

# Daily Current Affairs



जनसत्ता



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10 MCQ QUIZ

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

Top 10 MCQ from the session for  
every exam

- According to a recent study, when did iron usage begin in Tamil Nadu?
- हाल ही में जारी एक अध्ययन के अनुसार, तमिलनाडु में लोहे का उपयोग कब शुरू हुआ?
- A. 1500 BCE
- B. 2000 BCE
- C. 3345 BCE
- D. 1000 BCE

- What scientific method was used to verify the iron findings in Tamil Nadu?
- तमिलनाडु में लोहे की खोज की पुष्टि के लिए कौन सी वैज्ञानिक विधि का उपयोग किया गया?
- A. Carbon Dating / कार्बन डेटिंग  
B. Accelerator Mass Spectrometry (AMS) and Optically Stimulated Luminescence (OSL) / एक्सीलेरेटर मास स्पेक्ट्रोमेट्री (AMS) और ऑप्टिकली स्टिम्युलेटेड ल्यूमिनेसेंस (OSL)  
C. X-ray Diffraction / एक्स-रे विवर्तन  
D. DNA Sequencing / डीएनए अनुक्रमण

- What did the High Court rule about the use of loudspeakers in religious places?
- उच्च न्यायालय ने धार्मिक स्थलों में लाउडस्पीकर के उपयोग पर क्या निर्णय दिया?
- A. Loudspeakers can be used at all times / लाउडस्पीकर का उपयोग हर समय किया जा सकता है
- B. Loudspeaker usage is not an essential part of any religion / लाउडस्पीकर का उपयोग किसी भी धर्म का अनिवार्य हिस्सा नहीं है
- C. Loudspeaker use must be allowed in all religious places / सभी धार्मिक स्थलों में लाउडस्पीकर के उपयोग की अनुमति दी जानी चाहिए
- D. Loudspeaker usage should be banned nationwide / लाउडस्पीकर के उपयोग पर पूरे देश में प्रतिबंध लगाया जाना चाहिए

- Which Indian state is actively promoting archaeological research on iron usage?
- कौन सा भारतीय राज्य लोहे के उपयोग पर पुरातात्विक अनुसंधान को सक्रिय रूप से बढ़ावा दे रहा है?
- A. Maharashtra / महाराष्ट्र  
B. Tamil Nadu / तमिलनाडु  
C. Karnataka / कर्नाटक  
D. Gujarat / गुजरात



- Under the SAGAR initiative, how many square kilometers have been surveyed by Indian Navy hydrographic vessels in the last five years?
- सागर पहल के तहत, भारतीय नौसेना के हाइड्रोग्राफिक जहाजों ने पिछले पांच वर्षों में कितने वर्ग किलोमीटर का सर्वेक्षण किया है?
- A. 50,000 sq. km.  
B. 70,000 sq. km.  
C. 89,000 sq. km.  
D. 1,00,000 sq. km.

- What is the purpose of the newly introduced “Entity Locker” by MeitY?
- MeitY द्वारा पेश किए गए "एंटीटी लॉकर" का उद्देश्य क्या है?
- A. Secure, cloud-based storage solution for businesses / व्यवसायों के लिए सुरक्षित, क्लाउड-आधारित भंडारण समाधान
- B. A new banking system for startups / स्टार्टअप्स के लिए एक नई बैंकिंग प्रणाली
- C. A security software for government agencies / सरकारी एजेंसियों के लिए एक सुरक्षा सॉफ्टवेयर
- D. A biometric identity verification system / एक बायोमेट्रिक पहचान सत्यापन प्रणाली

- What is the primary concern about Boreal forests as per recent studies?
- हाल के अध्ययनों के अनुसार बोरियल जंगलों को लेकर मुख्य चिंता क्या है?
- A. They are warming four times faster than the global average / वे वैश्विक औसत की तुलना में चार गुना तेजी से गर्म हो रहे हैं  
B. They are expanding rapidly into tropical areas / वे तेजी से उष्णकटिबंधीय क्षेत्रों में फैल रहे हैं  
C. They are becoming less carbon-absorbent / वे कार्बन अवशोषण में कमी ला रहे हैं  
D. Both A and C / दोनों A और C

