

Daily Current Affairs



जनसत्ता

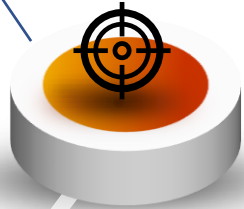


The Indian EXPRESS

THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS



7
The Hindu



5
PIB, PRS & Other newspaper



2
The Indian Express



0
Jansatta



1
Financial Express



Download class24



PDF



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 bokeh effect with soft, out-of-focus light spots. The overall atmosphere is professional and collaborative.

Top 10 MCQ from the session for
every exam

- What is the **significance of Goa Liberation Day** celebrated on December 19?
19 दिसंबर को मनाए जाने वाले गोवा मुक्ति दिवस का महत्व क्या है?
- **A. Liberation of Goa from Portuguese rule / पुर्तगाली शासन से गोवा की मुक्ति**
- **B. Goa's integration into India as a state / गोवा का एक राज्य के रूप में भारत में एकीकरण**
- **C. Signing of the Goa Treaty / गोवा संधि पर हस्ताक्षर**
- **D. Establishment of Goa as a Union Territory / गोवा को एक केंद्र शासित प्रदेश के रूप में स्थापित करना**

- Under which military operation was Goa liberated from Portuguese control?

गोवा को पुर्तगाली नियंत्रण से मुक्त करने के लिए किस सैन्य अभियान के तहत कार्रवाई की गई थी?

- **A. Operation Vijay / ऑपरेशन विजय**
- B. Operation Meghdoot / ऑपरेशन मेघदूत**
- C. Operation Cactus / ऑपरेशन कैक्टस**
- D. Operation Blue Star / ऑपरेशन ब्लू स्टार**

- Which year was Goa granted statehood in India?
गोवा को भारत में राज्य का दर्जा किस वर्ष प्रदान किया गया?
- **A. 1961**
- **B. 1972**
- **C. 1987**
- **D. 1990**

- What was the main focus of the **Travel and Tourism Development Index (TTDI) 2024**, in which India ranked 39th?
यात्रा और पर्यटन विकास सूचकांक (TTDI) 2024, जिसमें भारत 39वें स्थान पर रहा, का मुख्य ध्यान क्या था?
- A. Enhancing global connectivity / वैश्विक कनेक्टिविटी को बढ़ावा देना
- B. Boosting digital infrastructure / डिजिटल बुनियादी ढांचे को बढ़ावा देना
- C. Sustainability in tourism development / पर्यटन विकास में स्थिरता
- D. Promoting rural tourism / ग्रामीण पर्यटन को बढ़ावा देना

- What is the average speed of freight trains as per the Standing Committee on Railways report?
रेलवे पर स्थायी समिति की रिपोर्ट के अनुसार मालगाड़ियों की औसत गति क्या है?
- **A. 20.5 km/h**
- **B. 25.14 km/h**
- **C. 28.7 km/h**
- **D. 30.2 km/h**

- India's first fully solar-powered border village, Masali, is located in which district?

भारत का पहला पूर्णतः सौर ऊर्जा संचालित सीमा गांव मसाली किस जिले में स्थित है?

- **A. Kutch / कच्छ**
- B. Banaskantha / बनासकांठा**
- C. Surat / सूरत**
- D. Junagadh / जूनागढ़**

- Under the **PM Suryaghar Yojana**, how much electricity is generated by solar rooftops in Masali village?
पीएम सूर्यघर योजना के तहत मसाली गांव में सोलर रूफटॉप से कितनी बिजली उत्पन्न होती है?
- **A. 150 kW**
- **B. 200 kW**
- **C. 225 kW**
- **D. 250 kW**

- . What GST rate is applied to coconut oil labeled as **edible oil**?
खादय तेल के रूप में चिह्नित नारियल तेल पर कौन सा जीएसटी दर लागू होता है?
- **A. 5%**
- **B. 12%**
- **C. 18%**
- **D. 28%**

- According to the ILO report on migrant workers, what percentage of the global labor force were international migrants in 2022?
आईएलओ की प्रवासी श्रमिकों पर रिपोर्ट के अनुसार, 2022 में वैश्विक श्रम बल का कितने प्रतिशत अंतरराष्ट्रीय प्रवासी थे?
- **A. 3.5%**
- **B. 4.7%**
- **C. 5.5%**
- **D. 6.2%**

- Which classical music style did Tansen, the legendary Indian musician, bring into prominence?
प्रसिद्ध भारतीय संगीतकार तानसेन ने किस शास्त्रीय संगीत शैली को प्रमुखता दिलाई?
- **A. Thumri / ठुमरी**
B. Khayal / खयाल
C. Dhrupad / ध्रुपद
D. Tarana / तराना

Class24 Premium



SSC SUPER 50

- Video Course - 2000/-
- Books - ₹4000/-
- Hours - 700
- PYP - Last 5 Yrs
- Test - Unlimited

**Enrollment Close
Wednesday**

**Class start
WEDNESDAY**

**USE CODE:
SSC50
GET 50% OFF**

CLASS24

by bhunesh sir

SSC SUPER 50 BATCH

SSC CGL

₹ 4000 ~~₹ 6000~~

[Enroll Now](#)



SSC CGL
FOUNDATION BATCH
GK - GS
40% OFF
USE CODE **SB40**
~~₹2500/-~~ ₹1499/-

CLASS24

CLASS24

SSC CGL GK/GS Foundation Course



Class24: Team

SSC CGL GK/GS Foundation Course

★★★★ (4.8)

₹4999 **₹2500**

[ENROLL NOW](#)

Have a Coupon Code?

Course Information

 Team: Class24

 Validity: 12 Months

 Course level: Beginners to Advance

 Language: English+Hindi

[Chat With Us](#)

SSC CGL GK/GS Foundation Course

Current Affairs

Computer Knowledge

Science

Biology

Geography

History

Polity

Economics

Static GK

Computer Revision

chemistry CI-1

2024-12-13 at 11:30 AM

Starts In: 04:37:22

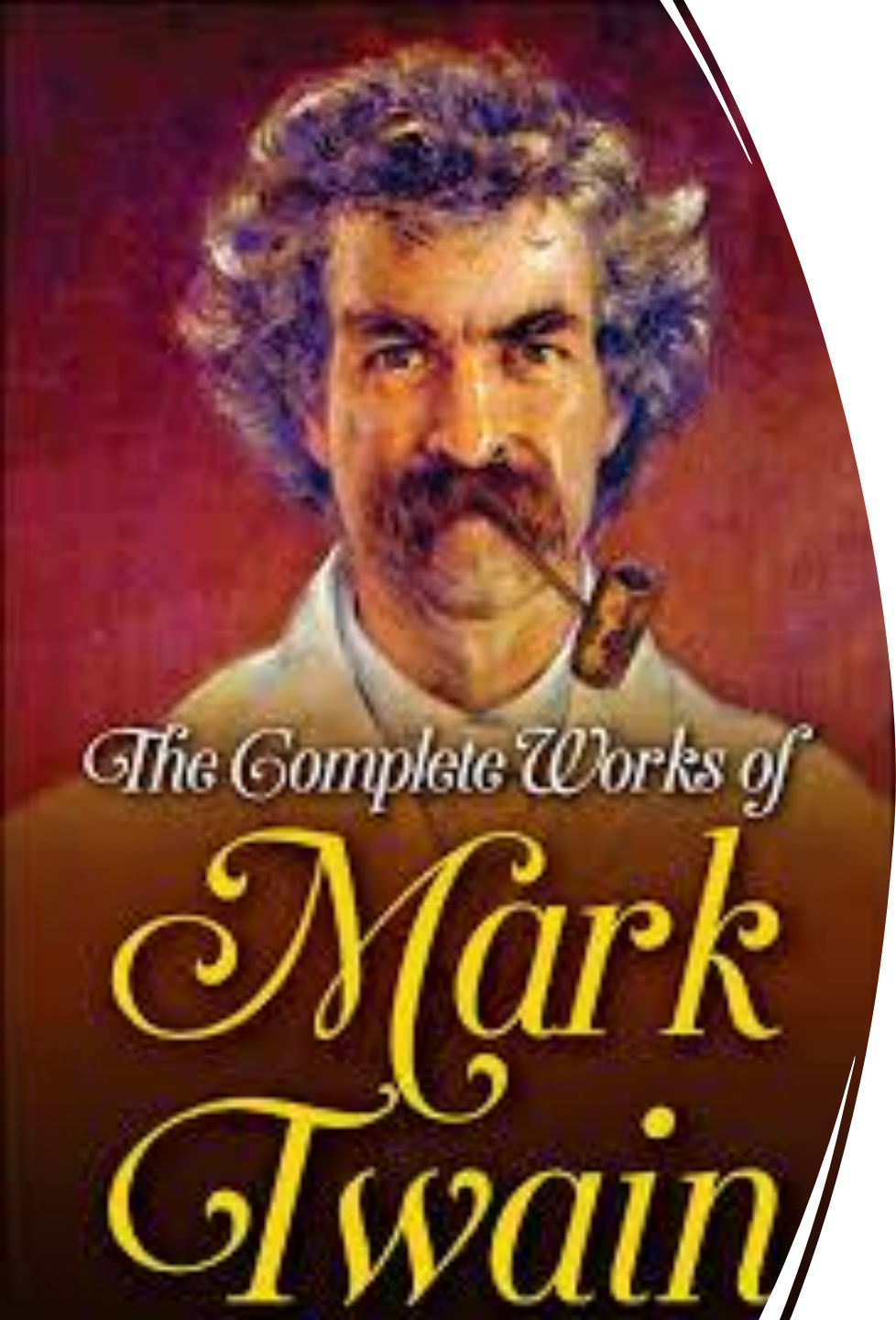
Coming Soon!

Electricity and Magnetism

2024-12-13 at 9:00 AM

Starts In: 02:07:22

Coming Soon!



Mark Twain, *Various works*

- *“Courage is not the absence of fear but the ability to act in spite of it.” –*

STORIES FROM THE MOUNTAINS
In 2025, look to the Himalayas
A recent festival in Delhi, showcasing the cultures and conservation work of Himalayan communities, could kickstart more conversations
MAGAZINE'S PAGE 1



What are India's plans for a quantum satellite?
FAQ » PAGE 8

U.S. court finds Israel's NSO group liable for hacking WhatsApp
WORLD » PAGE 12

Jadeja hopes to carry on in similar vein in the rest of the series
SPORTS » PAGE 13

INSIDE
Modi in Kuwait, calls Diaspora 'mini-Hindustan'
KUWAIT
Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Saturday, expressed happiness about the presence of Indians from diverse corners of the country in Kuwait, and called it a "mini-Hindustan". He said India had the potential to become the "skill capital of the world". » PAGE 3

Shah says police in Northeast should 'reorient'
NEW DELHI
Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Saturday the police in the northeastern States should change their orientation, and ensure that every citizen is granted their right to property, honour, and family protection. » PAGE 2

Rocket from Yemen strikes Tel Aviv, injures 16
TEL AVIV
A rocket fired from Yemen hit an area of Tel Aviv in Israel overnight, injuring 16 people slightly injured by shrapnel, the Israeli military said on Saturday, days after Israeli airstrikes hit Houthi rebels in Yemen. » PAGE 12

GST review on life, health insurance deferred

At its 55th meeting, the apex body in charge of the indirect tax regime raises taxes on used cars including electric cars, and exempts gene therapy, long-range surface-to-air missiles; Council proposes setting up a ministerial group to examine tax levies imposed by disaster-hit States, gives more time for group examining Compensation Cess levies

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI
The much-anticipated review of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) levies on life and health insurance premiums was put off by the GST Council, the apex body in charge of the indirect tax regime, at its 55th meeting on Saturday, as some members sought more discussions on the matter before taking a final call.
A Group of Ministers under Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary is now expected to meet fresh to deliberate on the insurance levies once more before coming back to the council with its recommendations. Moreover, suggestions on rate rationalisation pertaining to about 150 items, including

a price-based differential levy for garments, and 5% levies for packaged drinking water, and bicycles priced under ₹10,000, were also put off till the Council's next meeting.
The Council, chaired by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, which met in Jaipur, also decided to grant more time to a ministerial group tasked with suggesting a road map for dealing with the GST Compensation Cess levies on several items that are scheduled for a March 2026 sunset.
The Council did agree on some rate changes, including exempting gene therapy and long-range surface-to-air missiles (LRSAMs) from the tax, raising the levies on used car sales, including electric vehicles, to 18% from 12%.

Playing safe
At the GST Council's 55th meeting, members agreed to some changes in the indirect tax regime, while deferring a decision on many broader issues.

SETTLED <ul style="list-style-type: none">Popcorn taxation – Savoury to attract 5% or 12% GST, 18% levy on sweetened varietiesGift vouchers are not taxable	Levy on fortified rice <ul style="list-style-type: none">Levy on fortified rice has to be reduced from 18% to 5%Tax on used cars, including electric ones, raised from 12% to 18%	NOT SETTLED <ul style="list-style-type: none">Review of the GST levied on health and life insurance premiumsFuture of Compensation Cess levies after March 2026 sunset	Delayed <ul style="list-style-type: none">Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman chairs GST Council meeting in Jaipur, Rajasthan	Plan to tax Floor Space Charges for real estate firms <ul style="list-style-type: none">Rate Rationalisation – Govt proposes made for rate changes on about 150 items not taken up.
---	---	--	--	--

"Gene therapy that is now critical for dealing with life-threatening diseases, so have been totally exempted [from GST]. LRSAAM systems, very important in defence, so we have decided to extend the exemption on the systems, such as, equipment, parts, sub-parts, tools, test equipment and software meant for their assembly or manufacture from integrated GST levies," she conveyed after the Council's meeting.
A ministerial group would be set up to examine tax levies by States hit by natural disasters. "On the request of State of Andhra Pradesh, the Council recommended that a GoM be constituted to examine the legal and structural issues, and recommend a uniform policy on imposition of levy in case of a natural disaster in the State," the Finance Ministry said in a statement.
The council has decided to levy a tax of 18% on sweetened or caramelised popcorn, and levy 5% on the salty and spicy varieties that are not pre-packaged and labelled, and 12% for labelled and pre-pack-

aged savoury popcorn.
A proposal to levy GST on charges collected by municipalities for granting Floor Space Index to builders, presented to the Council on Saturday, was put off at the Centre's behest. It was also agreed upon by Council members that gift vouchers are not liable to attract GST nor are penal charges imposed by banks and non-banking finance companies on borrowers falling in compliance with loan conditions.
Ms. Sitharaman announced that the Council had agreed to reduce the GST on fortified rice kernels from 18% to 5% as these are supplied with an intent to pass them on the public distribution system.
MORE REPORTS ON » PAGES 2 & 11

Five killed as SUV rams Christmas market in Germany; seven Indians among 200 injured

Agence France-Presse
MAGDEBURG
German Chancellor Olaf Scholz on Saturday condemned the "terrible, insane" car-ramming attack on a crowded Christmas market that killed five people and injured over 200. Seven Indians were among the injured, sources said.
The police arrested a 50-year-old Saudi Arabian psychiatrist doctor at the scene on Friday, next to the battered SUV that had ploughed through the festive crowd leaving a trail of carnage and bloodied casualties.
Mr. Scholz visited the attack site in Magdeburg on Saturday. He said at least 40 of the injured were in a condition that "people should be 'worried' about them but gave no details.
He pledged that Ger-



Horrific incidents: The police and ambulances working next to the Christmas market, where a car crashed into a crowd on Friday, in Magdeburg, Germany. AFP

many would respond "with the full force of the law" to the attack. He also called for unity in the country that has been plunged into a heated debate on immigration and security ahead of elections in February.
The Ministry of External Affairs, in a statement condemning the "horrific and senseless" attack, said the Indian mission in Germany is in contact with Indians injured. It, however, did not specify the number of injured Indians.
"Islamophobic stance" Interior Minister Nancy Faeser said that while she would not speculate about the motive, "the one thing" she could confirm was that the suspect had expressed an "Islamophobic stance."
Taleb Jawad Al Abdulmoneem, the suspect, had lived in Germany since 2006 and held a permanent residence permit, working in a clinic near Magdeburg. He had also worked as a rights activist who supported Saudi Arabian women and described himself as a "Saudi atheist".
He had voiced anti-Islam views, echoing the rhetoric of the far-right in social media posts and interviews. *(With inputs from PTI)*

25% of India's total area under green cover, says survey report

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI
India's forest and tree cover has reached a quarter of the country's total geographical area, according to the India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2023, released by the Government of India on Saturday.
The increase of 25.17% breaks down to 21.76% of forest cover (7.15 lakh sq. km) and 3.41% of tree cover (1.289 sq. km).
The Forest Survey of India (FSI) defines "forest cover" as land with tree canopy density exceeding 10% and covering at least one hectare. This "forest" in ISFR includes plantations. The FSI counts trees outside forests towards the "tree cover" if they occupy less than one hectare and if they also lie outside reserve forest areas. FSI Director General Anoop Singh said bamboo cover is also included in the tree cover.
Union Environment Minister Bhupendra Patel said the report's finding that India has augmented its carbon sink by 2.29 billion tonnes over 2005 levels.
India's Nationally Determined Contributions to



Sea of green: The India State of Forest Report 2023 was released by the Government of India on Saturday. N. SATHYAMOORTHY

wards the Paris Agreement's targets require it to add an additional carbon sink of at least 2.5 billion tonnes by 2030.
The FSI's inclusion of plantations in "forests" has been controversial, however, as they lack the deadwood and underground biomass development that also sequester carbon.
The FSI has been assessing forest cover since 1987 and tree cover since 2001. The current report estimated green cover using data from the Resourcesat series of satellites operated by the Indian Space Research Organisation.
Since 2021, Madhya Pradesh has had the largest area under forest and tree cover (95,724 sq. km). The largest increase in forest and tree cover in this period was recorded in Chhattisgarh (684 sq. km).

The overall increase in tree and forest cover means a net gain after accounting for losses. Among other places, losses have been recorded in the Western Ghats and Eastern States Area (58,22 sq. km less forest cover) and the Northeast (27,30 sq. km less forest cover) both highly biodiversity regions.
Likewise, while "very dense" forest expanded by 3,465.12 sq. km, "moderately dense" and "open" forests shrank by 1,043.23 sq. km and 2,480.11 sq. km, respectively. *(With agency inputs)*

Govt. amends rule to restrict access to polling footage

New changes
The Centre has amended Conduct of Election Rules to restrict public access to a section of poll documents.
The Election Commission says the rule mentions election papers and does not specifically refer to electronic records. In order to remove this ambiguity, the rule has been amended to safeguard misuse of CCTV footage from inside the polling stations.
The move comes after a recent decision to the EC by the Punjab and Haryana High Court to share all documents related to Haryana Assembly Elections, including CCTV footage.

Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI
The Centre has amended the Conduct of Election Rules to restrict public access to a section of poll documents. This was brought into effect through a notification issued by the Ministry of Law and Justice on Friday following a recommendation by the Election Commission (EC).
Rule 93(2)(a) of the 1961 Conduct of Election Rules had earlier stated that "all other papers relating to the election shall be open to public inspection". After the amendment, it reads, "all other papers as specified in these rules relating to the election shall be open to public inspection."
The move follows a recent direction to the EC by the Punjab and Haryana High Court to share all documents related to Haryana Assembly polls, including CCTV footage also, as permissible under Rule 93(2), to a petitioner named Mahmood Pracha. According to a senior EC official, the rule mentioned election papers and documents do not specifically refer to electronic records. Considering the serious issue of violation of secrecy of vote and potential misuse of CCTV footage of inside of the polling station, the rule has been amended," he said. "Sharing of CCTV footage may have serious repercussions, especially in sensitive regions like nasal-affected regions, etc., where secrecy is important. All election papers and documents are otherwise available for public inspection."
"Transparency affected" However, RTI activists have said it was a setback to transparency. "Huge setback for transparency! Modi government amends Rule 93(2) of Conduct of Election Rules to restrict people's right to access election related records after High Court orders disclosure! Applications were filed in May 2024 under Rule 93(2) for copies of Form 17C are still pending; transparency activist Anjali Baradwaj said."
ERODES INTERACT. CONG. » PAGE 4

GST review on life, health insurance deferred

At its 55th meeting, the apex body in charge of the indirect tax regime raises taxes on used cars, including electric cars, and exempts gene therapy, long-range surface-to-air missiles; Council proposes setting up a ministerial group to examine tax levies imposed by disaster-hit States, gives more time for group examining Compensation Cess levies

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

The much-anticipated review of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) levies on life and health insurance premiums was put off by the GST Council, the apex body in charge of the indirect tax regime, at its 55th meeting on Saturday, as some members sought more discussions on the matter before taking a final call.

