immediately shifted to a hospital on the premises of the plant and is recovering, it added.

"We are extending all support to the families of the affected personnel. All emergency protocols were activated immediately and the area has been cordoned off," the statement noted.

Odisha police nab two fraudsters with many cases across country

The Hindu Bureau
BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha Police has apprehended K. Satish Kumar from Chennai and C.M. Harish from Kochi, both notorious tricksters with multiple criminal cases pending against them in different States.

In the latest case, the two had allegedly defrauded a senior scientist of ₹1.06 crore by assuming false identity of officers of the Mumbai Crime Branch.

Out of the total ₹1.06 crore that was cheated, ₹68 lakh was transferred to the bank accounts of Satish Kumar and ₹50 lakh to that of Harish.

"A senior scientist from Bhubaneswar had lodged a complaint that on August 9, 2024 he received a call from an unknown mobile number and the person on the other side claimed to be a courtier com-

pany. He told him that using his name and Adhaar number, a parcel was sent to Japan containing five passports, three credit cards, 200 gm of methyloxyethamphetamine (MDEMA), four kg cloth, one laptop and ₹55,000," said the Odisha Crime Branch in a press release.

They claimed that he would be implicated in a narcotics case and told him to transfer a hefty amount to evade arrest. They also told him that illegal bank accounts were opened using his Adhaar and that there were used for money laundering.

"On verification, it was found there are 22 other complaints against Satish Kumar and six complaints against Harish," the Odisha Crime Branch said. The two were produced in a local court in Bhubaneswar.

Nigerians top list of deported in 2023-24: Home Ministry data

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

The highest number of foreigners deported from India were from Nigeria, followed by Bangladesh and Uganda, the Union Home Ministry said in its annual report for 2023-24.

A total of 2,331 foreigners were deported by the Foreigners Regional Registration Officers (FRROs) from April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024. Of these, 1,470 people belonged to Nigeria, 411 people were from Bangladesh and 78 belonged to Uganda. The FRRO maintains the records of foreigners who enter India on valid documents. The deportation can be for overstaying the visa and flouting visa conditions among others.

During the same period, 1,112 Long-Term Visas (LTV) were granted by the Home Ministry for minority communities from Pakistan. LTVs, ranging from a year to five years, are precursors to citizenship.

Since 2019, all citizenship applications are being processed online and between April 1, 2023 and March 31, 2024, a total of 1,699 citizenship certificates have been granted by the Union as well as State governments. The Home Ministry has delegated powers to State government officials in 31 districts



During the period, 1,112 Long-Term Visas were granted to those from minority communities from Pakistan.



in nine States to grant citizenship to foreigners under the provisions of the Citizenship Act, 1955. "Out of this, 1,278 were granted by registration under Section 5 and 421 were granted by naturalisation under Section 6 of the Citizenship Act, 1955," the report said. The data does not reflect the number of citizenship certificates granted under the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (CAA).

Around 98 lakh foreigners visited India during the period and the highest number of visitors were from Bangladesh (21,08,734), followed by United States of America (17,37,549), United Kingdom (9,86,954), Australia (4,72,913), Canada (4,00,417), Sri Lanka (2,85,664), and Malaysia (2,80,578), Germany (2,39,271), Nepal (2,02,197) and Singapore (2,00,708).

Deportation Data (2023-24) / निर्वासन आंकड़े (2023-24)

Total Deportations / कुल निर्वासन:

- 2,331 foreigners deported by FRRO from April 2023 to March 2024.
- FRRO द्वारा 2,331 विदेशियों को अप्रैल 2023 से मार्च 2024 के बीच निर्वासित किया गया।

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- **Top Countries / शीर्ष देश:** Nigeria / नाइजीरिया: 1,470 deported / 1,470 निर्वासित।
 - Bangladesh / बांग्लादेश: 411 deported / 411 निर्वासित।
 - Uganda / युगांडा: 78 deported / 78 निर्वासित।
 - **Reasons for Deportation / निर्वासन के कारण:** Overstaying visas / वीज़ा की अवधि समाप्त होना।
 - Violating visa conditions / वीज़ा शर्तों का उल्लंघन।

**Long-Term Visas (LTVs) /
दीर्घकालिक वीज़ा (LTV)**

Issued / जारी वीज़ा:

- 1,112 LTVs granted to minority communities from Pakistan.
- पाकिस्तान के अल्पसंख्यकों को 1,112 दीर्घकालिक वीज़ा दिए गए।

Duration / अवधि:

- 1 to 5 years / 1 से 5 वर्ष।

Purpose / उद्देश्य:

- LTVs act as precursors to citizenship.
- LTV नागरिकता के लिए एक प्रारंभिक कदम है।

Citizenship Applications / नागरिकता आवेदन

Period / अवधि:

- From April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024.
- 1 अप्रैल 2023 से 31 मार्च 2024 तक।

Certificates Issued / प्रमाणपत्र जारी:

- 1,699 citizenship certificates issued by Union and State governments.
- संघ और राज्य सरकारों द्वारा 1,699 नागरिकता प्रमाणपत्र जारी।

Process / प्रक्रिया:

- Delegated to state officials in 31 districts.
- 31 जिलों में राज्य अधिकारियों को अधिकार सौंपे गए।

Methods of Citizenship Grant / नागरिकता प्रदान करने के तरीके:

- By registration (Section 5): 1,278 cases.
 - पंजीकरण के माध्यम से (धारा 5): 1,278 मामले।
- By naturalization (Section 6): 421 cases.
 - प्राकृतिककरण के माध्यम से (धारा 6): 421 मामले।

Foreign Visitors to India / भारत आने वाले विदेशी आगंतुक

Total Visitors / कुल आगंतुक:

- Around 98 lakh foreigners visited India.
- लगभग 98 लाख विदेशी भारत आए।

Top Countries / शीर्ष देश:

- Bangladesh / बांग्लादेश: 21,08,734 visitors / 21,08,734 आगंतुक।
- USA / अमेरिका: 17,37,549 visitors / 17,37,549 आगंतुक।
- UK / ब्रिटेन: 9,86,954 visitors / 9,86,954 आगंतुक।
- Others / अन्य: Australia, Canada, Sri Lanka, Nepal, etc.
 - ऑस्ट्रेलिया, कनाडा, श्रीलंका, नेपाल, आदि।

Jaishankar in Doha for talks, to prepare for Qatari Emir's visit

The Emir will visit India in February. External Affairs Minister's third visit in six months raises hopes for return of former Naval officer, delayed by nearly a year. New Delhi is also looking to boost ties with several countries in the West Asian region

Suhaimi Halidar
NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar is in Doha for a three-day visit over the New Year for a series of bilateral meetings, as well as to prepare for a visit by Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani to India, expected next month, sources told *The Hindu*.

During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Qatar last February, he had met and invited Sheikh Al Thani to India. The Emir's visit is part of New Delhi's recent broader outreach to the Gulf region, as Israel's bombardment of Gaza continues, with the effects of the West Asian crisis now spreading to Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen.

Mr. Jaishankar's visit to Qatar, his third in six months, has raised hopes for the return of the eighth former Naval officer con-



Outreach efforts: Jaishankar is likely to meet Qatar PM Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani. FILE PHOTO

victed of spying in 2023, who has been detained in Doha while others on death row along with him were pardoned. The decision to drop the death penalty against all eight men was taken at the end of December 2023, but while seven men were released and returned to India in February 2024, Commander Puranendu Tiwari (retired) and twice travel ban-

The MEA has said that the former Naval officer who was also decorated with the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman, is reported to be complete certain "formalities" in the Qatari legal system. According to officials, the pending requirements pertain to financial charges against the Bahra Global company where Mr. Tiwari was Managing Director and the other seven former naval personnel were employed.

However, Mr. Tiwari's family has rejected any charges of "wrongdoing", pleading to the Prime Minister to "intervene" and facilitate his return.

Wooing West Asia

Among a number of bilateral visits meant to shore up India's ties with the troubled region, Modi has travelled to Kuwait while Mr. Jaishankar visited Bahrain, and twice travelled to Qatar in Decem-

ber. After the proposed visit of the Qatar Emir to India, expected in the first or second week of February, Mr. Jaishankar is expected to travel to Oman. The Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi Sheikh Khalid bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud also visited Delhi in the last few months.

In addition, New Delhi will receive Iranian Vice Minister for External Affairs Tahkt Ravanchi on January 2 as its first high-level diplomatic visitor in 2025. The visit from the new Iranian government is significant, given its growing tensions with Israel, as well as the imminent inauguration of incoming U.S. President Donald Trump later in January. Mr. Trump is expected to take a tougher line on Iran, and to step up sanctions, which will affect India as well.

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party government at the Centre and those in the States have a mixed agenda of deprived sections of society, who are bearing the brunt of *Manuvaad*, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said on Tuesday.

Mr. Kharge, in a post on the social media platform X (formerly Twitter), alleged that Union Home Minister Amit Shah had insulted B.R. Ambedkar in Parliament and the same 'unchit virodhi' (against the deprived communities) mindset was prevalent in the BJP-led States.

The Congress chief cited incidents in which persons on the Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes were targeted.

In the past two days, he said, a Dalit youth was murdered in police custody in the state of Andhra Pradesh and at Balasore in Odisha, tribal women were



Mallikarjun Kharge

targeted to trees and beaten up. In Madhya Pradesh, a 35-year-old Dalit man, Mukesh Longre, died on Saturday at the Survas police station where he was summoned for questioning in a case for assaulting two women. He was arrested three persons for assaulting two women over allegations of conversion.

Other incidents

In Bhowani, Haryana, a Dalit girl student is forced to commit suicide after being unable to pay her fee exam fees. In Palghar, Maharashtra, a tribal preg-

nant woman has to travel 100 km in search of an ICU and dies. In Muzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh, three Dalit families are forced to migrate because of caste-based attacks on them and the police remains silent," Mr. Kharge said. "It is well known that atrocities are being committed against Dalits, tribals, backward and minority communities under the 'anti-constitutional rule' of the Modi government. Those who are poor and deprived are suffering the brunt of *Manuvaad*," he said.

Mr. Kharge said a crime was committed every hour against Dalit tribal women and children, and as per the National Crime Records Bureau, the figure had doubled since 2014. "The Congress will not allow the constitutional rights of 140 crore Indians to be violated and will oppose the anti-constitutional rule of the BJP-led States (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh)," he said.

Congress, Left protest against police lathi charge on students in Patna

The Hindu Bureau
PATNA

Congress and Left MLAs on Tuesday took out a protest march to the Raj Bhavan here in support of candidates who are demanding reconduct of the 70th Bihar Public Service Commission (BPSC) Combined (Preliminary) Competitive Examination (CPE) following an alleged paper leak.

The State's main Opposition party, the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), was not part of the protest. They scuffled with the police while trying to move barricades on their way to the Raj Bhavan, Congress Legislative Party leader Shakeel Ahmad Khan and Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) legislative party leader Mehboob Alam led the



Show of support: Congress and Left supporters during a protest against lathi charge on job aspirants in Patna on Tuesday. ANI

march. The MLAs slammed the Bihar government for the lathi charge on the students on Sunday and termed their demands "genuine".

Demands submitted
With the newly appointed Governor Mohammad Arif Khan not sworn in, a dele-

gation of the MLAs met the Principal Secretary to the Governor, Robert L. Chongthui, and submitted a memorandum. Their demands included re-examination, action against officers who lathi-charged students, withdrawal of FIRs against students, compensation for the fami-

ly of Sonu Yadav - a BPSC candidate who died by suicide due to the alleged paper leak - and an impartial inquiry into the leak. Mr. Chongthui said he would forward the demands to the Governor.

Criticising the police action during the march, Mr. Alam said, "Nitish Kumar is competing with Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. The students and youth of Bihar will not tolerate any more dictatorship of the Bharatiya Janata Party and Janata Dal (United) government."

The Governor, "lawlessness in the State and the government has become undemocratic. The ruling dispensation has allowed this Opposition position was politicising the situation and misleading students."

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Cold wave conditions intensified across Kashmir on Tuesday, with the IMD predicting fresh spells of light to moderate snowfall in the Valley during the week, while large swathes of Uttar Pradesh witnessed maximum temperatures dipping by more than 5 degrees Celsius.

Parts of Rajasthan experienced intense chill as neighbouring Haryana, and Punjab continued to witness biting cold conditions. "The mercury dipped to minus 3.5 degrees Celsius. Qazirund - the gateway town to Kashmir - logged a minimum of minus 7.5 degrees Celsius. In south Kashmir, Kokernag recorded a minimum

IMD predicts fresh spell of snowfall, as cold wave intensifies across J&K



Biting cold: A man walking in a snow-covered paddy field in Pulwama district of south Kashmir on Tuesday. IANS/ANSA

temperature of minus 8.4 degrees Celsius. The IMD has forecast light snowfall on New Year's Day and another spell of moderate snowfall later in the week in the Valley. "A feeble western disturbance is likely to hit Kashmir on January 1-2. There is

a possibility of light snow at scattered places. A moderate to strong western disturbance is likely to affect from January 3-5. There is a chance of snow at most places with peak activity on January 4-6," the IMD said and added that there was possibility of heavy snow at a few places in the higher reaches during the second spell.

Overcast sky

An overcast sky marked the last day of the year in Delhi, with the national capital's maximum temperature settling 2.7 degrees below normal at 17.7 degrees Celsius. In Uttar Pradesh, the maximum temperature dipped by more than 5 degrees Celsius in at least 50 districts, the IMD office in Lucknow said.

Will set up inquiry panel: Suvendu in Sandeshkhali

The Hindu Bureau
KOLKATA

A day after West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee held a public meeting in Sandeshkhali and urged them to leave the past behind, Leader of the Opposition Suvendu Adhikari on Tuesday visited the place and wondered how the people in the area would be able to forget the past.

He vowed to constitute an inquiry commission to probe into alleged atrocities by local Trinamool Congress leaders if the BJP comes to power in the 2026 Assembly election.

"Mamata Banerjee had conspired for the arrest of mothers and sisters at Sandeshkhali before the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. They were slapped with false charges and arrested protesting against the atrocities by local Trinamool strongmen like Shah-jahan Sheikh. You (Mamata) will face action for abetting such oppression if the BJP comes to power," Mr. Adhikari said at the public rally.

Close to nature



Annual vacations: Tourists spending time at the elephant camp at Theppakudi in Tamil Nadu on Tuesday. More than 15,000 tourists visited the camp and the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve in the week between Christmas and New Year's day. H. SATISHMOORTHY

India-Nepal joint military exercise begins

Press Trust of India
KATHMANDU

The 18th edition of Exercise Surya Kiran, a joint military exercise between India and Nepal aimed at enhancing interoperability and fostering collaboration between the two nations' Armies, began on Tuesday.

The annual training event is conducted alternatively in the two countries. The exercise is taking place at the Nepal Army Battle School, Saljuhandi in the Shivakuli range of Western Nepal, will be conducted till January 13.

It aims to enhance interoperability, primarily in the fields of Counter Terrorism (CT) Operations," according to an X post by the Indian Army.

"Exercise Surya Kiran signifies the strong bond of friendship, trust and common military linkages that exist between India and Nepal," it said. The Indian Army contingent, compris-

ing 334 personnel, is being led by a Battalion from the 11th Gorkha Rifles, according to a press release by the Defence Ministry.

NCP leader's aide surrenders in case related to murder of sarpanch in Maharashtra

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Walunik Karad, a close aide of Maharashtra Cabinet Minister and NCP leader Dhananjay Munde, surrendered before the State Criminal Investigation Department (CID) investigators in Pune on Tuesday in connection with an alleged ₹2-crore extortion case linked to the murder of a village sarpanch.

Since the murder of the three-term sarpanch of Masajale village in Beed district, Santosh Deshmukh's murder, he has been falsely framed in the case. In the video, Mr. Karad shared a link to a news report, claiming he has been falsely framed in the case. In the video, Mr. Karad shared a link to a news report, claiming he has been falsely framed in the case.

Before turning himself in around noon, Mr. Karad shared a video on social media claiming he has been falsely framed in the case. In the video, Mr. Karad shared a link to a news report, claiming he has been falsely framed in the case.



Walunik Karad surrenders before the Crime Investigation Department in Pune. PTI

Following Mr. Karad's surrender, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis said: "I had a telephonic conversation with late Santosh Deshmukh's brother, and he assured him that all the culprits be behind the murder, will face prosecution so he need not worry. We will not tolerate any such goonda raj in Maharashtra and those who are trying to take law

and order into their hands, extorting residents, will have to face strict consequences of their deed. No body will be spared."

On Mr. Karad's surrender, the Chief Minister said: "The CID is handling the case without any external pressure. I do not want to indulge in politics because what matters the most is to punish the murderers of Santosh Deshmukh."

The Opposition said Mr. Karad's surrender before the CID within hours of the family's statement raised doubts about this crime episode. Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Bhaskar Jadhav said: "The role of the police in this case has come under the spotlight. Last night, the Chief Minister and Dhananjay Munde held a long meeting and today, Karad surrendered. It cannot be a coincidence. This drama was stage-managed. The people of Maharashtra have doubts about this crime episode."

India-Nepal joint military exercise begins

Press Trust of India

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ing 334 personnel, is being led by a Battalion from the 11th Gorkha Rifles, according to a press release by the Defence Ministry.