- Which Indian wetland is awaiting notification from the Uttar Pradesh government?
- कौन सा भारतीय वेटलैंड उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार से अधिसूचना की प्रतीक्षा कर रहा है?
- A. Loktak Lake / लोकतक झील  
B. Dhanauri Wetland / धनौरी वेटलैंड  
C. Sambhar Lake / सांभर झील  
D. Ropar Wetland / रोपड़ वेटलैंड

- What is the significance of the Stargate Project launched by the United States?
- संयुक्त राज्य अमेरिका द्वारा शुरू की गई "स्टारगेट परियोजना" का महत्व क्या है?
- A. It is a \$500 billion AI infrastructure initiative / यह एक \$500 बिलियन की एआई बुनियादी ढांचा पहल है
- B. It is aimed at space exploration / यह अंतरिक्ष अन्वेषण पर केंद्रित है
- C. It focuses on blockchain technology / यह ब्लॉकचेन तकनीक पर केंद्रित है
- D. It is a global defense initiative / यह एक वैश्विक रक्षा पहल है


- What anniversary was celebrated for Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) and Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana in 2025?
- 2025 में बेटी बचाओ बेटी पढ़ाओ (BBBP) और सुकन्या समृद्धि योजना की कौन सी वर्षगांठ मनाई गई?
- A. 5th anniversary / 5वीं वर्षगांठ
- B. 10th anniversary / 10वीं वर्षगांठ
- C. 15th anniversary / 15वीं वर्षगांठ
- D. 20th anniversary / 20वीं वर्षगांठ

The Essential  
Translation of  
the Ancient Chinese  
Book of the Tao

TAO  
TE  
CHING

LAO-TZU

Translated with an  
Introduction and Commentary  
by  
JOHN MINFORD

  
PENGUIN  
CLASSICS  
DELUXE  
EDITION

# – Tao Te Ching by Lao Tzu

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*“The journey is the reward.”*



**RENUKASWAMY MURDAR**  
SC refuses to cancel actor Darshan's bail  
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**TEENS IN TROUBLE**  
Study links smartphone use to mental health  
NEWS » PAGE 5



**RESPONSE TO BACKLASH**  
'Jaffna' restored in cultural centre's name  
WORLD » PAGE 12



**THE GREAT CONGREGATION**  
Gods, gurus and glass turtles  
The Kumbh Mela and its religious, social and political significance  
GROUND ZERO » PAGE 7



**HEARTBREAK**  
Injured Djokovic forfeits semifinal  
SPORT » PAGE 14

**INSIDE**

**Tribal woman mauled to death by tiger in Kerala**

**KOZHIKODE** Intense protests broke out in Mananthavady, Wayanad, after a tribal woman, Radha, was mauled to death by a tiger on Friday. Her mutilated body was found by Thunderbolt commandos. » PAGE 4

**Jitendra Pal Singh is India's envoy to Israel**

**NEW DELHI** India has appointed Jitendra Pal Singh — currently the point person for Iran and Pakistan, as well as the Special Envoy to Afghanistan — as its next Ambassador to Israel. Mr. Singh will take over his new position in Tel Aviv shortly, the MEA said. » PAGE 3

**Waqf panel: 10 Oppn. members suspended**

**NEW DELHI** Ten Opposition members of the Parliament's Joint Committee on Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024, who protested against the last-minute change in the agenda of the meeting by Chairman and BJP leader Jagdish Pal, were suspended on Friday. » PAGE 4

**Odisha, Goa top the Fiscal Health Index**

**NEW DELHI** Mineral-rich Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Goa, and Jharkhand topped NITI Aayog's first Fiscal Health Index (FHI) for 2022-23, while Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, and Kerala were ranked the worst, facing significant fiscal challenges. » PAGE 5