A Group of Ministers under Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Chaudhary is now expected to meet afresh to deliberate on the insurance levies once more before coming back to the Council with its recommendations. Moreover, suggestions on rate rationalisation pertaining to about 150 items, including

a price-based differential levy for garments, and 5% levies for packaged drinking water, and bicycles priced under ₹10,000, were also put off till the Council's next meeting.

The Council, chaired by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, which met in Jaisalmer, also decided to grant more time to a ministerial group tasked with suggesting a road map for dealing with the GST Compensation Cess levies on several items that are scheduled for a March 2026 sunset.








The Council did agree on some rate changes, including exempting gene therapy and long-range surface-to-air missiles (LRSAMs) from the tax, raising the levies on used car sales, including electric vehicles, to 18% from 12%.

Playing safe

At the GST Council's 55th meeting, members agreed to some changes in the indirect tax regime, while deferring a decision on many broader issues



D-day: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman chairs GST Council meeting in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan

SETTLED		NOT SETTLED	
 Popcorn taxation – Savoury to attract 5% or 12% GST, 18% levy on sweetened varieties	 Levy on fortified rice kernels to be reduced from 18% to 5%	 Review of the GST levied on health and life insurance premiums	 Plan to tax Floor Space Index (FSI) charges for real estate firms
 Gift vouchers are not taxable	 Tax on used cars , including electric ones, raised from 12% to 18%	 Future of Compensation Cess levies after March 2026 sunset	Rate Rationalisation – GoM proposals made for rate changes on about 150 items not taken up

“Gene therapy that is now critical for dealing with life-threatening diseases, so have been totally

exempted [from GST]. LRSAM systems are very important in defence, so we have decided to extend

the exemption on the systems, sub-systems, equipment, parts, sub-parts, tools, test equipment and

software meant for their assembly or manufacture from Integrated GST levies,” she conveyed after the Council's meeting.

A ministerial group would be set up to examine tax levies by States hit by natural disasters. “On the request of State of Andhra Pradesh, the Council recommended that a GoM be constituted to examine the legal and structural issues, and recommend a uniform policy on imposition of levy in case of a natural disaster in the State,” the Finance Ministry said in a statement.

The council has decided to levy a tax of 18% on sweetened or caramelised popcorn, and levy 5% on the salty and spicy varieties that are not pre-packaged and labelled, and 12% for labelled and pre-pack-

aged savoury popcorn.

A proposal to levy GST on charges collected by municipalities for granting Floor Space Index to builders, presented to the Council on Saturday, was put off at the Centre's behest. It was also agreed upon by Council members that gift vouchers are not liable to attract GST nor are penal charges imposed by banks and non-banking finance companies on borrowers failing to comply with loan conditions.

Ms. Sitharaman announced that the Council had agreed to reduce the GST on fortified rice kernels from 18% to 5% as these are supplied with an intent to pass them on the public distribution system.

MORE REPORTS ON
» PAGES 2 & 11

Topic	Details
Established	2016 (Constitutional Amendment Act, 101st Amendment)
Article	Article 279A
Chairperson	Union Finance Minister
Members	- Union Minister of State (Revenue/Finance)
	- Finance Ministers/Representatives of all States/UTs
Key Functions	- Recommend GST rates, exemptions, and thresholds.
	- Resolve disputes related to GST.
	- Suggest measures for improving revenue collection.
	- Determine principles for GST levy, model GST law, and apportionment.

Voting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Total Votes: Central Govt (1/3), States/UTs (2/3).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Decision Requires: 75% majority of votes.
GST Council Secretariat	Located in New Delhi.
Frequency of Meetings	At least once every quarter.
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Streamlines indirect tax structure.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Ensures cooperative federalism.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Reduces cascading tax effects.
Recent Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Inclusion of petroleum under GST.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Simplified GST return filing process.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Rationalization of GST rates.

Item	Previous GST Rate	Revised GST Rate	Details
Fortified Rice Kernels (FRK)	18%	5%	Used in public distribution programs to combat malnutrition; rate reduction aims to make FRK more affordable. <small>NEWSX</small>
Gene Therapy	Taxable	Exempted	Full GST exemption granted to make life-saving treatments more accessible. <small>NEWSX</small>
Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (AAC) Blocks	5%	12%	Applicable if containing more than 50% fly ash content; adjustment addresses inverted duty structure. <small>CLEARTAX</small>
Fresh or Dried Black Pepper and Raisins	5%	Exempted	When supplied directly by agriculturists; exemption clarifies tax applicability. <small>CLEARTAX</small>
Bank/NBFC Penal Charges	Taxable	Exempted	GST exemption on penal charges for loan defaults to reduce financial burden on borrowers. <small>CLEARTAX</small>
Payment Aggregators' Services	Taxable	Exempted	Exemption for transactions up to ₹2,000 to promote digital payments. <small>CLEARTAX</small>
Merchant Export Supplies	Standard Rates	0.1% (Compensation Cess)	Reduced cess rate on supplies to merchant exporters to boost exports. <small>CLEARTAX</small>

Goods and Services with Increased GST Rates:

Item	Previous GST Rate	Revised GST Rate	Details
Used Vehicles (Including EVs)	12%	18%	<p>GST rate increased on the sale of used vehicles by registered sellers; direct sales between individuals remain untaxed.</p> <p>REUTERS</p>
Ready-to-Eat Popcorn	5% (Unpackaged) / 12% (Packaged)	12% (Standard) / 18% (Caramelized)	<p>Pre-packaged, labeled popcorn now attracts 12% GST; caramelized variants incur 18%. Unlabeled popcorn mixed with salt or spices retains 5% GST if not pre-packaged.</p> <p>ONE INDIA</p>

Playing safe

At the GST Council's 55th meeting, members agreed to some changes in the indirect tax regime, while deferring a decision on many broader issues



D-day: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman chairs GST Council meeting in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan

SETTLED



Popcorn taxation – Savoury to attract 5% or 12% GST, 18% levy on **sweetened varieties**



Gift vouchers are not taxable



Levy on **fortified rice kernels** to be reduced from 18% to 5%



Tax on **used cars**, including electric ones, raised from 12% to 18%

NOT SETTLED



Review of the GST levied on **health and life insurance premiums**



Future of **Compensation Cess levies** after March 2026 sunset



Plan to tax Floor Space Index (FSI) charges for **real estate firms**

Rate Rationalisation – GoM **proposals made for rate changes** on about 150 items not taken up

- **Deferred Topics**

- **Life and Health Insurance:** GST review on life and health insurance premiums was deferred to the next meeting.

जीवन और स्वास्थ्य बीमा प्रीमियम पर जीएसटी की समीक्षा को अगली बैठक तक टाला गया।

- **Compensation Cess:** Discussion on the future of Compensation Cess after March 2026 was postponed.

मुआवजा उपकर (Compensation Cess) का भविष्य, जो मार्च 2026 के बाद समाप्त होने वाला है, पर चर्चा लंबित।

- **Rate Rationalisation:** Deliberations on tax rationalisation for about 150 items were deferred.

कुल 150 वस्तुओं पर दरों के पुनर्मूल्यांकन (Rate Rationalisation) को और समय दिया गया।

- **New Proposals Under Review**

- **Municipal Charges:** GST exemption for charges collected by municipalities for Floor Space Index (FSI) fees.

नगर निगमों द्वारा बिल्डरों को मंजूरी शुल्क (Floor Space Index charges) पर जीएसटी नहीं लगेगा।

- **Natural Disaster:** A ministerial group will be set up to examine tax measures in natural disaster-hit states.

प्राकृतिक आपदा प्रभावित राज्यों में कर नीति में सुधार हेतु एक मंत्री समूह (GoM) की स्थापना।



- **Approved Adjustments**

- **Fortified Rice Kernels:** GST reduced from 18% to 5% on fortified rice kernels.

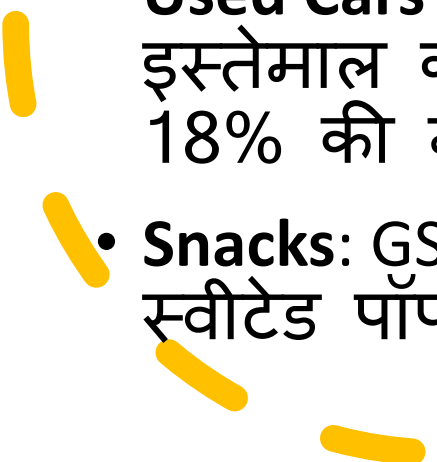
पोषणयुक्त चावल कर्नेल्स (Fortified Rice Kernels) पर जीएसटी को 18% से घटाकर 5% किया गया।

- **Used Cars and Electric Vehicles:** GST rate increased from 12% to 18%.

इस्तेमाल की गई कारों और इलेक्ट्रिक वाहनों पर कर दर 12% से बढ़ाकर 18% की गई।

- **Snacks:** GST of 18% on sweetened popcorn and 5% on salted snacks.

स्वीटेड पॉपकॉर्न और नमकीन स्नैक्स पर क्रमशः 18% और 5% जीएसटी।






- **Exemptions Approved**

- **Gene Therapy and Missiles:** Gene therapy and long-range surface-to-air missiles (LRSAM) exempted from GST due to their importance in defense and healthcare.

जीन थेरेपी (Gene Therapy) और लंबी दूरी की सतह से हवा में मार करने वाली मिसाइलों (LRSAM) को जीएसटी से छूट दी गई।



Ministerial Group Recommendations

Disaster-hit States

- A ministerial group will examine tax structures for states hit by natural disasters and recommend measures for relief.
प्राकृतिक आपदाओं से प्रभावित राज्यों के लिए जीएसटी संरचना की समीक्षा हेतु मंत्री समूह गठित।
- The group will propose a uniform policy for handling taxes in emergencies.
आपातकालीन स्थितियों में कर राहत देने के लिए एक समान नीति का प्रस्ताव।

1. Insurance Policy Revisions

1. The Bihar Deputy CM will lead the new review on insurance policies with fresh recommendations.

बिहार के उपमुख्यमंत्री शैलेश कुमार की अध्यक्षता में बीमा योजनाओं के लिए नई सिफारिशें तैयार होंगी।

2. Discussions on life and health insurance premium taxes to be further debated.

जीवन और स्वास्थ्य बीमा प्रीमियम पर करों को लेकर कानूनी और संरचनात्मक मुद्दों पर विचार किया जाएगा।



- **Economic and Policy Implications**

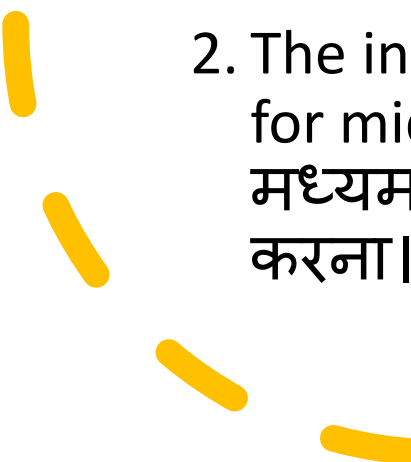
1. Impact on Common People

1. Reductions in GST for common items like fortified rice will benefit the general public.

मुख्य वस्तुओं पर जीएसटी दरों में कटौती, जैसे कि पोषणयुक्त चावल, से आम जनता की पहुंच में सुधार।

2. The increase in GST on used cars and electric vehicles may increase the cost for middle-class consumers.

मध्यम वर्ग के लिए भोजन और बुनियादी सुविधाओं की लागत को कम करना।





- **National Security Prioritization**

- Exemptions for gene therapy and defense-related missiles reflect prioritization of national security and healthcare.

रक्षा क्षेत्र के लिए उपकरण और प्रौद्योगिकी पर कर छूट से देश की सुरक्षा क्षमताओं में वृद्धि होगी।

- Defense and healthcare needs to be addressed in policy for national growth.

राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा और स्वास्थ्य को प्राथमिकता देती है।





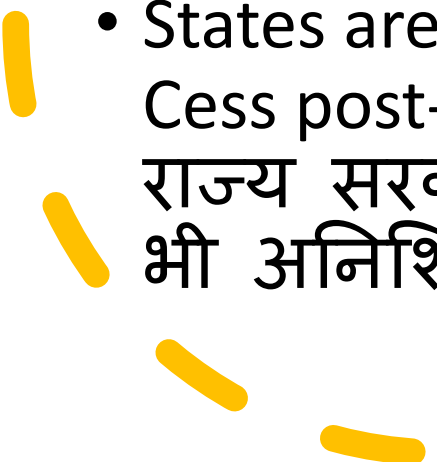
- **Revenue Concerns**

- The delay in Compensation Cess decision impacts revenue forecasts and the fiscal balance between the center and states.

लंबित निर्णय, जैसे कि मुआवजा उपकर, राजस्व अनुमानों और केंद्र-राज्य वित्तीय संतुलन को प्रभावित कर सकते हैं।

- States are concerned about the future structure of the Compensation Cess post-2026.

राज्य सरकारों के हिस्से के रूप में उपकर के भविष्य के प्रावधान अभी भी अनिश्चित।



25% of India's total area under green cover, says survey report

The Hindu Bureau

CHENNAI

India's forest and tree cover has reached a quarter of the country's total geographical area, according to the India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2023, released by the Government of India on Saturday.

The increase of 25.17% breaks down to 21.76% of forest cover (7.15 lakh sq. km) and 3.41% of tree cover (1,289 sq. km).

The Forest Survey of India (FSI) defines "forest cover" as land with tree canopy density exceeding 10% and covering at least

one hectare. Thus "forest" in ISFR includes plantations. The FSI counts trees outside forests towards the 'tree cover' if they occupy less than one hectare and if they also lie outside reserve forest areas. FSI Director-General Anoop Singh said bamboo cover is also included in the tree cover.

Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav singled out the report's finding that India has augmented its carbon sink by 2.29 billion tonnes over 2005 levels.

India's Nationally Determined Contributions to-



Sea of green: The India State of Forest Report 2023 was released by the Government of India on Saturday. M. SATHYAMOORTHY

wards the Paris Agreement's targets require it to create an additional carbon sink of at least 2.5 bil-

lion tonnes by 2030.

The FSI's inclusion of plantations in "forests" has been controversial, howev-

er, as they lack the deadwood and underground biomass development that also sequester carbon.

The FSI has been assessing forest cover since 1987 and tree cover since 2001. The current report estimated green cover using data from the Resourcesat series of satellites operated by the Indian Space Research Organisation.

Since 2021, Madhya Pradesh has had the largest area under forest and tree cover (85,724 sq. km).

The largest increase in forest and tree cover in this period was recorded in Chhattisgarh (684 sq. km).

The overall increase in tree and forest cover means a net gain after accounting for losses. Among other places, losses have been recorded in the Western Ghats and Eastern States Area (58.22 sq. km less forest cover) and the Northeast (327.30 sq. km less forest cover) – both highly biodiverse regions.

Likewise, while "very dense" forests expanded by 3,465.12 sq. km, 'moderately dense' and 'open' forests have shrunk by 1,043.23 sq. km and 2,480.11 sq. km, respectively.

(With agency inputs)


KEY FINDINGS OF ISFR 2023



▲ MAXIMUM INCREASE IN FOREST

Chhattisgarh		683.62 sq km ▲
Uttar Pradesh		559.19 sq km ▲
Odisha		558.57 sq km ▲
Rajasthan		394.46 sq km ▲

▼ MAXIMUM LOSS IN FOREST

Madhya Pradesh		612.41 sq km ▼
Karnataka		459.36 sq km ▼
Ladakh		159.26 sq km ▼
Nagaland		125.22 sq km ▼

Category	Details (English)	विवरण (हिंदी)
India's Green Cover	25% of the total geographical area.	भारत का कुल भौगोलिक क्षेत्रफल का 25% हरित क्षेत्र।
Forest Cover	21.76% (7.15 lakh sq. km).	21.76% (7.15 लाख वर्ग किमी)।
Tree Cover	3.41% (1,289 sq. km).	3.41% (1,289 वर्ग किमी)।
Definition of Forest Cover (FSI)	Land with canopy density >10% and area >1 hectare. Includes plantations and bamboo.	10% से अधिक चंदवा घनत्व और 1 हेक्टेयर से अधिक क्षेत्रफल वाली भूमि। इसमें बांस और वृक्षारोपण शामिल।
Largest Forest Cover	Madhya Pradesh (85,724 sq. km).	सबसे बड़ा वन क्षेत्र मध्य प्रदेश (85,724 वर्ग किमी)।
Largest Increase in Green Cover	Chhattisgarh (+684 sq. km).	हरित क्षेत्र में सबसे अधिक वृद्धि छत्तीसगढ़ (+684 वर्ग किमी)।
Carbon Sink Increase	Increased by 2.29 billion tonnes over 2005 levels.	2005 के स्तरों की तुलना में कार्बन सिंक में 2.29 बिलियन टन की वृद्धि।
Paris Agreement Target	Additional carbon sink of 2.5 billion tonnes by 2030.	2030 तक अतिरिक्त 2.5 बिलियन टन कार्बन सिंक का लक्ष्य।
Forest Losses	Western Ghats and Eastern States (-58.22 sq. km); Northeast (-327.30 sq. km).	पश्चिमी घाट और पूर्वी राज्यों में कमी (-58.22 वर्ग किमी); पूर्वोत्तर में कमी (-327.30 वर्ग किमी)।
Changes in Forest Density	Very dense: +3,465.12 sq. km; Moderately dense: -1,043.23 sq. km; Open forest: -2,480.11 sq. km.	अत्यधिक घने जंगल: +3,465.12 वर्ग किमी; मध्यम घने जंगल: -1,043.23 वर्ग किमी; खुले जंगल: -2,480.11 वर्ग किमी।
Assessment Source (FSI)	Data from Resourcesat satellites by ISRO.	इसरो के रिसोर्ससैट उपग्रहों से डेटा।

- **Green Cover Overview**

- India's green cover, including forests and trees, now constitutes **25.17%** of the country's total geographical area.

भारत का हरा आवरण, जिसमें वन और पेड़ शामिल हैं, देश के कुल भौगोलिक क्षेत्र का **25.17%** है।

- Breakdown:

- **Forest Cover:** 21.76% (7.15 lakh sq. km).

वन क्षेत्र: 21.76% (7.15 लाख वर्ग किमी)।

- **Tree Cover:** 3.41% (1,289 sq. km).

पेड़ का आवरण: 3.41% (1,289 वर्ग किमी)।



- **Assessment and Definitions**

- Conducted by the **Forest Survey of India (FSI)** using satellite data from ISRO.

भारतीय वन सर्वेक्षण (FSI) द्वारा ISRO के उपग्रह डेटा का उपयोग करके सर्वेक्षण।

- 
- Forests defined as land with tree canopy density exceeding 10% and covering at least one hectare.

वन को 10% से अधिक वृक्ष छतरी घनत्व और कम से कम एक हेक्टेयर क्षेत्र के रूप में परिभाषित किया गया है।

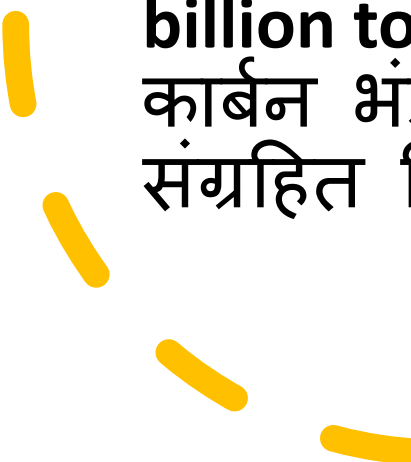


- **Significant Findings**

- Bamboo cover included in tree cover assessment.