The exercise aims to enhance interoperability in jungle warfare, counter-terrorism operations in mountains and Humanitarian Assistance

IN BRIEF



Kumbh Mela: QR code jackets to help access ticketing app

In the run-up to the Kumbh Mela 2025, the Railways has introduced jackets with QR scanners for volunteers in a bid to digitise ticket bookings for passengers. "During the Mahakumbh, North Central Railway officials from Prayagraj division will be deputised on special duty donning a fluorescent green jacket embedded with a QR code and a download a mobile app - Unreserved Ticketing System (UTS) - which will help them book tickets without having to wait in queues," the railway officials said. This is over and above 500 ticketing counters that will be capable of doing out to 10 lakh tickets daily.

'Spurious' drugs worth nearly ₹6.6 crore seized in Kolkata

A large quantity of suspected spurious anti-cancer, anti-diabetic, and other drugs has been seized from Kolkata. The total market value of the drugs seized is estimated at approximately ₹6.6 crore. The seizure follows a joint investigation conducted by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), East Zone, and the Drugs Control Directorate, West Bengal, on a wholesale premises in Kolkata. The seizures carried out at the firm Care and Care For You in Kolkata, according to the release issued by the Health Ministry on Tuesday.

Amit Patra takes additional charge as Director of IIT-KGP

Amit Patra, who is currently serving as the Director of Indian Institute of Technology, BHU (IIT-BHU), took over the additional charge as Director of IIT-Sargaraj (IIT-KGP) on Tuesday, until the regular incumbent takes over. He took over charge from Virendra Kumar Tewari, outgoing Director, IIT KGP, who was a Professor in the Institute's Department of Agricultural and Food Engineering. The IIT-KGP, set up in 1951, is one of the oldest IITs. Professor Patra is an alumnus of the Institute. He completed his B.Tech., M.Tech. and Ph.D. from the IIT in 1984, 1986, and 1990, respectively. He had joined the institute as a faculty member at the Department of Electrical Engineering in 1987.

Cong. seeks immediate release of detained leaders in J&K

The Congress party on Tuesday criticised the authorities for adopting "repressive measures" to handle the protests in Katra, the base camp of Mata Vaishno Devi, and sought the immediate intervention of the Lieutenant-Governor to secure the release of detained leaders. The party emphasised the need to create a conducive atmosphere for dialogue. The Congress said that this step was crucial if the authorities were sincere about finding an amicable solution to the ongoing crisis. People have been agitating against the proposed Vaishno Devi ropeway project. J&K Pradesh Congress Committee president Tariq Hanif said the administration was "showing unnecessary haste and repression".

Tiger leaves Kolkata zoo for Similipal reserve in Odisha

The wild cat had kept the forest officials of West Bengal, Jharkhand, and Odisha on their toes for three weeks; after capture, it is being safely returned along a special route without stoppages

Shrabana Chatterjee KOLKATA

Tiger Zeenat, who had evaded all attempts at capture for almost three weeks since straying from Odisha, was finally on the way back from Kolkata to Similipal on Tuesday. The tiger was captured in West Bengal on Sunday and is being returned after the paperwork was processed for the return. The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) had asked for its safe return to Odisha and sought its immediate release.



The National Tiger Conservation Authority had sought Zeenat's immediate return to Odisha, WEST BENGAL FOREST DEPARTMENT

The tiger's long journey between three States of West Bengal, Jharkhand, and Odisha had kept forest officials on their toes. It had entered West Bengal on December 19 and had travelled across three districts in south Bengal after multiple attempts at capture failed. After capture, Zeenat was kept at the Alipore zoo, which is the largest zoological park in West Bengal. A day after being tranquillised and caught, its vitals were reportedly stable.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Gobind Sagar Bhardwaj, member secretary of the NTCA, said, "Her return process is under way, she will travel to Similipal. She will be transported with proper security, and full protocol." A green corridor, a special route without stoppages, is being facilitated for the transport of the tiger. Zeenat had been relocated to Similipal from Tadoba in Maharashtra to improve Odisha's tiger population.

In the final hours before Zeenat was tranquillised, the operation was tense for 58-year-old Mrityunjay Biswas, Deputy Ranger of Sundarban Tiger Reserve, who had travelled with his team of four to help in capturing Zeenat. "With over 42 years of experience in tracking and capturing tigers, Mr. Biswas had been worried that Zeenat might meet the fate of a tiger that was brutally

killed by villagers in 2018 in Jhargram district in south Bengal. In that case, it had been harder to track and capture the tiger because it was between elephant corridors.

Tough operation Speaking on the efforts to capture Zeenat, he told *The Hindu*, "We had tried to tranquillise her multiple times. But it failed because every time the darts hit her, she pulled them out with her mouth. I was the first one to successfully hit her with a dart. Thanks to her radio collar, we could keep tracking her. The methods we use in Sundarbans were helpful. We shortened the nylon enclosure and shot a dart to her neck, which she couldn't remove. Four of us restrained her limbs and tried to keep her still as others put her inside a van."

Mr. Biswas, who has caught over 32 tigers in his life, and his team were roped in after multiple attempts to catch Zeenat failed. Zeenat had woken up within five minutes of being put in the van, said Mr. Biswas, relieved that both his team and the tiger were safe.

10 payloads of ISRO's POEM-4 module deployed successfully

Hemant C.S. SHRIHARIKOTA

The Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre (IN-SPACe) on Tuesday said that it had facilitated the successful establishment and operationalisation of 10 hosted payloads from non-governmental entities (NGEs) on board the POEM-4 module of the PSLV-C60/SpaDeX mission.

The mission was launched by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Monday. The mission, that launched today, carried out 10 scientific experiments at an altitude of 350 km with a 35-degree inclination, utilising the spent P54 stage repairable NGEs. The Experimental Module (POEM-4), said IN-SPACe, is the autonomous nodal agency under Department of Space to promote NGEs undertake space activities.

Reducing entry barriers "The PSLV Orbital Experiment Module is a practical solution deployed by ISRO to allow Indian startups, academic institutions, and research organizations to test their space technologies without the need to launch entire satellites. By

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making this platform accessible, we are reducing entry barriers and enabling a wider range of entities to contribute to the space sector," Pawan Goenka, Chairman, IN-SPACe, said. "At IN-SPACe, our role is to create opportunities for such collaborators and ensure that India's private sector can grow alongside advancements in space technology. Missions like these will be instrumental in capacity building by enabling NGEs to get their payloads space qualified, thus augmenting their future satellite launch missions," he added.

In total, 24 P54-Orbital Experiment Module payloads were deployed on board the PSLV-C60 SpaDeX mission to support a wide array of scientific and technological endeavours.

Bengal Special Task Force arrests two 'members' of Bangladeshi terror group

The Hindu Bureau KOLKATA

The West Bengal Special Task Force (STF) arrested two persons suspected to belong to the Ansarullah Bangladeshi Team (ABT), a militant group in Bangladesh, from Nowada in Murshidabad district on Monday.

This follows the recent arrest of two others suspected to be ABT members from the same district on December 18, along with nine others who were apprehended in other States. According to the West Bengal Police, the ABT is a splinter group of the Bangladesh-based terrorist organisation Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen. Police sources said the two suspected members arrested on Monday are 24-year-old Sajjad, an Indian youth, conduct recruit-

Two others who are suspected to be ABT members were held from the same district in December

Mondal - are residents of Nowda's Durlabhpur village and Bhola village, respectively.

Mr. Islam, according to the police, is a cousin of Saad Radi, a Bangladeshi national who was arrested from Kerala in a coordinated inter-State police operation earlier this month. Mr. Mondal is believed to be Mr. Radi's friend.

West Bengal STF officials had said earlier that Mr. Radi was sent from Bangladesh to India by a close associate of the ABT chief to infiltrate Indian youth, conduct recruit-

ment activities, and build sleeper cells. Mr. Radi was allegedly involved in setting up sleeper cells in Kerala, West Bengal, and Assam.

Mr. Islam and Mr. Mondal, Mr. Radi's alleged associates, were employed as contractual labourers and glassworkers.

They have been charged with complaints of sheltering militants and being involved in terrorist activities.

"After Radi's arrest, we kept a close watch on the movement of his relatives and associates in Murshidabad," police sources said.

The police have sought custody of Mr. Islam and Mr. Mondal. They might be taken to a different State or transit remain as well, police sources said.

Delhi Police to visit Assam, Bengal to verify documents of suspected Bangladeshis

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

Continuing its action against "illegal" Bangladeshi immigrants in the capital, the Delhi Police sent teams to Assam and West Bengal to verify documents of individuals whose nationalities they are doubtful of.

The move comes after the Delhi Lieutenant-Governor (L-G) ordered an inter-State police operation to verify documents of individuals whose nationalities they are doubtful of.

"We are sending anyone on transit remain as well, police sources said.

delivered home States to check their documents and claims," a senior police officer said. He added that teams are visiting Nadia, Medinipur, and Coimbatore in West Bengal and Goa in Assam to verify the documents and claims of the suspected individuals.

"We are sending anyone on transit remain as well, police sources said.

THE CROSSWORD 14371

Crossword puzzle grid with clues and a solution key at the bottom.

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

- 12 King's churning speculation largely implicating wife for everything (3,5)
13 According to Gussulufz, love died (6)
14 Performer returns with cape in a desire to advance (8)
15 Commercial-free additional broadcast expansion (8)
16 Must to leave following (6)
17 Regularly find details, issues to think of (8)
18 Wow, Shakespearean tragedy after overtime! (5)
19 Spiced a false love (how sage's daughter) (7)
20 Forest ranger has run (7)
21 Old puzzle lying around? Save the last third for flight (6)
22 Peasants polished poetic pieces (8)
23 Lacking cultivation? Produce dramatically after adding nitrogen and phosphorus (9)
24 More splendid than after score crosses a large number (7)
25 Discover fruit and nut bar wrapper on abandoned route (6,3)
26 Substitute teacher's at Zoom gathering (6)
27 Pregnancy test? No, I am irregular (5)
28 After scrubbing soy meal, corroded key unlocks joint (7)
29 Revolution of planet overlooking southern area (4)
30 Divorce of uncle alerted (6)
31 Disappointed post carrying drive threat? (9)
32 Rotten man stole small young fish (5)
33 Impersonated policeman, covering makeshift bomb (6)
34 Happened before Pluto crashed over the middle of Sweden? (5,2)
35 Cat's lousy turning gaga (7)
36 Compose a sonnet describing spring, perhaps (6)
37 One gets to fish university later (5)
38 Meet in coffee house, exchanging bits from classified files (4)

Sudoku puzzle grid with numbers and a difficulty rating of 4.6.

Solution to previous puzzle and solution to yesterday's sudoku.

FAITH Brahma's altar protected

A person with true bhakti is able to visualise Lord Narayana. What is this true bhakti? It is not contractual bhakti, where we offer a quid pro quo to the Lord. If some wish of ours is fulfilled, True bhakti remains the same whether we face problems, or whether we have successes in life. Suppose you make a hole in the bottom of a vessel and pour oil to it. The oil exits through the hole in a regular stream. Genuine bhakti is like that. It is a steady stream of devotion to God, said V.S. Karunakarachariar in a discourse. Brahma, because of his bhakti, could visualise Vishnu. But once Brahma could not bring before his eyes the image of Vishnu, and became sorrowful. Vedanta Desika says Brahma was like a child crying for the moon. Then an asurzeri said to Brahma that he must do a hundred avamedha yagas. If this were not possible, then he could do one yaga in Satyavrata Kshetra, that is Kanchari. Brahma came to Kanchari and began his penance. The rule is that the wife of the man performing the yaga must be with him. But Sarasvati had left Brahma because of a quarrel. So Brahma began the yaga with his other two wives - Gayatri and Savitri. When Sarasvati came to know of this, she was enraged, and took the form of a river and flowed towards Brahma's Vedic altar to destroy it. The fast moving river was called Vegavathi. Vishnu then reclined in her path, and served as a dam. Sarasvati was pacified and went back to Brahma. Because Vishnu served as a dam to the river, He is known as Vegavathi sethu in this kshetra. In Tamil, the name was Vegavathi Settu, which got shortened to Veggavathi, and then became Vekka avathi, which further became Vekka. So the Ashveta became Thiruvekka.

10 payloads of ISRO's POEM-4 module deployed successfully

Hemanth C.S.

SRIHARIKOTA

The Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre (IN-SPACe) on Tuesday said that it had facilitated the successful establishment and operationalisation of 10 hosted payloads from non-government entities (NGEs) on board the POEM-4 module of the PSLV-C60/SpaDeX mission.

The mission was launched by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Monday.

“The mission that launched today, carried out in-orbit scientific experiments at an altitude of 350 km with a 55-degree inclination, utilizing the spent PS4 stage repurposed as the PSLV Orbital Experimental Module (POEM-4),” said IN-SPACe, which is the autonomous nodal agency under Department of Space to promote NGE’s undertake space activities.

Reducing entry barriers

“The PSLV Orbital Experiment Module is a practical solution deployed by ISRO that allows Indian startups, academic institutions, and research organizations to test their space technologies without the need to launch entire satellites. By



ISRO's SPADEX Mission successfully lifted off from Sriharikota on Monday.

making this platform accessible, we are reducing entry barriers and enabling a wider range of entities to contribute to the space sector,” Pawan Goenka, Chairman, IN-SPACe, said.

“At IN-SPACe, our role is to create opportunities for such collaborations and ensure that India’s private sector can grow alongside advancements in space technology. Missions like these will be instrumental in capacity building by enabling NGEs to get their payloads space qualified, thus augmenting their future satellite launch missions,” he added.

In total, 24 PS4-Orbital Experiment Module payloads were deployed on board the PSLV-C60 SpaDeX mission to support a wide array of scientific and technological endeavours.



Mission Details / मिशन विवरण

Module Used / प्रयोग किया गया मॉड्यूल:

- POEM-4 (PSLV Orbital Experimental Module) was repurposed from the PS4 stage.
- POEM-4 (PSLV ऑर्बिटल एक्सपेरिमेंटल मॉड्यूल) PS4 स्टेज से पुनः उपयोग किया गया।

Launch Vehicle / लॉन्च यान:

- PSLV-C60 / SpaDeX mission.
- PSLV-C60 / SpaDeX मिशन।

- 
- **Altitude & Inclination / ऊंचाई और झुकाव:**
 - 350 km altitude with a 55-degree inclination.
 - 350 किमी ऊंचाई और 55-डिग्री झुकाव।
- 

. Objectives / उद्देश्य

To test space technologies by Indian startups, academic institutions, and research organizations.

भारतीय स्टार्टअप्स, शैक्षणिक संस्थानों और अनुसंधान संगठनों द्वारा अंतरिक्ष प्रौद्योगिकियों का परीक्षण करना

Key Features / मुख्य विशेषताएँ

Hosted Payloads / होस्टेड पेलोड्स:

- Successfully deployed 10 payloads from Non-Government Entities (NGEs).
- गैर-सरकारी संस्थाओं (NGEs) के 10 पेलोड सफलतापूर्वक स्थापित।

Accessibility / पहुंच:

- Platform reduces entry barriers for Indian private space initiatives.
- यह मंच भारतीय निजी अंतरिक्ष पहलों के लिए बाधाओं को कम करता है।

Role of IN-SPACe / IN-SPACe की भूमिका

Facilitator / सुगमकर्ता:

- Autonomous nodal agency under the Department of Space.
- अंतरिक्ष विभाग के तहत स्वायत्त नोडल एजेंसी।

Support to Private Sector / निजी क्षेत्र को समर्थन:

- Helps private players and startups access space technology platforms.
- निजी खिलाड़ियों और स्टार्टअप्स को अंतरिक्ष प्रौद्योगिकी मंचों तक पहुंच में मदद करता है।

. Impacts / प्रभाव

Capacity Building / क्षमता निर्माण:

- Enables NGEs to space-qualify their payloads, aiding future satellite launches.
- NGEs को उनके पेलोड को अंतरिक्ष के लिए योग्य बनाने में मदद करता है, जो भविष्य के उपग्रह लॉन्च में सहायता करेगा।

Technology Advancements / प्रौद्योगिकी प्रगति:

- Promotes collaboration between startups and the space sector.
- स्टार्टअप्स और अंतरिक्ष क्षेत्र के बीच सहयोग को बढ़ावा देता है।

The geopolitics of platform-publisher tussles

Last month, *The Australia Today's* coverage of External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's visit was discussed less for its substance and more for being inaccessible on Facebook in Canada. This was on the back of diplomatic tensions between India and Canada, where Mr. Jaishankar's interview and joint press conference, covered in *The Australia Today*, inaccessible in Canada due to a nudge by the Trudeau government? Or was it part of Meta's strategy to block news on social media platforms in Canada?

Some argue that this is a casualty of Canada's approach to mitigate asymmetries between all-pervasive platforms, such as Facebook and Google, and news publishers, such as *The Australia Today*. The blackout has less to do with the politics of foreign policy and more to do with the politics of Meta's corporate strategy. Mostly, it has to do with geopolitical ramifications of developments in Canada's media policy.

Let's start with the actors involved. Platforms facilitate publishers to reach a very large audience, and publishers offer platforms a stream of content to incessantly engage users. In this seemingly symbiotic relationship, only platforms know the true popularity of the news distributed through their users. Platforms are also known to change the metrics to gauge popularity and audience preference. These problems raise questions about transparency, accountability, and parity in the dealings between platforms and publishers.

