

# Daily Current Affairs



जनसत्ता



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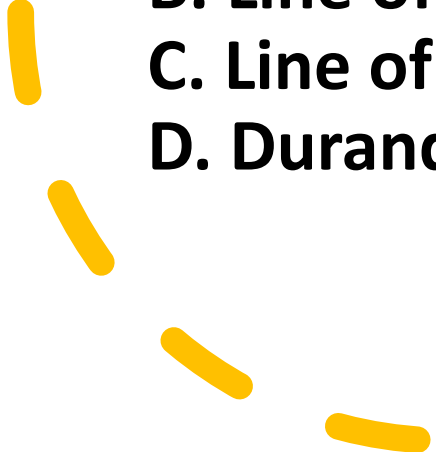
PDF



10 MCQ QUIZ


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

Top 10 MCQ from the session for  
every exam

- 
- The recent India-China meeting reaffirmed the disengagement agreement along which border?  
हाल ही में भारत-चीन बैठक ने किस सीमा के साथ विघटन समझौते की पुष्टि की?
  - **A. McMahon Line / मैकमोहन रेखा**
  - **B. Line of Control (LoC) / नियंत्रण रेखा (LoC)**
  - **C. Line of Actual Control (LAC) / वास्तविक नियंत्रण रेखा (LAC)**
  - **D. Durand Line / डूरंड रेखा**
- 


- 
- What is the **Gangetic River Dolphin's conservation status** as per the IUCN?

IUCN के अनुसार गंगा डॉल्फिन की संरक्षण स्थिति क्या है?

- **A. Critically Endangered / गंभीर रूप से संकटग्रस्त**
  - B. Endangered / संकटग्रस्त**
  - C. Vulnerable / असुरक्षित**
  - D. Near Threatened / निकट संकटग्रस्त**
- 

- 
- Under which project is the tagging of Ganges River Dolphins being conducted?



गंगा डॉल्फिन का टैगिंग किस परियोजना के तहत किया जा रहा है?


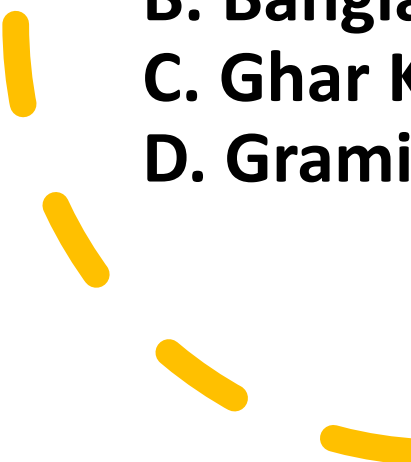
- **A. Project Dolphin / प्रोजेक्ट डॉल्फिन**
  - B. Project Tiger / प्रोजेक्ट टाइगर**
  - C. CAMPA Initiative / CAMPA पहल**
  - D. Project Saraswati / प्रोजेक्ट सरस्वती**
- 

- What year were Cheetahs declared extinct in India?  
भारत में चीतों को किस वर्ष विलुप्त घोषित किया गया था?
- **A. 1947**
- **B. 1950**
- **C. 1952**
- **D. 1965**





- 
- The Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary spans which two Indian states?  
गांधी सागर वन्यजीव अभयारण्य भारत के किन दो राज्यों में फैला हुआ है?
  - **A. Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan / मध्य प्रदेश और राजस्थान**
  - **B. Gujarat and Maharashtra / गुजरात और महाराष्ट्र**
  - **C. Karnataka and Kerala / कर्नाटक और केरल**
  - **D. Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand / उत्तर प्रदेश और उत्तराखंड**
- 

- 
- What is the name of the scheme launched in West Bengal to provide houses for the rural poor?  
पश्चिम बंगाल में ग्रामीण गरीबों के लिए घर प्रदान करने के लिए शुरू की गई योजना का नाम क्या है?
  - **A. Awas Yojana / आवास योजना**
  - **B. Banglar Bari Scheme / बांग्लार बारी योजना**
  - **C. Ghar Ka Sapna Scheme / घर का सपना योजना**
  - **D. Gramin Niwas Yojana / ग्रामीण निवास योजना**
- 

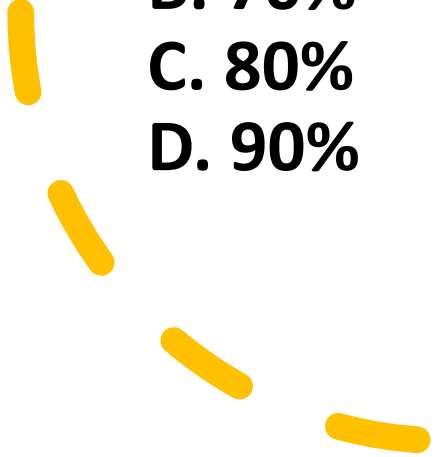
- The SARAT tool aids which agency in conducting search and rescue operations at sea?

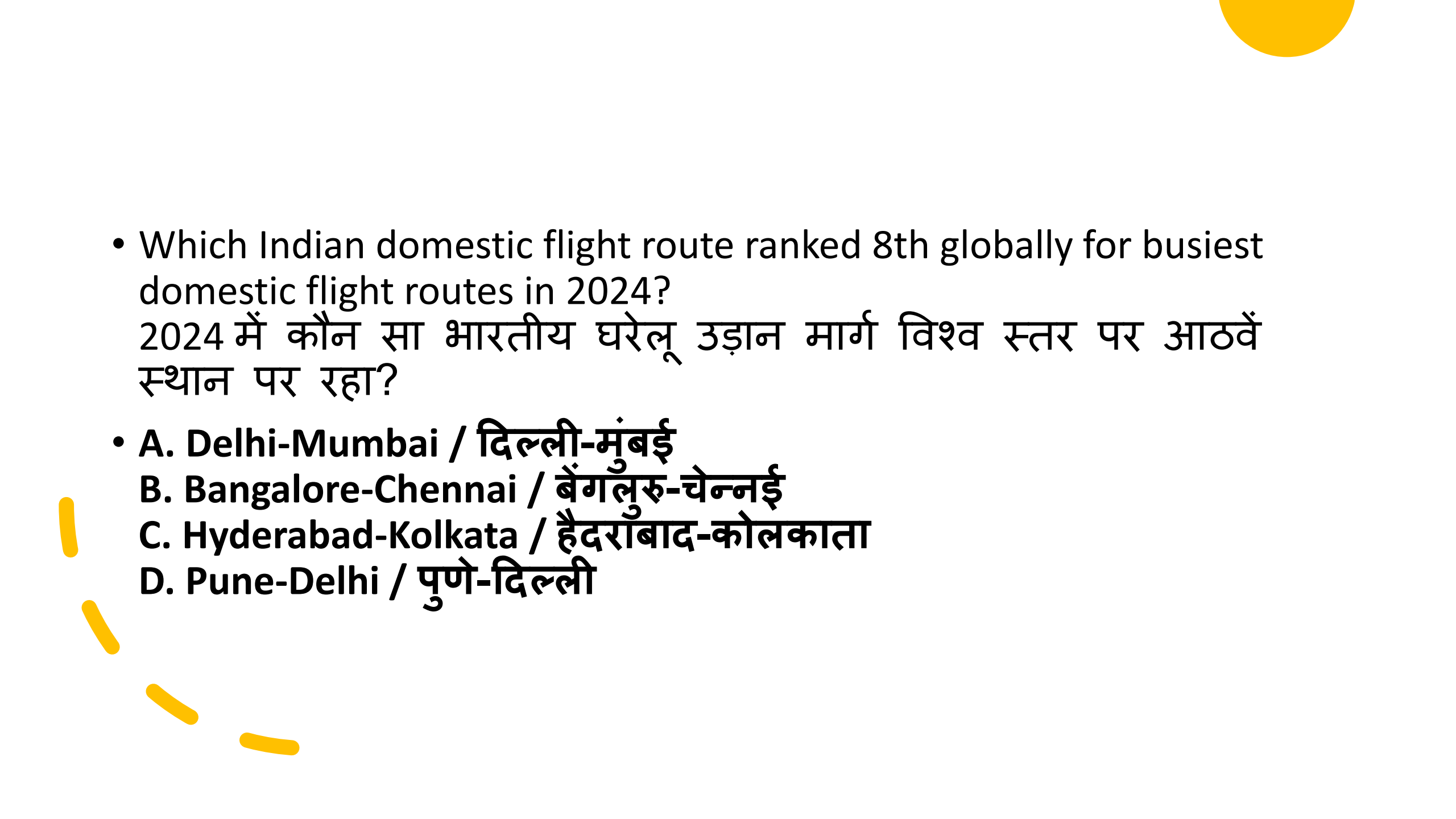
SARAT उपकरण समुद्र में खोज और बचाव अभियानों में किस एजेंसी की सहायता करता है?



- **A. Indian Navy / भारतीय नौसेना**
- **B. Indian Coast Guard / भारतीय तटरक्षक बल**
- **C. National Disaster Management Authority / राष्ट्रीय आपदा प्रबंधन प्राधिकरण**
- **D. INCOIS / INCOIS**

- 
- What percentage of global Ganges River Dolphin populations are found in India?

वैश्विक गंगा डॉल्फिन आबादी का कितने प्रतिशत भारत में पाया जाता है?