बांस आवरण को पेड़ों के आवरण में शामिल किया गया।

- **Carbon Sink:** India's green cover has sequestered **2.29 billion tonnes of carbon**, progressing towards the Paris Agreement target of **2.5 billion tonnes by 2030.**



कार्बन भंडारण: भारत के हरित आवरण ने **2.29 बिलियन टन कार्बन** संग्रहित किया है।

- **Regional Variations**

- **Increase in Green Cover:** Madhya Pradesh recorded the highest gain (85,724 sq. km).
हरित आवरण में वृद्धि: मध्य प्रदेश ने सबसे अधिक वृद्धि दर्ज की (85,724 वर्ग किमी)।

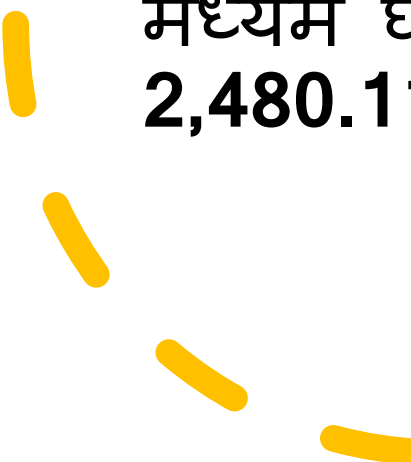
- **Losses:**

- Western Ghats and Eastern States: 58.22 sq. km less forest cover.
पश्चिमी घाट और पूर्वी राज्य: 58.22 वर्ग किमी वनों का हास।
- Northeast Region: Loss of 327.30 sq. km forest cover.
पूर्वोत्तर क्षेत्र: 327.30 वर्ग किमी वन क्षेत्र की कमी।



- **Forest Density Trends**

- **Very Dense Forests:** Increased by **3,465.12 sq. km.**
सघन वन: **3,465.12 वर्ग किमी** की वृद्धि।

- **Moderately Dense and Open Forests:** Reduced by **1,043.23 sq. km** and **2,480.11 sq. km**, respectively.
मध्यम घनत्व और खुले वन: क्रमशः **1,043.23 वर्ग किमी** और **2,480.11 वर्ग किमी** में कमी।
- 

1. Controversies

1. The inclusion of plantations as “forests” has been a point of debate.
वृक्षारोपण को "वन" के रूप में शामिल करना विवादास्पद रहा है।
2. Critics argue plantations lack biodiversity and carbon sequestration ability compared to natural forests.
आलोचकों का तर्क है कि वृक्षारोपण में जैव विविधता और कार्बन भंडारण क्षमता कम होती है।

Govt. amends rule to restrict access to polling footage

New changes

The Centre has amended Conduct of Election Rules to restrict public access to a section of poll documents

■ The Election Commission says the rule mentions election papers and does not specifically refer to electronic records. In order to remove this ambiguity, the rule has been amended to safeguard misuse of CCTV footage from inside the polling stations

■ The move comes after a recent direction to the EC by the Punjab and Haryana High Court to share all documents related to Haryana Assembly Elections, including CCTV footage



Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI

The Centre has amended the Conduct of Election Rules to restrict public access to a section of poll documents. This was brought into effect through a notification issued by the Ministry of Law and Justice on Friday following a recommendation by the Election Commission (EC).

Rule 93(2)(a) of the 1961 Conduct of Election Rules had earlier stated that “all other papers relating to the election shall be open to public inspection”. After the amendment, it reads, “all other papers as specified in these rules relating to the election shall be open to public inspection.”

The move follows a recent direction to the EC by the Punjab and Haryana High Court to share all documents related to Haryana Assembly polls, including treating CCTV footage also as permissible under Rule 93(2), to a petitioner named Mahmoud Pracha.

According to a senior EC official, “The rule mentioned election papers. The election papers and

documents do not specifically refer to electronic records. Considering the serious issue of violation of secrecy of vote and potential misuse of CCTV footage of inside of the polling station, the rule has been amended.” He said, “Sharing of CCTV footage may have serious repercussions, especially in sensitive regions like naxal-affected regions, etc., where secrecy is important. All election papers and documents are otherwise available for public inspection.”

‘Transparency affected’
However, RTI activists have said it was a setback to transparency. “Huge setback for transparency! Modi government amends Rule 93(2) of Conduct of Elections Rules to restrict people’s right to access election related records after High Court orders disclosure! Applications we filed in May 2024 under Rule 93(2) for copies of Form 17C are still pending,” transparency activist Anjali Bharadwaj said.

ERODES INTEGRITY: CONG.

» PAGE 4

- **Amendment Overview**

- The Centre has amended **Rule 93(2)(a)** of the **1961 Conduct of Election Rules** to restrict public access to a section of election-related documents.

केंद्र सरकार ने **1961 चुनाव आचरण नियमों** के **नियम 93(2)(क)** में संशोधन किया है, जिससे चुनाव से संबंधित दस्तावेजों की सार्वजनिक पहुंच को सीमित कर दिया गया है।

- **New Rule:** Access restricted to papers explicitly mentioned in the rules, excluding electronic records like CCTV footage.

नया नियम: केवल नियमों में उल्लिखित कागजों की ही पहुंच दी जाएगी, जबकि इलेक्ट्रॉनिक रिकॉर्ड जैसे सीसीटीवी फुटेज शामिल नहीं हैं।

Reason for Amendment

To address ambiguity regarding electronic records and safeguard the **secrecy of vote** and prevent misuse of **CCTV footage** inside polling stations.

इलेक्ट्रॉनिक रिकॉर्ड से संबंधित अस्पष्टता को दूर करने और मतदान की गोपनीयता और सीसीटीवी फुटेज के दुरुपयोग को रोकने के लिए।

Concern over sensitive regions, especially in areas like **Naxal-affected regions**, where security is critical.

संवेदनशील क्षेत्रों, विशेष रूप से **नक्सल प्रभावित क्षेत्रों** में सुरक्षा को ध्यान में रखते हुए।

- **Trigger for Amendment**

- Followed a direction from the Punjab and Haryana High Court, instructing the EC to share documents, including CCTV footage, during Haryana Assembly polls.

पंजाब और हरियाणा उच्च न्यायालय के निर्देश के बाद संशोधन किया गया, जिसमें हरियाणा विधानसभा चुनावों में सीसीटीवी फुटेज सहित दस्तावेज़ साझा करने का निर्देश दिया गया था।

- Petitioner: Activist Mahmood Pracha sought disclosure of CCTV footage under Rule 93(2).

याचिकाकर्ता: कार्यकर्ता महमूद प्राचा ने नियम 93(2) के तहत सीसीटीवी फुटेज का खुलासा मांगा।

- **Concerns Over Transparency**

- **RTI Activists' Objections:** They argue it is a setback to transparency and public access to election-related records.

सूचना के अधिकार कार्यकर्ताओं का विरोध: इसे पारदर्शिता और चुनाव से संबंधित रिकॉर्ड तक सार्वजनिक पहुंच के लिए झटका माना जा रहा है।

- Applications under **RTI for Form 17C** are still pending.

फॉर्म 17सी के लिए आरटीआई आवेदन अभी भी लंबित हैं।

- Activist Anjali Bharadwaj termed it a “huge setback for transparency.”

कार्यकर्ता अंजलि भारद्वाज ने इसे "पारदर्शिता के लिए बड़ा झटका" कहा।

Election Commission's View

- Emphasized that the rule explicitly mentions election papers, not electronic records, to prevent misuse.

चुनाव आयोग का कहना है कि नियम में केवल चुनाव कागजात का उल्लेख है, इलेक्ट्रॉनिक रिकॉर्ड का नहीं, जिससे दुरुपयोग रोका जा सके।

Political Reactions

- Opposition, including Congress, alleged the amendment compromises electoral integrity. विपक्ष, जिसमें कांग्रेस शामिल है, ने आरोप लगाया कि यह संशोधन चुनावी अखंडता को नुकसान पहुंचाता है।

Change in election conduct rules erodes integrity, says Cong.

The Law Ministry had changed Rule 93(2)(a) of the 1961 Conduct of Election Rules; move of the EC will be challenged legally, says Congress

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Saturday said that a change in rules regarding the conduct of elections is "a vindication of our assertions regarding the rapidly eroding integrity of the electoral process managed by the Election Commission of India (EC)". Congress communication chief Jitram Ramesh, in a post on X, tagged a media report that claimed that the Union Law Ministry, in consultation with the EC, effected a change in the rules after the Punjab and Haryana High Court asked the EC to supply all information relating to video and CCTV footage pertaining to a particular booth in the recent Haryana Assembly poll to the petition.

On Friday, the Law Ministry, through a Gazette notification, had changed Rule 93(2)(a) of the 1961 Conduct of Election Rules under the Representation of the People Act, 1951. Earlier, the said rule stated that "all other papers relating to the election shall be open to public inspection". However, it has now been changed to read: "all other papers as specified in these rules shall be open to public inspection".



Jitram Ramesh, Congress communication chief

EC, instead of complying with the verdict, rushes to amend the law to curtail the list of what can be shared. Why is EC afraid of transparency? Tiding over their internal differences, the Mahatma partners finally announced the Cabinet portfolio allocation on the last day of the Winter Session of Maharashtra Assembly. Portfolios were announced for all the 33 Cabinet Ministers and six Ministers of State. The portfolio allocation has also changed the formula of the Government. Some portfolios have been reallocated among the three parties, but the three top leaders will continue to handle the law and justice, home and judicial, general administration, industry and public works departments. The BJP has been successful in keeping the Revenue portfolio with itself, while Women and Child

Maharashtra CM allocates portfolios to Ministers, retains Home ministry

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI



New roles: Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis and Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde in Nagpur on Saturday. (A)

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis retained the Home, and Law and Judiciary departments, while Deputy Chief Ministers Eknath Shinde and Ajit Pawar got Urban Development and Finance departments respectively, in the portfolio allocation among the Cabinet Ministers in the State on Saturday. Tiding over their internal differences, the Mahatma partners finally announced the Cabinet portfolio allocation on the last day of the Winter Session of Maharashtra Assembly. Portfolios were announced for all the 33 Cabinet Ministers and six Ministers of State. The portfolio allocation has also changed the formula of the Government. Some portfolios have been reallocated among the three parties, but the three top leaders will continue to handle the law and justice, home and judicial, general administration, industry and public works departments. The BJP has been successful in keeping the Revenue portfolio with itself, while Women and Child

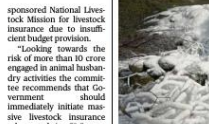
enter in the previous government, will now be the Water Resources Minister. NCP leader Thannay Mundhe has been named the Food and Civil Supplies Minister. He was earlier the Agriculture Minister. Shiv Sena's Uday Samant will continue to be the Industries Minister in this government as well. The berth allocation was announced a week after the Cabinet expansion, and almost a month after the State Assembly election results in Maharashtra.

Two Cabinet Ministers While maintaining regional balance, Mumbai has two Cabinet Ministers this time. This is crucial in the backdrop of the upcoming BMC elections. BJP Mumbai president Ashish Shelar, who has been named a Cabinet Minister this time, will handle Information Technology and Cultural Affairs department, while builder and BJP leader Mangalpatil Lodha will continue to handle Skill Development, Employment, Entrepreneurship and Innovation in this government as well.

Parliamentary panel suggests giving subsidies to farmers to keep non-milching livestock

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Parliamentary Standing Committee (PSC) on Agriculture, headed by former Haryana Chief Minister and Congress MP Charanjit Singh Channi, has recommended subsidies for farmers to keep non-milching animals to manage the problem of stray cattle. The panel asked the Centre to increase the allocation for insuring livestock. Appreciating the efforts of the Union Animal Husbandry Department to control the birth of male bovine offspring using sex-sorted semen techniques—whereby only female calves are born with 90% accuracy rate—the panel said there is also need to prevent further growth of stray cattle from the already existing livestock population of 30.46 million cattle and 109.85 million buffaloes. "Therefore, the Committee recommends that some incentive/subsidy



Stray cattle graze at a potato farm in Uttar Pradesh.

sponsored National Livestock Mission for livestock insurance due to insufficient budget provision. "Looking towards the risk of more than 10 crore engaged in animal husbandry activities the committee recommends that Government should immediately initiate massive livestock insurance scheme to bring 5.5 crore livestock population under the ambit of this scheme. The committee recommends that higher allocation may be made available by the Government for implementation of livestock insurance scheme," the report said. It also asked the Centre to work for self-sufficiency in cattle feed and fodder availability. "With increased availability of green fodder, cost incurred by farmers on milk production will be decreased and dependence of farmers on cattle feed will also be reduced. This will increase profit margins of dairy farmers," the panel said.

Kashmir in deep freeze after sub-zero temperatures; Srinagar records -8.5 C



Iceicles form on a tree branch in Baramulla on Friday as the valley experiences sub-zero temperatures. (A) (A)

icles form on a tree branch in Baramulla on Friday as the valley experiences sub-zero temperatures. (A) (A) Srinagar, just on the eve of "Chilal Kalan", a 40-day harsh spell of winter starting from December 22. According to the meteorological department, Srinagar witnessed a minimum temperature of minus 8.5 C. Srinagar's maximum temperature also dipped to 6.7 degree Celsius. In south Kashmir, Pahalgam, a tourist place, recorded minus 8.6 degree Celsius and north Kashmir's recorded minus 7.2 degree Celsius. Moved to Dabul However, the cricketer and his family now live in Dabul. Mr. Uthappa, who is associated with Centurions Lifestyle Brand Private Limited, is accused of deducting contributions from employees salaries, but allegedly failing to deposit the funds into their respective accounts.

Rahul to meet Parbhani victim's family tomorrow

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi is visiting Parbhani on Monday to meet the family members of Sonamthi Vyankar Suryanshu, a law student who died in judicial custody after violence broke out in Parbhani. Mr. Gandhi is expected to reach the victim's home by 2.45 p.m. He will be accompanied by Maharashtra State Congress president Nana Patil. Speaking to The Hindu, Maharashtra Pradesh Youth Congress Chairman Akshay Jain said, "This is Mr. Gandhi's first visit to Maharashtra after the Assembly election."



Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi in a conversation with Congress MP K.C. Venugopal in New Delhi on Thursday. (A)

Stepping up his campaign against the Home Minister Amit Shah for his comment that it has become "easier" to take Dr. Bhabha's name, the Congress on Saturday announced a plan to hold countryside press conferences and Ambedkar Samman (respect) marches. "We will fight to protect Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's legacy against the BJP's insidious attempt to hijack the Ambedkar Samman conferences in their constituencies and some districts on Sunday and Monday. On 24 December, all across the country, we will hold Babasaheb Ambedkar Samman Marches and submit a memorandum to President of India through BJP leaders who hold the Ambedkar Samman title." The speed with which the party has reacted to Mr. Shah's remarks is unusual, but it is clearly aimed at reviving the public narrative that the BJP is out of touch in reservations

Kerala begins probe into snakebite issue

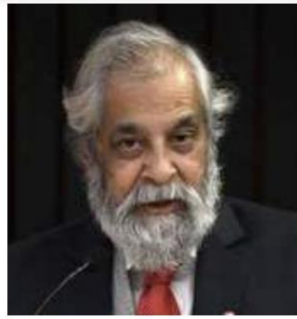
The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The General Education Department in Kerala has launched an inquiry into an incident in which a student was bitten by a snake at a school near Neyyattura here on Friday. Preliminary inspections have highlighted concerns regarding the poor maintenance of the school and its surrounding areas. General Education Minister V. Shantikutty directed the Director of General Education (DGE) to submit a detailed report on the incident in which a Class student suffered a snakebite during Christmas celebrations inside a classroom at the Government Upper Primary School in Chennala. A government-aided institution. Naha, 12, was bitten on her leg by a snake. Officials suspect the snake to be a hump-nosed pit viper, a venomous species. The student was rushed to a hospital. According to official sources, the girl is currently under instructions from the DGE, Thiruvananthapuram Deputy Director of Education (DDE) and other senior officials to undergo an inspection and submitted a preliminary report. The presence of dense bushes has raised concerns about the safety of students on the school premises. The Kerala State Commission for Protection of Child Rights registered a suo moto case, directing the DGE and Thiruvananthapuram DDE to submit reports on the incident.

PF case: arrest warrant issued against ex-cricketer

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

An arrest warrant has been issued against former India cricketer Robin Uthappa in an alleged Provident Fund (PF) cheating case. The warrant was issued by PF Regional Commissioner Shaktakant Gopal Reddy, who has asked the jurisdictional Palakkad Police to take necessary action. "The warrant, which was executed on December 4, has been returned after Mr. Uthappa was found not to be at the Palakkad residence," officials said. Moved to Dabul However, the cricketer and his family now live in Dabul. Mr. Uthappa, who is associated with Centurions Lifestyle Brand Private Limited, is accused of deducting contributions from employees salaries, but allegedly failing to deposit the funds into their respective accounts.



Madan B. Lokur

Madan Lokur is UN Internal Justice Council chief

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

Former Supreme Court judge Justice Madan B. Lokur was appointed Chairperson of the United Nations Internal Justice Council for a term ending on November 12, 2028.


In a communication to Justice Lokur, UN Secretary-General António Guterres said the retired judge would head the council which also comprises other distinguished jurists.

Born in 1953, Justice Lokur was appointed a judge of the Supreme Court on June 4, 2012.

He demitted office on December 30, 2018, upon attaining the age of superannuation.



- INTERNAL JUSTICE COUNCIL

- The General Assembly established the Internal Justice Council (IJC) as part of the new internal justice system in order to help ensure independence, professionalism and accountability in the administration of justice system of the United Nations.
 - The IJC is composed of five members consisting of a staff representative, a management representative and two distinguished external jurists, one nominated by the staff and one by management, and chaired by a distinguished jurist chosen by consensus by the four other members. The IJC members are appointed by the Secretary General.
- 

INTERNAL JUSTICE COUNCIL

The General Assembly established the Internal Justice Council (IJC) as part of the new internal justice system in order to help ensure independence, professionalism and accountability in the administration of justice system of the United Nations.

The IJC is composed of five members consisting of a staff representative, a management representative and two distinguished external jurists, one nominated by the staff and one by management, and chaired by a distinguished jurist chosen by consensus by the four other members. The IJC members are appointed by the Secretary General.



सभी फ्लश टैकों में
5 साल
 Terms & Conditions Apply
ग्रिमोन्स
 लक्षणा बदार्तो, संतुलनी बट

EXPRESS NETWORK



JUSTICE LOKUR APPOINTED HEAD OF AN INTERNAL JUSTICE COUNCIL
ASSAM ALERTS: N-E INSURGENTS USING RHINO POACHING TO FUND TERROR
PAGES 9, 9

IAS officer puts father's books on top in list for panchayat libraries in Bihar



Bihar govt aims to provide books to all panchayat libraries. Ashish Kumar Pandey

SANTOSH SINGH
 PATNA, DECEMBER 21
FOR BIHAR IAS officer Mihir Kumar Singh, his father's is the best word — literally.
 The former Panchayati Raj Additional Chief Secretary has added the state government in a spot by recommending 36 books written by his father Jagdish Prasad Singh for panchayat libraries across the state. Only Rashtrakarav Ramdhari Singh Beakar has more books, 47, on the list cleared by the Additional Chief Secretary.

A letter issued in June this year, by Kalpana Kamari, Under secretary of the Bihar Panchayati Raj Department, to Panchayati Raj officials of all districts, cleared the list that contained recommendations for 303 books in all or libraries at 8,053 panchayats across the state.

A Panchayati Raj Department official said that the books were set to be purchased. "It was about to be done, but since the minister has now called for a review of the book list, it has been put on hold."