Governing frenemies
In June 2023, Canada devised a bargaining framework for platforms to duly remunerate news outlets. The result of the Online News Act (ONA) sought to protect publishers from losses incurred that is justifiably due to them from Meta and Alphabet. These platforms are legally obliged to fashion commercial agreements

with one or a group of publishers. If either party disagrees, bargaining process ensues with the involvement of a mediator. If in Canada also arrived at despite this, each party can propose a final offer, and an arbitration panel is empowered to choose which offer becomes binding. Canada was the second country to move on this matter, after the Australian initiative of 2021, known as the 'Bargaining Code'. While concerns over the financial health of local news websites led to the enactment of the ONA, the Bargaining Code has been criticised for legitimising a mechanism that safeguards the interests of giants in the news business. After initial opposition, Meta and Google negotiated deals with many, but not all, Australian news outlets.

In Canada, Google complied with the ONA by agreeing to pay publishers and journalists. In India, however, Meta adopted a contrary route: from August 2023, it foreclosed news offerings on its platforms, Facebook and Instagram, in Canada. However, web pages that journalists can still be accessed on both platforms. Since the ONA does not define a news website, Meta decides which is a news site and which is not on the community site. For instance, *Buzz*, a Canada-based news outlet catering to the Punjabi and Sikh diaspora, was inaccessible for a while on Facebook and Instagram. After it switched to Substack, a subscription-based platform, and rechristened defined itself as 'community page', *Buzz* became accessible on both platforms.

Interrupting global flows
Following the uproar over Mr. Jaishankar's interview, Meta maintained that it blocks news in Canada, irrespective of its geographical origins. However, the editor of *The Australia Today* pointed out that prior to the interview, the content of the site was visible, suggesting that Meta restricted the site around the time the interview was posted. Such experiences render Meta

vulnerable to criticism of selective compliance with the ONA. The unavailability of the Jaishankar interview on Facebook in Canada also has geopolitical ramifications of its own. Media policies in Australia, Canada, and Indonesia have tackled the imbalances between platforms and publishers, as seen in their respective news markets. Consequently, they vary in normative considerations, policy priorities, and institutional designs. Recently, Australia disincorporated platforms which refrain from, or do not renew, agreements with publishers. Its News Bargaining Incentive (NBI) policy proposes to penalise platforms harvesting revenue of \$250 million and more and failing to finalise agreements. This is to ensure, *inter alia*, that Meta does not replay its Canadian strategy in Australia, since earlier this year, it had announced plans to discontinue paying news outlets there. What is interesting is that the NBI also incentivises platforms by offsetting payments to publishers against some of their fiscal liabilities in Australia.

How is India tackling publishers-platform asymmetries? Since 2022, the Competition Commission has been inquiring into the conduct of platforms, following pleas by news publishers. We don't know if their efforts factor in geopolitical dimensions of the matter. If the policy paralysis continues, India's news outlets will continue to be devoid of fair shares of online advertising revenues, and vulnerable to the whims of the Alphabet-Meta duopoly.

Meanwhile, structural censorship, seen in the Jaishankar case, could recur. It will proliferate if Meta replicates its content blocking in the UK, South Africa, and Germany, where fair compensation regulations are being evolved. If so, interviews by Indian Ministers to news outlets in these countries will be inaccessible on Meta's platforms there. Therefore, policy pundits must weigh in urgently on fair compensation.

The pulls and pushes in J&K

Despite the LG's posturing, Omar Abdullah is seeking to reconcile with Delhi

STATE OF PLAY
Peerzada Ashraf
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The first elected government of the five-year-old Union Territory (UT) of Jammu and Kashmir seems to be struggling to settle even more than two months after coming to power. The all-powerful Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, one of the few politicians to occupy the seat in J&K, and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, the National Conference (NC) leader who is riding high on his second best electoral victory in the past three decades, have been at loggerheads in the last few weeks.

It is becoming more and more evident that Mr. Sinha and Mr. Abdullah are yet to be seen together at any public or official function, except the swearing-in ceremony and the J&K Assembly. The absence of business rules has made matters worse. The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, gives power to the LG to make rules with the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers. However, the process is yet to be finalised and has impacted governance. In the absence of business rules, the LG's decision to unilaterally extend the terms of two vice chancellors of two universities raised eyebrows in the Chief Minister's Office, which said that the LG office was "dumping the institution of consultation" NC legislator and former High Court judge G. Masood said. "The mandate has to be respected and the institution of consultations must be in place".

Earlier last month, Mr. Abdullah's decision to retain advocate D.C. Raina as Advocate General of J&K was also down by Raj Bhavan. Similarly, the LG's move to transfer Vishesh

Mahajan, a J&K Administrative service officer, as director of tourism was not accepted by the Chief Minister's Office. Such tit-for-tat have become the new normal in a region that requires a delicate handling of situations, given the sense of alienation on the ground. The friction may also cast a shadow on the people's growing faith in the electoral process.

With the LG also invoking Article 311 to terminate two government employees for "anti-national" activities, the space for Mr. Abdullah has been squeezed further. In fact, his party had promised to review such cases in its manifesto. Raids against suspects from the National Investigation Agency and the J&K Police spreading "malicious, seditious propaganda" have also gained pace. The LG controls law and order in J&K.

Facing a formidable LG, who is resetting the rules of both governance and politics in J&K, Chief Minister Abdullah is repositioning himself. He has sought to tread the path of reconciliation between Sinha and New Delhi. Mr. Abdullah has met the top leadership of the BJP, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, and pleaded the case for full Statehood for J&K.

Recently, he said that the Congress will have to justify its leadership role in the INDIA bloc, instead of "taking it for granted". NC legislator and former High Court judge G. Masood said. "The mandate has to be respected and the institution of consultations must be in place". Earlier last month, Mr. Abdullah's decision to retain advocate D.C. Raina as Advocate General of J&K was also down by Raj Bhavan. Similarly, the LG's move to transfer Vishesh

India among 25 nations with high religious restrictions

Pakistan, France, Israel, Nigeria, Egypt, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Maldives were also part of that list

DATA POINT
The Hindu Data Team

In an index measuring religion-related hostilities for 2022, India scored the highest among 198 nations, according to a report recently published by the Pew Research Center. A higher score on the social hostilities index (SHI) indicates greater levels of religion-related harassment, mob violence, terrorism, militant activity, conflicts over religious conversions or the use of religious symbols and attire. India scored 3.3 on a scale of 10 on the SHI. Scores above 7.2 are considered 'very high'.

The report also assessed countries based on the government's restrictions on religion, using the government restrictions index (GRI). The GRI measures laws, policies, and actions that regulate or limit religious beliefs and practices. These include policies banning particular beliefs or practices, the unequal granting of benefits to certain religious groups, and bureaucratic rules requiring religious groups to register to access benefits. India had a 'high' GRI score of 6.4 out of 10 in 2022. Scores above 6.4 are classified as 'very high'.

Chart 1 plots the GRI (horizontal axis) and SHI (vertical axis) scores of 198 countries for 2022. The higher a country is on the chart, the more it experiences religion-related hostilities by non-government players. The farther to the right, the more government restrictions there are on religions. Only 12% (25 countries) had 'high' or 'very high' GRI scores and SHI scores in 2022; India, Nigeria, Syria, Pakistan, Iraq, Egypt, Afghanistan, Israel, Libya, Palestinian territories, Ukraine, Bangladesh, France, Jordan, Iran, Sri Lanka, Somalia, Tunisia, Indonesia, Yemen, Laos, Nepal, Algeria, Maldives, and Armenia. In about

62% of the countries, including Canada and South Korea, the GRI and SHI scores were 'low' or 'moderate'. In 16% of the countries, the GRI was 'very high' or 'high', but the SHI was 'low' or 'moderate'; these include Cuba and China. In 10% of countries, the GRI was 'low' or 'moderate', but the SHI was 'high' or 'very high'. These include Brazil and the Philippines.

The number of countries with 'high' or 'very high' GRI scores rose to 58 (29% of all countries) in 2022 from 55 in 2021 (Chart 2). In 2007, when the index was started, only 40 nations (20%) had 'high' or 'very high' scores.

The manner of countries with 'high' or 'very high' SHI scores rose to 45 (23% of all countries analysed) in 2022 from 43 countries in 2021 (Chart 3). In 2022, 65 countries had 'high' or 'very high' scores — the highest share (33%). Harassment by governments — a broad measure encompassing verbal and physical pressure by authorities on religious groups — was among the most prevalent types of restrictions in 2022. It was reported in 186 of the 198 countries and territories studied (94%).

Shades of intolerance

The data for the charts were sourced from the Pew Research Center's report titled "Government restrictions on religion stayed at peak levels globally in 2022"



Chart 1: The GRI (horizontal axis) and SHI (vertical axis) scores of 198 countries for the year 2022. The higher a country on the chart, the more it experiences religion-related hostilities by non-government players.

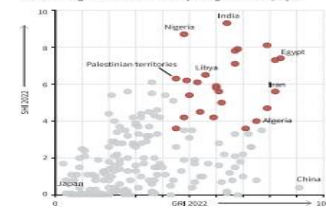


Chart 4: The chart shows the number of countries where there was government harassment of religious groups and government interference in worship. The report said that government restrictions and social hostilities often align closely, i.e., the lower the score on one index, the lower the score on the other too generally, and vice-versa.



Chart 2: The share and number of countries (in bold) with high or very high GRI score over the years.

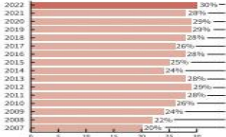


Chart 3: The share and number of countries (in bold) with high or very high levels of religion-related hostilities (SHI) over the years.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu

FIFTY YEARS AGO JANUARY 1, 1975

India and Portugal end two decades of confrontation

New Delhi, Dec. 31: The treaty signed by India and Portugal to-day has, in the words of the two Foreign Ministers who put their signatures to this historic document, buried two decades of confrontation and established the basis for friendly co-operation between them. The first article of the treaty says, "Portugal acknowledges that the territories of Goa, Daman, Diu, Dadra and Nagar Havel have already become parts of India, and India recognises the full sovereignty of India with effect from the dates when they became parts of India under the Constitution of India."

An official announcement was made simultaneously about the resumption of diplomatic relations at the Embassy level between the two countries with effect from 16-00 hours IST to-day. The two countries decided to dispense with the formality of waiting for the ratification of the treaty for beginning this new and happier chapter in their relations.

The two countries have further agreed under this treaty to settle through bilateral negotiations all outstanding questions concerning property assets or claims of their respective citizens, and matters relating to the property assets of either side in the territories of the other State. The treaty provides for a similar settlement of the rights and claims of Indian citizens and other persons who returned to India from territories under Portuguese administration in regard to the properties and assets left behind by them.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO FROM THE DECEMBER 31, 1924 AS THERE WAS NO ISSUE ON JANUARY 1, 1925

Communists arrested

Bulkhead, Dec. 28: Following the recent arrests of Communists (see cable of Dec. 23rd) the police have captured documents showing the existence of three organisations supported by the Soviet Government together with complete records of their relations with similar organisations in Moscow, Vienna, Berlin, Sofia and Athens; 200 out of 430 persons arrested are being held for trial and remaining 200 are being deported.

The Hindu Data Team

In an index measuring religion-related hostilities for 2022, India scored the highest among 198 nations, according to a report recently published by the Pew Research Center. A higher score on the social hostilities index (SHI) indicates greater levels of religion-related harassment, mob violence, terrorism, militant activity, and conflicts over religious conversions or the use of religious symbols and attire. India scored 9.3 on a scale of 10 on the SHI. Scores above 7.2 are considered ‘very high’.

The report also assessed countries based on the government’s restrictions on religion, using the government restrictions index (GRI). The GRI measures laws, policies, and actions that regulate or limit religious beliefs and practices. These include policies banning particular beliefs or practices, the unequal granting of benefits to certain religious groups, and bureaucratic rules requiring religious groups to register to access benefits. India had a ‘high’ GRI score of 6.4 out of 10 in 2022. Scores above 6.6 are classified as ‘very high’.

Chart 1 plots the GRI (horizontal axis) and SHI (vertical axis) scores of 198 countries for 2022. The higher a country is on the chart, the more it experiences religion-related hostilities by non-government players. The farther to the right, the more government restrictions there are on religions.

Only 12% (25 countries) had ‘high’ or ‘very high’ GRI scores and SHI scores in 2022: India, Nigeria, Syria, Pakistan, Iraq, Egypt, Afghanistan, Israel, Libya, Palestinian territories, Ukraine, Bangladesh, France, Jordan, Iran, Sri Lanka, Somalia, Tunisia, Indonesia, Yemen, Laos, Nepal, Algeria, Maldives, and Armenia. In about

62% of the countries, including Canada and South Korea, the GRI and SHI scores were ‘low’ or ‘moderate’. In 16% of the countries, the GRI was ‘very high’ or ‘high’, but the SHI was ‘low’ or ‘moderate’; these include Cuba and China. In 10% of countries, the GRI was ‘low’ or ‘moderate’, but the SHI was ‘high’ or ‘very high’. These include Brazil and the Philippines.

The number of countries with ‘high’ or ‘very high’ GHI scores rose to 59 (30% of 198 countries) in 2022 from 55 in 2021 (Chart 2). In 2007, when the index was started, only 40 nations (20%) had ‘high’ or ‘very high’ scores.

The number of countries with ‘high’ or ‘very high’ SHI scores rose to 45 (23% of all countries analysed) in 2022 from 43 countries in 2021 (Chart 3). In 2012, 65 countries had ‘high’ or ‘very high’ scores – the highest share (33%).

Harassment by governments – a broad measure encompassing verbal and physical pressure by authorities on religious groups – was among the most prevalent types of restrictions in 2022. It was reported in 186 of the 198 countries and territories studied (94%).

Government interference in worship was also widespread in 2022 and was reported in 170 countries and territories (86%). This includes policies and actions that disrupt religious activities, such as withholding permission to worship or denying access to places of worship. It also covers restrictions on religious practices and rituals not directly tied to worship, such as burial practices.

Chart 4 shows the number of countries where there was government harassment of religious groups and government interference in worship.

The report said that government restrictions and social hostilities often align closely, i.e., the lower the score on one index, the lower the score on the other too generally, and vice-versa.

Social Hostilities Index (SHI) / सामाजिक शत्रुता सूचकांक

India's SHI Score / भारत का SHI स्कोर:

- India scored **9.3/10**, the highest among 198 countries in 2022.
- भारत ने 2022 में 198 देशों में **9.3/10** स्कोर किया, जो सबसे अधिक है।
- Scores above 7.2 are considered “very high.”
- 7.2 से अधिक स्कोर को “बहुत उच्च” माना जाता है।

Indicators / संकेतक: Includes mob violence, religious harassment, terrorism, and conflicts over religious conversions.

इसमें भीड़ हिंसा, धार्मिक उत्पीड़न, आतंकवाद, और धर्मांतरण को लेकर संघर्ष शामिल हैं।

Government Restrictions Index (GRI) / सरकारी प्रतिबंध सूचकांक


India's GRI Score / भारत का GRI स्कोर:

- India scored **6.4/10**, categorized as “high.”
- भारत ने **6.4/10** स्कोर किया, जिसे “उच्च” श्रेणी में रखा गया।
- Scores above 6.6 are considered “very high.”
- 6.6 से अधिक स्कोर को “बहुत उच्च” माना जाता है।

• Measures / उपाय:

- Laws and policies limiting religious beliefs and practices.
- धार्मिक विश्वासों और प्रथाओं को सीमित करने वाले कानून और नीतियां।
- Bureaucratic rules requiring religious groups to register for benefits.
- धार्मिक समूहों को लाभ प्राप्त करने के लिए पंजीकरण की आवश्यकता।



- 
- **Global Comparisons / वैश्विक तुलना**
 - **High GRI and SHI Scores / उच्च GRI और SHI स्कोर:**
 - Only 12% of countries (25 nations) had “high” or “very high” scores for both SHI and GRI in 2022.
 - केवल 12% देशों (25 राष्ट्रों) का SHI और GRI स्कोर 2022 में “उच्च” या “बहुत उच्च” था।
 - Countries include India, Nigeria, Syria, Pakistan, Iraq, and Egypt.
 - इनमें भारत, नाइजीरिया, सीरिया, पाकिस्तान, इराक, और मिस्र शामिल हैं।

- **Government Interference in Worship / पूजा में सरकारी हस्तक्षेप**
- **Extent of Interference / हस्तक्षेप की सीमा:**
 - Reported in 170 countries (86% of the studied nations).
 - 170 देशों में पूजा में सरकारी हस्तक्षेप देखा गया (अध्ययन किए गए देशों का 86%)।
- **Types of Restrictions / प्रतिबंधों के प्रकार:**
 - Denial of access to places of worship.
 - पूजा स्थलों तक पहुंच से इनकार।
 - Restrictions on rituals and burial practices.
 - अनुष्ठानों और दफनाने की प्रथाओं पर प्रतिबंध।

Key Findings / प्रमुख निष्कर्ष

Alignment of SHI and GRI / SHI और GRI का संबंध:

- Countries with higher SHI also tend to have higher GRI.
- उच्च SHI वाले देशों में GRI भी अधिक होता है।

Harassment by Governments / सरकारों द्वारा उत्पीड़न:

- 94% of countries reported verbal and physical harassment by authorities.
- 94% देशों ने अधिकारियों द्वारा मौखिक और शारीरिक उत्पीड़न की रिपोर्ट दी

Chart 1: The GRI (horizontal axis) and SHI (vertical axis) scores of 198 countries for the year 2022. The higher a country on the chart, the more the religion-related hostilities by non-government players