**8 killed, 5 injured in ordnance factory blast in Maharashtra**

District administration, Superintendent of Police set up SIT; the factory also forms inquiry team; NDRF rescuers avoid flash cutters as site has high-energy plastic explosives; Maharashtra CM announces ex gratia of ₹5 lakh to families of deceased

**Purnima Sah**  
MUMBAI

A massive explosion ripped through an ordnance factory in Maharashtra's Bhandara district on Friday morning, leaving eight people dead and five injured. A Special Investigation Team (SIT) has been set up by the district administration and the Superintendent of Police to ascertain the cause of the blast, and the factory has also set up an inquiry committee. The blast took place at 10:40 a.m. in a building containing low-temperature plastic explosives, according to a statement from the ordnance factory. These high-energy explosives are used in the ammunition manufactured in the factory.



Banger scene: Rescue operation under way at the blast site in Bhandara district in Maharashtra on Friday. PTI

The building caught fire and collapsed, trapping 13 workers under the debris. The death toll rose during the day as the rescue operation continued till around 8:30 p.m. National Disaster Response Force personnel had to manually remove the trapped workers from the debris using special-

ised equipment, as they did not want to risk using flash cutters that could ignite the explosive material at the site and cause further blasts. Four victims identified so far have been identified workers — Chandrabhek- har Goswami (59), Manoj Meshram (55), Ajay Nig- deve (51), and Ankit Baral (20). The five injured — N.P. Wanjari (55), Sanjay Raut (51), Rajesh Badwaik (33), Sunil Kumar Yadav (24) and Jaydeep Banerjee (42) — have been admitted to Lakh Hospital and the Bhandara District General Hospital. Immediately after the explosion, the factory's rescue and relief team, fire brigade team and medical team reached the spot and started the rescue operation. "We immediately dispatched 12 fire brigade vehicles, 15 ambulances and 8 heavy-duty cranes to clear the debris," Bhandara district collector Sanjay Kulkarni said. "Crime Detection Unit and the Directorate of Forensic Science Laborato-

ries and police dog squad and industrial safety team were at the spot. At 8 p.m., the district administration and police formed a special investigation team which includes the crime branch, security branch and local police to probe the root cause of the blast." SP Nooral Hasan said. Expressing condolences on X, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, who is in Switzerland for the World Economic Forum, announced an ex gratia of ₹5 lakh each to the families of the deceased. "We immediately dispatched 12 fire brigade vehicles, 15 ambulances and 8 heavy-duty cranes to clear the debris," Bhandara district collector Sanjay Kulkarni said. "Crime Detection Unit and the Directorate of Forensic Science Laborato-

**538 arrested as U.S. begins deportation operation**

**AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE**  
WASHINGTON  
Hundreds of migrants in the U.S. were arrested on Thursday and others flown out of the country on military aircraft as the White House said President Donald Trump's promised deportation operation had started. White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said "538 illegal immigrant criminals" were arrested Thursday and "hundreds" were deported by military aircraft. "The largest massive deportation operation in history is well underway," she said in a post on social media platform X. **FULL REPORT** » PAGE 12

**Border patrol**



Hawk-eyed: Army personnel keeping vigil along the Line of Control in Kupwara district of Jammu and Kashmir on Friday. The Army has increased surveillance along the LoC under sub-zero temperatures ahead of Republic Day celebrations. SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT

**India, Indonesia set to discuss Myanmar conflict during talks**

**Kalol Bhattacharjee**  
NEW DELHI  
The raging conflict in Myanmar will feature prominently in discussions between visiting Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto and Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the weekend, sources said. Mr. Subianto, who will be the chief guest at the Republic Day celebrations, began his official meetings by calling on External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and meeting industry bigwigs on Friday. The inclusion of the prevailing scenario in Myanmar in the official agenda is significant as both India and Indonesia have been trying to stitch up a dialogue process among various domestic stakeholders in the conflict-torn southeast Asian country. Sources further mentioned that the two sides will discuss several "regional issues" including the tension around the South China Sea" during the official talks that will be held in Hyderabad House on Saturday. **Facilitating dialogue** India recently hosted a number of ethnic armed organisations from Myanmar as well as members of the exiled National Unity Government. India hosted