Prasad, who retired as professor of English at a Gaya college died earlier this year, and was awarded a Padma Shri in 2013 for his contribution to the field of education. Unlike other authors, none of his books in the list — all in Hindi — has been awarded.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

SPOTLIGHT ON SPYWARE COMPANIES

US court holds Israeli company NSO liable for targeting WhatsApp users

Hearing on damages NSO owes to WhatsApp to begin in March

VENKATANANTH
 BENGALURU, DECEMBER 21

In a significant ruling on Friday, a United States District Court held Israeli technology company NSO Group liable for targeting the devices of 1,400 WhatsApp users. NSO Group is the maker of the Pegasus spyware allegedly used by its government clients to infect the devices of several WhatsApp users, including activists, journalists, and other members of the civil society.

The case now moves the

dress the rights of individuals whose phones were hacked. Friday's ruling came five years after the Meta-owned WhatsApp sued the NSO Group in the US District Court of North California in October 2019. In its ruling, the court concluded that in exploiting a bug in WhatsApp, NSO Group had violated sections of the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act (CFAA), a federal cybersecurity law that criminalises unauthorised access to computers, networks and other digital information, and a similar state

300 of 1,400 users from India, why ruling may re-open tapping debate

SOUAMYARENDRA BARKI
 NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 21

NOW THAT A US court has indicated NSO Group and held it liable for damages, this may have an impact on the processes in the Indian courts and reopen the debate on state surveillance and privacy of individuals in Parliament.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Govt amends poll rules to restrict public inspection of electronic records

Cong demands reversal of decision, says bid to keep public in dark

ED What the tweak does

NOW, ONLY election papers mentioned under different provisions of the Conduct of Election Rules (like nomination papers) would be open to public scrutiny. Papers available to candidates, like Form 17C, continue to remain available to them. The tweak would effectively exclude CCTV footage or any electronic record of the poll process from public inspection.

DAMINI NATH
 NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 21

THE UNION Government Friday amended the Conduct of Election Rules to limit public inspection of election papers to only those documents specified in the provisions.

This amendment, sources in the government told The Sunday Express, would effectively clarify that electronic footage of the

list cleared by the Additional Chief Secretary.

A letter issued in June this year, by Kalpana Kamari, Under secretary of the Bihar Panchayati Raj Department, to Panchayati Raj officials of all districts, cleared the list that contained recommendations for 303 books in all or libraries at 8,053 panchayats across the state.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



PM IN KUWAIT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi being received by Kuwait Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah in Kuwait City on Saturday. PM Modi is on a two-day visit to the Gulf country.

ED request for sanction to move against Kejriwal gets L-G's nod

Former CM's plea against chargesheet cognizance is already pending

THE GOODS AND SERVICES TAX (GST) COUNCIL IN ITS 35th MEETING HELD IN JAISALMER SATURDAY DEFERRED A DECISION TO LOWER THE TAX RATE ON HEALTH AND LIFE INSURANCE PREMIUMS, AND FOOD DELIVERY CHARGES-OF-COMMERCE AGREEMENTS SUCH AS SWIGGY AND ZOMATO. IT ALSO DISCUSSED THE FUSION OF Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) UNDER GST, BUT DEFERRED A DECISION ON MOST STATES WERE NOT IN FAVOUR OF LOSING THEIR RIGHT TO TAX IT.

What, however, caught attention was the clarification the Council offered on why different varieties of popcorn, i.e., regular, salted and spiced, and caramelised, carry different rates

of GST. This led to some political backlash too, with Congress spokesperson Jairam Ramesh terming it as "absolutely unbelievable" and "sheer madness".

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

MAHARASHTRA PORTFOLIOS ANNOUNCED



Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnis, Deputy CM Eknath Shinde and state BJP chief and minister Chandrashekhar Bawankule in Nagpur on Saturday.

Fadnavis retains Home, Ajit Finance, Shinde gets Urban, Works, and Housing

ALOK DESHPANDE
 MUMBAI, DECEMBER 21

THE BJP-LED Maharashtra government in Maharashtra announced the portfolios of ministers Saturday, with Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis keeping Home, a ministry that Eknath Shinde, his predecessor and now Deputy CM, was keen to have.

Fadnavis also kept Energy (including Renewable Energy); Law & Judiciary; General Administration Department; Information & Publicity; and Departments/Subjects re-allocated to any other minister.

Shiv Sena leader Shinde, who was eyeing Home, which Fadnavis had as Deputy CM in the previous government, got

three portfolios: Urban Development; Housing; and Public Works (Public Enterprises). The other Deputy CM, NCP chief Ajit Pawar, will keep Finance & Planning, and also handle State Excise.

The portfolio allocation came hours after the weekend Winter Session of the state Assembly concluded here. And days after the Fadnavis Government inducted 30 ministers on December 15, although with a rider — their tenure will be for two-and-a-half years, and their continuance will depend on a review.

Many in the ruling alliance felt while the review will fix accountability and put pressure on the ministers to perform after the impressive mandate in the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Lower GST on food delivery, insurance deferred, many rates on popcorn new row

of GST. This led to some political backlash too, with Congress spokesperson Jairam Ramesh terming it as "absolutely unbelievable" and "sheer madness".

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

'Forged letter', no culprit: Years on, Kerala woman's death in UAE a mystery

PAGE 1 ANCHOR

SHAJU PHILIP
 THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DECEMBER 21

IN SEPTEMBER 3, 2005, SMITHA GEORGE, then 25, newly married in a foreign land, vanished without a trace. But the report left behind a letter in the flat

in Dubai from where she went missing, saying she was leaving to join her lover. A decade later, in February 2015, with no trace of Smitha, the Kerala Police arrested her husband Velayudhan George Antony, accusing him of allegedly forging the letter and allegedly murdering Smitha and causing her disappearance.



Smitha George went missing in 2005; her husband V Antony was cleared of all charges by a Kerala court in November



Antony was cleared of all charges by a Kerala court in November

against him. The CBI court also took note of a letter from the UAE — sent in July this year in response to the CBI's Letter Rogatory — which said that an unidentified body of a woman had been found in a Sharjah airport morgue on September 6, 2006, a year after Smitha went missing. The UAE letter said Smitha's family had been shown photographs of the body and they had "confirmed 100%" that it was hers. The letter

also said forensic tests conducted on the body — which was reportedly found in November 22, 2006 — had confirmed that the person died of "natural" causes.

But the questions remained.

Indian bizman gets top Bahrain award

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Dubai, December 21

INDIAN BUSINESSMAN RAVI Pillai has been awarded Bahrain's prestigious national honour, the Medal of Efficiency, in recognition of his significant contributions to the progress and development of the kingdom, making him the only foreign national to receive the title.

King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, the king of Bahrain, awarded the prestigious national honour to Pillai, chairman of RP Group. With a turnover of \$12 billion, his business is the largest employer of Indians outside India and with 1,26,000 employees, his group is one of the largest remitters of foreign currency to India.

Commenting, Pillai said, "This award is a reflection of the collective efforts of my



RP Group chairperson **Ravi Pillai** was awarded Medal of Efficiency (First Class) by Bahrain King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa

team, the support of the people of Bahrain, and the unwavering trust of the Kingdom. I dedicate this award to all the hardworking employees who supported me all these years."

B. Ravi Pillai



Born	2 September 1953 (age 71) Chavara, State of Travancore–Cochin (present-day Kollam, Kerala), India
Nationality	Indian
Education	University of Cochin
Occupation(s)	Founder, Chairman, RP Group
Spouse	Geetha Pillai
Children	2
Relatives	Kollam K. Chandrasekhara Pillai (uncle) ^[1]



SEVERE COLD SPELL
J&K CM to monitor services from Srinagar
NEWS » PAGE 6

CENTRE'S ASSURANCE
Transit camp residents may get homes soon
NEWS » PAGE 4

ISRAEL'S SIEGE OF GAZA
Air strikes hit school, near hospital, kill 28
WORLD » PAGE 14

DATA POINT
Fiscal evolution of Odisha
RBI article analyses the State's journey from 2000 to 2024
OPINION » PAGE 9

HARD AT WORK
India hits the nets with gusto
SPORT » PAGE 16

India, Kuwait lift ties to 'strategic partnership'

The two sides sign a memorandum of understanding for exchange of defence personnel, exercises, supply of military equipment; they ink an MoU on cultural exchange and agreement on sports cooperation. Prime Minister holds discussions with Kuwaiti Amir, invites the Gulf country's investment body to 'look at new opportunities' in India

Kallol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

India and Kuwait on Sunday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on defence cooperation that will allow for exchange of defence personnel, joint exercises, and supply of military equipment. The MoU was part of the outcomes formed up during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's two-day visit to the energy-rich Gulf kingdom, which bestowed its highest honour on him.

Mr. Modi announced that the two sides had lifted the relationship to the level of "strategic partnership". The conversation between Mr. Modi and the Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber

Al Sabah, covered areas such as pharmaceuticals, IT, fintech, infrastructure, and security. Earlier, India hosted the Foreign Minister of Kuwait, Abdullah Ali Al-Yahya, in New Delhi on December 3 and 4.

Economic ties
Mr. Modi met with the Prime Minister of Kuwait, Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and discussed ways to deepen economic ties. He invited a delegation from the Kuwaiti Investment Authority and other notables in the Kuwaiti economy to visit India and "look at new opportunities in the fields of energy, defence, medical devices, pharmaceuticals, food and External Affairs Ministry



Prime Minister Narendra Modi receiving Kuwait's highest honour from the Amir, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al Sabah, on Sunday.

said in a press note. The two Prime Ministers witnessed the signing of the MoU on bilateral defence cooperation. The press note said the MoU will "institutionalize bilateral cooperation in the area of defence."

Apart from the MoU on defence, the two sides signed an MoU on cultural exchange and agreement on sports cooperation. They welcomed the recent sealing of the Joint Commission for Cooperation in the area under which new joint

Working Groups in trade, investment, education, technology, agriculture, security and culture have been set up.

The two sides already have joint Working Groups (JWGs) on health, manpower, and hydrocarbons. Mr. Modi reached Kuwait on Saturday and visited the Gulf Spic Labour camp where more than 90% of the inhabitants are from India.

Cultural connection
He also met translators Abdulla Al Baroun and Abdul Lateef Al Neseet who have translated the Ramayana and Mahabharata into Arabic. Over the decades, India and Arab countries have translated the Indian epics and the work of the two translators

have added to that tradition. "I am honoured to be conferred the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Order by His Highness the Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al Sabah. I dedicate this honour to the strong friendship between India and Kuwait," Mr. Modi said after receiving the honour during the visit.

The honour is bestowed generally on heads of state and foreign sovereigns and royal families as a sign of respect. Former U.S. President Bill Clinton and King Charles were among the previous recipients of the honour. Mr. Modi also met the Crown Prince of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-

Hamad Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah. Professor Zikur Rahman, former diplomat who has served in multiple Arab countries, pointed out that Kuwait was the only Gulf Cooperation Council country that Mr. Modi had not visited earlier and the visit therefore was significant as Kuwait has maintained a friendly policy towards India over the past several decades. "PM Modi has visited all other Gulf countries barring Kuwait and it was time that he also covered Kuwait. Starting with the end of the Cold War and the first Gulf war, Kuwait has maintained a positive attitude towards India and therefore the visit at this time will be helpful for India," said Prof. Rahman.

Centre should overhaul GST regime, says Congress

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Sunday exhorted the Narendra Modi government to show the courage to overhaul the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime, citing the "absurdity" of three different tax slabs for popcorn under the present system. In a post on X, Congress general secretary in-charge communications, Jairam Ramesh said the current complexities in the system had thrown open several loopholes leading to tax evasion. These complexities, he said, were leading to significant GST invasion.

FULL REPORT ON
» PAGE 4

In search of life



Ground zero: Rescue operations continued on Sunday after a multi-storey building collapsed at Sobhana village in Mohali district of Punjab on Saturday evening. Two people were killed in the accident. » PAGE 6

Congress seeks further probe by SC in Pegasus case after U.S. court holds Israeli group 'liable'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Renewing a debate on the alleged deployment of the Pegasus spyware by the Narendra Modi government, Congress leader Kanwaljit Surjewala on Sunday asked if the Supreme Court would conduct a "further inquiry" as a U.S. court has held Israel's NSO group "liable" for its intrusive software. On Friday, a U.S. court held NSO liable for hacking WhatsApp in a case initiated by the software giant Meta. Sharing a media report on the verdict, Mr. Surjewala said on X, "The Pegasus spyware case verdict proves how spyware apps numbers of Indians were targeted in the illegal spyware racket." In 2021, reports said Pe-

gaspis was used on more than 300 Indian mobile numbers. The reports had said that mobile numbers of Cabinet Ministers, Opposition leaders, holders of constitutional positions, journalists, and business persons were targeted.

"Reveal targeted users"
Mr. Surjewala said it was time the Narendra Modi government revealed who the 300 users were. The Rajya Sabha member asked, "Who are the two Union Ministers? Who are the three Opposition leaders? Who is the constitutional authority? Who are the journalists? Who are the business persons? What information was received by the BJP government and agencies? How was it used - misused -



A U.S. court on Friday held NSO liable for hacking WhatsApp, in a case initiated by the software giant Meta. »
... and what consequence? Who are the two Union Ministers? Who are the three Opposition leaders? Who is the constitutional authority? Who are the journalists? Who are the business persons? What information was received by the BJP government and agencies? How was it used - misused -

conduct a further inquiry in view of the judgment affirming the targeting of 1,400 WhatsApp numbers, including 300 from India, he asked. "Will the Supreme Court now ask Meta to submit to itself the 300 names to meet the ends of justice in the Pegasus case?" "Shouldn't Facebook (now Meta) now have responsibility to release the names of 300 Indians targeted by Pegasus, considering WhatsApp and Facebook have the biggest subscriber base in India and they have 'duty of care and disclosure' to its clients in India?" In 2022, a Supreme Court-appointed committee reported that Pegasus was used to target 29 mobile phones it examined.

Half of MGNREGS sites inspected in West Bengal showed flaws: RTI reply

Sobhana K. Nair
NEW DELHI

On December 26, it will be three years since the Centre released the last tranche of funds under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) to West Bengal. The funds have been withheld by the Centre since December 2021, citing irregularities in implementation of the programme in the State.

A set of RTI replies reveals that one of the key factors prompting the Union Rural Development Ministry's decision was the inspection of 63 worksites out of which inconsistencies were reported in 31. There are 3.4 crore registered MGNREGS workers in West Bengal. The Centre bears 90% of the budget for the scheme that provides guaranteed employment for up to 100 days in rural areas.

A series of RTI requests filed by Chakradhar Budha from the National Campaign for People's Right to Information reveals that the Centre has undertaken three field visits to the State in January 22-24, 2019; to Purbani, Bardhaman and Hooghly districts; March 2-28, 2022; to Malda district; and a third visit from April 14-18, 2022, to Hooghly, Purba Bardhaman, and Darjeeling. In total, the teams inspected 63 worksites, of which 312 were found satisfactory and the remaining 31 had serious shortcomings. The Central teams also pointed out the implementation - "breaking bigger projects into smaller packets to avoid scrutiny", "existence of multiple work sites shown to be created under MGNREGS", "tendering



Ongoing issue: There are 3.4 crore registered MGNREGS workers in West Bengal and the Centre bears 90% of scheme budget. FILE PHOTO

norms were not followed for procurement of systems", "works not permissible under MGNREGS were taken up", "poor maintenance of files and records" and so on. The Centre also stated that the State government filed delayed and unsatisfactory action-taken reports when these faults were pointed out.

State against Centre
A series of RTI requests filed by Chakradhar Budha from the National Campaign for People's Right to Information reveals that the Centre has undertaken three field visits to the State in January 22-24, 2019; to Purbani, Bardhaman and Hooghly districts; March 2-28, 2022; to Malda district; and a third visit from April 14-18, 2022, to Hooghly, Purba Bardhaman, and Darjeeling. In total, the teams inspected 63 worksites, of which 312 were found satisfactory and the remaining 31 had serious shortcomings. The Central teams also pointed out the implementation - "breaking bigger projects into smaller packets to avoid scrutiny", "existence of multiple work sites shown to be created under MGNREGS", "tendering

INSIDE

Row after arrest of terror suspects in West Bengal

KOLKATA
The arrest of a suspected member of a terror outfit in West Bengal on Sunday triggered the debate about whether the State is turning out to be a safe haven for extremist elements. » PAGE 4

Can't intimidate India to conform, says Jaishankar

MUMBAI
External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar has said India will work for the global good without being intimidated to "conform". » PAGE 6

Row after arrest of terror suspects in West Bengal



Ongoing issue: There are 3.4 crore registered MGNREGS workers in West Bengal and the Centre bears 90% of scheme budget. FILE PHOTO

hama Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme to the State of West Bengal has been stopped since March 9, 2022, as per provision of Section 27 of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005, due to non-compliance of directives of Central Government."

Section 27 empowers the Centre to stop releasing funds if irregularities are found in the scheme's implementation. The Section, however, does not stipulate holding back funds indefinitely. It also states, "appropriate remedial measures for its proper implementation within a reasonable period of time" has to be taken. On December 18, a delegation of NRIGA Sangharsh Morcha - a body of unions working with MGNREGA workers - met Union Rural Development Minister Shyambir Singh Chouhan who assured them of resolving it the earliest. "We told Mr. Chouhan and the Ministry officials that workers are being punished for the theft of MGNREGS funds from the officials, which is unjust. We hope it is resolved at the earliest," Anuradha Talwar, of PRKMS said.

India, Kuwait lift ties to 'strategic partnership'

The two sides sign a memorandum of understanding for exchange of defence personnel, exercises, supply of military equipment; they ink an MoU on cultural exchange and agreement on sports cooperation; Prime Minister holds discussions with Kuwaiti Amir, invites the Gulf country's investment body to 'look at new opportunities' in India

Kalol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

India and Kuwait on Sunday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on defence cooperation that will allow for exchange of defence personnel, joint exercises, and supply of military equipment.

The MoU was part of the outcomes firmed up during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's two-day visit to the energy-rich Gulf kingdom, which bestowed its highest honour on him.

Mr. Modi announced that the two sides had lifted the relationship to the level of "strategic partnership". The conversation between Mr. Modi and the Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber

Al Sabah, covered areas such as pharmaceuticals, IT, fintech, infrastructure, and security.

Earlier, India hosted the Foreign Minister of Kuwait, Abdullah Ali Al-Yahya, in New Delhi on December 3 and 4.

Economic ties

Mr. Modi met with the Prime Minister of Kuwait, Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and discussed ways to deepen economic ties.

He invited a delegation from the Kuwaiti Investment Authority and other notables in the Kuwaiti economy to visit India and "look at new opportunities in the fields of energy, defence, medical devices, pharma, foodparks," the External Affairs Ministry



Prime Minister Narendra Modi receiving Kuwait's highest honour from the Amir, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al Sabah. PTI

said in a press note.

The two Prime Ministers witnessed the signing of the MoU on bilateral defence cooperation. The press note said the MoU will "institutionalize bilateral cooperation in the area of defence."

Apart from the MoU on defence, the two sides signed an MoU on cultural exchange and agreement on sports cooperation. They welcomed the recent sealing of the Joint Commercial Commission for Cooperation under which new joint

Working Groups in trade, investment, education, technology, agriculture, security and culture have been set up.

The two sides already have Joint Working Groups (JWGs) on health, manpower, and hydrocarbons.

Mr. Modi reached Kuwait on Saturday and visited the Gulf Spic Labour Camp where more than 90% of the inhabitants are from India.

Cultural connection

He also met translators Abdulla Al Baroun and Abdul Lateef Al Nesef who have translated the Ramayana and Mahabharata into Arabic. Over the decades, several Gulf and Arab countries have translated the Indian epics and the work of the two translators

have added to that tradition.

"I am honoured to be conferred the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Order by His Highness the Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al Sabah. I dedicate this honour to the people of India and to the strong friendship between India and Kuwait," Mr. Modi said after receiving the honour during the visit.

The honour is bestowed generally on Heads of state and foreign sovereigns and to members of foreign royal families as a sign of friendship. Former U.S. President Bill Clinton and King Charles were among the previous recipients of the honour.