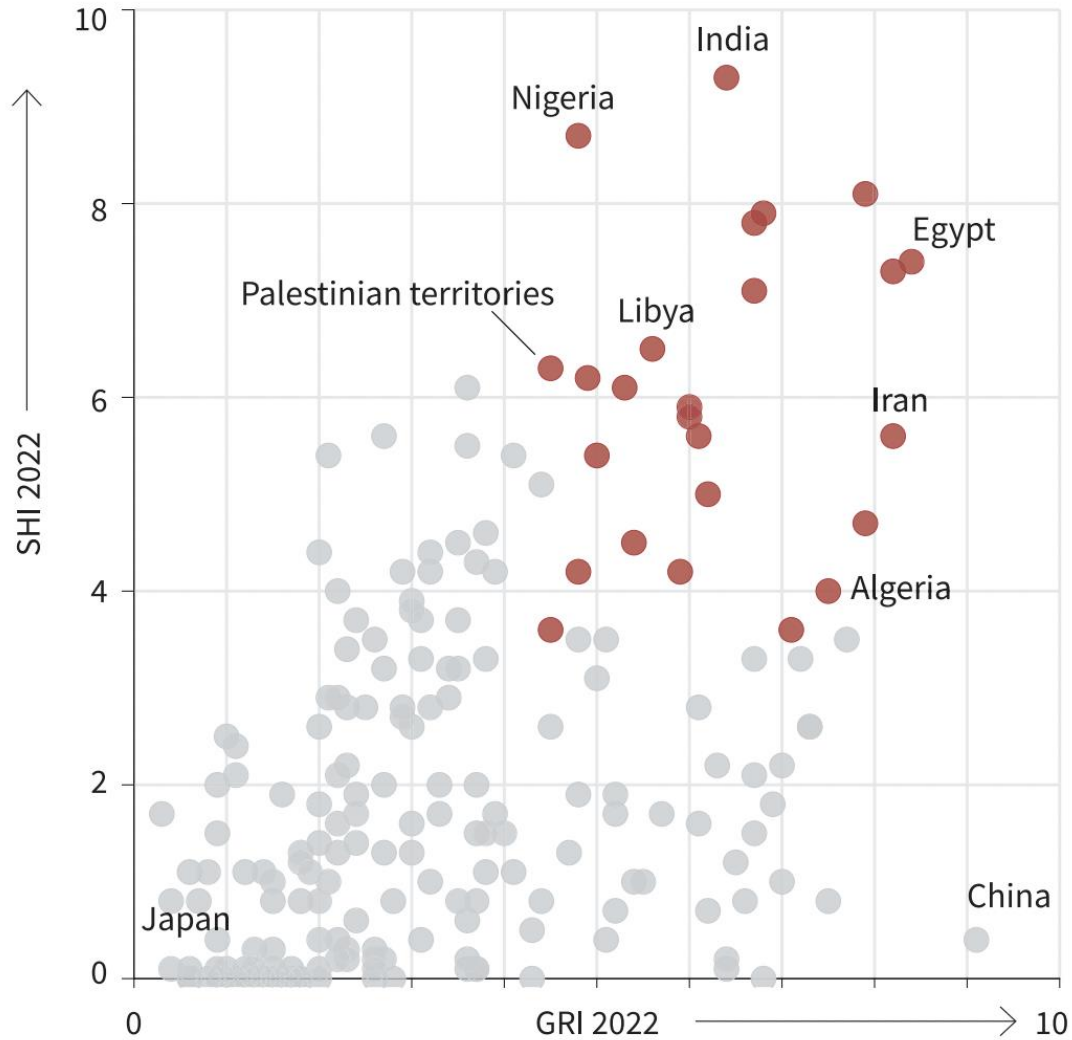


Chart 2: The share and **number of countries** (in bold) with high or very high GRI score over the years

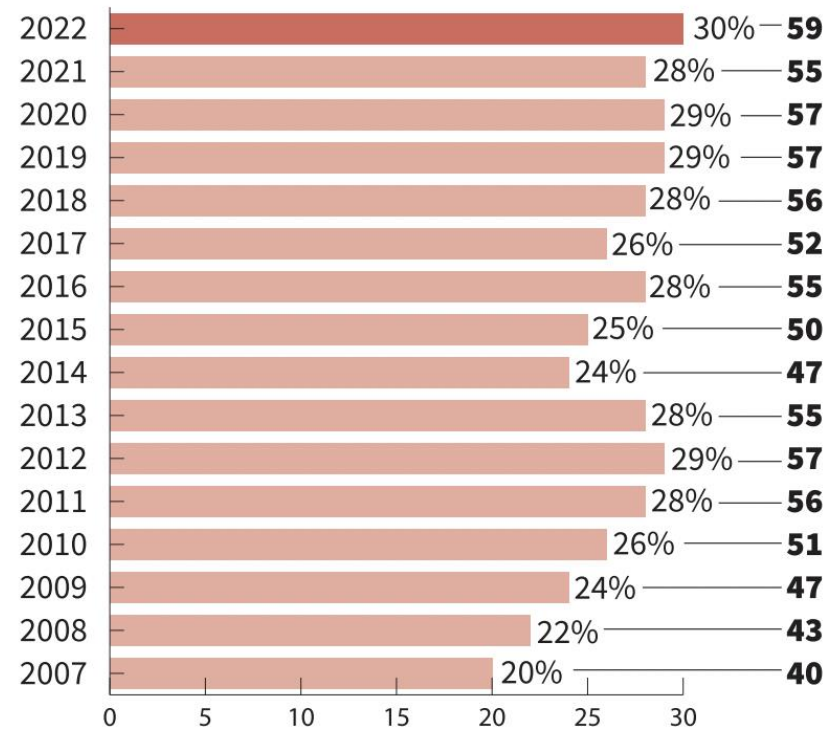
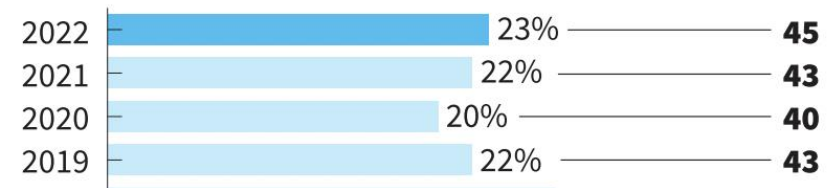


Chart 3: The share and **number of countries** (in bold) with high or very levels of religion-related hostilities (SHI) over the years



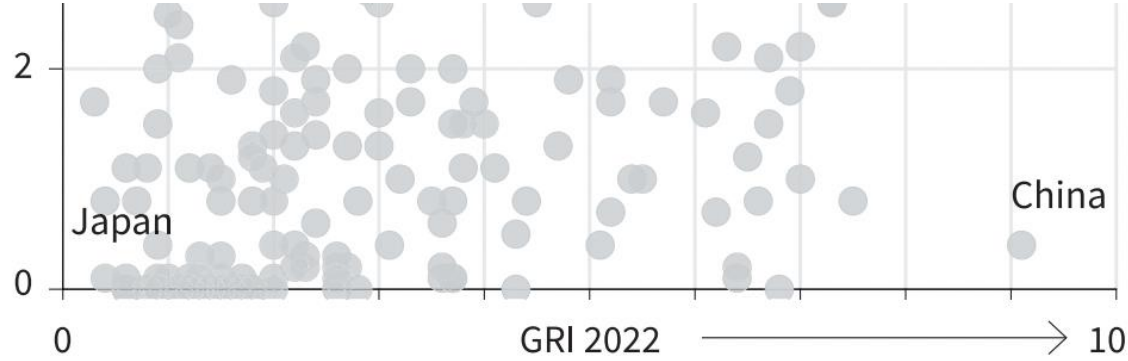
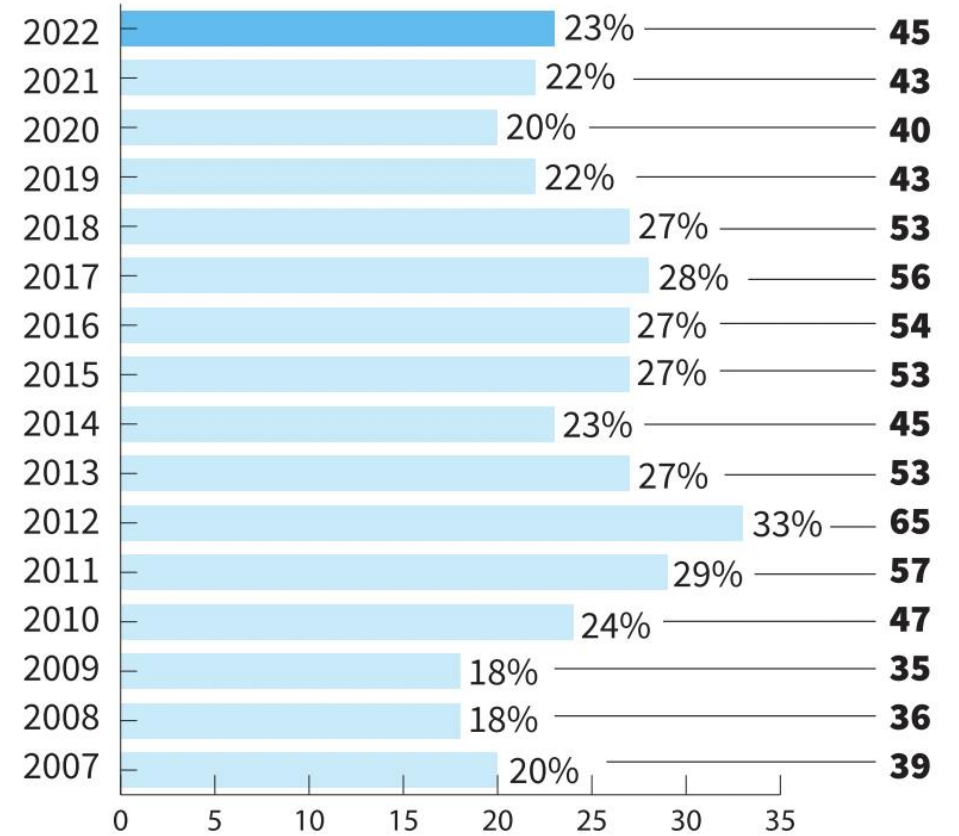


Chart 4

The chart shows the number of countries where there was government harassment of religious groups ■ and government interference in worship ■



Chart 3: The share and **number of countries (in bold)** with high or very levels of religion-related hostilities (SHI) over the years



RARE HONOUR Bumrah named captain of Cricket Australia's Test team of the year



Cricket Australia named Indian pacer Jasprit Bumrah as the captain of its Test team of the year...

UPSET WIN Ipswich stuns Chelsea for first home win this season



Relegation-threatened Ipswich beat Chelsea 2-0 on Monday to win at home for the first time in the Premier League...

ECSTASY & AGONY Isak continues dream run as Newcastle pile misery on United



Alexander Isak scored for the sixth straight Premier League game as Newcastle beat Manchester United 2-0 at Old Trafford...

PHENOMENAL FEAT Belgian ultra-runner Dosogne ran a marathon every day last year



Ultra-runner Hilde Dosogne ran a marathon every day in 2024, covering 13,444 km and raising 600,000 for breast cancer research...

India's willow-wielders have to find a way through

Rohit and Kohli need to perform in Sydney; past tours of Australia have forced a closure to pedigreed Indian stars; Pant has to strike a balance between his cavalier approach and team's prospects

INDIA IN AUS K.C. Vihava Kumar SYDNEY

ate on Monday, the light dimmed on the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG)...

two previous tours, the Border-Gavaskar Trophy was secured. This time around, the visitors are trailing 1-2, and hoping to draw level in the final Test commencing at Sydney on Friday.

point. From 121 for four, India slid to 85 all out. The beauty of Test cricket is that it also offers space for a stalemate. However, in these frenetic times of winning at all costs, a draw is seen as an aberration.

year. Their drought in Tests often gets camouflaged through their flamboyance in limited over cricket. Having bowled out of T20s, while still being in the mix for Tests and ODIs, the captain and his predecessor need to perform.

Sadly, the efforts of Jasprit Bumrah, Nitish Kumar Reddy and Washington Sundar in the fourth Test went in vain as it is time the batting clicks. K.L. Rahul has been an exception but he too could not prosper at the MCG.

Down Under, either legacies are built or retirements get hastened. After a long gap, Kohli had a hundred in the first Test at Perth while Rohit's last came against England at Dharamsala in March last year.

Turning point: Pant's attempted big shot off Head cost India dearly in the Melbourne Test. AP

+ Vaishali advances to World blitz quarterfinals

Sports Bureau

R. Vaishali moved into the quarterfinals of the women's World blitz chess championship in New York, topping the league stage.



Vaishali, nine

Vaishali did that in style, as she topped the 108-player field by one full point. She finished with 9.5 points, one more than top seed Lei Tingjie of China.

make the knockout were the top seed Magnus Carlsen, fresh from his joint controversy, Fabiano Caruana, Alireza Firouzja and Ian Nepomniachtch, who was ranked first when the tie-breaks were applied.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2025. Includes Australian Open, ICC U19 Women's T20 World Cup, Women's Premier League, IPL, and various international tournaments.

+ Bengal regains the Santosh Trophy

Sports Bureau

West Bengal re-asserted its supremacy in the Santosh Trophy national football championship, clinching the title for a record 33rd time with a 1-0 win over Kerala in the final of the 78th edition at the GMC Hallayog Stadium here on Tuesday.

when he picked up a header from Aditya Thapa into the box and slotted the ball in from close range.



Staggering! Bengal won its 33rd ISB. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Hyderabad Toofans opens account with shootout win over Delhi Pipers



Delighted bunch: Hyderabad Toofans players celebrate a strike. M. VEJANAI

HHL. Ultra Ganesan SOURKELA

Two goals in a space of one minute capitalising on defensive blunders by Delhi SG Pipers and holding nerve in a tense sudden death helped Hyderabad Toofans get its first point after the teams were tied 2-2 at the end of regulation time in the Hockey India League at the Birsa Munda Stadium here on Tuesday.

ing play of Hyderabad appeared to have the upper hand against a Delhi team that seems to be lacking firepower up front but continue to play attacking hockey, relying on its youngsters Dilraj Singh and Aditya Lalage.

The game picked up tempo post the break with the teams exchanging control and possession but neither could make their chances count.

in by Pellant and Aman-deep Lakra respectively - to go up 2-0 early on. To Delhi's credit, it did not go into panic mode.

minute. Two PCs in the dying minutes of the game for Hyderabad went waste as well as teams entered the shootout.

Bengal regains the Santosh Trophy

Sports Bureau
HYDERABAD

West Bengal re-asserted its supremacy in the Santosh Trophy national football championship, clinching the title for a record 33rd time with a 1-0 win over Kerala in the final of the 78th edition at the GMC Balayogi Stadium here on Tuesday.

The match-winner came through Robi Hansda in added time of the second-half

when he picked up a header from Aditya Thapa into the box and slotted the ball in from close range.

Robi Hansda bagged the Tulasidas Balaram award for player-of-the-final and also the Peter Thangaraj award for player-of-the-championship.

Both the awards carried a cash prize of ₹1 lakh each were given by the Telangana State Government.

The result: Final: West Bengal 1 (Robi Hansda 90+4) bt Kerala 0.



Staggering! Bengal won its 33rd title. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Organising body

[AIFF](#)

Founded

1941; 84 years ago

Region

India

Number of teams

Group stage: 36

Final round: 12

Related competitions

[National Games](#)

International cup(s)

[Asian Champion Club Tournament \(1967–70\)](#)

Current champions

[West Bengal \(33rd title\)](#)

Most successful team(s)

[West Bengal \(33 titles\)](#)

Television broadcasters

[SSEN](#) [🔗](#) ([online streaming](#))

SportsKPI

SportsCast India

[Prasar Bharati Sports](#)

([YouTube](#))

Migraine, sinus or tension? How to tell headaches apart

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), almost half of all adults experience a headache at least once a year. But not every headache is the same



TYPES OF HEADACHES



Tension headache
Happens around the back of the head, the temples and the forehead



Migraine
Typically occurs on just one side of the head



Cluster headache
Happens in bouts, typically on one side and behind or around an eye



Post-traumatic headache
Frequently occurs in the temples, forehead and neck



Medication overuse
Location may vary from person to person



Sinus headache
Happens inside the forehead, cheekbones and nasal cavity

Women are 2-3 times more likely to suffer from migraine than men

They are also 1.5 times more likely to get tension headaches

But more men get cluster headaches

MEDICAL BREAKTHROUGHS AND RESEARCH THAT GAVE US HOPE IN 2024



Cutting-edge CAR-T cell cancer therapy, now made in India

● That too, at one-tenth the cost. Mumbai-based biotech company ImmunoACT came up with NexCAR19 – a desi version of the chimeric antigen receptor (CAR) T-cell therapy first brought out in the US. Used mainly to treat blood cancer so far, this cutting-

edge treatment is also effective for brain cancer and autoimmune diseases. NexCAR19 offers hope for low and middle-income countries that cannot afford prohibitively expensive cancer treatment.

Egypt becomes malaria-free

● “The disease that plagued pharaohs now belongs to its history,” WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in October after certifying that almost 100 years of anti-mosquito efforts have finally rid Egypt of malaria. It’s the third country in the WHO’s eastern Mediterranean Region to get a clean bill, following the UAE and Morocco



Augmented reality for weight-loss surgery

● In another first, a bariatric surgeon from Delhi used an Apple Vision Pro augmented reality device to perform weight-loss surgery on a 45-year-old patient who weighed 155kg. The interactive 3D environment provided by AR helped the surgeon see complex anatomical structures with much greater clarity.