Union External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar with Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto in New Delhi. PTI

them at the Indian Council of World Affairs, soon after Indonesia also hosted such groups. The chain of engagements indicated that both the countries are trying to establish dialogue between the military junta in Nay Pyi Taw and the ethnic armed organisations that have captured large amounts of territory of Myanmar, including vast tracts of land near its borders with India's north-eastern States. The situation in Myanmar has escalated over the last year, with the military junta losing control over areas in Chin state, Kachin, and the Sagaing region. The Myanmar issue has been on the table of the ASEAN since the military coup of February 2021 and it is understood that the Indonesian president will continue the discussion on "regional issues" in Malaysia, which is his next destination after India. "Close cooperation with friendly countries has always been our priority to build a stronger and more prosperous region together," Mr. Subianto said on Thursday. On Friday, the visiting president met with industry bigwigs including Gautam Adani of the Adani group, representatives of the Tatas, and the telecom majors.

**Bihar Chief Minister honours Olympians, Paralympic stars**

**Sports Bureau**  
PATNA  
Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar felicitated athletes and para-athletes at the Sportstar Focus Bihar Conclave held here on Friday. The players felicitated included Paralympic silver medalist Deepak Malik, Olympic bronze medal-winning boxer Vijender Singh, double Olympic bronze medalist P.R. Sreejesh, double Paralympic medalist Shradha Kumar, six-time Winter Olympian Shiva Kishavan, and women's hockey team head coach Harindra Singh. The sporting stars were honoured with a shawl and

**U.P. temple gets FCRA nod without request**

**Vijalita Singh**  
ISHITA MISHRA  
NEW DELHI  
The Union Home Ministry has granted registration under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA), 2010 to the famous Banke Bihar temple in Uttar Pradesh's Vrindavan, enabling it to receive donations from foreign countries for "religious" activity. The temple's priests, however, said they had never applied for the registration. The temple committee is locked in a legal battle with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led government in the State over the control of the temple's affairs and funds. The committee



Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar presenting an award to farmer-decathlete Jai Prakash Singh in Patna on Friday. IXX MEDIA/PTI



Devotees celebrate Hindu festival at the Banke Bihar Temple in Mathura, Uttar Pradesh. FILE PHOTO

Bankey Bihar ji Maharaj Temple' at Vrindavan under the "Religious (Hindu)" category. Registration under the FCRA, 2010 is mandatory for non-government organisations (NGOs) and associations to receive foreign funds. Speaking to The Hindu, Ashok Goswami, one of the temple priests, said he had no idea about the application for the FCRA licence, and said that, for the past several years, the temple had been receiving donations from devotees living in foreign countries who visited the premises. "Our temple is run through a committee which is formed by the Civil Judge, Junior Division. Apart from the Goswamis, like us, who own the temple property, we have many outsiders in the committee. I cannot comment on who applied for the FCRA licence. But none of the priests applied for it," he said. Mr. Goswami also said that, devotees contribute directly to the priests, donations arrive via cheques or other digital payments; and thirdly, contributions are made to donation boxes kept in the temple. The court, in past hearings, had asked the State to not meddle with the affairs of the temple, including with its funds, but allowed it to proceed with the corridor project. The matter is sub judice.



## Bench led by CJI to hear former Haryana MLAs plea on EVMs

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

A petition filed by former MLA Karan Singh Dalal, who contested the Haryana Assembly election in 2024, seeking directions to the Election Commission to lay down a policy for verifying the original burnt memory/microcontroller.

Datta on EVMs in April 2024. Justice Datta was the puisne judge on the Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Sanjay Khanna.