Mr. Modi also met the Crown Prince of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-

Hamad Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah.

Professor Zikrur Rahman, former diplomat who has served in multiple Arab countries, pointed out that Kuwait was the only Gulf Cooperation Council country that Mr. Modi had not visited earlier and the visit therefore was significant as Kuwait has maintained a friendly policy towards India over the past several decades.

"PM Modi has visited all other Gulf countries barring Kuwait and it was time that he also covered Kuwait. Starting with the end of the Cold War and the first Gulf war, Kuwait has maintained a positive attitude towards India and therefore the visit at this time will be helpful for India," said Prof. Rahman.




- **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)**

- **Defence Cooperation:** MoU signed for exchange of defence personnel, joint exercises, and supply of military equipment.

रक्षा सहयोग: रक्षा कर्मियों के आदान-प्रदान, संयुक्त अभ्यास और सैन्य उपकरणों की आपूर्ति के लिए समझौता जापन पर हस्ताक्षर।

- **Cultural Exchange:** Another MoU signed for cultural cooperation and sports collaboration.

सांस्कृतिक आदान-प्रदान: सांस्कृतिक सहयोग और खेल सहयोग के लिए समझौता जापन पर हस्ताक्षर।






- **Strategic Partnership Upgraded**



- Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the elevation of ties to a “strategic partnership.”

प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने संबंधों को "रणनीतिक साझेदारी" के स्तर पर ले जाने की घोषणा की।

- 
- Interaction with Kuwaiti Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah emphasized mutual respect and trust.



कवैती अमीर शेख मशाल अल-अहमद अल-जाबेर अल-सबह के साथ बातचीत में आपसी सम्मान और विश्वास पर जोर दिया गया।



- **Economic Cooperation**

- Discussions held with Kuwaiti Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on enhancing economic ties.

क़वैती प्रधानमंत्री शेख अहमद अल-अब्दुल्ला अल-अहमद अल-सबह के साथ आर्थिक संबंधों को बढ़ाने पर चर्चा।

- Kuwaiti Investment Authority invited to explore opportunities in India's energy, defence, pharmaceuticals, and food sectors.

क़वैती निवेश प्राधिकरण को भारत के ऊर्जा, रक्षा, फार्मा और खाद्य क्षेत्रों में अवसर तलाशने के लिए आमंत्रित किया गया।



- **Existing Joint Working Groups (JWGs)**

- Active JWGs in health, manpower, hydrocarbons, and more.

स्वास्थ्य, जनशक्ति, हाइड्रोकार्बन और अन्य क्षेत्रों में सक्रिय संयुक्त कार्य समूह।

- New working groups set up in trade, education, technology, and security.

व्यापार, शिक्षा, प्रौद्योगिकी और सुरक्षा में नए कार्य समूह स्थापित।

- **Recognition and Honours**

- PM Modi received the Mubarak Al Kabeer Order, Kuwait's highest civilian honour.

पीएम मोदी को कुवैत का सर्वोच्च नागरिक सम्मान, मुबारक अल कबीर ऑर्डर प्राप्त हुआ।

- Acknowledged strong India-Kuwait ties spanning decades.

दशकों से चले आ रहे मजबूत भारत-कुवैत संबंधों को मान्यता दी गई।

1. Labour and Workforce Relations

1. PM Modi visited Gulf Spic Labour Camp in Kuwait, where over 90% of residents are Indian.
पीएम मोदी ने कुवैत के गल्फ स्पिक श्रम शिविर का दौरा किया, जहां 90% से अधिक निवासी भारतीय हैं।

2. Historical Context

1. Kuwait has been a long-time partner of India in the Gulf region.
कुवैत खाड़ी क्षेत्र में भारत का लंबे समय से साझेदार रहा है।
2. PM Modi's visit marks a significant step in enhancing bilateral ties post-Cold War.
पीएम मोदी की यात्रा शीत युद्ध के बाद द्विपक्षीय संबंधों को बढ़ाने में एक महत्वपूर्ण कदम है।

CROWNED CHAMPION India beats Bangladesh to clinch inaugural U-19 T20 Asia Cup



India scored a 41-run win over Bangladesh and emerged champion in the inaugural Women's T20 U-19 Asia Cup in Kuala Lumpur on Sunday. The scores: India 117/7 in 20 overs (Trisha 52, Eastin 4/32) bt Bangladesh 76 in 18.3 overs (Ayush 3/17). Toss: Bangladesh; Point: Trisha.

STUNNER Atletico picks Barca's pocket and the top spot in LaLiga



Atletico Madrid beat Barcelona 2-1 to top LaLiga. The results: LaLiga: Barcelona 1 (Phehi 30) lost to Atletico 2 (De Paul 60, Sorloth 90+1); Real 4 (Mozape 10, Valverde 20, Rodrigo 34, Diaz 53) bt Sevilla 2 (Romero 35, Lukebakio 85). Bundesliga: Bayer Leverkusen 5 (Schick 45+1, 67, 74, 77, Wirtz 53) bt Freiburg 3 (Grifo 55).

SANTOSH TROPHY Meghalaya advances, honours end between TN and Odisha



Meghalaya entered the quarterfinals of the 78th Santosh Trophy senior National football championship with a 1-0 win over Goa while Tamil Nadu and Odisha were locked in a 3-3 draw in Hyderabad on Sunday. The results: Meghalaya 1 (Chyne 89) bt Goa 0; TN 1 (Romaria Jesuraj) 68 drew with Odisha 1 (Mukhl 75).

FACILE WINS Steelers get the better of Mumbai; Thalaivas overcome Bulls



Haryana Steelers beat U Mumbai 47-30 to cement its position at the top of the Pro Kabaddi League Season 11 table at the Balewadi Sports Complex in Pune on Sunday night. Earlier, Tamil Thalaivas registered its eighth win of the season by beating bottom-placed Bengaluru Bulls 42-32.

Team India hits the nets with full intensity at the MCG

False alarm as skipper Rohit and Akash are struck on their limbs while facing throwdowns; pacer says no major concern over injury scare; batters have a long stint; Bumrah and Siraj prepare in right earnest for the fourth Test

INDIA IN AUS MELBOURNE

A couple of false alarms rang through the Indian team's nets session at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) here on Sunday. Rohit Sharma and Akash Deep, were both struck on their limbs while counter-attacking throwdowns in the outdoor practice arena. While Rohit dealt with a sore left knee and iced it for a while, Akash was hit on his hand but made light of the bruise. The skipper spent some time sitting with one leg stretched on a chair. He chatted with bowling coach Moene Mokrel for a while before gingerly standing up. Later he ambled along, having a word with the last set of batters busy in the nets.

Loud cheer Earlier, when he walked in to bat, a loud cheer emanated from the fans, who had gathered on the mezzanine floor and were gazing at the Indian players, Akash, meanwhile,



Looking ahead: Skipper Rohit will be eyeing a reversal of fortunes in the next two Tests. AFP

to the nets outside. K.L. Rahul, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, Rohit and Rishabh Pant were the first set of batters and all had a long stint even as the blow on the knee forced the Indian captain to seek rest.

Bowling with gusto Importantly, Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Siraj linked up with their fellow seamers and bowled with gusto.

The batters were always informed if the ball was new or old, and imaginary field settings were revealed.

Gill was mauling his shots, Rohit tried to pull a few and one such endeavour had him missing the line and the ball hit the side of his left knee.

After a weekend of training, the Indian team will rest on Monday while Pat Cummins and his men will commence their preparation for the fourth Test here from December 26.

I was thinking of contributing, Akash on his defiant knock at Gabba

K.C. Vijaya Kumar MELBOURNE

A massive 9,417 kilometres split Bihar, Dehri from Melbourne. It is an aerial distance meant to be traversed over multiple flights. Not difficult in this modern age but to get here, Akash Deep had to work his way up over the years.

From Bihar, he shifted to Bengal, dealt with personal tragedies, and kept running in hard. His is a story of sweat and a big heart. The kind he revealed at Brisbane's Gabba where along with Jasprit Bumrah, he helped India win the 2023 World Cup.

If Rohit Sharma's men are placed at 1-1 in the current Gavaskar Trophy series, a large credit is due to the way Akash performed at the Gabba. The numbers, though, may never tell the entire tale. Just like Javagal Srinath in the 1991-92 tour of Australia, Akash was this Indian speedster who bowled well but without luck. Hopefully that will change.

At the Melbourne Cricket Ground here on Sunday afternoon, Akash met reporters and answered all their queries. Looking back at his life, he said: "When I began playing



Akash, ANI

gives everyone confidence. Everybody was enjoying that moment (in the dressing room)." Having played his first five Tests in India and just a lone one Down Under in the current tour, Akash was aware of the challenges lurking on these surfaces. "Before this I have played in India where there's not much help for us (pacers). We can keep our lengths short here as there is some help, especially with the new ball. We also feel like we can bowl a lot fuller thinking we can beat the batters." Then there is a chance of leaking runs too. As a fast bowler, irrespective of conditions, maintaining discipline is very important.

Bumrah's guidance has helped Akash and the seamer expressed his gratitude: "This is my first time in Australia. The place where I come from and the place I am in right now, because of that (growth) children are playing cricket (back home) and parents have tried to support their children. That makes me feel good and proud." Gaining confidence Talk veered towards his 47-run last-wicket partnership with Bumrah at the Gabba, and he responded: "Honestly, when we come down to bat, when some 20 to 25 runs were required, I was thinking of contributing and that day, I wasn't thinking of avoiding a follow-on, I just wanted to stay unbeaten and by god's grace we avoided the follow-on. When you save a Test from that position, it

gives everyone confidence. Everybody was enjoying that moment (in the dressing room)." Having played his first five Tests in India and just a lone one Down Under in the current tour, Akash was aware of the challenges lurking on these surfaces. "Before this I have played in India where there's not much help for us (pacers). We can keep our lengths short here as there is some help, especially with the new ball. We also feel like we can bowl a lot fuller thinking we can beat the batters." Then there is a chance of leaking runs too. As a fast bowler, irrespective of conditions, maintaining discipline is very important.

Bumrah's guidance has helped Akash and the seamer expressed his gratitude: "This is my first time in Australia. The place where I come from and the place I am in right now, because of that (growth) children are playing cricket (back home) and parents have tried to support their children. That makes me feel good and proud." Gaining confidence Talk veered towards his 47-run last-wicket partnership with Bumrah at the Gabba, and he responded: "Honestly, when we come down to bat, when some 20 to 25 runs were required, I was thinking of contributing and that day, I wasn't thinking of avoiding a follow-on, I just wanted to stay unbeaten and by god's grace we avoided the follow-on. When you save a Test from that position, it

gives everyone confidence. Everybody was enjoying that moment (in the dressing room)." Having played his first five Tests in India and just a lone one Down Under in the current tour, Akash was aware of the challenges lurking on these surfaces. "Before this I have played in India where there's not much help for us (pacers). We can keep our lengths short here as there is some help, especially with the new ball. We also feel like we can bowl a lot fuller thinking we can beat the batters." Then there is a chance of leaking runs too. As a fast bowler, irrespective of conditions, maintaining discipline is very important.



Passionate: R. Ashwin...he did not play cricket, he lived in it. EMANUELE YODINI

The Encyclopedist

Gideon Haigh John Arlott said of the great English seamer Maurice Tate that he did not play cricket; he lived in it. The same might be said of Ravi Ashwin, who has retired, somewhat unexpectedly, aged thirty-eight. He was born into the game; his parents Ravichandran and Chitra were obsessed with his career. He married the game - his wife now runs his cricket academy, Gen Next, and media company, Carrom Ball Media. He covers the world on his YouTube Channel, and is a compulsive communicator on Instagram. In amongst all this, he has harvested 765 international wickets and nearly 5000 runs. Sometimes cricketers and their cricket are readily separable. Yet it was hard to imagine a conversation with this proud maestro that did not circle back to his passion and obsession. He did have other interests, I know. He liked movies, with a special affinity for the cult classic Chennai 600028. It is, of course, about cricket. To an outsider, this might make him sound a little...narrow? But there is what you're interested in, and how you're interested

in it. Few cricketers can have explored the game to such a minute level. Sometimes you wonder whether Australia's top players see cricket as getting in the way of their golf; they fondly nickname Mike Hussey, Ashwin's Chennai Super Kings colleague, "Mr. Cricket". Life's intelligent study But Ashwin's encyclopedist kind of makes you feel a little proud of cricket. It, that it could be subjected to a life's intelligent study, and protective of it too. After all, nobody ever said to Einstein: "Gosh, Albert, do you reckon you could talk about something other than physics?" Or of Steve Jobs: "Steve could be a really fun guy if he wasn't so obsessed with the graphic user interface." The argument then becomes whether it is possible to be a genius in such a seemingly esoteric realm. To which the straight-forwardest retort is: cricket in India is anything but trivial. And even if it may be of lesser importance than physics or the cult classic Chennai 600028, then, as Hazlitt observed in his impromptu essay on Gavaskar the fives player, what of it? It may be said that there are things of more importance than striking a

ball against a wall - there are things, indeed, that make more noise and do as little good, such as making war and peace, making speeches and answering them, making verses and blotting them, making money and throwing it away. But the game of fives is when no one despises who has ever played it." I commend the appreciation of Ashwin by Karthikeya Date, Jarrod Kimber and his amanuensis Sid Monge, while there has been an impressive range of tributes from other players, and I liked the gesture by Pat Cummins' Australians too. Different memoir But what has really enhanced my appreciation of Ashwin in recent times has been reading the coming-of-age memoir he published this year with Sid, I Have The Streets. By convention, cricket memoirs dispose of early life perfunctorily usually in a chapter called "Early Life" - with rites of passage like the first century, the first five-for etc. That's not for Ashwin. He takes you right back to his gully cricket days in the streets of the Little Street, where, for instance, he developed his batting

technique of staying leg side of the ball, because he had no pads, and his aptitude for the pull shot, because there were windows around his ground in first Mankad, he tells us, aged twelve. Nobody would have thought he would take a hard line later. Ashwin was also twelve when he suffered his first career-threatening injury - a torn ligament in his right hand, but also in everyone else's. Rahul Dravid has a pleasing glimpse of him in his introduction. I have seen Paras Mthembey, our bowling coach, occasionally try to do something to impress him. Ash will verbally duel with him, and it never appears that Paras has been able to fully convince him. And yet, two days later, we will see Ash trying the same thing in the nets all by himself. Then we just look at each other, smile and nod; look, he is actually doing something that you asked him to do a certain thing." Why the departure? So why now? Why would a player so steeped in the game's own history and international pedestal? I suspect it was not the play-

ing that finally stretched Ashwin thin, but the not playing - the sense of not being guaranteed a place overseas because of India's dual objectives of lengthening its batting and packing an extra seamer. Since the last bordered-vasekar Trophy here four years ago, he had played only nine away Tests, and was unlikely to form part of India's first-choice XI in England next year. Still, I'm not sure we should underestimate the toll of fifteen years at the very top of the very top of cricket membership of the Indian cricket team. In The Two of Cricket, Ash's Nandy reflected on the extraordinary burden of cricketers in his country - "how eleven players with an average age less than thirty are manoeuvring the politics and culture" must "recover the self-esteem of all India." It's a tribute to Ashwin that he made it look like this is what he was born for. (with permission from Cricket Et Al)

ing that finally stretched Ashwin thin, but the not playing - the sense of not being guaranteed a place overseas because of India's dual objectives of lengthening its batting and packing an extra seamer. Since the last bordered-vasekar Trophy here four years ago, he had played only nine away Tests, and was unlikely to form part of India's first-choice XI in England next year. Still, I'm not sure we should underestimate the toll of fifteen years at the very top of the very top of cricket membership of the Indian cricket team. In The Two of Cricket, Ash's Nandy reflected on the extraordinary burden of cricketers in his country - "how eleven players with an average age less than thirty are manoeuvring the politics and culture" must "recover the self-esteem of all India." It's a tribute to Ashwin that he made it look like this is what he was born for. (with permission from Cricket Et Al)

CROWNED CHAMPION

India beats Bangladesh to clinch inaugural U-19 T20 Asia Cup



X@ACCMEDIA1

India scored a 41-run win over Bangladesh and emerged champion in the inaugural Women's T20 U-19 Asia Cup in Kuala Lumpur on Sunday. **The scores:** India 117/7 in 20 overs (Trisha 52; Easmin 4/32) bt Bangladesh 76 in 18.3 overs (Ayushi 3/17); **Toss:** Bangladesh; **PoM:** Trisha.

SCIENCE

In big update, minimum possible mass of dark matter particles revised

In 1922, Jacobus Kapteyn estimated the density of dark matter. Since then, a century of sophisticated measurements has held up the figure. It's equal to the heft of two protons per teaspoon, which means your house could contain dark matter with a mass equivalent of a trillion protons — but herein lies the rub

Nirmal Raj

Dark matter is an enigmatic, invisible substance supplying five-sixths of the matter of the universe. Unlike photons, the particles of light and the particles of dark matter need to have non-zero mass, or else the dense and intricate structure of matter on cosmic scales will not form.

How light can a dark particle then be? For decades, scientists thought this minimum mass was about 10^{21} times the mass of a proton. But in May this year, theoretical physicists revised the limit and pushed it up by an order of magnitude to 2.3×10^{20} proton masses. This is a significant update in the world of dark matter.

Uniformly or in lumps?

To understand these numbers and their importance, let us first build a mental picture of dark matter. Dark matter is said to be everywhere in the universe. Does that mean it is in your house? In 1922, Dutch astronomer Jacobus Kapteyn studied the motion of stars neighbouring the Sun and concluded the density of "dark matter" (using that term for one of the first times) must be 0.003 solar masses per cubic light year.

Since then, through a century of increasingly sophisticated measurements, the accuracy of Kapteyn's conclusion has held up remarkably well. This density of dark matter can be re-expressed as the heft of two protons per teaspoon, which means your house could contain dark matter with a mass equivalent of a trillion protons.

But this would also be naïve: Kapteyn's and subsequent measurements are only valid when regarding the million-cubic-light-year volume and don't apply when we zoom in for a closer look. This is because stars, whose motion is used for the measurement, are themselves separated by a few light years. Whether or not dark matter is present on smaller length scales would depend on how it is distributed: either uniformly or in lumps.

An occasional visitor?

Let's assume it is spread around like fine flour, which the standard theories of cosmology also predict. If it comes in lumps, the spacing between them may be as large as many light years, and there will perhaps be no dark matter under your roof.

Now, since we know the local density of dark matter, the value of the unknown mass of the dark particle will determine



A Hubble Space Telescope view of the galaxy NGC2985. The evidence for dark matter emerged in the 1970s when astronomers found an unusual pattern in the rate at which stars in a galaxy rotated the farther they were from the centre. [DOI:10.1007/978-1-4939-9800-0_14](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4939-9800-0_14)

the separation between two neighbouring particles. If it is 100 proton masses, the inter-particle separation will be 7 cm. Then dark particles at any given moment will not only be in your house but also in your head.

If dark matter is made of an elementary particle, the heaviest it can be is about 10^{21} times a proton's mass. In that case the interparticle separation would be 30 km. So dark matter won't be a resident of your house but will visit occasionally (since the particles travel randomly at around 300 km/s).

Then again, a 10^{20} gram agglomerate of dark particles would be apart by more than the size of the solar system, reducing our chance of discovering them.

Fluid rather than a flock

What about small masses? At 10^{21} proton masses, every red blood cell in your body will contain a dark matter particle. But now quantum physics becomes important. Every object is also a wave, with its wavelength given by the inverse of its momentum. Thus the lighter a dark matter particle is, the larger its wavelength will be. For 10^{21} proton masses, the wavelength will be about 2 cm, much larger than its micrometre interparticle separation.

So for small masses, we must picture a

It's not every day that particle physics gets to redraw a fundamental goal post by an order of magnitude. And it is a sign of our times that this could only have been done with computers as opposed to a blackboard

collection of dark particles as a fluid rather than as a flock of grains.