New gene therapy restores UK toddler’s hearing

● Opal Sandy had lived all 18 months of her life without being able to hear anything, until a 16-minute surgery gave her a working copy of the gene thought to have caused her deafness. Now, she can hear almost perfectly. More deaf children in the UK, Spain, and the US will participate in this gene therapy trial over the next five years.



Japan uses stem cells for cornea transplant; three get sight back

● A Japanese ophthalmologist took donor blood cells and turned them into corneal epithelial cells that were successfully transplanted in three people with severely damaged corneas in a global first. All three have greatly improved vision now, with no major side effects. Clinical trials are planned in March to further assess the treatment’s efficacy.



First pig-to-human kidney transplant



● After decades of attempts to heal humans with nonhuman organs, Richard

Slayman, a 62-year-old man with kidney disease, became the first person ever to undergo a successful pig kidney transplant. Slayman had a good recovery and was able to stop dialysis, doctors said, but he died from his late-stage condition two months later.

Delhi beagle gets hybrid heart surgery

● Juliet, a seven-year-old beagle afflicted with Mitral valve disease, underwent a minimally-invasive Transcatheter Edge-to-Edge Repair (TEER) in Delhi, an entirely image-guided procedure dubbed the first in Asia and the second in the world. The common heart condition is a major cause of canine deaths worldwide. This hybrid ‘beating heart’ surgery was first performed at Colorado state university a couple of years ago.



Mumbai teen gets 1st shoulder-level arm transplant

● Anamta Ahmad, a 15-year-old from Goregaon, Mumbai was the first in the world, and the youngest to get a shoulder-level arm transplant after touching a livewire caused critical burns in her right arm. “Her muscles, blood vessels and nerves were severely damaged. We almost had to work inside the chest to repair them,” said plastic surgeon Dr Nilesh Satbhai who performed her transplant in September.

Ukraine halts transit of Russian gas to Europe

Associated Press

KYIV

Ukraine on Wednesday halted Russian gas supplies to European customers through its pipeline network after a pre-war transit deal expired at the end of last year.

Ukraine's Energy Minister Herman Halushchenko confirmed on Wednesday morning that Kyiv had stopped the transit "in the interest of national security". "This is a historic event. Russia is losing markets and will incur financial losses. Europe has already decided to phase out Russian gas, and [this] aligns with what Ukraine has done today," Mr. Halushchenko said in an up-

date on the Telegram messaging app.

At a summit in Brussels last month, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy vowed that Kyiv would not allow Moscow to use the transits to earn "additional billions... on our blood, on the lives of our citizens." But he had briefly held open the possibility of the gas flows continuing if payments to Russia were withheld until the war ends.

Russian state-owned energy company Gazprom said in a statement on Wednesday that it "has no technical and legal possibility" of sending gas through Ukraine, due to Kyiv's refusal to extend the deal.

Even as Russian troops



Key link: An underground gas storage facility in Lviv, Ukraine. AFP

and tanks moved into Ukraine in 2022, Russian natural gas kept flowing through the country's pipeline network to Europe, under a five-year agreement. Gazprom earned money from the gas and Ukraine took transit fees.

Before the war, Russia supplied nearly 40% of the EU's pipeline natural gas. Gas flowed through four pipeline systems, one under the Baltic Sea, one through Belarus and Poland, one through Ukraine and one under the Black Sea

through Turkiye to Bulgaria.

Energy crisis

After the war started, Russia cut off most supplies through the Baltic and Belarus-Poland pipelines, citing disputes over a demand for payment in roubles. The Baltic pipeline was blown up in an act of sabotage, but details of the attack remain murky.

The Russian cutoff caused an energy crisis in Europe. Germany had to shell out billions of euros to set up floating terminals to import liquefied natural gas that comes by ship. Users cut back as prices rose. Norway and the U.S. filled the gap, becoming the two largest suppliers.

Ukraine Halts Russian Gas Transit:Ukraine stopped the transit of Russian gas to Europe as the pre-war transit deal expired at the end of 2023.

यूक्रेन ने 2023 के अंत में पूर्व-युद्ध पारगमन समझौता समाप्त होने पर यूरोप में रूसी गैस के पारगमन को रोक दिया।

Reason / कारण:Ukraine's Energy Minister cited "national security" as the primary reason.

यूक्रेन के ऊर्जा मंत्री ने "राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा" को प्राथमिक कारण बताया

Impact on Europe / यूरोप पर प्रभाव

Energy Crisis:

- Russia supplied nearly 40% of the EU's pipeline natural gas before the war.
- युद्ध से पहले रूस यूरोपीय संघ की पाइपलाइन प्राकृतिक गैस का लगभग 40% आपूर्ति करता था।
- After the war, Europe faced an energy crisis as Russia cut off supplies through Baltic and Belarus-Poland pipelines.
- युद्ध के बाद, रूस ने बाल्टिक और बेलारूस-पोलैंड पाइपलाइनों के माध्यम से आपूर्ति बंद कर दी, जिससे यूरोप में ऊर्जा संकट पैदा हुआ।

Germany's Response:

- Germany invested billions in floating terminals to import liquefied natural gas (LNG).
- जर्मनी ने तरलीकृत प्राकृतिक गैस (LNG) आयात करने के लिए फ्लोटिंग टर्मिनलों में अरबों का निवेश किया।

New Suppliers:

- Norway and the U.S. stepped in as major suppliers.
- नॉर्वे और अमेरिका प्रमुख आपूर्तिकर्ता बन गए।

Pipeline Sabotage:

- The Baltic pipeline was destroyed in an act of sabotage, with details remaining unclear.
- बाल्टिक पाइपलाइन तोड़फोड़ में नष्ट हो गई, और विवरण अस्पष्ट बना हुआ है।

Historical Significance:

- This marks a significant shift in the European energy market, reducing dependence on Russian gas.
- यह यूरोपीय ऊर्जा बाजार में एक महत्वपूर्ण बदलाव है, जिसने रूसी गैस पर निर्भरता कम कर दी।

IN BRIEF



Botanist Manilal who revived Hortus malabaricus dies

K.S. Manilal, the botanist who brought the ancient botanical treasure Hortus malabaricus to the modern world, passed away on Wednesday at a private hospital in Thiruvir. He was 86. The Padma Shri awardee had been battling illness for a long time. A former head of the Botany department at Calicut University, Dr. Manilal dedicated around 35 years to researching, translating, and annotating Hortus malabaricus, a 17th century Latin manuscript compiled by Dutch Governor Hendrik Adrian van Rheede.

Case filed against organisers of dance event in Kochi

The Kerala Police has registered a case on charges of cheating and criminal breach of trust against four persons, including the proprietor of a firm that organised the dance event at the Jawaharlal International Stadium in Kaloor, Kochi, on December 29. During the event, MLA Uma Thomas fell from a temporary gallery and suffered serious injuries. The FIR was filed based on a complaint that the organisers failed to deliver on the promises given to the participants.

Newborn dies in A.P. as lack of road delays medical aid

A newborn baby, who developed respiratory complications at a remote hamlet in Andhra Pradesh, died before the could be taken to the nearest hospital on New Year's Eve. The incident was reported from the Jajurpeta in the district, which is home to 160 tribal villagers belonging to the Kondh tribe, classified as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group. The hamlet, and its surrounding villages, are bereft of road access.

CPI(M) renews efforts to mend ties with Nair Service Society

Hiran Unnikrishnan
KOTTAYAM

Just as preparations for the 148th Mannan Jayanti celebrations were in full swing at the Nair Service Society (NSS) headquarters at Perumna, Communist Party of India (Marxist) State secretary M.V. Govindaraj visited the town on December 30 to inaugurate the centenary commemoration of the historic Savarna Jatha led by Mannathu Padmanabhan.

The event, organised by the CPI(M)'s Changanassery area committee, was ostensibly part of the run-up to the party's four-day district conference in Kottayam.

According to CPI(M) leaders, by organising the event, the party was attempting to resonate with the NSS, which has long lamented the lack of recognition for Mannan's pivotal role in Kerala's social renaissance. The occasion also reflected the Left party's ongoing efforts to repair its strained relationship with the influential community organisation, a rift that deepened after the Sabarimala women's entry issue in 2018.

Festive beginning



Green arts: Students at a procession in Thiruvananthapuram on Wednesday ahead of the Kerala School Arts Festival. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

K.C. Deepika
BENGALURU

From a common conversation starter to the declining factor for agricultural output, weather occupies an important place in the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has been telling people about sunny, rainy, and wintry days for the first time in its history on January 15, and the IMD, established in 1875, will be completing 150 years of service.

According to the department, the IMD is one of the earliest government departments created for systematic observation, regular reporting, and scientific forecasting of weather in the Indian subcontinent.

In terms of infrastructure, India has some of the oldest meteorological observatories in the world. The instrumental era of science and meteorology in India commenced with the establishment of the first Meteorological and Seismological Observatory in (then) Madras in 1793. While the number gradually increased since then, the standards of instruments, and the time of observations were not fixed and the observations could not be utilised for predicting purposes.

Among its major breakthroughs through its evolution, the preparation of the first chart in 1877, and the commencement of ra-

T.M. Krishna honoured with 'Sangita Kalanidhi'

The musician has attracted younger audiences into the Carnatic music fold, says Music Academy President N. Murali; Parassala Ravi and Geetha Raja conferred the title of 'Sangita Kalacharya'

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI



T.M. Krishna receives the Sangita Kalanidhi title from N. Murali, President, Music Academy, S.A. sasi@rediffmail.com

Renowned Carnatic musician T.M. Krishna was conferred the title of 'Sangita Kalanidhi 2024' by Professor David Shulman, Chair, Renee Lang Professor of Humanistic Studies, and former professor of Indian Studies and Comparative Religion, Hebrew University, Jerusalem at the 98th Conference and Concerts — Sadas, the traditional oriental convocation — of The Music Academy in Chennai on Wednesday.

Parassala Ravi and Geetha Raja were conferred the title of 'Sangita Kalacharya' and Dr. Margaret Bastin was the recipient of 'Musicologist Award 2024'. Thiruvaiyavaru Brothers S. Narasimhan and S. Venkatesan, and violinist H.K. Narasimhamurthy received the TRK Award.

Speaking at the event, N. Murali, President, The Music Academy, and Director, The Hindu Group Publishing Private Limited, said Mr. Krishna's concert on Christmas Day was of "very high quality" and the response from the audience "was truly overwhelming. The rapturous applause and standing ovation that the artist received were incredible."

Mr. Murali said Mr. Krishna "distinguished himself in the role as the President of the 98th Annual Conference and Concerts." "His brilliance absolutely shone through the entire season. The academic seasons have been specially curated for the first time in over 20 years with an over-

arching theme 'Aesthetics and Synaesthetics: Reflections on Raga in Indian Art'," he said.

"Non-stop action" Upon receiving the title, Mr. Krishna, who thanked the people of Uroor Olcott Kuppam, along with his friends and family, said his life changed after he was invited to organise a music festival in 2015 in Uroor Olcott Kuppam in Chennai. "My life over the past decade or so has had many rounds of disturbances. Many have lasted about a month or so, but 2024 was different. It was about eight months of non-stop action, if you can call it that, I know I'm tough, but sometimes, it is hard and it can get very lonely," he said.

Mr. Krishna recalled his experiences of performing at The Music Academy on December 25. "It was not



Pinarayi Vijayan at the inauguration of the 92nd Sivagiri pilgrimage, in Thiruvananthapuram on Tuesday. PTI

'Guru played lead role in rectifying Sanatana Dharma'

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Just about the number of people who gathered here. For me, it was not about that. It was not about the applauses. It was not about the standing ovation. It was not about the screams or the howls and whistles. No, I think what made it unprecedented for me was that everybody here on that day was here for a very personal reason. And I left that morning with a lot of hope and a lot of joy, but above all, truth," he said.

Professor David Shulman said Carnatic music possesses the power to change self and change something in reality as well. "One of the features of Carnatic music is that you're just capable of changing your life and also changing something in reality. Let me say that part of the reason for this, the magic of that kind of transformation, part of it is interdependence and more than symbiosis of the musical, melodic and harmonic elements. It has to do with the tremendous interdependence and more than symbiosis of this entire tradition, because the role in rectifying it, all know it's a music of compositions... as a compositional framework, and even if the composition exceeds itself in the course of performance, and wedding together of words and sounds, that's a magical combination," he said.

teers remove their shirts before entering temples saying that it is a good suggestion. "Representatives of a Devaswam board had met me. They said they were also planning such a decision," he said.

When asked about the BJP's demand for a discussion on the matter, Mr. Vijayan said: "Let it be discussed. That should be done by the Devaswam board, not the government," he added.

Opposition's charge Meanwhile, Leader of the Opposition V.D. Satheesan contested the Chief Minister's attempt to draw a parallel between Sanatana Dharma and Varnashrama Dharma, an inflexible set of obligations and responsibilities based on the adherent's caste-based social station.

Speaking at the Sivagiri Madhom on Wednesday, Mr. Satheesan said Sanatana Dharma, which professes universal welfare, was the collective culture of the people of India.

C.T. Ravi case: no further action unless fresh plaint is filed, says Council Chairman

The Hindu Bureau
HUBBALLI

Chairman of Karnataka Legislative Council Basavaraaj Horatti on Wednesday said that unless he receives a fresh complaint from Women and Child Development Minister Lakshmi Hebbalkar, supported by audio-video evidence regarding what transpired in the Legislative Council on December 19, he would not file to take any further step as he had already ruled on the issue.



Basavaraaj Horatti

Mr. Horatti said that in the subsequent days, Ms. Hebbalkar had released a video clip of the purported incident and had also said that she would file another complaint with evidence.

"Till date, my office has not received any new complaint. If she files one, I will inquire into it and if video or audio clips are submitted as evidence, then they will be sent to Forensic Sciences Laboratory (FSL) to confirm the authenticity of the same. Based on the lab results, I will take further action as per the Council regulations in consultation with the Council secretaries and experts," he said.

Ravi's arrest and release on bail, he had received a complaint on December 24 regarding the alleged misbehaviour and threat issued to him in the Council hall by Congress leaders.

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The chairman said that after the subsequent developments, including Mr.

Banking on technology, India's weatherman to turn 150 on Jan. 15

dar age and flood Met services between 1947-1959, the commencement of the global satellite era in 1960-1970, global monitoring and better forecasting up to 24 hours in 1971-1983, the instrumental era in 1984-1990, and the age of modernisation in 2000-2010.

Between 2014 and 2023, there was rapid advancement in the observational platform, communication and modelling facilities, paradigm shift in forecasting, accuracy, and services, and significant improvement in all fronts including meteorological observations, communication, data, and infrastructure.

"Accordingly, there was rapid enhancement of weather and climate services and also the forecast accuracy improved by 40-50%," explained an IMD document.

The IMD today is manned by over 4,000 scientific personnel and boasts advanced meteorological instruments, state-of-the-art computing platforms, weather and climate prediction models, forecasting systems, and warning dissemination systems. With its headquarters in Delhi, it has six regional data collection and processing centres (RDMCs) catering to

six regions of the country, which are further assisted by 26 Meteorological Centres (MCs) at the State level.

T.M. Krishna honoured with 'Sangita Kalanidhi'

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"All in all, the *rasikas*, young and old, were in such high spirits and bursting with such energy and



T.M. Krishna receives the Sangita Kalanidhi title from David Shulman, Chair, Renee Lang Professor of Humanistic Studies, in the presence of N. Murali, President, Music Academy. S.R. RAGHUNATHAN

enthusiasm that the whole atmosphere was surreal in a sense. I would dare say that, if at all there is a musician who could attract into the fold of Carnatic music those outside it, particularly younger audiences, it is Shri T.M. Krishna," he said.

"The Carnatic music ecosystem needs such an induction sorely as there are structural changes already happening, which, institutions involved in classical performing arts, need to take serious note of."

Mr. Murali said Mr. Krishna "distinguished himself in the role as the President of the 98th Annual Conference and Concerts".

"His brilliance absolutely shone through the entire season. The academic sessions have been specially curated for the first time in over 20 years with an ove-

rarching theme 'Aesthetics and Synaesthetics: Reflections on Raga in Indian Art'," he said.

'Non-stop action'

Upon receiving the title, Mr. Krishna, who thanked the people of Uroor Olcott Kuppam, along with his friends and family, said his life changed after he was invited to organise a music festival in 2015 in Uroor Olcott Kuppam in Chennai. "My life over the past decade or so has had many rounds of disturbances. Many have lasted about a month or so, but 2024 was different. It was about eight months of non-stop action, if you can call it that. I know I'm tough, but sometimes, it is hard and it can get very lonely," he said.


Mr. Krishna recalled his experiences of performing at The Music Academy on December 25. "It was not

just about the number of people who gathered here. For me, it was not about that. It was not about the applause. It was not about the standing ovation. It was not about the screams or the howls and happiness. No, I think what made it unprecedented for me was that everybody here on that day was here for a very personal reason. And I left that morning with a lot of hope and a lot of joy, but above all, truth," he said.

Professor David Shulman said Carnatic music possesses the power to change self and change something in reality as well. "One of the features of Carnatic music is that you're just capable of changing your life and also changing something in reality. Let me say that part of the reason for this, the magic of that kind of transformation, part of it, of course, has to do with the tremendous interpenetration and interdependence and more than symbiosis of the text, the verbal text, and the musical, melodic and rhythmic text. It's one of the strongest features of this entire tradition, because Carnatic music, we all know it's a music of compositions... as a compositional framework, and even if the composition exceeds itself in the course of performance, and wedding together of words and sounds, that's a magical combination," he said.