- **A. 60%**
  - B. 70%**
  - C. 80%**
  - D. 90%**
- 

- 
- Which Indian domestic flight route ranked 8th globally for busiest domestic flight routes in 2024?  
2024 में कौन सा भारतीय घरेलू उड़ान मार्ग विश्व स्तर पर आठवें स्थान पर रहा?
  - **A. Delhi-Mumbai / दिल्ली-मुंबई**
  - **B. Bangalore-Chennai / बेंगलुरु-चेन्नई**
  - **C. Hyderabad-Kolkata / हैदराबाद-कोलकाता**
  - **D. Pune-Delhi / पुणे-दिल्ली**

- 
- On which date is Minorities Rights Day observed annually in India?  
भारत में अल्पसंख्यक अधिकार दिवस प्रतिवर्ष किस तारीख को मनाया जाता है?
  - **A. December 16 / 16 दिसंबर**
  - **B. December 17 / 17 दिसंबर**
  - **C. December 18 / 18 दिसंबर**
  - **D. December 19 / 19 दिसंबर**
- 

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## chemistry CI-1

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Coming Soon!

## Electricity and Magnetism

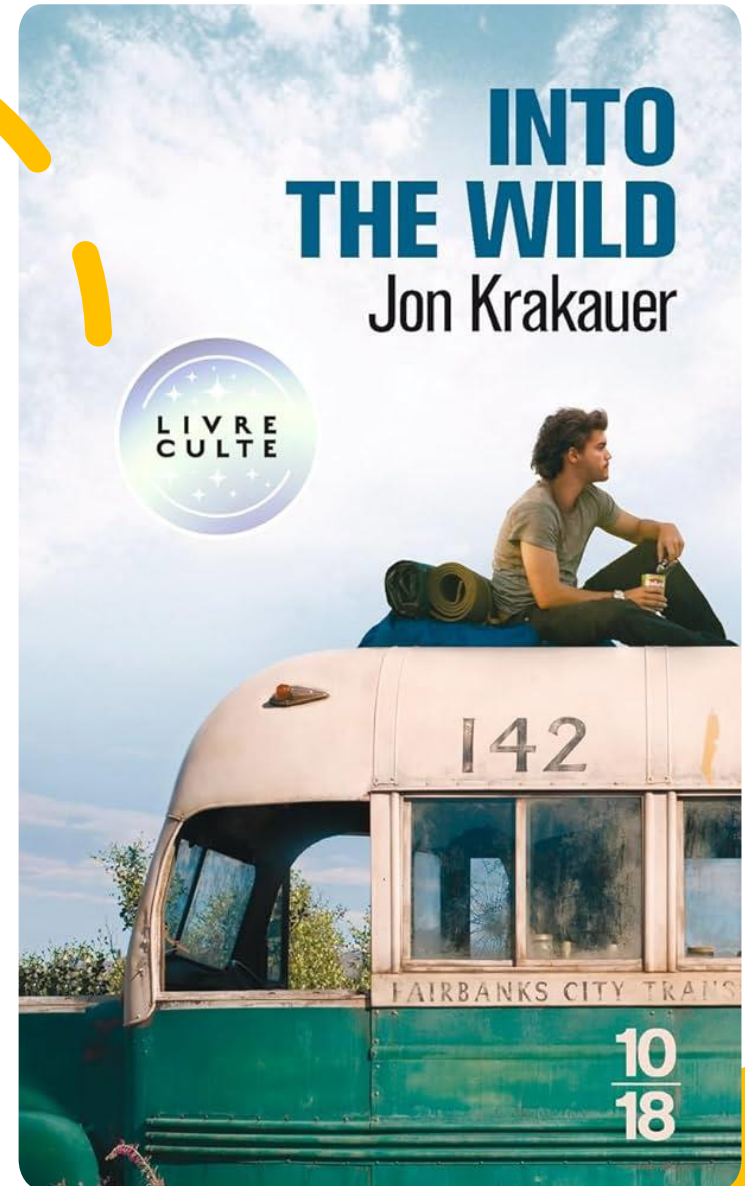
2024-12-13 at 9:00 AM

Starts In: 02:07:22

Coming Soon!

# Jon Krakauer, *Into the Wild*

- “Happiness is only real when shared.” –



**SENTHILBALAJI CASE**  
Give details of cases, witnesses: SC tells TN.  
NEWS » PAGE 4

**WHITE HOUSE WATCH**  
'Pak ballistic missile programme a new threat'  
WORLD » PAGE 12

**BELIEF FOR ZURAIR**  
Allahabad HC stays arrest of fact checker  
NEWS » PAGE 3

**PLACES OF WORSHIP ACT**  
Archaeologists should dig sites, not bigots  
Judicial misdirection adding fuel to fire  
EDITORIAL » PAGE 6

**INDIA'S RESILIENCE PLAN**  
New cables to boost undersea network  
NEWS » PAGE 5

INSIDE

**Former Haryana CM Om Prakash Chautala dies**

**Former Haryana CM Om Prakash Chautala dies**

**GURUGRAM**  
Five-time Haryana Chief Minister and Indian National Lok Dal supremo Om Prakash Chautala died on Saturday. The State government has declared a public holiday on Saturday. » PAGE 3

**PM's Kuwait visit aims to boost partnership: MEA**

**NEW DELHI**  
India and Kuwait are expected to focus on shoring up ties in a range of key areas including defence and trade during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's two-day visit to the country beginning Saturday. » PAGE 3

**Human error led to 19 IAF crashes from 2017-2022**

**NEW DELHI**  
Of the 34 air accidents involving the Indian Air Force (IAF) between 2017 and 2022, 19 were attributable to human error (aircrew), according to a report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence that was tabled this week. » PAGE 5

**One killed in Russian missile strike on Kyiv**

**KYIV**  
A Russian ballistic missile attack on Ukraine's capital Kyiv early on Friday killed at least one person and wounded 12 others, officials said. Moscow claimed it was in response to a Ukrainian strike on Russian soil using American-made weapons. » PAGE 12

# Stormy Winter Session ends on bitter note

Low productivity, a no-confidence motion against Rajya Sabha Chairman, a slugfest over alleged insult to B.R. Ambedkar and a flurry of breach of privilege notices mark the Parliament session; only 4 Bills were passed in the Lok Sabha and 3 Bills in the Rajya Sabha; the Lok Sabha was adjourned in three minutes without a concluding address

**Sobhana K. Nair Sandeep Phukan**  
NEW DELHI

**B**oth Houses of Parliament were adjourned *sine die* on Friday, in what was one of the frostiest Winter Sessions. In his concluding address, Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar exhorted the members to rise above "political differences and restore the sanctity of parliamentary discourse" and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla issued a stern warning prohibiting parliamentarianism from protesting or holding demonstrations within parliamentary premises.

The session was marked by debate on the Constitution's 75th anniversary, notice of no-confidence moved by the Opposition against Mr. Dhankhar, Opposition notice to initiate

proceedings for impeachment of an Allahabad High Court judge and concluded with a slugfest on the alleged insult of the architect of Constitution Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.

Amid the acrimonious atmosphere, the government introduced the controversial Bills — the Constitution (129th Amendment) Bill, 2024 and the Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024 — to give effect to "One Nation One Election". The two Bills have been sent to a 39-member joint select committee, which has to deliver its report by the last week of the next session.

The session also saw the two sides moving a flurry of breach of privilege motions against each other. The Opposition in both Houses moved a motion against Home Minister Amit Shah, while in the



Tensions run high: INDIA bloc MPs during a protest against Home Minister Amit Shah over his remarks related to B.R. Ambedkar, at Vijay Chowk in New Delhi on Friday. (SANSI, KANAN VISWA)

Lok Sabha, the ruling party moved a motion against the Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi.

**Productivity of Houses**  
Only four bills were passed in the Lok Sabha and three

Bills in the Rajya Sabha. The productivity of the Lok Sabha was 54.5% and that of the Rajya Sabha 40%.

Their analysis also shows that Question Hour did not function in the Rajya Sabha for its 10 days in the Lok Sabha, it did not

function for more than 10 minutes in 12 out of 20 days. No private member's business was transacted in the Lok Sabha and only one resolution was discussed in the Rajya Sabha.

The bitterness of the session carried over to the last day too. On Friday, the Lok Sabha was adjourned within minutes without even the customary concluding address by the Speaker. As soon as the Lok Sabha convened at 11 a.m., Mr. Om Birla asked Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal to move the resolution to set up a joint committee of Parliament that will examine the two Bills on holding simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies.

Before adjourning the Lok Sabha *sine die* or indefinitely, the Speaker issued a stern warning to mem-

bers about strict action if any of them resorted to demonstrations and protests within the premises of Parliament. "Do not resort to demonstration or protest at any gate or anywhere on Parliament premises. Else, the House will have to take serious action," Mr. Birla said.

**'Eroding public trust'**  
Reflecting on the session, in his valedictory address, Rajya Sabha Chairman Mr. Dhankhar said parliamentarians were "drawing severe criticism" from people. The "persistent disruptions", he said, were "steadily eroding public trust in our democratic institutions".