If we now dial the mass of a dark particle all the way down to 10^{20} proton masses, the wavelength is 200 light years, about the size of a dwarf galaxy. The substance of a dwarf galaxy is chiefly in the form of dark matter, with only about 5% contribution from stars. This simple fact translates to a restriction on the dark matter particle's mass: it must be greater than 10^{21} proton masses. If it were lower, its spatial extent would exceed the dwarf galaxy, and we can't form a macroscopic object smaller than its microscopic constituents.

The time of computers

This is where the paper from May matters. Its authors have shown that this lore is too simplistic and that researchers can do something sharper. First, using

data on how stars move in Leo II, a dwarf galaxy orbiting the Milky Way, they inferred the dark matter density in it as a function of the distance from its centre. This density profile isn't unique due to measurement uncertainties, so they generate a set consistent with the stellar data. Next, they numerically solved the Schrödinger equation after modifying it to account for gravity and obtained an ensemble of density profiles. Finally, they carried out a statistical procedure to match the two sets of density profiles — the empirical one from observing Leo II and the theoretical one from solving the equation.

Their key finding here was that the inner regions of Leo II contained more invisible mass which dark particles of 10^{21} proton mass couldn't account for. Thus they surmised heavier particles are needed to accommodate the inner crowding.

It's not every day that particle physics gets to redraw a fundamental goal post by an order of magnitude. And it is a sign of our times that this could only have been done with computers as opposed to a blackboard.

Nirmal Raj is an assistant professor of theoretical physics at the Centre for High Energy Physics in the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru. nraj@hipe.ac.in

THE GIST

Scientists thought the minimum mass of dark matter was about 10^{21} times the mass of a proton. But in May, theoretical physicists revised the limit and pushed it up by an order of magnitude to 2.3×10^{20} proton masses

If the mass of a dark particle is 10^{21} , the wavelength is 200 light years, about the size of a dwarf galaxy, which is chiefly dark matter. This restricts the dark matter particle's mass: it must be greater than 10^{21} . If it were lower, its spatial extent would exceed the galaxy

Researchers inferred the dark matter density in Leo II. They matched the two sets of density profiles — empirical and theoretical. They found that Leo II contained more invisible mass, which dark particles of 10^{21} proton mass couldn't account for

BIG SHOT



Youngsters examine 'Harrow', a rehabilitated loggerhead sea turtle, just before it was released into the Atlantic Ocean on Saturday in Marathon, Florida. Rescued in June, the reptile was found unable to dive, emaciated, and covered with barnacles by a family that was fishing off the Keys. AP

WHAT IS IT?

SpaDeX: meeting in space

SpaDeX is the name of a new mission to be flown by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). During the mission, two satellites will be launched into orbit around the earth, where they will demonstrate technologies to dock and undock while in motion.

ISRO needs to master in-space docking so that satellites launched in separate rocket launches can link up to perform more sophisticated tasks. The technology will be essential for the 'Bharatya Antariksh Station', an India-made space station ISRO has begun work on.

If the SpaDeX test is successful, India will become the fourth country in the world to have a space programme capable of docking in space. The satellites for the SpaDeX mission will be launched onboard the PSLV C60 mission. The launch is expected to happen on December 30, 2024. Each of the spacecraft weighs about 220 kg. The rocket will launch the simultaneously but independently into a 470-km-wide circular orbit at a 55° inclination, with a local time cycle of about 66 days. The docking manoeuvre will be SpaDeX's primary objective.



The two satellites, dubbed 'Chaser' and 'Target', involved in the ISRO SpaDeX mission. ISRO

Once it has been accomplished, the two satellites will proceed to the secondary objectives: "the transfer of electric power between the docked spacecraft, which is essential for future applications such as in-space robotics, composite spacecraft control, and payload operations after undocking," per an ISRO statement.

With agency inputs

-The Hindu Bureau

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

WHAT IS IT?

SpaDeX: meeting in space

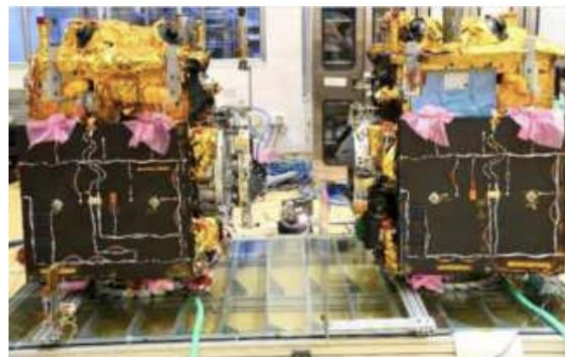
SpaDeX is the name of a new mission to be flown by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). During the mission, two satellites will be launched into orbit around the earth, where they will demonstrate technologies to dock and undock while in motion.

ISRO needs to master in-space docking so that satellites launched in separate rocket launches can link up to perform more sophisticated tasks. The technology will be essential for the 'Bharatiya Antariksh Station,' a new India-made space station ISRO has begun work on.

If the SpaDeX test is successful, India will become the fourth country in the world to have a space programme capable of docking in space. The satellites for the SpaDeX mission will be launched onboard the PSLV C60 mission. The launch is expected to happen on December 30, 2024.

Each of the spacecraft weighs about 220 kg. The rocket will launch them simultaneously but independently into a 470-km-wide circular orbit at a 55° inclination, with a local time cycle of about 66 days.

The docking manoeuvre will be SpaDeX's primary objective.



The two satellites, dubbed 'Chaser' and 'Target', involved in the ISRO SpaDeX mission. ISRO

Once it has been accomplished, the two satellites will proceed to the secondary objectives: "the transfer of electric power between the docked spacecraft, which is essential for future applications such as in-space robotics, composite spacecraft control, and payload operations after undocking," per an ISRO statement.

With agency inputs

-The Hindu Bureau


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



- **Introduction to SpaDeX**

- SpaDeX is a new mission by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

स्पेडेक्स भारतीय अंतरिक्ष अनुसंधान संगठन (इसरो) का एक नया मिशन है।

- 
- It involves launching two satellites into orbit to demonstrate in-space docking and undocking technology.

इसमें दो उपग्रहों को कक्षा में लॉन्च करके अंतरिक्ष में डॉकिंग और अनडॉकिंग प्रौद्योगिकी का प्रदर्शन करना शामिल है।

- **Significance of In-Space Docking**

- This technology allows satellites launched on separate rockets to link up for complex tasks.

यह तकनीक अलग-अलग रॉकेटों पर लॉन्च किए गए उपग्रहों को जटिल कार्यों के लिए जोड़ने की अनुमति देती है।

- Essential for the development of the Bharatiya Antariksh Station, India's planned space station.

भारतीय अंतरिक्ष स्टेशन के विकास के लिए यह तकनीक आवश्यक है।

- **Global Context**

- If successful, India will be the fourth country to have a space programme capable of in-space docking.

यदि यह सफल होता है, तो भारत अंतरिक्ष में डॉकिंग करने में सक्षम अंतरिक्ष कार्यक्रम वाला चौथा देश बन जाएगा।

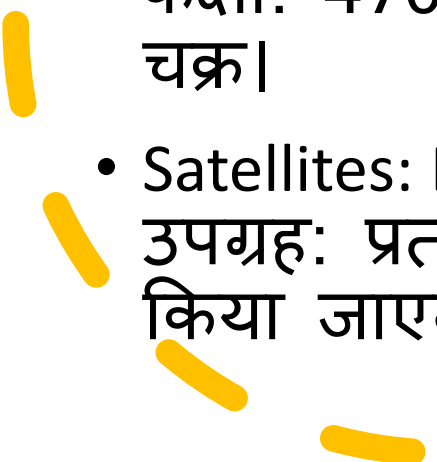




- **Mission Details**

- Launch Vehicle: PSLV C60 mission, scheduled for December 30, 2024.
लॉन्च वाहन: पीएसएलवी सी60 मिशन, जो 30 दिसंबर, 2024 को निर्धारित है।

- Orbit: 470-km-wide circular orbit with a 55° inclination, 66-day cycle.
कक्षा: 470-किमी चौड़ी गोलाकार कक्षा 55° झुकाव के साथ, 66-दिन का चक्र।

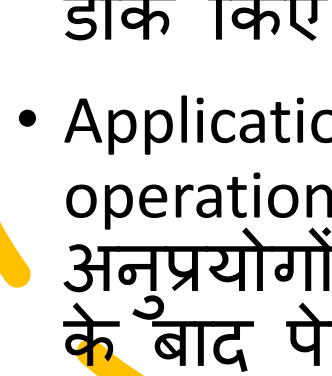
- Satellites: Each weighs 220 kg, launched simultaneously but independently.
उपग्रह: प्रत्येक का वजन 220 किग्रा, एक साथ लेकिन स्वतंत्र रूप से लॉन्च किया जाएगा।
- 



- **Primary Objective**

- Docking manoeuvre to demonstrate in-space docking capabilities.
अंतरिक्ष में डॉकिंग क्षमताओं को प्रदर्शित करने के लिए डॉकिंग प्रक्रिया।

- **Secondary Objectives**

- Transfer of electric power between docked spacecraft.
डॉक किए गए अंतरिक्ष यान के बीच विद्युत शक्ति का हस्तांतरण।
 - Applications include in-space robotics, spacecraft control, and payload operations post-undocking.
अनुप्रयोगों में अंतरिक्ष रोबोटिक्स, अंतरिक्ष यान नियंत्रण, और अनडॉकिंग के बाद पेलोड संचालन शामिल हैं।
- 



- **Impact and Future Prospects**

- Demonstration of this technology will pave the way for advanced space missions.

इस प्रौद्योगिकी का प्रदर्शन उन्नत अंतरिक्ष मिशनों का मार्ग प्रशस्त करेगा।

- 
- Strengthens India's position in global space exploration and innovation.

वैश्विक अंतरिक्ष अन्वेषण और नवाचार में भारत की स्थिति को मजबूत करता है।

SC DISMISSED TWO HIGH-PROFILE CASES As key cases fall in courts, ED to staff: No PMLA on basis of conspiracy alone

DEEPTIM TIWARY NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 22 WITH SOME of its high-profile money laundering proceedings falling in court, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) has decided not to rely solely on "criminal conspiracy" as the "predicate offence" based on which it registers such cases... it should also include the offence under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) related to that conspiracy...

- CASES DISMISSED Karnataka Dy CM and Congress leader D K Shivakumar booked in 2018 in money laundering case for alleged tax evasion, arrested in 2019. SC dismissed case, said "question of whether 120B IPC can constitute a predicate stand-alone offence to enable ED to invoke PMLA has already been decided..." Chhattisgarh liquor scam case against IAS officer Anil Tuteja was quashed by SC - "as there is no scheduled offence" - if there are no proceeds of crime, obviously offence under section 3 of PMLA is not made out. The SC ruled. The ED later registered a fresh case.

Ahead of Delhi polls, AAP to start doorstep enrolment for women, elderly schemes today



Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal with AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal and party leader Manish Sisodia on Sunday.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 22 AAP VOLUNTEERS and leaders will move from home to home across Delhi from Monday to register people for two state government schemes... The Mukhya Mantri Mahila Samman Yojana and Sanjivani Yojana... the party believes can be the gamechanger in the upcoming Assembly elections.

As road ends for Kolkata's iconic yellow cabs, drivers face uncertain future

PAGE 1 ANCHOR ATRI MITRA & SWEET KUMARI KOLKATA, DECEMBER 22 FOR THE past 15 years, Bijoy Shaw, a 30-year-old taxi driver from Kolkata's Park Circus area, has been following a routine. At 6:30 each morning, he drives his yellow Ambassador taxi to the Sealdah Railway Station, hoping to find customers... But with Kolkata taxi drivers phasing out 80 per cent of its iconic yellow taxis by March, Shaw and driv-

PM VISIT: BOTH SIDES CONDEMN CROSS-BORDER TERROR India, Kuwait boost ties: Strategic partnership, key pact on defence



Prime Minister Narendra Modi being awarded 'The Order of Mubarak Al-Kabeer' by Kuwait's Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Sunday.

Modi gets Kuwait's highest honour, 'The Order of Mubarak Al-Kabeer' AS PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi and Kuwait's Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah held their first bilateral meeting on Sunday, the two countries elevated their relationship to a "strategic partnership" and signalled that trade and defence cooperation would form the key pillars of their ties... This came on the day that Kuwait conferred its highest honour - 'The Order of Mubarak Al-Kabeer' - on Modi for his role in strengthening relations between the two countries.

A Goa scam unravels: Portuguese-era land papers forged, properties 'sold' by dead Not possible without connivance of Archives dept staff, says inquiry panel

PAVNEET SINGH CHADHA PANAJI, DECEMBER 22 FORGED SALE deeds with Portuguese-era calligraphy, dead men and women shown as sellers and a village that woke up to discover that half the homes there had changed hands. This is how a land-grabbing racket unfolded in Goa, all under the nose of - and possibly in connivance with - government officials. These are among the findings of a Commission of Inquiry, which the Goa government formed two years ago to look into dozens of such cases, The Indian Express

LAND GRAB: THE MODUS OPERANDI Vacant, dilapidated properties or those occupied by owners with common Goa names were identified Ownership, title info from government offices or other sources were obtained Fake forged sale deeds written in Portuguese style calligraphy were prepared Forged sale deeds were inserted in official records, allegedly in connivance with staff of Directorate of Archives & Archaeology Certified copies of fake sale deeds were obtained from Directorate of Archives and Archaeology

Mohali building collapse: Among two dead, techie who returned to gym to get his phone

JAGDEEP SINGH DEEP MOHALI, DECEMBER 22 ABHISHEK DHANWAL, a 30-year-old IT professional, was working out in the gym Saturday evening when his trainer noticed cracks rapidly developing on the walls and alerted him. He and others rushed out of the building. Within moments, Abhishek realised that he had left behind his cellphone, and ran back to fetch it, his friends told his father. On Sunday morning, the building was shattered when rescue workers recovered his



At the site of the incident in Sohana, Sunday. Kamleshwar Singh

Change in poll rules part of conspiracy to destroy integrity of EC, says Cong

EC not consulting all, undermining multi-party democracy: Opp parties ASAD REHMAN NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 22 CLIPPING ACROSS party lines, the Opposition on Sunday criticised the Centre for amending the Conduct of Election Rules to limit public inspection of election papers to only those documents specified in the provisions... While the Congress called it part of a "systematic conspiracy to destroy the institutional integrity of the Election Commission of India", others like the Samajwadi Party (SP) and Left parties accused the EC of "undermining multi-party democracy" by taking "unilateral" decisions without consulting all political parties.

THE WORLD, PAGE 14

GERMANY X'MAS MARKET ATTACK STIRS TENSIONS OVER IMMIGRATION, STIRTS BLAKE LIVELY ACCUSES CO-STAR, DIRECTOR OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

IF IT IS BUSINESS AS USUAL, VIKSIT BIHAR BY 2047 WILL NOT HAPPEN

THE EXPRESS INTERVIEW FORMER PFI EXPLAINED LOOKING AT 2025: POLITICS LANDSCAPE OF RISKS AND CHALLENGES

Aparna Sen's 1981 film 36 Chowringhee Lane and more recently, the 2012 Vidya Balan-starrer Kahaani. But a 2019 order by the Supreme Court, combined with the fact that Ambassador, once long ceased to be produced, have meant that by March 2025, the majority of the city's yellow fleet - over 7,000 cars - will go off the road. Hindustan Motors began producing the iconic Ambassador in 1958 at their factory in Hindustan, around 20 km from Kolkata. Four years later, in Calcutta, Taxi Association introduced Ambassadors as the standard

taxi models in two colours - yellow and black for intercity travel. In 1994, the then Left government headed by Jyoti Basu announced 'All Bengal permit' for all taxis in the state. The government also gave Kolkata the first universal and the now iconic yellow colour. In 2009, however, the first blow was dealt. In July that year, the government bench of the Supreme Court decided that all commuters over 100 days and older upgraded their vehicles to the newer Ambassador model,



Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge with Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah at an event in Kalaburagi, Sunday.

CLIPPING ACROSS party lines, the Opposition on Sunday criticised the Centre for amending the Conduct of Election Rules to limit public inspection of election papers to only those documents specified in the provisions... While the Congress called it part of a "systematic conspiracy to destroy the institutional integrity of the Election Commission of India", others like the Samajwadi Party (SP) and Left parties accused the EC of "undermining multi-party democracy" by taking "unilateral" decisions without consulting all political parties.

Earlier, Rule 93 (2) (a) of the 1951 Conduct of Election Rules stated that "all other papers relating to the election shall be open to public inspection". The amended version of the rule now states "all other papers as specified in these rules relating to the election shall be open to public inspection."

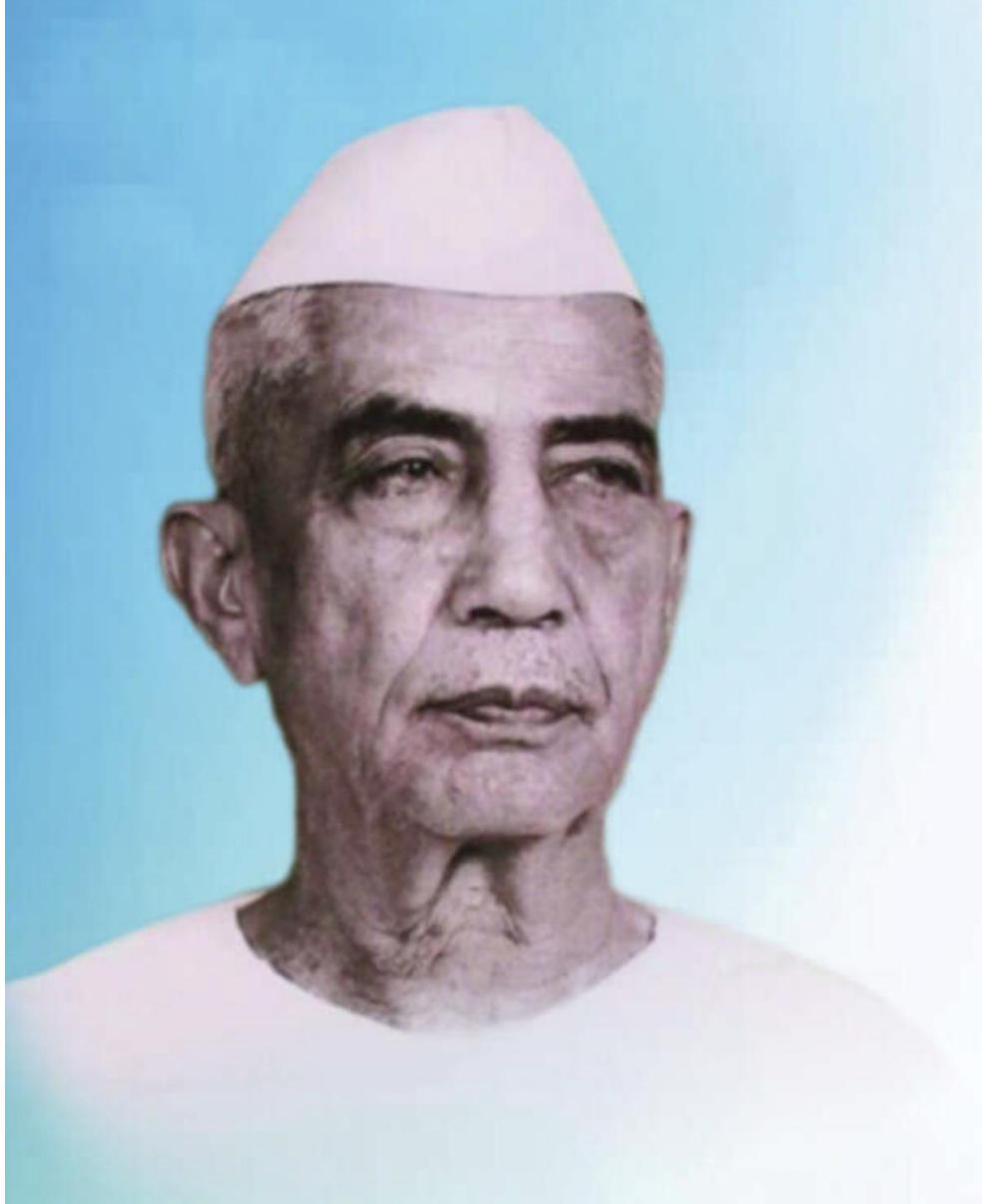
THE WORLD, PAGE 14

GERMANY X'MAS MARKET ATTACK STIRS TENSIONS OVER IMMIGRATION, STIRTS BLAKE LIVELY ACCUSES CO-STAR, DIRECTOR OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

IF IT IS BUSINESS AS USUAL, VIKSIT BIHAR BY 2047 WILL NOT HAPPEN

THE EXPRESS INTERVIEW FORMER PFI EXPLAINED LOOKING AT 2025: POLITICS LANDSCAPE OF RISKS AND CHALLENGES

According to data from the state's transport department, over 5,000 yellow Ambassadors had already gone off the road as of August this year, and 2,500 more would soon follow suit. "Now that production has stopped, the vehicles replacing these will not be Ambassadors and won't be yellow," the official says. "By 2027, we're expecting that the Ambassador taxi would have all but vanished from the city streets." But there are other factors as well that contributed to the slow decline of the cabs, for one thing the car was considered a fuel guzzler, and the iconic yellow Ambassador taxi combined with stagnant taxi



**Ministry of Agriculture
and Farmers Welfare
Government of India**

On the Occasion of
'National Farmer's Day'
The Birth Anniversary of

Bharat Ratna Chaudhary Charan Singh

The grateful nation pays rich tributes

Indian rupee continues to fall against US dollar: what determines exchange rate?