- **T.M. Krishna Honored:**

- Renowned Carnatic musician **T.M. Krishna** was conferred the title of '**Sangita Kalanidhi 2024**' by Professor David Shulman at the Music Academy's 98th Conference in Chennai.
 - प्रसिद्ध कर्नाटक संगीतकार टी.एम. कृष्णा को चेन्नई में म्यूजिक एकेडमी के 98वें सम्मेलन में '**संगीत कलानिधि 2024**' का खिताब प्रोफेसर डेविड शुलमैन द्वारा प्रदान किया गया।
- 

- **Other Awards / अन्य पुरस्कार**
- **Sangita Kalaacharya Title:**
 - Conferred to **Parassala Ravi** and **Geetha Raja**.
 - **पारसला रवि और गीता राजा** को 'संगीत कालाचार्य' का खिताब दिया गया।
- **Musicologist Award 2024:**
 - Awarded to **Dr. Margaret Bastin**.
 - **डॉ. मार्गरेट बास्टिन** को 'म्यूज़िकोलॉजिस्ट अवार्ड 2024' दिया गया।
- **TTK Award:**
 - Presented to violinist **H.K. Narasimhamurthy**.
 - वायलिन वादक **एच.के. नरसिंहमूर्ति** को 'टीटीके अवार्ड' से सम्मानित किया गया।

- **. Contributions of T.M. Krishna / टी.एम. कृष्णा का योगदान**
- Described as someone who attracts younger audiences to Carnatic music.
 - Carnatic music के प्रति युवाओं की रुचि बढ़ाने में मददगार।
- Initiated **Uroor Olcott Kuppam Festival** in 2015 to make music more inclusive.
 - 2015 में उरूर ऑल्कोट कुप्पम फेस्टिवल शुरू किया, जिससे संगीत सभी के लिए सुलभ बना।
- Advocated for structural reforms in the Carnatic music ecosystem.
 - कर्नाटक संगीत के क्षेत्र में संरचनात्मक सुधार की वकालत की।

- 
- **T.M. Krishna's Remarks / टी.एम. कृष्णा की टिप्पणी**
 - Shared his journey of non-stop action and transformation since 2015.
 - 2015 से लगातार सक्रियता और परिवर्तन की अपनी यात्रा साझा की।
 - Highlighted the importance of unity between text, music, and emotions in Carnatic compositions.
 - कर्नाटक रचनाओं में पाठ, संगीत, और भावनाओं की एकता पर जोर दिया।
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IN BRIEF

Bhuvnesh Kumar takes charge as UIDAI CEO

Bhuvnesh Kumar took charge as the Chief Executive Officer of the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), which administers Aadhaar, on Wednesday...

Five persons die inside well in Jharkhand's Hazaribag

Five persons died in Jharkhand's Hazaribag district, including four persons who tried to rescue a man from a well, the police said on Wednesday...

24-year-old man from U.P. kills mother, four younger sisters to 'save their honour'

Plus Ishita Mishra NEW DELHI

The Lucknow police on Wednesday arrested a 24-year-old man for allegedly murdering his mother and four sisters in a hotel in the city...

'Excessive nitrates found in groundwater in 440 districts'

Report suggests that about 56% of India's districts face the problem largely due to subsidised synthetic nitrogenous fertilizer, a key input for farming; a level more than 45 mg per litre is high

Jacob Koshy NEW DELHI

Excessive nitrates have been found in groundwater in 440 districts as of 2023, an increase from 350 such districts in 2017, a report by the Central Groundwater Board (CGWB) said on Wednesday...



The Central Ground Water Board estimates that the stage of groundwater extraction is 60-65%, the same since 2009. FILE PHOTO

The data suggest that about 56% of India's districts have excessive nitrates - defined as more than 45 mg per litre - in groundwater, largely due to the use of subsidised synthetic nitrogenous fertilizer, a key input for farming...

concentration exceeding 100 ppb (parts per billion). Any level over 30 ppb of uranium is considered unsafe and several of these samples were predominant in regions of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Karnataka...

School enrolment down by over a crore in 2023-24: report

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

The total enrolment of students has dropped by over a crore in 2023-24 from that of the previous years, show the latest data released by the Education Ministry...



Over the past four years, the enrolment number has hovered around a crore.

A total of 24.8 crore students enrolled in the academic year 2023-24, the Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+) report released by the Ministry said...

Education officials have said in the report that the enrolment shows some real changes from the previous years as this exercise of maintaining a separate student base is unique and different and incomparable from that of 2022 or a previous year...

Other major chemical contaminants such as fluoride and uranium. Fluoride concentrations exceeding the permissible limit are a 'major concern' in Rajasthan, Haryana, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana...

This is a sharp rise from the 67.4% in 2022. However, there were 343 fewer blocks analysed for the 2024 assessment, compared to 2022.

In 2018-19, the total enrolment of students in school was 26.02 crore, which increased in 2019-20 by 1.6% and crossed 26.45 crore, an increase of more than 42 lakh students...

In 2022-23, there was a dip in enrolment with 25.18 crore students being registered and there was a further fall in 2023-24 to 24.8 crore in the total enrolment, a drop of 69 lakh (nearly 1.22 crore students) as compared with 2018-19...

In 2022-23, the Ministry started a revitalised UDISE+ ecosystem which covers districts more than 60 fields for each student and to maintain the uniqueness of the child, the Aadhaar details were collected on a voluntary basis...

Officials have stated that UDISE+ 2023-24 data is not strictly comparable with previous reports on various educational indicators such as Gross Enrolment Ratio, Net Enrolment Ratio, dropout rates and so on...

temple and [then later] convert to Hinduism," he said.

In the video, he named some people and accused them of being the land mafia and land women trafficker. He urged Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu to take strict action against them...

"Their plan was to get me and my father arrested in a fake case and then sell me and my father to the mafia and land women trafficker. We wanted to save their honour..." he said.

The neighbourhood of the accused, whose house is located in the Techii Bagya locality in Agra, denied the claims.

"Both Mohammad Badr and his son Mohammad Arshad used to create a ruckus every now and then and have fought with almost every person in the area," said Fatima Begum, a neighbour.

Workshop on 'positive mind mastery' for students to be held online on Jan. 4 and 5

The Hindu Bureau CHENNAI

A workshop on "positive mind mastery" will be organised by MITra Global on January 4 and 5 for students aged 10 to 17 and their parents...

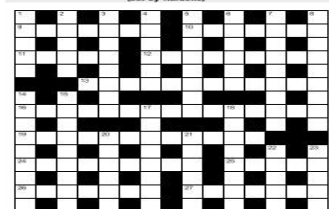


In today's world, negativity and challenges can loom large in the lives of young people. Self-doubt, anxiety, and the pressure to succeed can overwhelm them. Studies show that a positive mindset leads to better academic performance, improved mental health, and a more fulfilling life...

The workshop will discuss topics related to building accelerated learning methodologies, peer support, study strategies, handling peer pressure, negating digital influence, goal setting and visualisation, and affirmation...

The first 25 registered participants will receive a free eBook, 'I Love Exams', which will reinforce the critical concepts discussed during the workshop and provide additional strategies to nurture potential. To register, visit hub.mitraglobal.com/services/pmmw or scan the QR code. For details, call 7482 62507 or email pmw@mitraglobal.com

TH CROSSWORD 14372



- Across 9 The spirit - film cut short after censor (7) 10 Learner never smiles embarrassingly, it indicates admission of oversight (5,2) 11 Moderate rent increase (3-2) 12 Honey, we never set out without val at first (5) 13 Proverbially, union members do this without thinking... (5,2,5)

To solve this puzzle online, get access to our crossword site at: https://crossword.hindunews.com

- Down 1 Fatal disease of middle ear part showing up (5) 2 Trouble brewing up for affiliates (5) 3 Clergyman takes drink at flat (8) 4 I am told old man's spout usually spouts hot water (6) 5 Ice on the ebb in the backdrop is unusual (8) 6 Problem of girl ends with burning (6) 7 Annoying? My dad! It's a place for workout (8) 8 Extremely venturesome terrier, trained to find and fetch game for hunter (9) 9 One who stakes claim to the throne makes advance submission (8) 10 'Veronica, cigarette time!' Spooner says (9) 11 Served Rwandese in distress (8) 12 It is likely that mispeller diary listed namesakes at the centre (1,4,3) 13 He works for band touring extremely around Rio with friends nearby (6) 14 Inconceivable, couldn't start off miserably! (6) 15 Suse auditor's balance (3) 16 Country's cups and saucers (5)

SUDOKU

9x9 Sudoku grid with numbers 1-9 in some cells and empty cells for solving.

Solution to previous puzzle and solution to yesterday's Sudoku. Includes a 9x9 grid and a list of numbers for the solution.

FAITH

Like the earth and seeds

Yudhishtira asks Bhisma which is more important - vidhi or effort, said PT. Seshadri in a discourse. Bhisma replies that there was once a discussion between Brahma and Vasistha on the subject. Both vidhi and duty have their place in our lives, explains Bhisma. It is like the connection between seeds and the earth. The earth has been ploughed and manured, and is ready for cultivation. But if we do not sow seeds, can we get crops? We must continue to do our duties. We often make the mistake of thinking that because we have faced something terrible in our lives, everything else in future is going to turn out the same way...



Bhuvnesh Kumar takes charge as UIDAI CEO

Bhuvnesh Kumar took charge as the Chief Executive Officer of the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), which administers Aadhaar, on Wednesday. Mr. Kumar, a 1995-batch IAS officer of the Uttar Pradesh cadre, is an Additional Secretary at the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, a post he will continue to hold after this appointment. Mr. Kumar succeeds Amit Agrawal, a 1993-batch IAS officer of the Chhattisgarh cadre, who was also MEITY Additional Secretary prior to his June 2023 appointment. Mr. Kumar has also served as a Joint Secretary at the Ministry.

School enrolment down by over a crore in 2023-24: report

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The total enrolment of students has dropped by over a crore in 2023-24 from that of the previous years, show the latest data released by the Education Ministry.

A total of 24.8 crore students enrolled in the academic year 2023-24, the Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+) report released by the Ministry said. Over the past four years, the enrolment number has hovered around 26 crore.

Education officials have said in the report that the data show some real changes from the previous years as this exercise of maintaining a separate student base is unique and different and incomparable from that of 2021-22 or the previous years. The UDISE+ facilitates online uploading of data at the school level with inbuilt validation checks and the subsequent data verification at the block, district and State levels ensures data reliability and timely completion.

In 2018-19, the total enrolment of students in school was 26.02 crore, which increased in 2019-20 by 1.6% and crossed 26.45 crore, an increase of more than 42 lakh students. The enrolments slightly fell in 2020-21 as compared with 2019-20. In 2021-22, as compared with 2020-21, the total enrolment increased by 0.76%. Even according to data from back in 2012-13, the total enrolment was 26.3 crore.

In 2022-23, there was a drop in enrolment with 25.18 crore students being registered and there was a further fall in 2023-24 to 24.8 crore in the total enrolment, a drop of 6% (nearly 1.22 crore students) as compared with 2018-19.

In 2022-23, the Ministry started a revitalised UDISE+ ecosystem which captures data on more than 60 fields for each student and to maintain the uniqueness of the child, the Aadhaar details were also collected on a voluntary basis.

In the latest report, more than 19.7 crore students provided Aadhaar numbers by 2023-24 voluntarily, the report said.

Officials have stated that UDISE+ 2022-23 data is not strictly comparable with the previous reports on various educational indicators such as Gross Enrol-



Over the past four years, the enrolment number has hovered around 26 crore.

ment Ratio, Net Enrolment Ratio, dropout rates and so on. Since 2022-23, more efforts have been put in accurately establishing student and teacher credentials to weed out duplicate or ghost entries for specific identification of beneficiaries for various educational schemes.

Apart from Aadhaar, a separate unique educational ID (EID) for every student has been created in the UDISE+ portal to cover each and every child under the ecosystem of UDISE+, officials said.

"Through the creation of unique student and teacher identities, credentials of individuals students and teachers in the education ecosystem can be established more accurately leading to weeding out of duplicate or ghost entries resulting in precise identification of beneficiaries for benefit transfers of Samagra Shiksha scheme, PM POSHAN Scheme, National Scholarship scheme etc. (and) can bring significant savings to government in future years," the report said. While in 2018-19, 13.53 crore boys were enrolled, this saw a drop to 12.87 crore enrolments in 2023-24 a decrease of 4.87%, while enrolment of girls decreased from 12.49 crore in 2018-19 to 11.93 crore in 2023-24, a decrease of 4.48%.

States like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra saw among the highest drop in enrolments. In 2018-19, Bihar reflected an enrolment of over 2.49 crore students which dropped to over 2.13 crore (a dip of over 35.65 lakh students) in the respective years UDISE+ report data. Similarly, Uttar Pradesh had shown enrolment of 4.44 crore students in 2018-19 which dropped by 28.26 lakh to 4.16 crore in latest data. Maharashtra recorded a decrease of 18.55 lakh students from over 2.32 crore to 2.13 crore in the latest report.

Key Highlights / मुख्य बिंदु

Enrolment Decline / नामांकन में गिरावट:

- Total student enrolment in 2023-24 fell to **24.8 crore** from 26 crore in previous years.
- 2023-24 में कुल छात्र नामांकन **24.8 करोड़** हो गया, जो पिछले वर्षों में 26 करोड़ था।

Percentage Drop / प्रतिशत गिरावट:

- A 6% drop since 2022-23, translating to 1.22 crore fewer students.
- 2022-23 से 6% की गिरावट, जिसमें 1.22 करोड़ कम छात्र नामांकित हुए।

Factors Behind the Decline / गिरावट के कारण

Improved Data Accuracy / डेटा सटीकता में सुधार:

- Validation checks and Aadhaar-linked enrolment ensured the elimination of duplicate or ghost entries.
- वैलिडेशन चेक और आधार लिंकड नामांकन ने डुप्लिकेट या घोस्ट एंट्री को समाप्त किया।

Economic and Social Changes / आर्थिक और सामाजिक परिवर्तन:

- States like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Maharashtra reported significant drops in enrolments.
- बिहार, उत्तर प्रदेश, और महाराष्ट्र जैसे राज्यों में नामांकन में महत्वपूर्ण गिरावट दर्ज की गई।

- . State-wise Trends / राज्यों के अनुसार प्रवृत्तियाँ

- Bihar:

- Enrolment decreased from 2.49 crore to **2.13 crore**.
- नामांकन 2.49 करोड़ से घटकर **2.13 करोड़** हुआ।

- Uttar Pradesh:

- Enrolment fell from 4.44 crore in 2018-19 to **4.16 crore** in 2023-24.
- 2018-19 में 4.44 करोड़ से घटकर 2023-24 में **4.16 करोड़**।

- Maharashtra:

- Enrolment declined by 15.55 lakh from 2.32 crore to **2.13 crore**.
- नामांकन 2.32 करोड़ से घटकर **2.13 करोड़** हो गया, 15.55 लाख की कमी।

-
- **Measures Taken / उठाए गए कदम**
 - **Revitalized UDISE+ Ecosystem / पुनर्जीवित UDISE+ इकोसिस्टम:**
 - Introduced unique student identification (EID) linked to Aadhaar.
 - आधार से जुड़े अद्वितीय छात्र पहचान (EID) को लागू किया गया।
 - Data verified at block, district, and state levels for accuracy.
 - डेटा की सटीकता के लिए ब्लॉक, जिला, और राज्य स्तर पर सत्यापन।
 - **Government Schemes / सरकारी योजनाएँ:**
 - Data is being used for targeted implementation of Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, PM POSHAN Scheme, and other scholarships.
 - डेटा का उपयोग समग्र शिक्षा अभियान, पीएम पोषण योजना, और अन्य छात्रवृत्तियों के लिए किया जा रहा है।

-
- **Broader Impact / व्यापक प्रभाव**
 - **Savings for Government / सरकारी बचत:**
 - Elimination of ghost entries saved significant public funds.
 - घोस्ट एंट्री को हटाने से सार्वजनिक धन की महत्वपूर्ण बचत हुई।
 - **Future Projections / भविष्य की संभावनाएँ:**
 - More accurate enrolment data will aid in better educational policy-making.
 - अधिक सटीक नामांकन डेटा बेहतर शैक्षिक नीति निर्माण में मदद करेगा।

TOP OF THE CHARTS

Bumrah registers record by an Indian bowler in ICC rankings



Premier fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah on Wednesday bettered the all-time rating points record by an Indian bowler in the Bowling Day Test. "We'll see how he plays out here (Sydney), to be able to throw a few punches early and get a bit of momentum for us, the opening partnership was probably just lacking that intensity."

IMPETUS

Konostas has brought momentum and intensity, says Carey



Alex Carey said on Wednesday that he was mesmerised by the way Sam Konstas scored an audacious half-century in the Boxing Day Test. "We'll see how he plays out here (Sydney), to be able to throw a few punches early and get a bit of momentum for us, the opening partnership was probably just lacking that intensity."

HIGH PRAISE

Australian PM Albanese hails Bumrah's superb show



Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese on Wednesday interacted with the Indian cricketer ahead of the fifth Test and effusively praised Jasprit Bumrah for his exploits in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. According to the local media, Albanese acknowledged Bumrah's superb performance in the series.