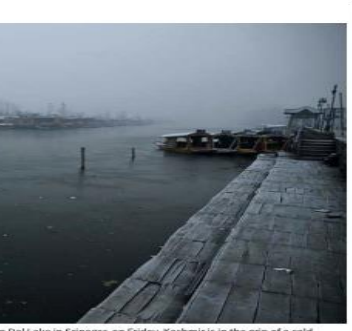
**FROSTY AND BITTER**  
» PAGE 6  
**RELATED REPORTS**  
» PAGE 6

## Valley shivers



Freezing over: Shikaras and houseboats moored on the partially frozen Dal Lake in Srinagar, on Friday, Kashmir is in the grip of a cold wave, with Srinagar recording minus 6.2 Celsius ahead of Chitral, Kalan, the 40-day coldest spell in Kashmir. (SANSI, KANAN VISWA)

Freezing over: Shikaras and houseboats moored on the partially frozen Dal Lake in Srinagar, on Friday, Kashmir is in the grip of a cold wave, with Srinagar recording minus 6.2 Celsius ahead of Chitral, Kalan, the 40-day coldest spell in Kashmir. (SANSI, KANAN VISWA)



Deadly hits: Firefighters dousing the fire at the accident site on the Jaipur-Ajmer Highway, in Jaipur, on Friday. (PI)

## SC allows against cap on credit card dues

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday allowed appeals filed by banks challenging a 2008 National Consumer Dispute Redressal Commission (NCDRC) order, which held that charging over 30% interest on credit card dues amounted to unfair trade practice under the Consumer Protection Act.

A Bench of Justices Bela Trivedi and Satish Chandra Sharma pronounced the judgment on the batch of appeals.

The NCDRC had passed the order in 2008 on whether banks could charge the credit card users interest at rates ranging from 36% to 49% per annum if there was any delay or default in payment within the time specified.

The commission was concerned with whether such percentages of interest were "unfair". It finally concluded that charging interest rates in excess of 30% per annum "is an unfair trade practice".

It had finally concluded that "charging of interest at rates in excess of 30% per annum from credit card holders by banks for the former's failure to make full payment on the due date or paying the minimum amount due, is an unfair trade practice".

The commission had further said that "penal interest can be charged only once for one period of default and shall not be capitalised".

A copy of the judgment was awaited at the time of going to print. It had found the charging of interest in excess of 30% per annum an unfair trade practice.

## 11 dead, 30 injured as gas tanker fire sweeps highway



Deadly hits: Firefighters dousing the fire at the accident site on the Jaipur-Ajmer Highway, in Jaipur, on Friday. (PI)

**The Hindu Bureau**  
JAIPUR

Eleven persons were killed and about 30 injured in a massive fire caused by a collision between a gas tanker and multiple vehicles on the Jaipur-Ajmer National Highway on Friday. The fire spread rapidly across a 300-metre stretch of the road and engulfed around 35 vehicles.

The accident occurred in the morning when the tanker carrying liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) was making a U-turn on the highway at Bhankrota and hit a truck coming from the opposite direction. A few other vehicles coming at high speed collided with them, resulting in an explosion that intensified the blaze.

As the fire spread and burst into flames as well as the properties on the roadside, causing widespread damage and chaos. Thick black smoke could be seen rising above National Highway-48. The flames, visible from a kilometre away, left the local residents terrified.

Several drivers were injured. Those who lost their lives included the passenger in a sleeper bus, which was playing just behind the tanker, and the

workers of a pipe factory situated nearby.

Over 30 ambulances and fire brigade vehicles rushed to the crash zone; the highway was closed by a regular traffic, leading to long queues of vehicles.

Rescue workers faced great difficulty as the gas spread at the site. The fire could be extinguished only after about an hour.

**Seven critical**  
The injured were shifted to the Sawal Man Singh Government Hospital in Jaipur through a 14-km-long green corridor created by the traffic police.

SMS Hospital's Medical Superintendent Sushil Bhatti said six of the deceased had been identified, and efforts were underway to confirm the identity of others. "As many as 29 persons are admitted to the burns ward at present and seven of them are in a serious condition. Fourteen persons have sustained over 50% burns," Dr. Bhatti said.

The police thoroughly checked all the damaged vehicles to confirm the toll. Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel Mevta visited the accident site and the SMS Hospital along with Health Minister Gajendra Singh Khimsar.

# Pakistan ballistic missile programme is an emerging threat to U.S., says White House

**Press Trust of India**  
WASHINGTON

Asserting that Pakistan developing sophisticated missile technology will give it the capability to strike targets well beyond South Asia, including the U.S., a top White House official said on Thursday that the Asian country's actions are an emerging threat to the U.S.

The remark comes a day after the U.S. slapped sanctions on four Pakistani entities, including the state-owned flagship aerospace and defence agency — National Development Complex (NDC) — on charges of them contributing to Pakistan's ballistic-missile pro-



**Scary proposition:** The U.S. is worried some of the technologies possessed by Pakistan allow it to strike beyond South Asia. (AP)

gramme. The other three entities are Akhtar and Sons, Affiliates International and Rockside Enterprise. All three are based in Karachi. The NDC, based in Islamabad, is responsible for the ballistic-missile development of long-range missile systems. Over the

last year, we have issued three rounds of sanctions against non-Pakistani entities that have provided support to Pakistan's ballistic-missile programme," Principal Deputy National Security Adviser Jon Finer told a think-tank here.

"And yesterday, we issued sanctions directly against Pakistan's state-owned National Development Complex, which the U.S. assesses is involved in the development and production of Pakistan's long-range ballistic missiles, the first time we have sanctioned a Pakistani state-owned enterprise tied to missile development," he said.

"Simply put, we are go-

ing to keep the pressure on Pakistan regarding its long-range missile programme, even as we also continue to seek diplomatic resolutions to address our concerns," Mr. Finer said.

Mr. Finer added that recently Pakistan has developed increasingly sophisticated missile technology, from long-range ballistic missile systems to equipment that would enable the testing of significantly larger rocket motors.

"If these trends lines continue, Pakistan will have the capability to strike targets well beyond South Asia, including in the United States, raising real questions about Pakistan's intentions," he said.

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**Scary proposition:** The U.S. is worried some of the technologies possessed by Pakistan allow it to strike beyond South Asia. AFP

gramme. The other three entities are Akhtar and Sons, Affiliates International and Rockside Enterprise. All three are based in Karachi. The NDC, based in Islamabad, is responsible for the ballistic-missile programme. It has worked

to acquire items to advance Pakistan's long-range ballistic missile programme.

"As a result, the (Joe) Biden administration has implemented a series of steps to contend with further development of long-range missile systems. Over the

last year, we have issued three rounds of sanctions against non-Pakistani entities that have provided support to Pakistan's ballistic-missile programme," Principal Deputy National Security Adviser Jon Finer told a think-tank here.

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## Pakistan's Ballistic Missile Programme: Emerging Threats and U.S. Concerns

पाकिस्तान का बैलिस्टिक मिसाइल कार्यक्रम: उभरते खतरे और अमेरिका की चिंताएँ

### Sophisticated Missile Development

- Pakistan is developing advanced missile technology with the capability to strike targets beyond South Asia, including the U.S.

पाकिस्तान उन्नत मिसाइल तकनीक विकसित कर रहा है, जिसमें दक्षिण एशिया से परे और अमेरिका तक लक्ष्यों पर हमला करने की क्षमता है।

- This development is perceived as a direct threat to global security.  
यह विकास वैश्विक सुरक्षा के लिए एक सीधा खतरा माना जा रहा है।

- **U.S. Sanctions**

- Recently, the U.S. imposed sanctions on four Pakistani entities, including:

हाल ही में, अमेरिका ने चार पाकिस्तानी संस्थाओं पर प्रतिबंध लगाए, जिनमें शामिल हैं:

- **National Development Complex (NDC):** Based in Islamabad, responsible for Pakistan's ballistic missile program.

नेशनल डेवलपमेंट कॉम्प्लेक्स (NDC): इस्लामाबाद में स्थित, पाकिस्तान के बैलिस्टिक मिसाइल कार्यक्रम के लिए जिम्मेदार।

- **Other Entities:** Akhtar and Sons, Affiliates International, and Rockside Enterprise, all based in Karachi.

अन्य संस्थाएँ: अख्तर एंड संस, एफिलिएट्स इंटरनेशनल, और रॉकसाइड एंटरप्राइज, जो सभी कराची में स्थित हैं।

- Sanctions were levied for their involvement in advancing Pakistan's long-range missile capabilities.

प्रतिबंध पाकिस्तान की लंबी दूरी की मिसाइल क्षमताओं को बढ़ावा देने में उनकी संलिप्तता के लिए लगाए गए।

- **Technology Advancements**

- Pakistan's missile program includes:

पाकिस्तान का मिसाइल कार्यक्रम शामिल है:

- Long-range ballistic missile systems.  
लंबी दूरी की बैलिस्टिक मिसाइल प्रणाली।
- Testing of larger rocket motors for enhanced strike capabilities.  
बड़े रॉकेट मोटर्स का परीक्षण, जो बेहतर हमले की क्षमताएँ प्रदान करते हैं।

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- **Strategic Measures by the U.S.**

- The Biden administration implemented multiple sanctions against entities aiding Pakistan's missile development.

बाइडेन प्रशासन ने पाकिस्तान के मिसाइल विकास में सहायता करने वाले संगठनों पर कई प्रतिबंध लगाए।

- Diplomatic efforts are ongoing to address these security concerns while maintaining pressure on Pakistan.

इन सुरक्षा चिंताओं को संबोधित करने के लिए कटनीतिक प्रयास जारी हैं, साथ ही पाकिस्तान पर दबाव बनाए रखा गया है।



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- **Potential Implications**

- Continuation of these trends may enable Pakistan to strike targets well beyond its region.

इन रुझानों का जारी रहना पाकिस्तान को उसके क्षेत्र से परे लक्ष्यों पर हमला करने में सक्षम बना सकता है।

- This raises serious global concerns about Pakistan's long-term strategic intentions and its potential threat to U.S. interests.