UDIT MISRA

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 22

THE INDIAN rupee's exchange rate against the US dollar breached the 85 mark last week. In other words, one would have to pay Rs 85 to buy \$1.

In April, this "exchange rate" was around 83 and a decade ago, when Narendra Modi became prime minister, it was around 61. As such, the rupee has been weakening in value relative to the dollar — this is a long-term trend.

What is the exchange rate?

Within India, we buy goods (such as a pizza or a car) and services (such as a haircut or a hotel stay) using our money, the Indian rupee. But for things from outside the country — say an American-made car or Swiss vacation or indeed, crude oil — we would have to purchase the currency of another country, say the US (dollar) or Swiss currency (euro) using our domestic currency before we buy

the final item. The rate at which one can swap currencies is the exchange rate. In other words, how many rupees would buy you a dollar or a euro.

In such a market — also referred to as the currency market — each currency is like a commodity itself. The value of each currency relative to another currency is called the exchange rate. These values can stay the same over time but more often than not they keep changing.

What decides it?

Like any other trade in life, the relative value of one currency against another depends on which is demanded more. If Indians demand more US dollars than Americans demand the Indian rupee, the exchange rate will tilt in favour of the US dollar. If this situation keeps repeating every day, such a trend will become stronger and the rupee will keep losing value relative to the US dollar.

This movement will show up in the form of the rupee's exchange rate weakening against the dollar.

What factors determine the demand for rupee vis à vis dollar?

Three main factors are at play here. One big component of demand comes from trade of goods. For the sake of simplicity, imagine a world where there are only two countries — India and the US. If India imports more goods from the US than what it exports to the US, then the demand for US dollars will outstrip the demand for Indian rupee. This, in turn, will make the US dollar gain strength

against the rupee, and its exchange rate versus the rupee will appreciate. Put differently, the rupee's exchange rate relative to the dollar will weaken. As a result, more rupees will be required to buy a single US dollar.

The other component is trade in services. If Indians buy more US services — say tourism — than Americans buy Indian services, then again, demand for dollars will outstrip the demand for rupee, and rupee will weaken.

The third component is investments. If Americans invest in India more than Indians invest in the US, then the demand for rupee will outstrip the dollar and rupee will appreciate against the dollar.

And what factors affect these three kinds of demands?

There are several factors that can affect these three demands.

■ Suppose the US decides that it will not allow Indian imports. In such a scenario, the demand for Indian rupees will plummet; after all, if the Americans can't buy Indian goods, why would they go to the currency market to buy Indian rupees?

End result: rupee will weaken. Something similar is expected to happen if, as President-elect Donald Trump has promised, the US slaps high tariffs against Indian goods, making them so costly that no one in the US will buy them.

■ Imagine a scenario where both India and the US are experiencing high inflation. By definition, inflation eats away the value

of a currency because an inflation of 5% means that whatever one could buy for Rs 100 in year 1, requires Rs 105 to buy in the next year.

Now imagine that in 5 years' time, the US reduces its inflation to zero while in India it stays at 6%. This would mean that if an American decides to invest in the Indian stock market thinking that Indian companies/shares give an annual return of 10%, she would end up getting only a 4% real return because six out of the 10% would be eaten up by inflation. On the other hand, the US stock market might give a return of just 5% but since inflation is at 0%, the final return would be 5%.

In such a scenario, an investor may not make any fresh investments into India; worse still, she may actually pull out money from India and invest it back in the US. Both these actions will reduce the demand for rupees relative to the dollar, and the rupee will weaken against the dollar. Something similar is happening at present as the investors pull out money from India.

YOUR GO-TO INSTITUTE FOR GENERAL STUDIES PREPARATION

VAJIRAM & RAVI
Institute for IAS Examination

Prelims cum Mains	Prelims cum Mains	Prelims Test Series
General Studies Comprehensive Programme	General Studies Fledgling Comprehensive Programme	Prelims CAMP
11 Months + 8 Months MSP	2 Years + 8 Months MSP	4 Months
31st JANUARY 2025	18th DECEMBER 2024	2nd JANUARY 2025
Available in Classroom and LIVE-Online Mode		
080-6220-6330 www.vajiramandravi.com		

-
- **Indian Rupee's Decline Against US Dollar: Key Factors**
 - **Exchange Rate Basics**
 - **Definition:** The exchange rate determines how much of one currency can be exchanged for another.
 - मुद्रा विनिमय दर यह तय करती है कि एक मुद्रा को दूसरी के लिए कितना विनिमय किया जा सकता है।
 - **Example:** If \$1 = ₹85, it means ₹85 are needed to purchase \$1.
 - उदाहरण: यदि \$1 = ₹85 है, तो \$1 खरीदने के लिए ₹85 की आवश्यकता होगी।

Current Scenario

Rupee crossed ₹85 against the US Dollar.

रुपया अमेरिकी डॉलर के मुकाबले ₹85 के पार चला गया।

A decade ago, it was around ₹61.

एक दशक पहले, यह लगभग ₹61 था।

- **What Determines Exchange Rates?**

- 1. Demand and Supply of Currencies:**

- 1. If Indians demand more dollars for imports, the rupee weakens.

- 1. यदि भारतीय आयात के लिए अधिक डॉलर की मांग करते हैं, तो रुपया कमजोर होता है।

- 2. Conversely, if foreigners demand more rupees for Indian goods or services, the rupee strengthens.

- 1. इसके विपरीत, यदि विदेशी भारतीय वस्तुओं या सेवाओं के लिए अधिक रुपये की मांग करते हैं, तो रुपया मजबूत होता है।

- **Trade in Goods and Services:**

- Higher imports than exports increase demand for dollars, weakening the rupee.
 - आयात का निर्यात से अधिक होना डॉलर की मांग बढ़ाता है, जिससे रुपया कमजोर होता है।
- If Americans spend on Indian services like tourism, rupee strengthens.
 - यदि अमेरिकी भारतीय सेवाओं जैसे पर्यटन पर खर्च करते हैं, तो रुपया मजबूत होता है।

1. Investments:

1. When foreign investors withdraw money from India, demand for rupee decreases, leading to depreciation.

1. जब विदेशी निवेशक भारत से पैसा निकालते हैं, तो रुपये की मांग कम हो जाती है, जिससे अवमूल्यन होता है।



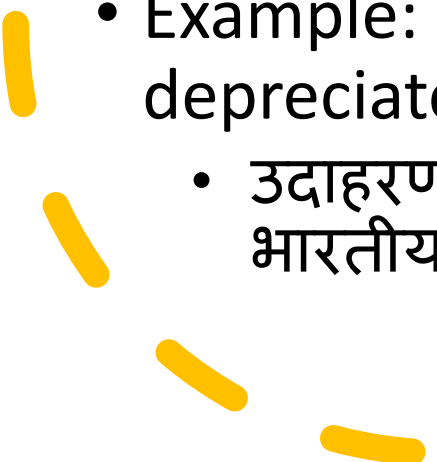
- **Impact of Inflation**

- High inflation reduces the purchasing power of a currency, making it weaker.

- उच्च मुद्रास्फीति एक मुद्रा की क्रय शक्ति को कम करती है, जिससे यह कमजोर हो जाती है।

- Example: If US inflation is 0% and India's is 6%, Indian currency will depreciate.

- उदाहरण: यदि अमेरिका में मुद्रास्फीति 0% है और भारत में 6%, तो भारतीय मुद्रा का अवमूल्यन होगा।



Policy Influence

Policies like trade barriers or increased tariffs can affect currency demand and exchange rates.

- व्यापार अवरोध या बढ़े हुए शुल्क जैसी नीतियां मुद्रा की मांग और विनिमय दर को प्रभावित कर सकती हैं।

Conclusion

The weakening of the rupee reflects a combination of higher imports, reduced foreign investments, and inflationary pressures.

A stable exchange rate depends on balanced trade and controlled inflation.

- रुपये की कमजोरी अधिक आयात, घटते विदेशी निवेश, और मुद्रास्फीति के दबाव का परिणाम है।
- स्थिर विनिमय दर संतुलित व्यापार और नियंत्रित मुद्रास्फीति पर निर्भर करती है।



State Finances: A Study of Budgets of 2024-25

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) released the Report “State Finances: A Study of Budgets of 2024-25”.

Major Highlights

GFD of States: State governments contained their consolidated gross fiscal deficit (GFD) within 3% of gross domestic product (GDP) and their revenue deficit at 0.2% of GDP during 2022-23 and 2023-24.

- In 2024-25, States have budgeted a GFD of 3.2% of GDP.

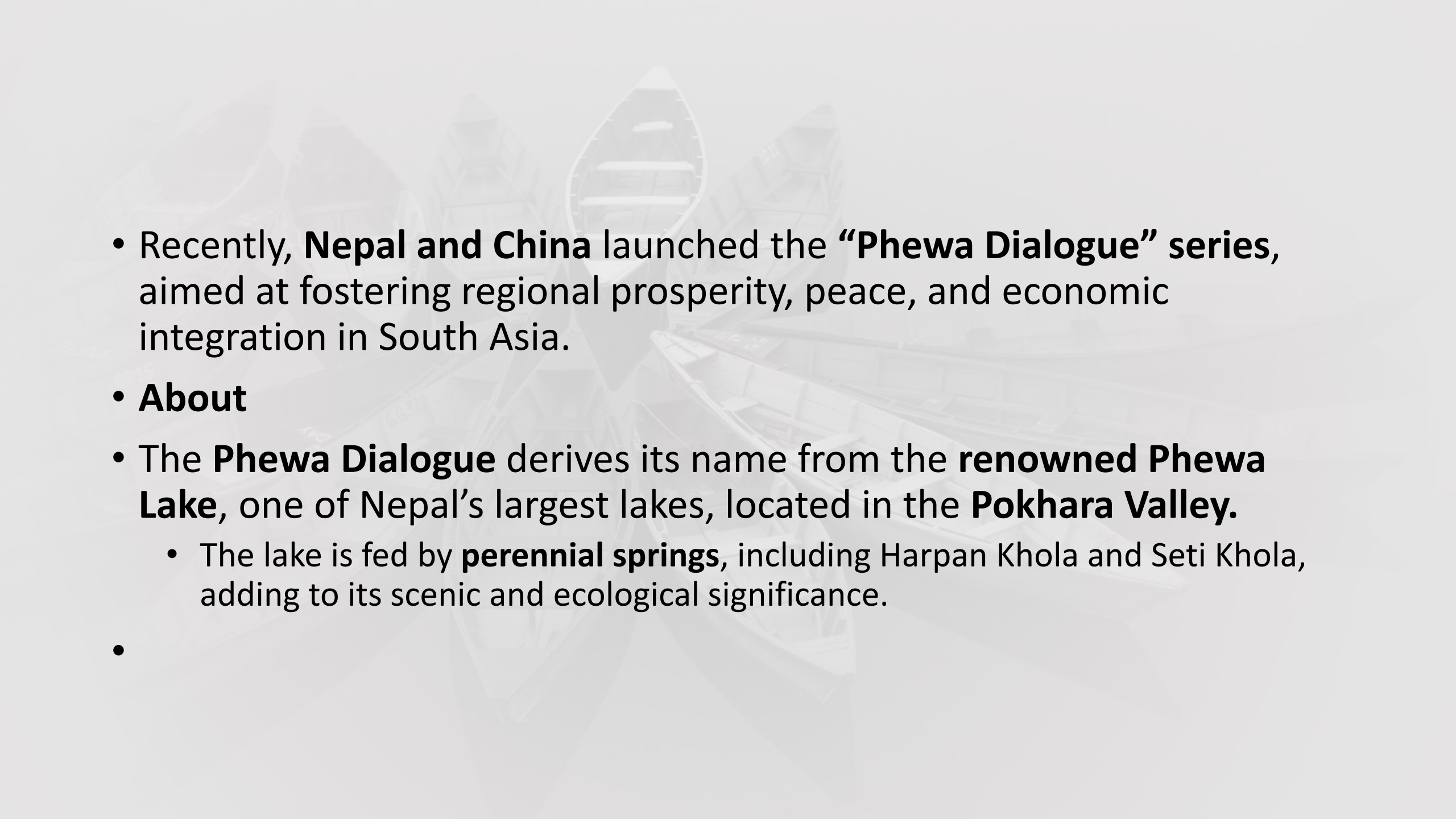
Expenditure: Capital expenditure rose from 2.4% of GDP in 2021-22 to 2.8% in 2023-24 and budgeted at 3.1% of GDP in 2024-25.

Liabilities: States' total outstanding liabilities declined from 31.0% of GDP 2021 to 28.5% in 2024 but remain above the pre-pandemic level.

State-specific Fiscal Responsibility Legislations (FRLs) along with tax and expenditure reforms have strengthened their finances over the past two decades.







Phewa Dialogue

- 
- Recently, **Nepal and China** launched the “**Phewa Dialogue**” series, aimed at fostering regional prosperity, peace, and economic integration in South Asia.
 - **About**
 - The **Phewa Dialogue** derives its name from the **renowned Phewa Lake**, one of Nepal’s largest lakes, located in the **Pokhara Valley**.
 - The lake is fed by **perennial springs**, including Harpan Khola and Seti Khola, adding to its scenic and ecological significance.
 -





India and ADB Loan Agreement for SMILE Programme

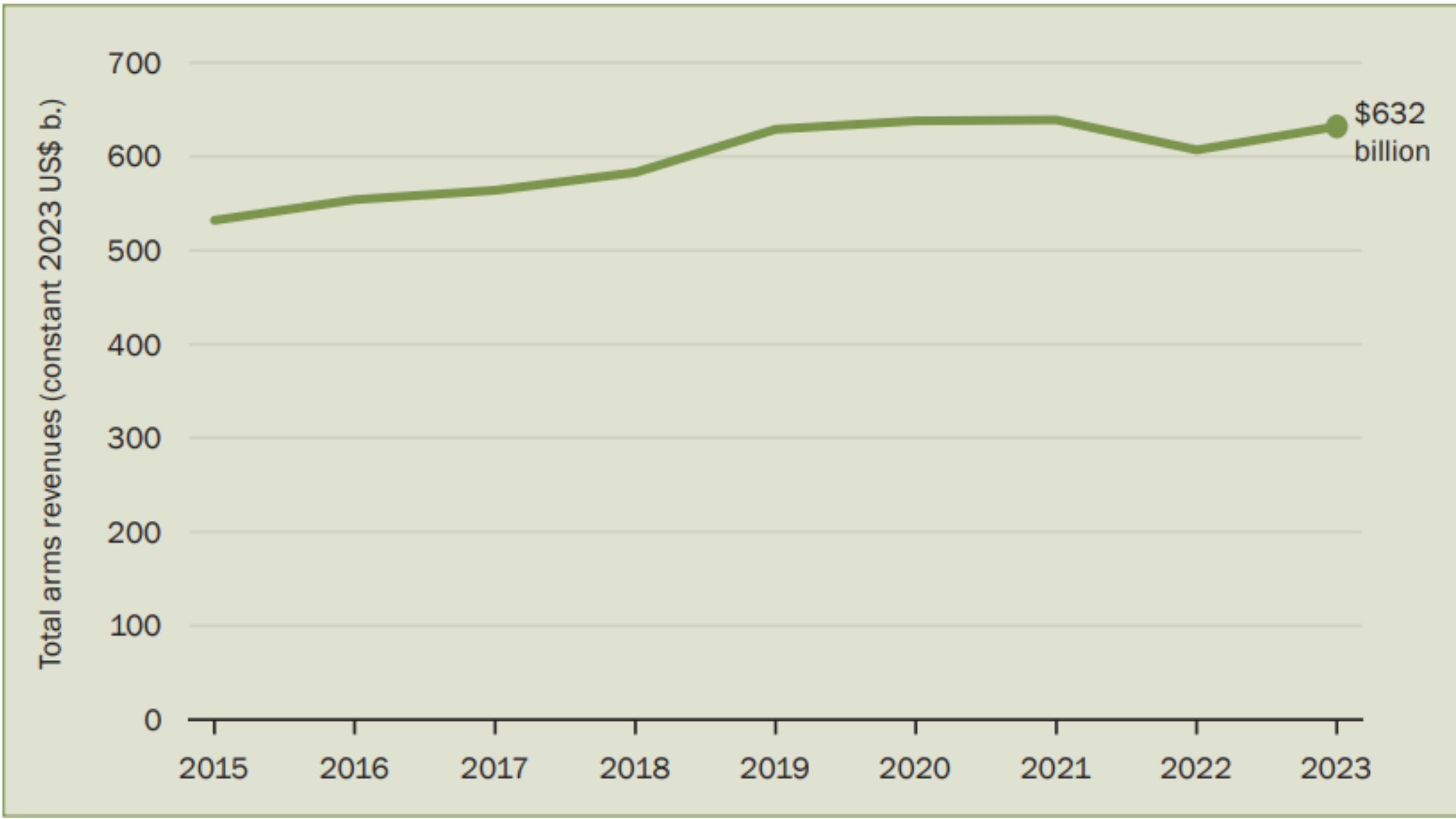
- 
- The Indian government and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have signed a \$350 million policy-based loan agreement for the **Strengthening Multimodal and Integrated Logistics Ecosystem (SMILE)** programme.
 - **SMILE** programme
- 



- 
- 
- The SMILE program is a policy-based lending initiative comprising two subprograms aimed at expanding India's manufacturing sector and enhancing supply chain resilience.
 - It focuses on improving logistics efficiency by strengthening multimodal infrastructure at national, state, and city levels, standardizing warehousing and logistics assets to attract private investment, enhancing external trade logistics, and adopting low-emission smart systems for efficient logistics.

SIPRI Report on Global Arms Producers



- 
- Recently, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) released its annual report on the world's 100 largest arms producers with three Indian firms among the top global arms manufacturers.
 - What are the Key Findings of the SIPRI Report?
 - Global Arms Revenue: Global arms revenues reached USD 632 billion in 2023, a 4.2% rise driven by wars, regional tensions, and rearmament.
- 



- 
- Performance of Indian Companies:
 - Three Indian companies namely Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (Rank 43), Bharat Electronics Limited (Rank 67), and Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd (Rank 94) ranked among the Top 100 global arms producers.
- 

- The combined revenues of these companies rose by **5.8%**, from **USD 6.37 billion in 2022** to **USD 6.74 billion (Rs 56,769 crore)** in 2023.