END OF THE ROAD

Djokovic-Kyrgios pair flatters to deceive, loses in second round



The new doubles team of Novak Djokovic and Nick Kyrgios bowed out of the British and Irish Open in the second round. The pair, granted a wild-card entry by tournament organisers, lost 2-6, 6-3, 18-105 on Wednesday to the top-seeded combination of Nikola Pietrangeli of Croatia and New Zealand's Michael Venus.

One-man army Bumrah at his menacing best Down Under

The pace spearhead has 30 scalps from just four Tests in the ongoing series and what makes his performance even more special is the absence of regular partner Shami. Siraj has slowly found his rhythm while Akash has tried hard without luck

INDIA IN AUS

K.C. Vilava Kumar
SYDNEY

A slow walk gathering pace, legs suddenly whirring while approaching the bowling crease, back arching and the ball hurtling at 140 kph, Bumrah, aged 31 and with 44 Tests under his belt, this is the middle stage, and his bowing is a masterpiece in cricket's longer format is bound to quadruple. To bag 200 plus with an average of 19.42 is spectacular. He is the first bowler to get to this milestone while the average stayed below the 20 mark.

Prior to Rohit Sharma's return as captain at Adelaide, Bumrah led India well in the triumphant first Test at Perth. While the subsequent contests witnessed Australia's comeback and a series scoreline of 2-1 now favours the host, Bumrah has remained undaunted. Even as a tailender, he has put a price on his wicket.

There was theatre when Shane Warne bowled; an equally dramatic run happens when Bumrah is at work. Great players impose their will on contests. Kapil Dev during India's 1991-92 tour Down Under bagged 25 wickets. Thirty two years later, another In-

dian fast bowler has 30 scalps from just four Tests while the Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG) awaits the fifth Test here on Friday. Kapil's was the twilight that lit up a stunning career in its twilight. For Bumrah, aged 31 and with 44 Tests under his belt, this is the middle stage, and his bowing is a masterpiece in cricket's longer format is bound to quadruple. To bag 200 plus with an average of 19.42 is spectacular. He is the first bowler to get to this milestone while the average stayed below the 20 mark.

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Fast and furious: Bumrah has been simply sensational in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy series. AFP

raw emotion. When Nathan Lyon suffered a similar outcome, the timber-diminished just stood and held a cold gaze.

This was the hero in a Wild West, gunning

down rivals with a phlegmatic air. After going through the "Bumrah inquisition" on the pitch, every Australian batter has been subjected to the "Bumrah question" in press

conferences. Their usual responses reflected shock and awe.

It is not easy to perform consistently while his regular partner Mohammed Shami is yet to resurface at the international level following injury and rehabilitation. The other Mohammed, Siraj, has slowly found a rhythm to gain 16 wickets. Akash Deep, meanwhile, has strived hard without luck.

All this meant that Rohit was often employing Bumrah in repetitive spells. The shock bowler was now doubling up as a stock bowler, and it is a workload that the Indian captain is conscious about. When India strides out at the SCG, Bumrah is expected to replicate his excellence. It would be ideal if the batsmen's feet can contribute.

Readers of a certain vintage may remember a Sachin Tendulkar hundred being the lone balm while India lost. The wickets are reversed. A Bumrah five-for is taken for granted even as the team slumps toward defeat's shadow. The women, however, were in no mood to share the title, even though both the finalists were from their country - China. Ju Wen-

Carlsen, Nepomniachtchi share World blitz title; Vaishali clinches bronze

CHESS

Sports Bureau

The World blitz championship ended on a bizarre note in New York. Magnus Carlsen and Ian Nepomniachtchi decided to share the title, with the approval from the world chess governing body FIDE.

What if the regulations may not have quite allowed that. The final was still tied after three games in the sudden death when Carlsen proposed to Nepomniachtchi that the title be shared. Before the tie-breaks, the defending champion had taken a 2-0 lead but his Russian rival fought back to win the next two.

After the match, Carlsen and Nepomniachtchi were already played for a very long time. I was very happy to end it. I thought at that point it would have been very cruel on both of us if one came first and another second. That's why I thought it was a reasonable solution."

The women, however, were in no mood to share the title, even though both the finalists were from their country - China. Ju Wen-



Proud moment: Vaishali, right, with the other medalists. FIDE



Nothing to separate: Carlsen and Nepomniachtchi were declared joint winners in a tie-break.

Jun, the defending World classical champion, added the blitz title to her collection after beating Lei Tingjie in the tie-breaks. This was the second medal for India in New York. Koneru Humpy had won the women's World rapid title on Sunday.

McGrath lauds Bumrah's ability to adapt

Preet Trust of India
SYDNEY

Jasprit Bumrah's incredible show has prevented the Border-Gavaskar Trophy series from becoming completely lopsided in Australia's favour, said pace great Glenn McGrath, lauding the India spearhead for his control and ability to adapt quickly. "He has been a massive part of the Indian team and without him, the series might have been more one-sided and what he does is special," said McGrath on the sidelines of his foundation's cancer awareness event here.

"Terrific young guy who has found a way to adapt. Absolutely incredible how he powers into bowl the last few steps," McGrath said of Bumrah's short run-up.

The man with 563 Test wickets also found similarities between him and the Indian in terms of hyper-extension of their arms when the elbow joint bends backward beyond its normal range. He said it allows them to launch the ball a few inches further.

Team management and training are the franchises' prerogative, feels Ikram

Uthra Ganesan
ROURKELA

International Hockey Federation (FIH) President Tayyab Ikram has made it clear that while the window for the Hockey India League was fixed, the exact dates were up to Hockey India and the franchises.

Many overseas players had cited it clashing with Christmas as reason for pulling out when it was announced. "How the franchises plan their training and team management is their prerogative. We have no problem with when it starts - December 28 or January 1 - so long as it is in the exclusive window," Ikram said here on Wednesday.

"IHL is close to my heart because it is for the athletes. Globally, we need more platforms that provide athletes with opportunities to perform and receive the recognition they deserve. I believe this is a great for global hockey. The IHL, coming back is a great first step and I am sure the rest of the world



Ikram, FILE PHOTO

will also come soon. It's an annual event and I have already started seeing some interest. It is not far that the response of all the countries will be more positive," he added.

Ikram also refuted FIH launching a Pakistan-specific project to revive hockey. "Earlier we had top-8-10 countries playing major tournaments but there was nothing for teams below that. Now we have the Nations Cup that targets eight teams after top-10 and the Nations Cup 2 with the next eight teams. I eventually want about 35 teams playing top hockey in some way or the other."

"As for the Pro League, yes we have a lot to do to make it as perfect as we had wanted and we need to engage more. Which is why we are launching the Pro League Connect so that all hockey nations engage with it."

We are launching the Pro League Connect so that all hockey nations engage with it

icipation, commitment and investment from the respective national associations and India is the best possible example," he declared.

Elaborating on his plans to spread top-tier hockey to more countries, Ikram said, "Earlier we had top-8-10 countries playing major tournaments but there was nothing for teams below that. Now we have the Nations Cup that targets eight teams after top-10 and the Nations Cup 2 with the next eight teams. I eventually want about 35 teams playing top hockey in some way or the other."

"As for the Pro League, yes we have a lot to do to make it as perfect as we had wanted and we need to engage more. Which is why we are launching the Pro League Connect so that all hockey nations engage with it."

Bengal Tigers find a way past Gonasika, record second victory of the season

HIL

Uthra Ganesan
ROURKELA

The rub of the green went Shrawati Karh Bengal Tigers' way as it registered its second win in as many games with a 2-1 victory over Team Gonasika at the Birsa Munda Stadium here on Wednesday.

For a game that was as evenly matched as possible, one moment of defensive error led to a penalty stroke for SRBT, proving to be the difference between the two sides.

For the remaining part, there was little to choose from between the two sides. SRBT did earn enough penalty corners, however, it had to wait till the sixth one for Rupinder Pal Singh to finally step into the action - Jugraj Singh was entrusted with the responsibility. He then but was unable to beat Payne - and the veteran made no qualms in smashing into the net past Payne's shoulder.

For Gonasika, it was Manpreet Singh, along with Frenchman Victor Charlet, who was the beat-



Roaring success: Rupinder's double sealed it for Tigers. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

goalkeeper Oliver Payne. SRBT did earn enough penalty corners, however, it had to wait till the sixth one for Rupinder Pal Singh to finally step into the action - Jugraj Singh was entrusted with the responsibility. He then but was unable to beat Payne - and the veteran made no qualms in smashing into the net past Payne's shoulder.

For Gonasika, it was Manpreet Singh, along with Frenchman Victor Charlet, who was the beat-

ing heart, controlling every aspect and running relentlessly to attack, create and defend.

It was no surprise that the former India captain got his name on the score-sheet as well, swinging to smash into the board, unmarked on the left after being put through by Struan Walker.

That should have opened up the game but the teams went back to possession play and it looked like yet another IHL match would go into shoot-

outs. However, a 48th minute blunder saw SRBT rewarded with the stroke that Rupinder calmly converted.

Gonasika, faced with the prospect of another loss, finally stepped up the tempo and tried to find an equaliser but the rushing inside the circle saw the side falter at the finish with wayward shots, eventually ending on the losing side.

The result: SRBT 2 (Rupinder Pal Singh 31, 48) vs Team Gonasika 1 (Manpreet Singh 32).

Carlsen, Nepomniachtchi share World blitz title; Vaishali clinches bronze

CHESS

Sports Bureau

The World blitz championship ended on a bizarre note in New York. Magnus Carlsen and Ian Nepomniachtchi decided to share the title, with the approval from the world chess governing body FIDE.

What if the regulations may not have quite allowed that.

Tied

The final was still tied after three games in the sudden death when Carlsen proposed to Nepomniachtchi that the title be shared. Before the tie-breaks, the defending champion had taken a 2-0 lead but his Russian rival fought back to win the next two.

After the match, Carlsen reasoned: "At that point, we had already played for a very long time. I was very happy to end it. I thought at that point it would have been very, very cruel on both of us if one came first



Proud moment: Vaishali, right, with the other medallists. FIDE



Nothing to separate: Carlsen and Nepomniachtchi were declared joint winners in a first. FIDE

**rate? House of Chikankari did
with a tailored checkout.**



News / Business / World starts waking up to Indian coffee, exports cross \$1 billion first time

 Premium

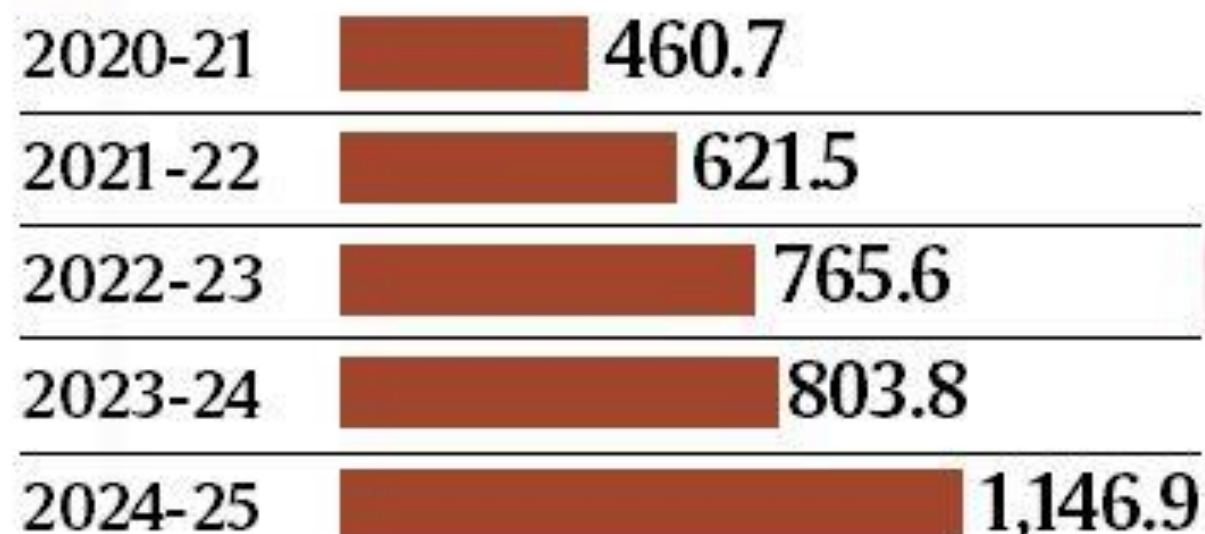
World starts waking up to Indian coffee, exports cross \$1 billion first time

India's coffee exports rose to a record high of \$1,146.9 million between April and November in FY24, compared to \$803.8 million during the same period last year, registering a 29 per cent rise.

INDIA'S COFFEE EXPORTS

(April - Nov)

■ Exports (\$million)



Source: Commerce Ministry/CMIE





Brazil is the world's largest coffee producer, contributing about 40 per cent of global production.

Meanwhile, Vietnam, the second-largest coffee producer, has also reported lower production forecasts. Although Vietnam's coffee production is expected to recover by 2.6 million bags to 30.1 million, it will still remain below the record crop of 2021/22, according to the USDA.



Coffee Board data showed that Chikkamagaluru, Kodagu and Hassan in Karnataka with 2,48,020 MTs during 2022-23 is the largest producer of Arabica and Robusta coffee.

Kerala comes a distinct second at 72,425 MTs followed by Tamil Nadu at 18,700 MTs.



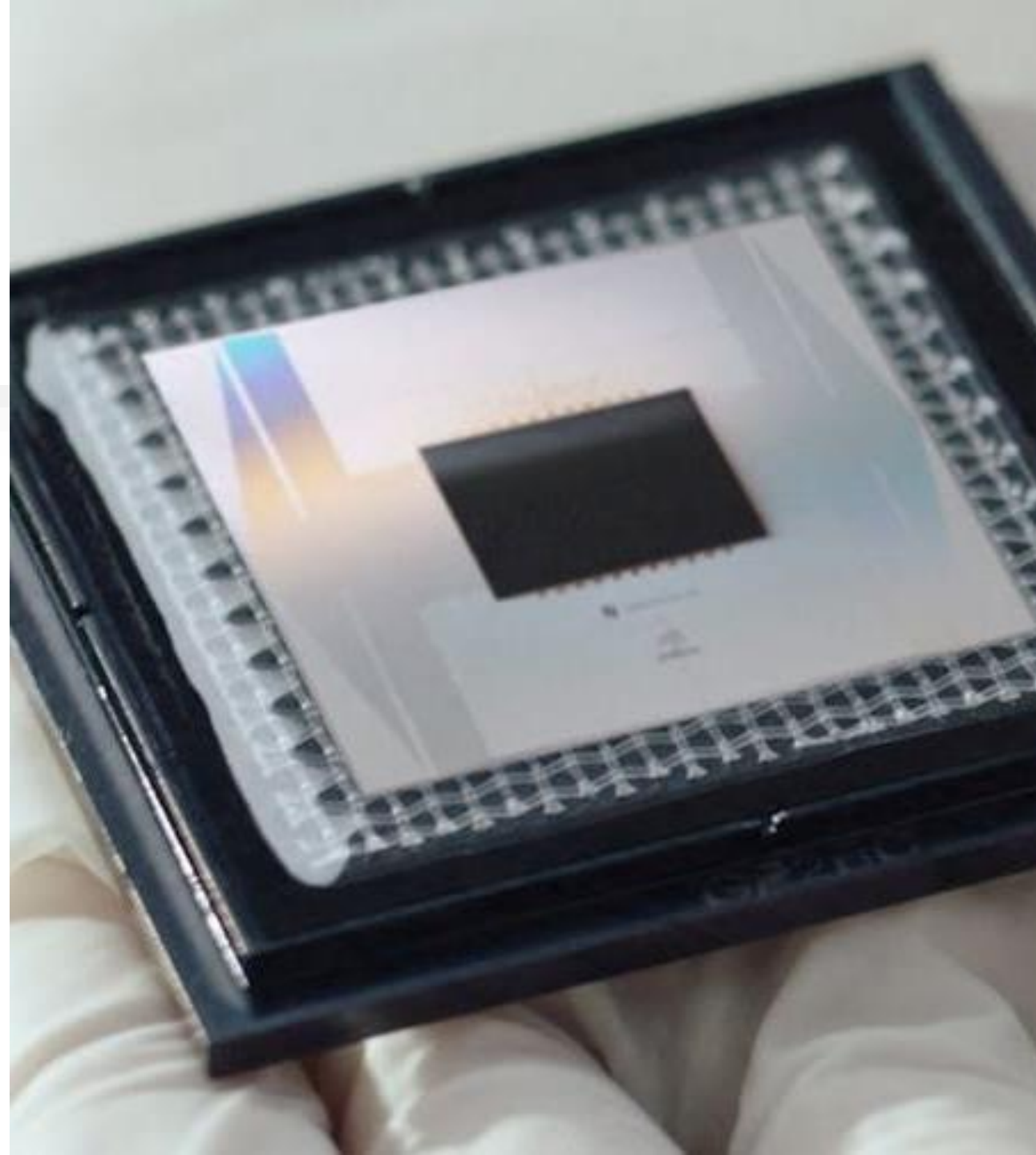
Official data revealed that India's top export destination between April and November this year was the European Union, with Italy, Belgium, and Germany accounting for nearly half of total coffee exports.

Other significant destinations included Russia, the UAE and the US, which together accounted for about 20 per cent of total exports. The US, Germany, France, Italy are the largest importers of coffee.