यह पाकिस्तान के दीर्घकालिक रणनीतिक इरादों और अमेरिका के हितों के लिए संभावित खतरे पर गंभीर वैश्विक चिंताएँ उत्पन्न करता है।

IN BRIEF



Tabla maestro Zakir Hussain laid to rest in San Francisco

Zakir Hussain was laid to rest on Thursday at a San Francisco cemetery as percussion artists performed on their drums at a little distance away in a tribute to the tabla maestro. Hussain died at a San Francisco hospital on Monday due to complications arising from idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis. He was 73. He was laid to rest at the Fernwood cemetery in San Francisco on Thursday. Hundreds of his admirers gathered at Hussain's funeral to pay their last respects. Mr. Sivamani said, "Rhythm is God, that is you Zakir bhai. I learned a lot in our journey from 1982 till now."

FSSAI seeks quarterly data on rejected, expired food items

To ensure that rejected and expired food items are not being rebranded and sold for public consumption, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has directed all licensed food manufacturers and importers to submit quarterly data on such foodstuffs, through an online portal. As per the FSSAI, the latest directive covers three key areas - quantity of products falling internal quality testing, volume of expired or returned products from the food supply chain, and detailed records of product disposal, including destruction, auction, or alternative use, with specific buyer and waste disposal agency information.

Bombay HC dismisses UAE firm's plea on Dharavi project

The Bombay High Court on Friday gave a green signal to the Adani Group to continue with the Dharavi Redevelopment Project in Mumbai. A Division Bench of Chief Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya and Justice Amit Borkar observed that it cannot be said that the tender conditions for the Dharavi Redevelopment Project were "tailor-made" to suit only a particular bidder, Adani Properties Pvt. Ltd., as claimed by the United Arab Emirates-based firm Seculink Technologies Corporation. The Bench ruled that there was no "arbitrariness, unreasonableness or perversity" in the Maharashtra government's decision to award the project to the Adani Group.

36 crore beneficiaries verified under PM-JAY, says Minister

Approximately 36 crore hospital beneficiaries have been verified, and 8.39 crore hospital admissions worth over 1.16 lakh crore have been authorised under the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY) so far, Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare Prapti Rajadhyaj stated in a written reply in the Lok Sabha on Friday. AB PM-JAY is a flagship scheme of the Centre that provides a health cover of 5 lakh per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalisation to approximately 35 crore beneficiaries corresponding to 12.37 crore families constituting economically vulnerable bottom 40% of India's population.

New undersea cables to boost India's digital connectivity

Two new submarine cable systems will provide additional Internet links to Asia and Europe even as India takes a more active role in discussions on undersea cable resilience and security

Aroon Deep NEW DELHI

With data use increasing year on year, India's undersea cable network is growing. Two new cable systems are set to be launched in the coming three months: the India Asia Xpress (IAX) and the India Europe Xpress (IEX), both connecting India with additional Internet links to the two continents. This comes even as India takes a more active role in discussions around undersea cable security and resilience.



Experts say India is emerging as a strong maritime cable network player in the region. (A. S. SANKARANARAYAN)

Both cable systems, cumulatively over 15,000 kilometres in length, are owned by Reliance Jio, with a strategic investment from China Mobile. The IAX connects Chennai and Mumbai with Singapore, Thailand, and Malaysia in Asia, and the IEX connects them with France, Greece, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Djibouti. This adds to the dozens of cables landing in India, mainly in Mumbai and Chennai.

gannath Panda, head of the Sweden-based Stockholm Centre for South Asian Indo-Pacific Affairs (SCSA-IPA) wrote recently. The new cable systems bolster India's "defence strategy in terms of the resilience of the cables against physical damage or digital disruptions from cyberattacks by state or non-state actors". Mr. Panda wrote in a paper for the Marine Policy journal.

India is emerging as a strong maritime cable network player in the region," Mr. Panda said in an interview. "There will be focus in the Bay of Bengal and the South China Sea region, and India's proactive role will be closely watched, and India won't shy away from taking a leading role there," he said. In March, three undersea cables connecting India to West Asia and Europe were disrupted, impacting traffic to India. While that incident had an impact on India's international bandwidth, traffic still flowed through alternate routes, with data centres within India itself also buffering against disruptions of the West Bengal services. The alarm over disruptions to connectivity

has been felt worldwide, and India is no exception. Telecom Secretary Neeraj Mittal is part of the International Advisory Body for Submarine Cable Resilience established by the International Telecommunication Union. IT Secretary S. Krishnan asked at an event earlier this month, "Are we stable within the country that all services within this country can be offered even in the event of a disruption?"

The Bangladesh government recently put on hold plans by internet service providers in that country to sell bandwidth to North-Asian countries, according to reports from local media. This setback, however, has limited impact for India, said Suresh Chattopadhyay, a Tamil Nadu close to the destination. North-east States are already served by fibre on top of the Power Grid Corporation of India's transmission lines, and this fibre accounts for "hundreds of gmbs" per second of connectivity, Mr. Chattopadhyaya said, sufficient for current connectivity needs.

Human error led to 19 of 34 IAF crashes in 2017-2022: panel

Dinakar Peri NEW DELHI

Of the 34 air accidents involving the Indian Air Force (IAF) between 2017 and 2022, 19 were attributable to human error (aircrew). This includes the Mi-17 chopper crash that kills in the country's first Chief of Defence Staff, General Bipin Rawat, according to a report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence.



General Bipin Rawat

Nine of the crashes during this period were due to technical defect, said the report that was tabled in Parliament this week. The Mi-17V5 helicopter with General Rawat, his wife Madhulika Rawat, and 12 others, including his staff, the pilots and the Indian Air Force crew, crashed on December 8, 2021, when it crashed in the Nilgiris in Tamil Nadu close to the destination. A tri-services inquiry, headed by Air Marshal Manvendra Singh, then Air Force Commander-in-Chief of Training Command, was ordered by the govt to investigate the crash. The report was tabled on January 14, 2022, the IAF stated that according to the preliminary findings

the crash occurred due to "unexpected change" in weather conditions that led to spatial disorientation of the pilot resulting in Controlled Flight into Terrain (CFIT). The accident was a result of entry into clouds due to unexpected change in weather conditions in the valley. This led to spatial disorientation of the pilot, resulting in CFIT, the IAF said in a statement.

In addition to these accidents, the IAF also lost a MiG-21 fighter jet and a Mi-17 helicopter on February 27, 2019 during the aerial dogfight with the Pakistan Air Force over the Line of Control (LoC), a day after the Balakot air strike by the IAF. The MiG-21 flown by Group Captain Abhinandan Varthaman (then Wing Commander) was shot down and fell across the LoC in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

Defence Ministry signs ₹7,629-cr. pact for 100 artillery guns

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

The Defence Ministry on Friday signed a ₹7,629-crore contract with Larsen & Toubro (L&T) for 100 additional 155 mm/52 calibre K9 Vajra-T self-propelled tracked artillery guns for the Indian Army.

The procurement of K9 Vajra-T will catalyse the artillery modernisation and enhance overall operational readiness of the Indian Army," a Defence Ministry statement said. The contract was signed by senior officials of the Ministry and representatives of L&T in the presence of Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh in South Block, New Delhi.

The gun, being equipped with cutting-edge technology, is capable of delivering long-range lethal fires with high accuracy, higher rate of fire and will be able to operate in high-altitude areas to its full potential, the Ministry said. The project will generate employment of more than nine lakh man-days over a period of four years and encourage active participation of various Indian industries.

MSMEs, it added. At the height of tensions in eastern Ladakh, the Army deployed one regiment of K9 Vajra tracked self-propelled howitzers there to augment its long-range fire power to counter a Chinese build-up.

The K9 Vajra is built by L&T with technology transfer from South Korean defence major Hanwha Defence.

Impressed with their performance, the Army is looking to procure 200 more guns in two batches.

Calcutta High Court allows junior doctors to hold protest over R.G. Kar issue

The Hindu Bureau KOLKATA

The Calcutta High Court on Friday allowed representatives of the West Bengal Junior Doctors Front (WBJDF) to hold protests in the Esplanade area of Kolkata over the rape and murder of a trainee doctor at the R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital earlier this year but restricted gathering to 200-250 members at a time.



The West Bengal Junior Doctors Front holds a protest in Kolkata's Esplanade area on Friday.

The WBJDF had approached the High Court seeking permission to hold protests after a city court granted bail to two accused who were arrested for tampering with evidence in the case. Justice Tirthankar Ghosh allowed the association to hold protest at the R.G. Kar Crossing in Esplanade from December 20 to 26.

"The stage proposed to be constructed should not exceed 40 feet in length and from the back side of the stage to the guard rail which will enclose the entire area of the stage," the order said. The organisers are specifically directed not to deliver any inciting speech so that at any point of time, the law and order situation goes out of hands of the administration," the court said.

Rajkot police take custody of jailed journalist

Press Trust of India RAJKOT



Senior journalist Mahesh Langa, who is already in jail in an alleged Goods and Services Tax scam case, was arrested by the Rajkot police in another case of GST evasion registered by the Crime Branch last month, said an official on Friday.

A team of the Rajkot Crime Branch took Mr Langa's custody from the Sabarmati Central Jail, Ahmedabad and brought him here on Friday for further investigation, said S.N. Jadede, Police Inspector and Investigation Officer of the case.