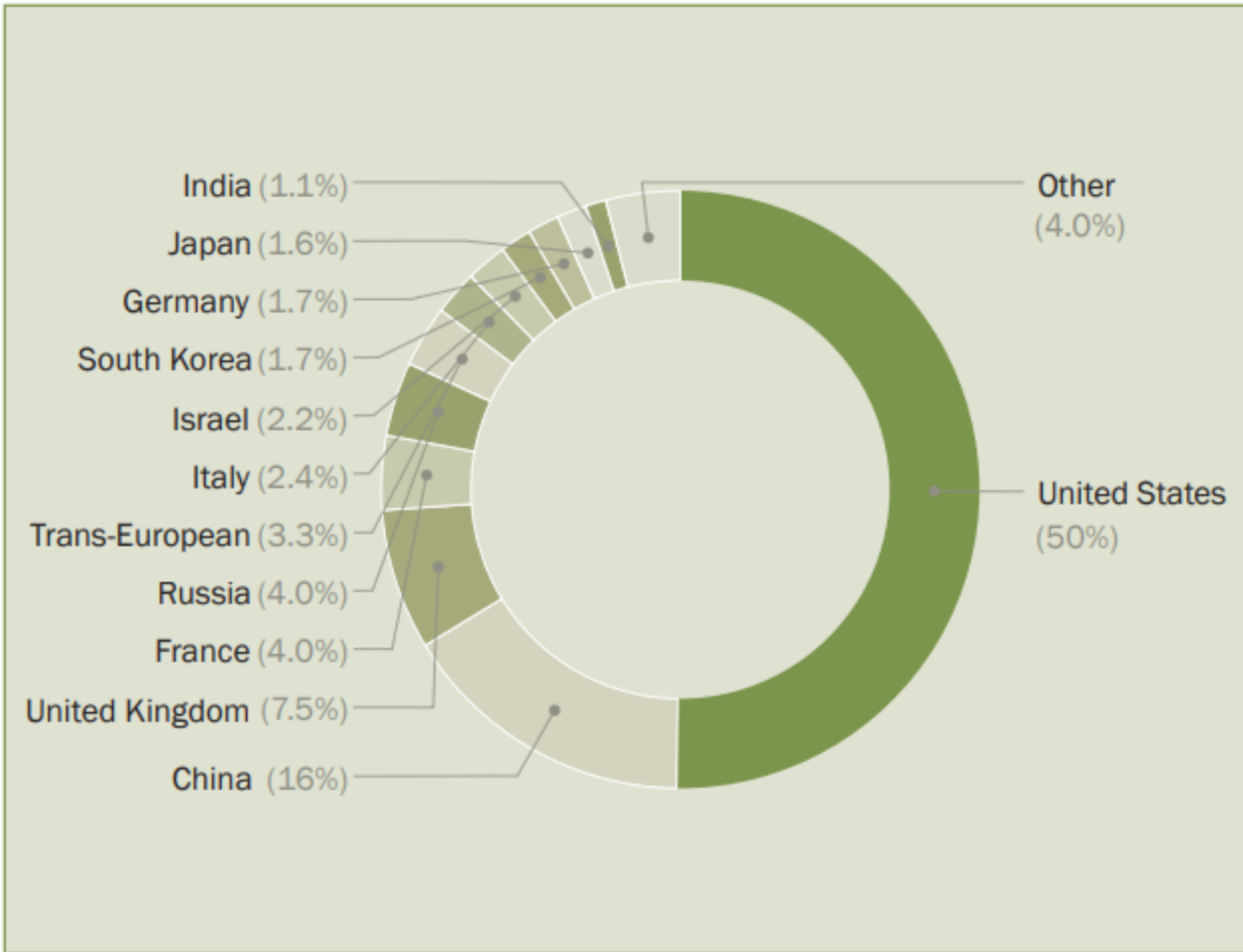
TOP LINE CHECK Sipri top 100 arms companies 2023

Rank 2022	Rank 2023	Company	Country	Arms revenue 2023 (\$ bn)	Change (%)
1	1	Lockheed Martin	US	60.81	-1.6
2	2	RTX	US	40.66	-1.3
3	3	Northrop Grumman	US	35.57	5.8
4	4	Boeing	US	31.1	2.0
5	5	General Dynamics	US	30.2	3.2
43	43	Hindustan Aeronautics	India	3.71	6.9
65	67	Bharat Electronics	India	1.94	0.5
96	94	Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders	India	1.09	12.4



Note:
Revenue figures are in billion of constant (2023) US dollars
Source: Sipri



- **Major Global Producers:**


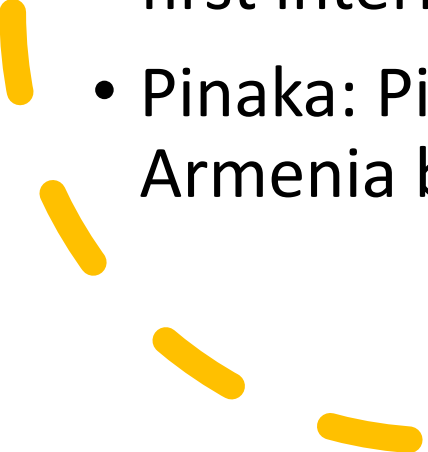
- **US:** The **41 US companies in the Top 100** earned USD 317 billion in 2023, **half of global arms revenues**, with the **top five** producers being **US-based**.
- **China:** The **nine Chinese companies** in the Top 100 recorded a total revenue of **USD 103 billion** in 2023.
- **Russia:** The arms revenues of the **two Russian companies** for which data was available went up by **40%** to an estimated **USD 25.5 billion** due to a significant increase in orders and production.

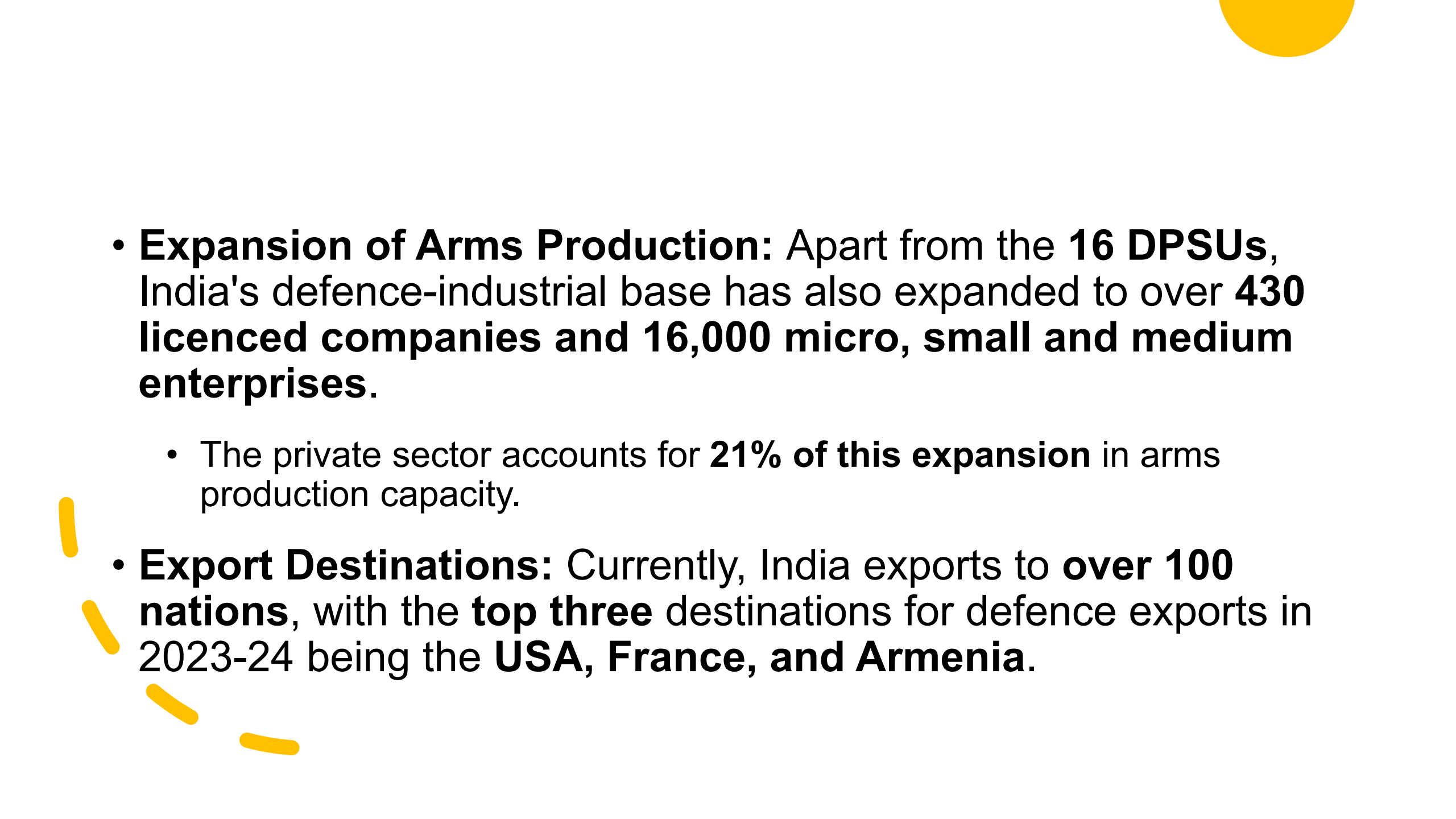


- 
- Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)
 - **SIPRI** is an **independent** international institute dedicated to research into **conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament**.
 - Established in **1966**, SIPRI provides **data, analysis and recommendations**, based on **open sources**, to policymakers, researchers, media and the interested public.
- 

- 
- What are Key Items in India's Defence Exports?
 - BrahMos Missiles: India delivered the first batch of BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles to the Philippines, following a USD 375-million deal for three shore-based, anti-ship missile batteries.
 - ASEAN countries and some Gulf nations are showing increasing interest in acquiring BrahMos missiles.
- 

- 
- Dornier-228 Aircraft: India exports the Dornier-228 aircraft, a versatile and reliable aircraft for defense and civilian applications to various countries.
 - Subsidiary Aircraft Parts: India exports subsidiary aircraft parts like fuselage and wings to defense giants such as Boeing and Lockheed Martin as part of the global supply chain and offset commitments.
- 



- 
- 155mm Artillery Guns: India has been exporting 155mm artillery guns to countries like Armenia, highlighting its capabilities in producing advanced artillery systems.
 - Akash Missile System: The Akash air defence missile system, including its variant Akash-1S, has been a major export, with Armenia being the first international customer.
 - Pinaka: Pinaka multi-launch rocket systems have been exported, with Armenia being a significant buyer.
- 


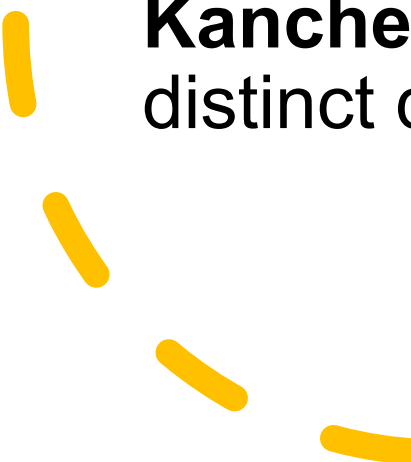
- 
- **Expansion of Arms Production:** Apart from the **16 DPSUs**, India's defence-industrial base has also expanded to over **430 licenced companies** and **16,000 micro, small and medium enterprises**.
 - The private sector accounts for **21% of this expansion** in arms production capacity.
 - **Export Destinations:** Currently, India exports to **over 100 nations**, with the **top three** destinations for defence exports in 2023-24 being the **USA, France, and Armenia**.

-
- **Which one of the following is the best description of 'INS Astradharini', that was in the news recently? (2016)**
 - (a) Amphibious warfare ship
 - (b) Nuclear-powered submarine
 - (c) Torpedo launch and recovery vessel
 - (d) Nuclear-powered aircraft carrier

VIRAASAT



- 
- The **Ministry of Textiles** is organizing the **third edition** of the **VIRAASAT Sari Festival 2024** from **15th–28th December** in New Delhi.
 - This mega event **promotes India's handloom heritage** by showcasing diverse handwoven saris and providing direct market access to weavers and artisans.
- 

- 
- **About India's Handloom Sector:** The handloom sector employs around **3.5 million people**, making it the **second-largest employment sector after agriculture**, particularly women.
 - It is known for its **unique regional weaves** like **Paithani, Kancheepuram, Banarasi, Patola**, and others, each with distinct designs and motifs that attract global attention.
- 

- What is the primary focus of the recently launched **Phewa Dialogue** between Nepal and China?
नेपाल और चीन के बीच हाल ही में शुरू किए गए फेवा संवाद का मुख्य उद्देश्य क्या है?
- **A. Regional prosperity and economic integration / क्षेत्रीय समृद्धि और आर्थिक एकीकरण**
- **B. Military cooperation and security alliances / सैन्य सहयोग और सुरक्षा गठबंधन**
- **C. Tourism development and cultural exchange / पर्यटन विकास और सांस्कृतिक आदान-प्रदान**
- **D. Infrastructure and energy projects / बुनियादी ढांचा और ऊर्जा परियोजनाएं**

- Which Indian state has the highest forest cover as per the latest Forest Survey report?
नवीनतम वन सर्वेक्षण रिपोर्ट के अनुसार किस भारतीय राज्य में सबसे अधिक वन क्षेत्र है?
- **A. Madhya Pradesh / मध्य प्रदेश**
- **B. Arunachal Pradesh / अरुणाचल प्रदेश**
- **C. Maharashtra / महाराष्ट्र**
- **D. Odisha / ओडिशा**

- The GST rate on **fortified rice kernels** has been reduced from 18% to what percentage?

पोषणयुक्त चावल कर्नेल्स पर जीएसटी दर 18% से घटाकर कितने प्रतिशत कर दी गई है?

- **A. 5%**
- B. 10%**
- C. 12%**
- D. 15%**

- The **SMILE programme** funded by ADB focuses on which key area?
एडीबी द्वारा वित्तपोषित **SMILE कार्यक्रम** का मुख्य ध्यान किस क्षेत्र पर है?
- A. Logistics and supply chain resilience / लॉजिस्टिक्स और आपूर्ति श्रृंखला की मजबूती
- B. Digital education infrastructure / डिजिटल शिक्षा बनियादी ढांचा
- C. Renewable energy projects / नवीकरणीय ऊर्जा परियोजनाएं
- D. Rural healthcare systems / ग्रामीण स्वास्थ्य देखभाल प्रणाली

- Which of the following is **exempted from GST** as per the latest tax reforms?
नवीनतम कर सुधारों के अनुसार निम्नलिखित में से किसे जीएसटी से छूट दी गई है?
- **A. Electric vehicles / इलेक्ट्रिक वाहन**
- **B. Gene therapy and long-range missiles / जीन थेरेपी और लंबी दूरी की मिसाइलें**
- **C. Sweetened popcorn / मीठा पॉपकॉर्न**
- **D. Fortified rice / पोषणयुक्त चावल**

- What percentage of India's total geographical area is currently covered by green cover?
भारत के कुल भौगोलिक क्षेत्र का वर्तमान में कितने प्रतिशत हरित आवरण से आच्छादित है?
- **A. 20.17%**
- **B. 21.76%**
- **C. 25.17%**
- **D. 26.41%**

- What is the **carbon sequestration target** under India's green cover for 2030?

2030 तक भारत के हरित आवरण के तहत **कार्बन भंडारण लक्ष्य** क्या है?

- **A. 2.29 billion tonnes**
- B. 2.5 billion tonnes**
- C. 3 billion tonnes**
- D. 3.5 billion tonnes**

- The **INS Astradharini**, recently in the news, is best described as:
हाल ही में चर्चा में रहा **आईएनएस अस्त्रधारिणी**, किस रूप में सबसे अच्छी तरह वर्णित है?
- **A. Amphibious warfare ship / उभयचर यद्धपोत**
- **B. Torpedo launch and recovery vessel / टॉरपीडो लॉन्च और रिकवरी पोत**
- **C. Nuclear-powered submarine / परमाणु ऊर्जा चालित पनडुब्बी**
- **D. Aircraft carrier / विमानवाहक पोत**

- Under the **VIRAASAT Sari Festival**, how many people are employed in India's handloom sector?
विरासत साड़ी उत्सव के तहत भारत के हस्तकरघा क्षेत्र में कितने लोग कार्यरत हैं?
- **A. 2 million / 20 लाख**
- **B. 3.5 million / 35 लाख**
- **C. 4 million / 40 लाख**
- **D. 5 million / 50 लाख**

- Which country received the first batch of BrahMos supersonic missiles from India under a \$375-million deal?
375 मिलियन डॉलर के समझौते के तहत किस देश को भारत से ब्रह्मोस सुपरसोनिक मिसाइलों की पहली खेप मिली?
- **A. Philippines / फिलीपींस**
- **B. Vietnam / वियतनाम**
- **C. Indonesia / इंडोनेशिया**
- **D. Malaysia / मलेशिया**

Word of the day

Qualm:

uneasiness about the fitness of an action (particularly for reasons of ethics, morals or propriety); a mild state of nausea

Synonyms: misgiving, scruple, squeamish

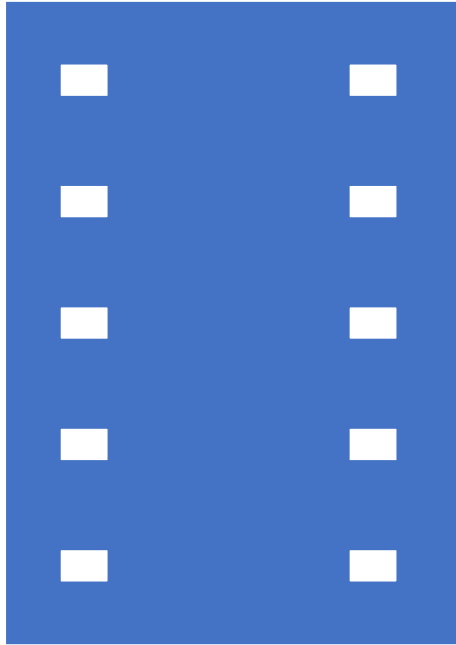
Usage: *She had some qualms about moving to a new city.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/qualmpro

International Phonetic

Alphabet: /kwa:m/, /kwɔ:m/

Fun Fact



Myth 4: Movies are shot in the order of the story.

- **Truth:** Films are rarely shot in sequence. Scenes are filmed based on **location availability, actor schedules, and budget constraints**, then edited into the correct order later.

Class24 Premium



SSC SUPER 50

- Video Course - 2000/-
- Books - ₹4000/-
- Hours - 700
- PYP - Last 5 Yrs
- Test - Unlimited

**Enrollment Close
Wednesday**

**Class start
WEDNESDAY**

**USE CODE:
SSC50
GET 50% OFF**

CLASS24

by bhunesh sir

SSC SUPER 50 BATCH

SSC CGL

₹ 4000 ~~₹ 6000~~

[Enroll Now](#)



SSC CGL
FOUNDATION BATCH
GK - GS
40% OFF
USE CODE **SB40**
~~₹2500/-~~ ₹1499/-

CLASS24

CLASS24

SSC CGL GK/GS Foundation Course



Class24: Team



SSC CGL GK/GS Foundation Course

★★★★ (4.8)

₹4999 **₹2500**

[ENROLL NOW](#)

Have a Coupon Code?

Course Information

Team: Class24

Validity: 12 Months

Course level: Beginners to Advance

Language: English+Hindi

[Chat With Us](#)

SSC CGL GK/GS Foundation Course

Current Affairs

Computer Knowledge

Science

Biology

Geography

History

Polity

Economics

Static GK

Computer Revision

chemistry CI-1

2024-12-13 at 11:30 AM

Starts In: 04:37:22


Coming Soon!

Electricity and Magnetism

2024-12-13 at 9:00 AM

Starts In: 02:07:22

Coming Soon!



Thank you
guys.