The background features several abstract geometric shapes: a blue circle at the top left, a green triangle at the top center, a yellow vertical bar on the left, a blue circle in the middle right, a green square at the bottom left, a large orange circle at the bottom center with yellow dashed lines around it, and an orange semi-circle on the left side.

Google Willow Chip

- Google recently unveiled its latest quantum processor, named 'Willow.'








- **About Willow Quantum AI:**
- Willow is Google's latest quantum processor with 105 physical qubits designed to enhance quantum error correction and scalability.
- **Error Correction**
Protocols: Employs **surface code** with data and measurement qubits to detect and mitigate errors without collapsing qubit states.



- **Superconducting Qubits:** Operates at near absolute zero temperatures (-273.15°C) for maximum stability.
- **Improved Coherence Time:** Achieves 100 microseconds of coherence time, allowing qubits to hold information longer during computations.



- 
- **Significance of Willow:**
 - **Computational Breakthrough:** Successfully completed the Random Circuit Sampling (RCS) task in minutes a task that would take classical computers 10 septillion years.
 - **Applications in Complex Problems:** Paves the way for solving challenges in **drug discovery, climate modelling, materials science, and optimization problems.**
 - **Foundation for Scalability:** Addresses key hurdles, ensuring quantum computers can grow larger and remain reliable.
 - **Societal Impact:** Potential to revolutionize industries and solve problems of global significance
- 
- 
- 
- 

Trinidad and Tobago



Tobago



TRINIDAD and TOBAGO



HILLS - MTS.



- Trinidad and Tobago declared a state of emergency, following a surge in violence, including gang-related shootings.



- **About Trinidad and Tobago:**

- **Capital:** Port of Spain

- **Location:** Southernmost island nation in the Caribbean, situated 11 km northeast of Venezuela and 130 km south of Grenada.



- Trinidad and Tobago are located in the **Atlantic Ocean**


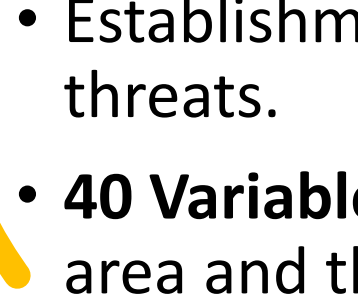




- **Geographic Features:**

- **Rivers:** Ortoire River, Caroni River, and Nariva River (major rivers on the island of Trinidad).
- **Mountains:** Northern Range (Trinidad), including the highest peak, El Cerro del Aripo (940 meters).

Digital Maha Kumbh



- 
- The Maha Kumbh 2025, set to take place in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, promises to be a unique fusion of spirituality and cutting-edge technology.
 - **Cyber Security at Maha Kumbh**
 - Deployment of **56 dedicated cyber warriors** and experts for cyber patrolling.
 - Establishment of a **Maha Kumbh cyber police station** to counter cyber threats.
 - **40 Variable Messaging Displays (VMDs)** will be installed in both the fair area and the commissionerates for raising awareness about cyber threats.
- 

- 
- **Infrastructure and Land Digitalization**
 - **A new district, Maha Kumbh Nagar,** is being developed with state-of-the-art digital infrastructure.
 - **Drone surveys** before and after the monsoon will map land topography accurately.
 - **GIS-based maps on Google Maps** will provide real-time navigation of essential public utilities.
- 



- **Enhanced Devotee Security**
- **Remote-controlled life buoys** will be deployed to quickly respond to emergencies and ensure the safety of pilgrims in water.
- **Underwater drones**, capable of diving up to 100 meters, will monitor activities beneath the waters, transmitting real-time reports to the **Integrated Command and Control Center (ICCC)**.



Aspect	Key Facts About Kumb Mela
About	Largest peaceful congregation of pilgrims globally, involving bathing in sacred rivers for purification.
Locations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Haridwar: On the Ganges. 2. Ujjain: On the Shipra. 3. Nashik: On the Godavari (Dakshin Ganga). 4. Prayagraj: At the confluence of the Ganges, Yamuna, and Saraswati.
Types of Kumbh Mela	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Main Kumbh Mela: Celebrated at four locations every 12 years. 2. Ardh-Kumbh Mela: Held every 6 years at Haridwar and Prayagraj. 3. Maha Kumbh Mela: Held every 144 years at Prayagraj. 4. Maagh Kumbh: Celebrated annually in Prayagraj during January-February.
Historical Evolution	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mythological Origins: Rooted in the Puranas, describing the battle for the Amrit pitcher. 2. Ancient Period: Prominent during Maurya and Gupta periods; gained prominence under Gupta rulers. 3. Medieval Period: Harshavardhana organized Kumbh at Prayagraj; Akbar honored Naga Sadhus. 4. Colonial Period: Documented by British administrators like James Prinsep. 5. Post-Independence: Recognized by UNESCO in 2017 as an intangible cultural heritage.
Guinness World Records	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Largest Traffic and Crowd Management Plan. 2. Biggest Painting Exercise under the Paint My City Scheme. 3. Largest Sanitation and Waste Disposal Mechanism.
Cultural Significance	Symbolizes spiritual ethos, cultural unity, and India's capacity to host large-scale global events.



New Glenn Rocket

- 
- The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has granted Blue Origin a commercial space launch license for its New Glenn rocket.
 - **What is the New Glenn rocket?**
 - New Glenn is a **heavy-lift, two-stage rocket** developed by Blue Origin.
 - It is named after **John Glenn**, the first American to orbit Earth
- 



The rocket stands at 320 feet, and has a 7-meter-wide payload fairing.



The **first stage** of the rocket is **reusable** and **powered by seven BE-4 engines**, which are **LNG-fueled** and produce over 3.8 million pounds of thrust.



The **second stage** is powered by two BE-3U engines, using **liquid hydrogen** and oxygen, generating over 320,000 pounds of vacuum thrust.

India's First Glass Bridge Over Sea





The Tamil Nadu CM inaugurated India's first glass bridge over the sea.



About bridge It connects the Tiruvalluvar Statue and Vivekananda Rock Memorial in Kanniyakumari.



The inauguration was part of the 25th anniversary celebrations of the Tiruvalluvar Statue.

- The statue is officially named the “**Statue of Wisdom.**”
- It represents the 133 chapters of Tirukkural.
- **Bridge Features:** The 77-meter-long, 10-meter-wide bridge allows safe passage between the two landmarks while providing views of the sea below.












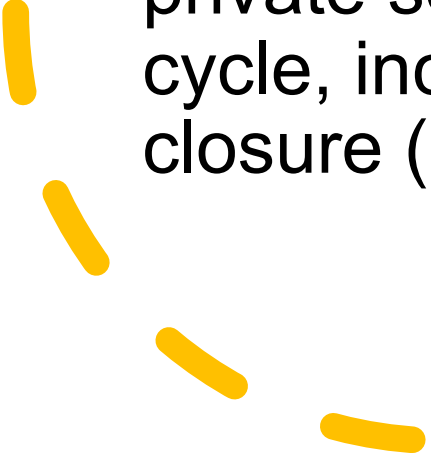


Business Ready (B-READY) Report 2024





Recently, the World Bank launched the Business Ready (B-READY) report 2024 to replace the Ease of Doing Business report.

The Ease of Doing Business report was paused in 2020 due to data manipulation issues and concerns over the integrity of certain rankings, leading to an independent review and methodology changes

- 
- What is Meant by Business Ready?
 - **Benchmarking Tool:** B-READY evaluates the global business climate to promote **inclusive private sector growth**.
 - **Ten Core Topics:** **B-READY** is organized around key topics for private sector development, covering the stages of a firm's life cycle, including market entry, operation (or expansion), and closure (or reorganization).
- 

- Ten Core topics covers Business Entry, Business Location, Utility Services, Labor, Financial Services, International Trade, Taxation, Dispute Resolution, Market Competition, and Business Insolvency.



- 
- **Pillars of B-READY:** For each topic, B-READY considers three pillars.
 - **Pillar I: Regulatory Framework**
 - **Pillar II: Public Services**
 - **Pillar III: Operational Efficiency**
- 

REGULATORY B-READY pillars define the scope of the project



Pillar I

Regulatory Framework

Rules and regulations that firms must follow as they open, operate, and close a business



Pillar II

Public Services



Facilities to support regulatory compliance and institutions and infrastructure to enable business activities



Pillar III

Operational Efficiency

Ease of regulatory compliance and effective use of public services directly relevant to firms

- 
- **Three Themes:** B-READY assesses **three key themes** across 10 topics.
 - **Digital Adoption**
 - **Environmental Sustainability**
 - **Gender:**
- 

B-READY topics correspond to various stages of the life cycle of a firm and examine three cross-cutting themes


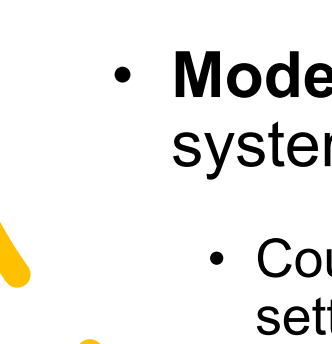


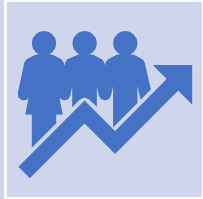
Source: B-READY project.

Global Expansion: Covers **50 economies** in 2024, with plans to reach 180 by 2026.

Focus on Reform: B-READY shifts focus to **inclusivity, sustainability, and efficiency** in evaluating business environments.



- 
- India Specific Observations of think tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI)
 - **India did not participate in the 2024 B-READY Report.** However, there are some India-specific observations by the think tank GTRI.
 - **Moderate Score in Business Entry:** India's business registration system is **time-consuming** and lacks complete **digital integration**.
 - Countries like **Singapore** achieve one-day online registration with minimal costs, setting a global benchmark.
- 



Challenges in Labor Regulations: Despite introducing **four labor codes**, India faces slow and uneven implementation across states, affecting **labor market flexibility** and compliance ease.



Trade Inefficiencies: India's customs processes are marred by delays, inconsistent enforcement, and high logistics costs, unlike Germany and Singapore, which excel in **trade facilitation**.



Low Score in Business

Location: Regulatory inconsistencies and approval delays hinder the establishment of business facilities, affecting investment decisions.

Positive Aspects:

India is expected to perform well in the three core pillars of B-READY, highlighting strengths in **operational and regulatory areas.**

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

Top 10 MCQ from the session for
every exam

- Which river in Trinidad is a significant water source?
त्रिनिदाद में कौन सी नदी एक महत्वपूर्ण जल स्रोत है?
- **A. Ortoire River / ऑर्टॉयर नदी**
- B. Ganges River / गंगा नदी**
- C. Amazon River / अमेज़न नदी**
- D. Nile River / नील नदी**

- The **Digital Maha Kumbh** aims to enhance cybersecurity by deploying how many cyber warriors?

डिजिटल महाकंभ साइबर सुरक्षा को बढ़ाने के लिए कितने साइबर योद्धाओं की तैनाती करता है?

- **A. 40**
- B. 50**
- C. 56**
- D. 60**

- What is the name of the **quantum processor** recently unveiled by Google?
Google द्वारा हाल ही में लॉन्च किए गए **क्वांटम प्रोसेसर** का नाम क्या है?
- **A. QuantumX / क्वांटमएक्स**
- **B. Willow / विलो**
- **C. Phoenix / फीनिक्स**
- **D. Orion / ओरियन**

- What is the main feature of the **Willow quantum processor**?
विलो क्वांटम प्रोसेसर की मुख्य विशेषता क्या है?
- **A. 105 physical qubits / 105 भौतिक क्यूबिट्स**
- B. Solar-powered operation / सौर ऊर्जा संचालित संचालन**
- C. Satellite communication enhancement / उपग्रह संचार संवर्धन**
- D. Nuclear energy applications / परमाणु ऊर्जा अनुप्रयोग**

- Which country did not participate in the 2024 **B-READY Report**?
2024 **बी-रेडी रिपोर्ट** में कौन सा देश भाग नहीं ले पाया?
- **A. India / भारत**
- **B. China / चीन**
- **C. USA / अमेरिका**
- **D. Australia / ऑस्ट्रेलिया**

- What is the purpose of the **Integrated Command and Control Center (ICCC)** at the Maha Kumbh?
महाकुंभ में एकीकृत कमांड और नियंत्रण केंद्र (ICCC) का उद्देश्य क्या है?
- **A. Provide real-time navigation / वास्तविक समय नेविगेशन प्रदान करना**
- **B. Monitor underwater activities / पानी के नीचे की गतिविधियों की निगरानी करना**
- **C. Ensure public safety / सार्वजनिक सुरक्षा सुनिश्चित करना**
- **D. All of the above / उपरोक्त सभी**

- What is the historical significance of the **Statue of Wisdom**?
स्टैच्यू ऑफ विजडम का ऐतिहासिक महत्व क्या है?
- A. Represents Tirukkural's 133 chapters / तिरुक्कुरल के 133 अध्यायों का प्रतिनिधित्व करता है
- B. Symbolizes India's technological growth / भारत की तकनीकी प्रगति का प्रतीक
- C. Honors Indian freedom fighters / भारतीय स्वतंत्रता सेनानियों को सम्मानित करता है
- D. Showcases modern art forms / आधुनिक कला रूपों को प्रदर्शित करता है

- What core technology does Google's Willow chip utilize?
Google के विलो चिप में कौन सी मुख्य तकनीक का उपयोग किया गया है?
- **A. Artificial Intelligence / कृत्रिम बुद्धिमत्ता**
- **B. Superconducting Qubits / सुपरकंडक्टिंग क्यूबिट्स**
- **C. Blockchain Technology / ब्लॉकचेन तकनीक**
- **D. Nanochips / नैनोचिप्स**

- What is the purpose of drone surveys at the Digital Maha Kumbh?
डिजिटल महाकुंभ में ड्रोन सर्वेक्षण का उद्देश्य क्या है?
- **A. Monitor land topography / भूमि स्थलाकृति की निगरानी करना**
- **B. Provide security during events / घटनाओं के दौरान सुरक्षा प्रदान करना**
- **C. Map public utilities in real-time / सार्वजनिक उपयोगिताओं का वास्तविक समय में मानचित्रण करना**
- **D. All of the above / उपरोक्त सभी**

Word of the day

Condone:

excuse, overlook, or make allowances for; be lenient with

Synonym: excuse

Usage: *We should not be seen as condoning violence.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/condonepro

International Phonetic

Alphabet: /kən'doʊn/

Fun Fact

Myth :
Mercury is
the only
liquid metal
at room
temperature.

- **Truth:** Mercury is the most well-known liquid metal, but gallium is also a metal that can melt in your hand, as its melting point is around 29.8°C.

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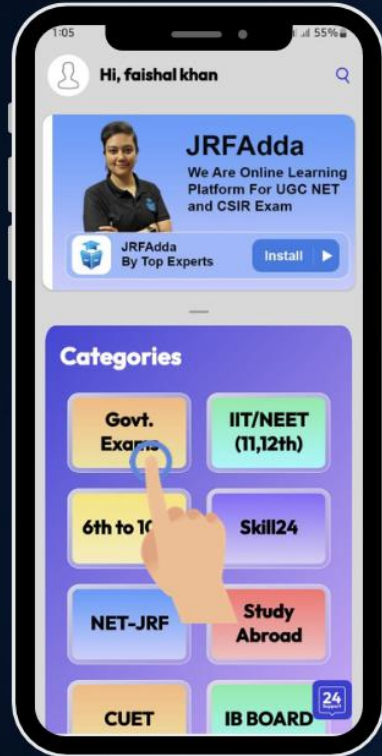
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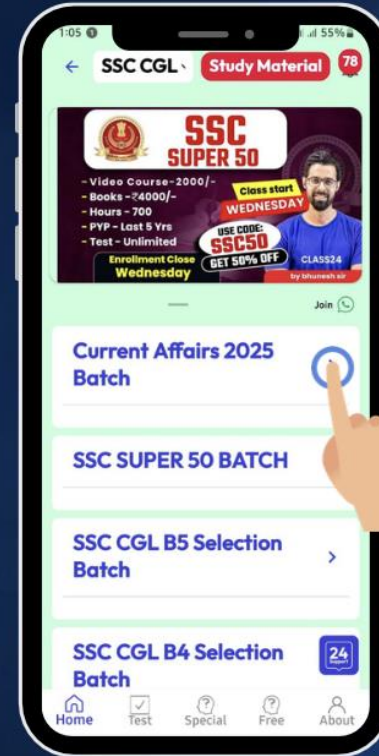
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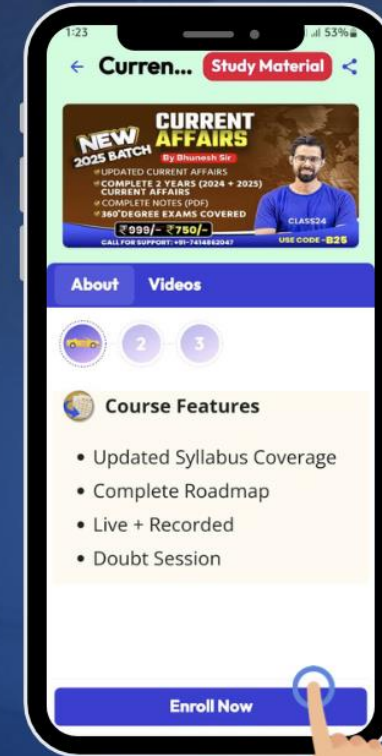
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Step 3



Step 4



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

Thank you
guys.