He said an FIR was registered by the Rajkot Crime Branch on November 27 and so far 12 persons had been arrested in connection with the GST evasion case.

THE CROSSWORD 14362

Crossword puzzle grid with clues and solutions.

- 13 Ugly, ugly things spend a grand and get a facet (9)
14 Carnies growing with support on time, husband seeing primarily (6)
15 Tips from old brother on enjoying an instrument (4)
16 Collection of aples trimmed (4)
17 Tour over days gets support (6)
18 Drama is on cleaner's work time (4,5)
19 Lead has good energy (5)
20 A wooden peg found in window elongating (5)
21 Zero scope to get a deal at 50% off for a beverage (9)
22 Groveling gender fluid person in the door having a hole in wrinkled missy indulging in deliberate act to attract attention (13)
23 Down
24 People ordered to leave cause Eve is disturbed (8)
25 Treatment for addiction at bar, he is drunk (5)
26 A powder with bright character and soluble primarily (8)
27 Ejection of lady in East India, only stopped midway (8)
28 Order given, order for sinner (9)
29 Spin at the far end! tall standing (6)
30 Loveliness comes with sixth sense, night (one that's internal) (6)
31 Orders to stop first train; stops (5)
32 Hot oil pedic treatment by common people (1,6)
33 Portuguese footballer Ron has a sausage (8)
34 Native girls having a telephone (8)
35 Operator's game according to Sinner on couch (3,3)
36 Departure is from an end (5)
37 Doctor's aware; unknown secretion (8)
38 Son gets one pound, international sausage (6)
39 Start to plead at home (5)

SUDOKU

Sudoku puzzle grid with numbers and difficulty rating.

FAITH

Choosing good Acharyas
People undertake various activities to reap some benefits, but the benefits may differ from person to person. It is rare to see people undertake activities without anticipation. To enrich their lives, some may choose academics, some may concentrate on sports, etc. It depends on their mental makeup, which is realised through experience.

Across
1 Rural teen mostly knows about software modelled on human brain (6,7)
10 Cop and man having a good time, spending half of it on pasta
11 Group of musicians becomes outcaste after leaving USA (5)
12 Rectifier's finger cut in the front by a point in compass (5)

# New undersea cables to boost India's digital connectivity

Two new submarine cable systems will provide additional Internet links to Asia and Europe even as India takes a more active role in discussions on undersea cable resilience and security

**Aroon Deep**  
NEW DELHI

**W**ith data use increasing year on year, India's undersea cable network is growing. Two new cable systems are set to be launched in the coming three months: the India Asia Xpress (IAX) and the India Europe Xpress (IEX), both connecting India with additional Internet links to the two continents. This comes even as India takes a more active role in discussions around submarine cable security and resilience.

Both cable systems, cumulatively over 15,000 kilometres in length, are owned by Reliance Jio, with a strategic investment from China Mobile. The IAX connects Chennai and Mumbai with Singapore, Thailand, and Malaysia in Asia, and the IEX connects them with France, Greece, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Djibouti. This adds to the dozens of cables landing in India, mainly in Mumbai and Chennai.

The cable expansions not only reflect growing traffic, but also increased geopolitical ambition, Ja-



Experts say India is emerging as a strong maritime cable network player in the region. B. VELANKANNI RAJ

gannath Panda, head of the Sweden-based Stockholm Center for South Asian and Indo-Pacific Affairs (SCSA-IPA) wrote recently. The new cable systems bolster India's "defense strategy in terms of the resilience of the cables against physical damages or digital disruptions from cyberattacks by state or non-state actors", Mr. Panda wrote in a paper for the *Marine Policy* journal.

"India is emerging as a strong maritime cable network player in the region," Mr. Panda said in an interview. "There will be focus in the Bay of Bengal and

the South China Sea region, and India's proactive role will be closely watched, and India won't shy away from taking a leading role there," he said.

In March, three submarine cables connecting India to West Asia and Europe were disrupted, impacting traffic to India. While that incident had an impact on India's international bandwidth, traffic still flowed through alternate routes, with data centres within India itself also buffering against disruptions for key Internet services. The alarm over disruptions to connectivity

has been felt worldwide, and India is no exception. Telecom Secretary Neeraj Mittal is part of the International Advisory Body for Submarine Cable Resilience established by the International Telecommunication Union. IT Secretary S. Krishnan asked at an event earlier this month, "Are we stable within the country that all services within this country can be offered even in the event of a disruption?"

## Bangladesh connection

The Bangladeshi government recently put on hold plans by Internet service providers in that country to sell bandwidth to North-east India, according to reports from local media. This setback, however, has limited impact for India, said Suvesh Chattopadhyaya, an undersea cable industry veteran. North-east States are already served by fibre laid on top of the Power Grid Corporation of India's transmission lines, and this fibre accounts for "hundreds of gigabits" per second of connectivity, Mr. Chattopadhyaya said, sufficient for current connectivity needs.

## New Undersea Cables to Boost India's Digital Connectivity

भारत की डिजिटल कनेक्टिविटी को बढ़ावा देने के लिए नई अंडरसी केबल्स

### Introduction

Two new submarine cable systems to enhance India's internet connectivity with Asia and Europe:

- India Asia Xpress (IAX) connects Chennai and Mumbai with Singapore, Thailand, and Malaysia in Asia.
- India Europe Xpress (IEX) links India with France, Greece, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Djibouti in Europe.
- दोनों केबल सिस्टम एशिया और यूरोप से भारत की इंटरनेट कनेक्टिविटी को मजबूत करेंगे।

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- **Features of the Cable Systems**

- Combined length: Over 15,000 kilometers.

- कंबाइंड लंबाई 15,000 किलोमीटर से अधिक।

- Owned by Reliance Jio, with strategic investment from China Mobile.

- रिलायंस जियो के स्वामित्व में, चीन मोबाइल से रणनीतिक निवेश।

- Enhances both bandwidth and geopolitical connectivity.

- बैंडविड्थ और भू-राजनीतिक कनेक्टिविटी को मजबूत करता है।

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- **Importance of the Cable Systems**

- Increased global connectivity helps India's emerging role as a maritime network leader in the region.

- वैश्विक कनेक्टिविटी में वृद्धि भारत को क्षेत्र में समुद्री नेटवर्क नेता के रूप में उभरने में मदद करती है।

- Focus on Bay of Bengal and South China Sea region as strategic areas.

- बंगाल की खाड़ी और दक्षिण चीन सागर क्षेत्र पर रणनीतिक ध्यान।

- **Challenges and Resilience Measures**

- Three submarine cables connecting India to West Asia disrupted in March 2023, impacting traffic.
  - मार्च 2023 में भारत और पश्चिम एशिया को जोड़ने वाली तीन पनडुब्बी केबल्स बाधित हुईं।
- India's defense strategy includes protection from physical damages and cyberattacks.
  - भारत की रक्षा रणनीति में भौतिक क्षति और साइबर हमलों से सुरक्षा शामिल है।
- IT Secretary emphasized the need for stability in domestic services during disruptions.
  - आईटी सचिव ने व्यवधान के दौरान घरेलू सेवाओं में स्थिरता की आवश्यकता पर जोर दिया।

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- **Economic and Geopolitical Impact**

- Provides hundreds of gigabits per second connectivity to key regions in India.

- भारत के महत्वपूर्ण क्षेत्रों को सैकड़ों गीगाबिट प्रति सेकंड कनेक्टिविटी प्रदान करता है।

- Helps maintain India's position in the international digital infrastructure landscape.

- अंतरराष्ट्रीय डिजिटल संरचना में भारत की स्थिति बनाए रखने में मदद करता है।



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- **Bangladesh Connection**

- Recent disruptions in internet services in Bangladesh had limited impact on India.

- बांग्लादेश में इंटरनेट सेवाओं में हाल की बाधाओं का भारत पर सीमित प्रभाव पड़ा।

- Northeast India continues to be served by fiber laid along the Power Grid Corporation lines.

- पूर्वोत्तर भारत को पावर ग्रिड कॉरपोरेशन लाइनों के साथ बिछाई गई फाइबर द्वारा सेवाएं मिलती रहती हैं।

- This development strengthens India's digital backbone and positions it as a proactive player in global internet connectivity.

यह विकास भारत की डिजिटल रीढ़ को मजबूत करता है और इसे वैश्विक इंटरनेट कनेक्टिविटी में एक सक्रिय खिलाड़ी के रूप में स्थापित करता है।

ONLY BUSINESS ON LAST DAY: 39-MEMBER PANEL FOR BILLS ON JOINT POLLS

## The cold, bitter end



The winter session of Lok Sabha was adjourned sine die amid pandemonium in the House Friday. PTI

### Amid protests, Speaker issues warning, Dhankhar flags 'severe criticism'

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 20

THE WINTER session of Parliament came to an abrupt end Friday when the two Houses were adjourned sine die after a few minutes of business amid the face-off between the ruling NDA and the Opposition. The divide appeared to have deepened a day after they clashed on the premises of Parliament, accusing each other

of insulting Dr B R Ambedkar. Two minutes after proceedings began in the morning, Lok Sabha was adjourned sine die as Opposition members stormed the Well of the House, raising slogans of 'Jai Bharti' and protesting a remark by Union Home Minister Amit Shah which they called an insult of Ambedkar. Amid the din, Speaker Om Birla allowed Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal to move the proposal that the Bills related to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

### Crime Branch to investigate BJP's FIR against Rahul, Cong complaint

Make scuffle footage public, says Cong; BJP gives notice against Rahul, Kharge

**PRAGYNESH, ASAD REHMAN & LALMANI VERMA**  
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 20

A DAY after it registered an FIR against Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi on a BJP complaint following a scuffle on Parliament premises in which two BJP MPs were injured, Delhi Police transferred the case to its Crime

Branch. The Interstate Cell (ISC) of the FIR against Gandhi which was registered under sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Samhita that included those on voluntarily causing grievous hurt, use of criminal force and criminal intimidation. DCP (Crime) Sanjay Kumar Sain said, "A team led by ACP

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

**E** Stormy days ahead

THE END of the winter session on an acrimonious note has deepened the divide, and hardened positions on either side. It is likely that this face-off will play out across the country in the days leading to the Budget session of Parliament.



A protest against the Parbhani police custody death near the Collector's office in Thane on December 16. Deepak Jadhav

### 'He aspired to be just 1% of Babasaheb, but police killed him': A family seeks justice

In Parbhani's Dalit areas, allegations of police brutality do the rounds

**SIDDHANT KONDUKAR**  
PARBHANI, DECEMBER 20

SEATED ON a cot in the courtyard of a relative's house in Aneabhatu Sathu Nagar area of Parbhani district, Vijayabai Suryawanshi remembers her son as "an avid book lover". His only assets were his books, running into hundreds. He aspired to be even 1% of what Babasaheb (B R Ambedkar) was," Vijayabai says. On December 15, Somnath Suryawanshi, who was studying to become a lawyer like Ambedkar, died in custody, two days before his law exam. A interim postmortem report attributed the immediate cause of death as "shock following multiple injuries".

Scornathi's death triggered protests in Parbhani town as it followed allegations of widespread police brutality in rounding up people from its Dalit ar-

ea over a violent agitation on December 10. The agitation had been sparked off by the "degradation" of a copy of the Constitution kept next to an Ambedkar statue in the area. The Opposition has sought to corner the newly elected Maharashtra government over the issue, particularly as it coincides with the war of words between the two sides in Parliament and outside over the Constitution and Ambedkar. On Friday, replying to a discussion on the Maharashtra Assembly, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis said Somnath was suffering from breathlessness and other diseases, and had not complained of any police torture when produced before a magistrate. At the same time, the government has set up an SIT to probe the incident, suspended a police sub-inspector and sent on leave

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

### Five-time Haryana CM and INLD patriarch O P Chautala dies at 89

**VARINDER BHATIA**  
GHANDIGARH, DECEMBER 20

INDIAN NATIONAL Lok Dal (INLD) supremo and five-time Haryana Chief Minister Om Prakash Chautala, patriarch of one of the most influential political families of the state, died at his Gurugram residence Friday. He was 89.

A dominant figure of Haryana politics for over five decades, Chautala was born to former Deputy Prime Minister Devi Lal and Harki Devi. He grew up observing his father, a two-time CM and one of the tallest Jat and



Om Prakash CHAUTALA 1935-2024

farmer leaders of Haryana. It was in 1998 that Chautala fought his first political battle from Ellersabad, which was con-

sidered his father's bastion, on a Janata Party ticket. He, however, lost to Lakshman Khor of Vishal Haryana Party, formed by former CM Rao Birender Singh. Chautala challenged the election in High Court and after about one year, Khor's election was set aside. A bypoll was conducted and Chautala won the seat, marking his Assembly debut. Since then, the journey of Chautala — the man with 90% physical disability who couldn't even "change his clothes on his own", a plea his lawyers took while seeking leniency after he was convicted of corruption

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

### 12 killed in explosion on Jaipur highway after LPG tanker-truck crash

**PARUL KULHRESHTHA**  
JAIPUR, DECEMBER 20

AT 5:45 AM — 15 minutes after he dropped his nephew Harlal and another relative, Raju, at the Jaipur-Ajmer highway to board a truck to take them back home — Mohankal (77) got a distressing call: there had been an explosion and that Harlal was nowhere to be found.

The explosion occurred after the truck they were travelling in collided with an LPG tanker while it was taking a U-turn on the

At the site of the accident in Jaipur on Friday. Anil Jain/Punjab

Highway. According to officials, 12 people died and 40 vehicles were burnt in the accident.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

**EXPRESS NETWORK**

**SC: PUNJAB SHOULD ENSURE DALLEWAL'S HEALTH IS STABLE**

**DHARAVI PROJECT: HC DISMISSES DUBAI FIR PLEA** PAGE 7

#### THE WORLD

**TOP US OFFICIALS IN SYRIA TO DISCUSS TRANSITION**

**TRUDEAU LOOKS SET TO LOSE POWER AS KEY ALLIES VOW TO TOPPLE HIM** PAGE 18

### New game in town: Opinion trading sees surge in users, funding — under the radar

**SOUMYARENDRA BARKI**  
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 20

WILL INDIA take three wickets against Australia in the next five overs? Will Bitcoin breach the \$110,000 mark today? Will the Congress contest 30 or more seats in the Delhi Assembly elections in 2025?

You can bet real money on the outcome of these and many

more questions. Welcome to the world of opinion trading: platforms which allow users to wager on the outcome of future events. The sector is growing exponentially, raking in funding and an estimated \$3 crore every day. The market is largely gone under the radar in India, unscrutinised. Parochially, opinion trading platforms appear to be betting platforms — and some in govern-

ment also have this view. But, investors and founders argue that there is a big element of skill that goes into making money on such platforms. Whether it's a game of skill or chance, it appeals to the larger online gaming sector in India as privately calling for a clear Central law to deal with opinion trading platforms. The Indian Express has heard. The sector in India has companies like Gurugram-based

Probo and MPL Opinio. While the former offers questions on a varied set of sectors like sports, elections and cryptocurrency, the latter only deals with questions related to cricket matches. These platforms have received more than Rs 4,200 crore in funding so far from over 35 investors which include Sequoia Capital (Peak XV), Elevarion Capital, Acel Partners,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

### Near the slopes of the Caucasus, a hotel tragedy at a ski resort reveals India-Georgia connection

**PAGE 1 ANCHOR**

**ANJU AGNIHOTRI CHABA**  
JAIPUR, DECEMBER 20

A DECADE ago, having hot idlis near the snow-clad Caucasus mountains in Gudauri was perhaps a pipe dream for most Indian tourists and medical students in Georgia. With Gudauri becoming a "must-visit" destination for Indian tourists and medical stu-

dents — thanks to its breathtaking views, snow and hotels — restaurants serving Indian food are thriving in this scenic Europe-based ski resort. Gudauri was thrust into the spotlight on December 14, when a gas leak at an Indian restaurant, Haveli, claimed 12 lives, including 11 Indians, due to suspected carbon monoxide poisoning during a severe snowstorm. On the day the bodies were discovered, temperatures had plunged to minus 18 degrees. According to the local media, the deaths allegedly happened after fumes



An Indian restaurant in Gudauri, Georgia. Special arrangement

from a generator placed in a closed room filled the premises. The incident, however, shed light on the growing Indian presence in Gudauri, which started developing as a tourist resort after the first hotel was established there in the late 1980s. Located near the Russian border, Gudauri is now home to nearly 36 Indian and Indian-Anglo hotels, catering to the increasing number of Indian tourists and students who are primarily pursuing medical education in Georgia. Over such visits, the deaths al-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

#### BUSINESS AS USUAL



### Bhagwat: Ram temple matter of faith, raising up new issues unacceptable



**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
PUNE, NEW DELHI, DEC 20

UNDERLINING THAT Ram temple in Ayodhya was a "matter of faith" for Hindus, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat has said that it is "unacceptable" to raise up "such new issues on a daily basis" simply because of "extreme hatred, malice, enmity and suspicion". His remarks come amid the debate over the Places of Worship Act, the challenge to the validity of which is before the Supreme Court, and a clamour for surveys of mosques and dargahs in different parts of the country.

In his address on "Vishwaguru Bharat" at a lecture series in Pune on Thursday, Bhagwat said, "Ram temple is a matter of faith for Hindus. The Hindus believed Ram temple should be constructed. But by doing that one does not become a Hindu leader..."

"Under the burden of the extreme past, it is not acceptable to resort to extreme hatred, malice, enmity, suspicion and take up such new issues on a daily basis," Bhagwat said.

He said that while the world believes that all have to be

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

**ON THE OCCASION OF 114th FOUNDATION DAY 27th DECEMBER 2024**

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## TAIWAN LAWMAKERS CLASH

Lawmakers from DPP use chairs to block the entrance as members of KMT try to break into the Legislature in Taipei on Friday. DPP lawmakers got into the building Thursday night in an attempt to block any votes on three Bills pushed by the NP including one that critics say would paralyse the Constitutional Court. Lai Ching-te, from DPP, is the President. *Reuters*

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Global  
Estimates on  
International  
Migrant  
Workers :ILO



- 
- Global Estimates on International Migrant Workers report released by the International Labour Organization (ILO).
  - **Major Findings**
  - **Labor Force** : : In 2022, international migrants made up 4.7% of the global labor force, totaling 167.7 million, an increase of over 30 million since 2013.
    - Of the 167.7 million migrants, 102.7 million were men and 64.9 million were women.

- 
- **Regional Trends:** Europe and Central Asia hosted 34.5% of migrant workers (57.8 million).
    - The share of migrants in Northern, Southern, and Western Europe increased from 22.5% in 2013 to 23.3% in 2022, while other regions saw slight declines.
    - More than 68% of migrants were in high-income countries, primarily in Northern, Southern, and Western Europe; North America; and the Arab States.

**Sector Employment:** 68.4% of migrant workers were employed in the services sector, particularly in care and domestic work, with 30% of migrant women and 12.4% of migrant men in this sector.

**Comparisons to Non-Migrants:** 19.2% of non-migrant women and 6.2% of non-migrant men were employed in care and domestic work.

- **Issues and Concerns**
- **Higher Unemployment Rates:** Migrants faced a higher unemployment rate (7.2%) than non-migrants (5.2%), with women more affected.
- **Gender Disparities in Employment:** Migrant women had an employment-to-population ratio of 48.1%, compared to 73% for migrant men.
- **Barriers to Employment:** Gender disparities may be driven by factors like language barriers, unrecognized qualifications, discrimination, limited childcare options, and gender-based expectations.
-



# National Tansen Samman

Renowned tabla player of Indian classical music Pt. Swapan Choudhary of Kolkata was honoured with the “National Tansen Samman” for the year 2023.

## About National Tansen Samman

Established in: **1980**.

An honorarium of five lakh rupees, citation plaque and shawl-shriphal was presented.

The award is established by the **Madhya Pradesh government in the name of Music Emperor Tansen**, awarded in the field of Indian classical music.

- **Tansen**

- Tansen (16th Century) was a legendary **Indian classical musician** and one of the “**Navaratnas**” (nine jewels) in the court of the **Mughal Emperor Akbar**.



- He was a disciple of the great musician **Swami Haridas** and is often credited with bringing the dhrupad style of music to prominence.



Tansen is known for his mastery of **Hindustani classical music** and for his contributions to the development of **several ragas**.


Tansen was honored with the **prefix 'Miyan' from Emperor Akbar** and from that day onwards he came to be known as **MiyanTansen**.

# Goa Liberation Day

- 
- Goa Liberation Day is celebrated every year on **December 19** to mark the freedom of Goa from Portuguese rule in **1961**.
  - **Background**
  - The Portuguese arrived in Goa under **Afonso de Albuquerque in 1510**, making it one of their longest-held overseas territories.
  - While India gained independence in 1947, Goa, along with Daman and Diu, remained under Portuguese control.
- 



- **Operation Vijay**

- It was the code name for the military action undertaken by India to liberate Goa.
  - The operation began on December 17, 1961, and lasted for two days.
  - On December 19, 1961, the Portuguese Governor-General **Manuel Antonio Vassalo e Silva** surrendered to Indian forces.
- 





- **Integration into India**

- After liberation Goa, Daman, and Diu were declared a Union Territory.
- **In 1987**, Goa was granted statehood, becoming the **25th state** of India.
  - However, Daman and Diu continue to remain Union Territories.





# Travel and Tourism Development Index (TTDI) 2024

- 
- India is ranked 39th among 119 countries in the 2024 Travel and Tourism Development Index (TTDI) report by the **World Economic Forum (WEF)**.
  - **Travel and Tourism Development Index (TTDI) 2024**
  - Introduced in 2022, TTDI is an evolution of the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI), which has been published biennially since 2007.
- 

## Travel & Tourism (T&T) Development Index framework



Enabling  
Environment



T&T Policy and  
Enabling Conditions



Infrastructure  
and Services




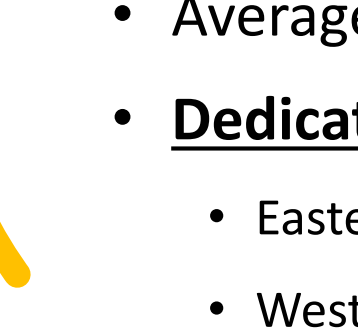
T&T Resources



T&T Sustainability

Rank	Economy	Score <sup>2</sup>	Change since 2019 <sup>3</sup>		Diff. from TTDI Avg. (%)
			Rank	Score	
1	United States	5.24	0	-0.5%	32.3%
2	Spain	5.18	0	0.9%	30.6%
3	Japan	5.09	0	-0.3%	28.5%
4	France	5.07	2	0.8%	28.0%
5	Australia	5.00	2	0.8%	26.0%

# Standing Committee on Railways

- 
- The Standing Committee on Railways presented its latest report in Parliament, highlighting inefficiency in Railways.
  - **About Standing Committee Report on Railways:**
  - **Freight Train Speed:**
    - Average speed over the past 11 years: 25.14 km/h.
    - **Dedicated Freight Corridors (DFC):**
      - Eastern DFC: Completed.
      - Western DFC: 102 km section to be completed by December 2025.
- 

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- Revenue Insights:

- 2023–24 revenue from freight: ₹1,68,293 crore.
- 2024–25 target: ₹1,80,000 crore.
- Recommendation:
  - Keep **general class fares affordable.**
  - Align **AC class fares** with operational costs to reduce passenger segment losses.

- **Research and Development (R&D):**

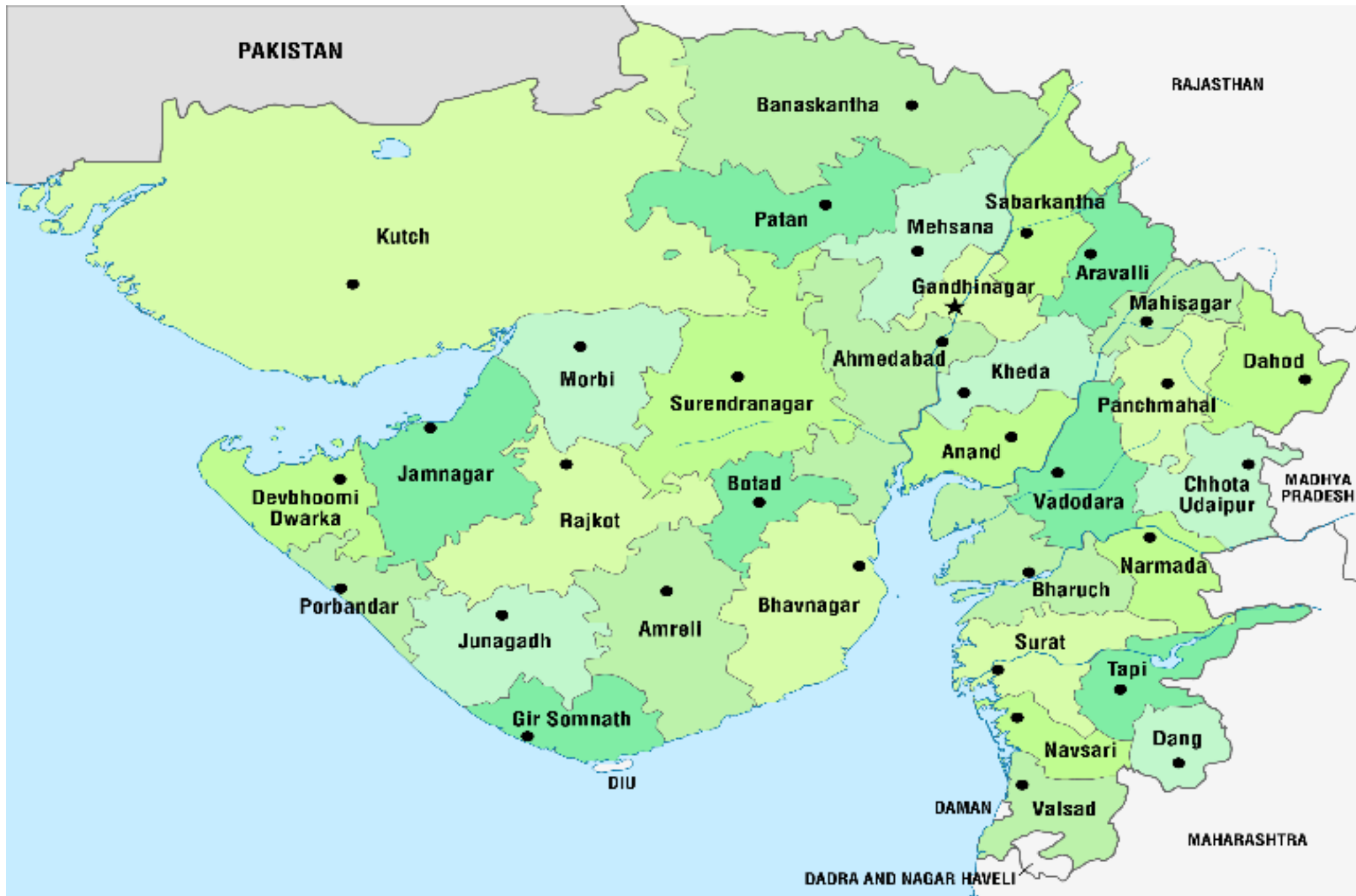
- **Budget allocation for 2024–25:** ₹72.01 crore.
- **Actual spending:** ₹39.12 crore (2022–23) and ₹28.34 crore (2023–24).
- Recommendation:
  - Invest prudently in R&D for modernization and efficiency.



# India's First Fully Solar-Powered Border Village

- **Masali village** in Gujarat's Banaskantha district has become India's first fully solar-powered border village under the PM Suryaghar Yojana.
- 






- About Masali Village: Location: Banaskantha district, Gujarat, 40 km from the Pakistan border.
- Solarisation Scheme: Solar rooftops installed on 119 houses under the PM Suryaghar Yojana, generating over 225 kilowatts of electricity.
- **Significance:** First solar-powered border village in India.
- Promotes renewable energy and self-sufficiency in energy needs.
- Part of the **Border Development Project** to solarize 11 villages in Vav taluka and six in Suigam taluka.
- Boosts energy security in remote, strategic border areas

A halved coconut is the central focus, resting on a sandy beach. The coconut is cut in half, revealing the white, fleshy interior. The background is a vibrant blue ocean under a clear sky, with palm fronds visible in the upper left corner. The text "Coconut Oil" is overlaid in white, centered over the coconut's interior.

# Coconut Oil

- 
- The Supreme Court of India ruling stated that coconut oil in small bottles is to be taxed as **edible oil** (5% GST) unless explicitly labeled and marketed as **hair oil**, which would attract an 18% GST.


- 









- **Case Background:**

- The dispute centred on whether coconut oil, packaged in quantities from 5 ml to 2 litres, should be taxed as **edible oil** or **hair oil** under GST and the **Central Excise Tariff Act, 1985**.
  - The **Revenue Department** argued for higher taxation (18%) by categorizing it as hair oil.
- 



- 
- GST Issue:
  - Edible oil is taxed at 5% under GST, while hair oil attracts an 18% GST rate.
  - Classification confusion arose for small-sized coconut oil packages with dual-use potential.
- 

## Supreme Court Judgment:

- Coconut oil not explicitly marketed as hair oil is classified under **edible oil** and taxed at 5%.
- Packaging size (small or large) alone cannot determine classification. Clear labelling is crucial for classification as hair oil.
- Aligns with Harmonized System of Nomenclature (HSN) for global consistency.

## Facts:

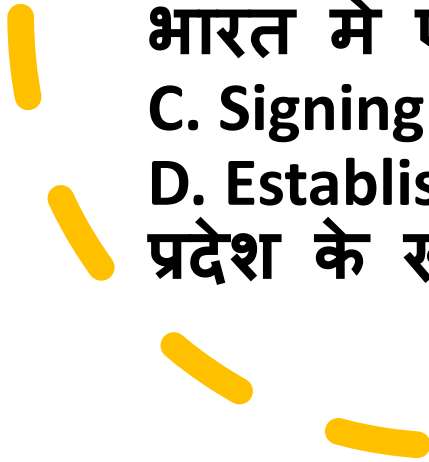
- The coconut palm is a remarkable and versatile crop found in **tropical regions** across the globe.
- **Kerala state in India** is a leading producer of coconuts, coconut oil and their products.
- **World ranking in coconut production:** Indonesia > Philippines > India > Brazil.

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

Top 10 MCQ from the session for  
every exam

- 
- What is the **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**
- 


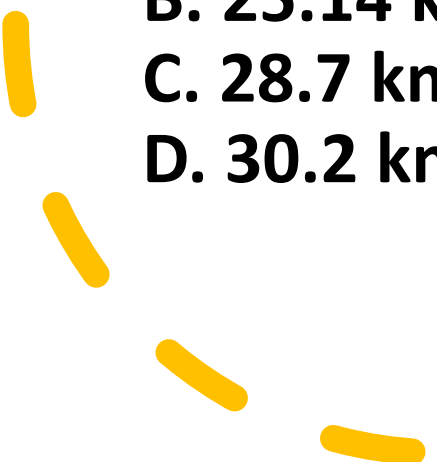
- Under which military operation was Goa liberated from Portuguese control?

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**
- 

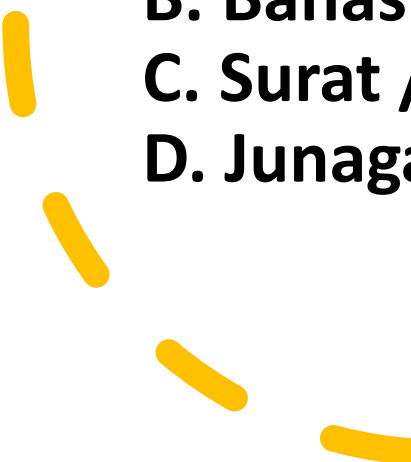
- What was the main focus of the **Travel and Tourism Development Index (TTDI) 2024**, in which India ranked 39th?  
यात्रा और पर्यटन विकास सूचकांक (TTDI) 2024, जिसमें भारत 39वें स्थान पर रहा, का मुख्य ध्यान क्या था?
- A. Enhancing global connectivity / वैश्विक कनेक्टिविटी को बढ़ावा देना
- B. Boosting 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**
- 




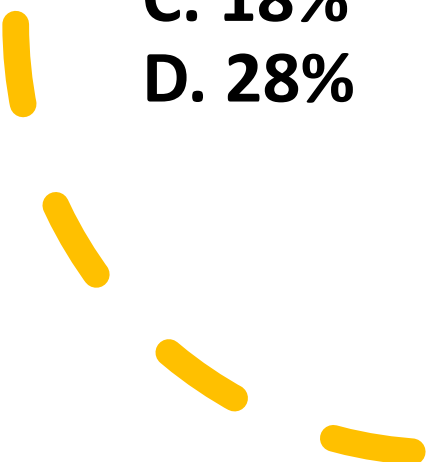
- 
- India's first fully solar-powered border village, Masali, is located in which district?

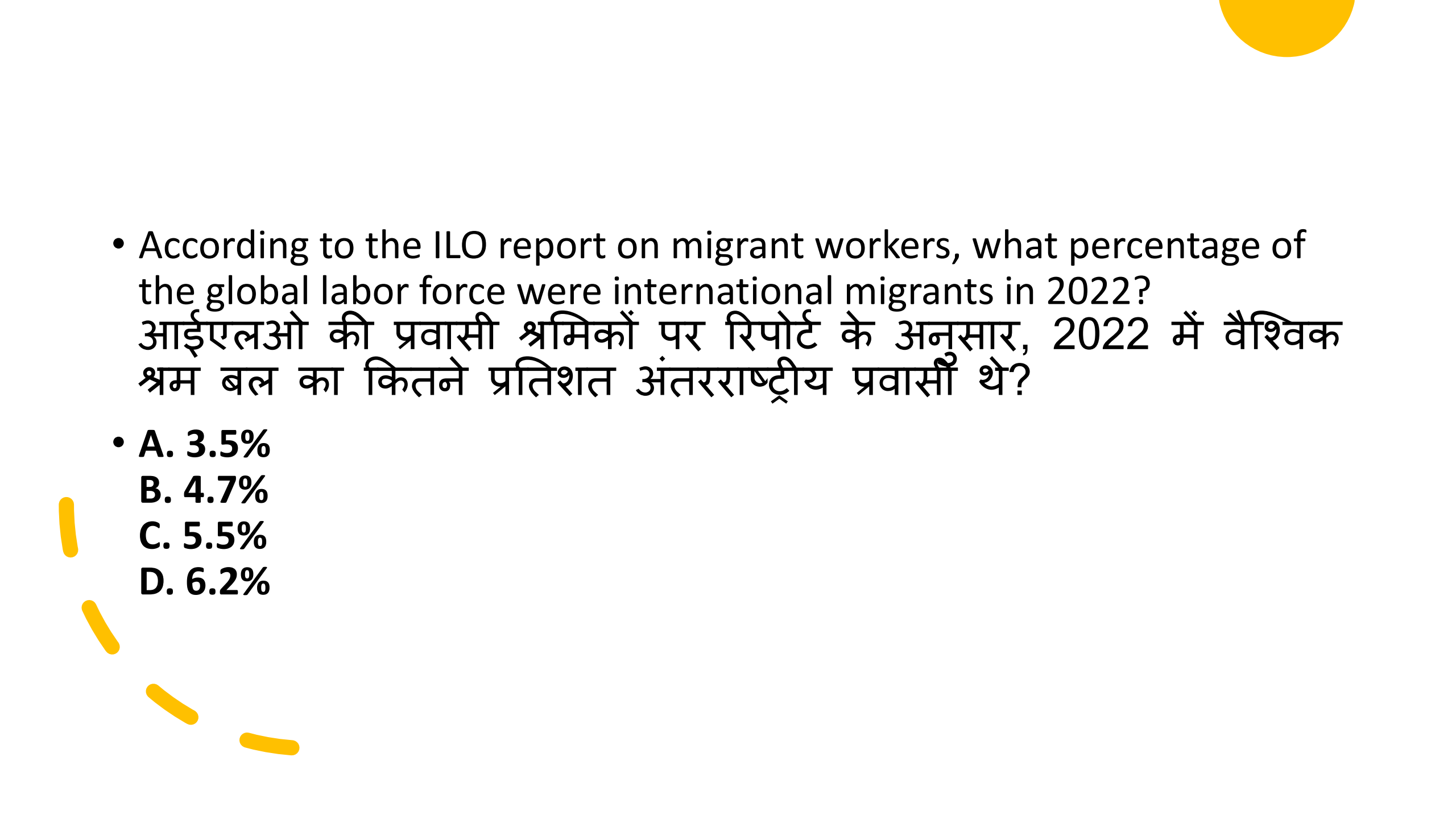
भारत का पहला पूर्णतः सौर ऊर्जा संचालित सीमा गांव मसाली किस जिले में स्थित है?

- 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
- 

Fun Fact

---

**Myth 9:** Awards like the Oscars determine the "best" films

- **Truth:** Awards are subjective and depend on **industry politics, marketing campaigns, and voting bodies**. Some incredible films have been overlooked while others are hyped for awards.

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Starts In: 04:37:22


Coming Soon!

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2024-12-13 at 9:00 AM

Starts In: 02:07:22

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Thank you  
guys.

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