The petition came up on Friday before a Bench headed by Justice Dipankar Datta. The Bench, however, observed that the case ought to be listed before the Chief Justice's Bench, which had similar petitions pending before it.

The case had first come up before a Bench headed by Justice Vikram Nath and subsequently before the Chief Justice himself in a constituent member. The Chief Justice Bench had, in open court then, said the case ought to be heard by Justice Dipankar Datta.

On Friday, the case was referred from Justice Datta's Bench back to the Chief Justice for listing, likely before the latter's own Bench again.

The petition by Mr. Dalal is an off-shoot of a judgment pronounced by a Bench of Justice (as he was then) Khanna and Justice



Karan Singh Dalal

## Jitendra Pal Singh named India's Ambassador to Israel

Envoys is set to assume office in Tel Aviv as ceasefire pact between Israel and Hamas in Gaza gets under way; taking over from Sanjeev Singla, he will oversee revival of trade and defence ties

Subashini Haldar  
NEW DELHI

India has named Jitendra Pal Singh — currently the Special Envoy to Afghanistan — as its next Ambassador to Israel.

Mr. Singh has held a number of important designations at the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) over the past few years. He assisted External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar as the Joint Secretary in the Minister's office, and has also headed the important Iran-Pakistan relations desk at the MEA.

He will take over as Indian Ambassador to Tel Aviv "shortly", the MEA said. This change of guard is expected to take place during the Israel-Hamas ceasefire in Gaza.

Mr. Singh's tenure in Tel Aviv is expected to be important in terms of bilateral defence and trade ties, but also because a growing number of Indian workers are being sent to work on projects in Israel. If the ceasefire holds, New Delhi also hopes to revive multi-lateral engagements like the I2U2 with Israel, U.S., UAE and the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor, both of which have been virtually shelved

since the October 7, 2023, terror attacks in Israel by Hamas and the conflict that has followed, taking nearly 50,000 lives. Steered Iran, Pak. ties Mr. Singh's assignments during this time have included balancing India's relationship with Iran along with its ties with Israel during the Kashmir reorganisation process in 2019. Mr. Singh also oversaw talks to the Kartikeyan in Kashmir during the Kashmir reorganisation process in 2019. Mr. Singh also oversaw talks to the Kartikeyan in Kashmir during the Kashmir reorganisation process in 2019.



Key diplomat: Jitendra Pal Singh with Taliban Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi in Kabul during a previous assignment. FILE PHOTO

dy seen the exchange of three Israeli women by Hamas and 90 Palestinian women and children detained by Israel. India has welcomed the ceasefire, and Palestinian diplomats have expressed the hope that India will be involved in the future reconstruction process in Gaza.

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## Pawar didn't do anything for cooperatives as Union Agriculture Minister: Shah

The Hindu Bureau  
MUMBAI

Nationalist Congress Party (Sharadchandra Pawar) chair Sharad Pawar said nothing for the development of cooperative mills in Maharashtra during his time in office, Union Minister of Cooperation Amit Shah said at the cooperatives conference in Nashik on Friday.

"Pawar sahab you were the Agriculture Minister of India for 10 years. At that time this Cooperative Minister was under your charge. Please give an account of what was done for the cooperative movement of Maharashtra. What have you done for the sugar mills? What have you done for the farmers? Being a marketer is not enough to become a leader. You have to work on the ground Pawar sahab," Mr. Shah said.

Mr. Shah asserted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had solved the problem of sugar cooperatives. "For several years, there was a dispute over the tax on cooperative sugar factories in Maharashtra. But the BJP government, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, resolved this issue," Mr. Shah said. He also said that the Union Minister of Cooperation Ministry was a 75-year-old man, and being a marketer is not enough to become a leader. Besides Mr. Shah, Union Minister of State for Cooperation Muralidhar Mohal,



Amit Shah

## SC refuses plea for stay on Darshan's bail

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday declined to stay a Karnataka High Court order allowing bail to Kannada actor Darshan Thoogudeepa in the Renikawasy murder case.

A Bench headed by Justice J.B. Pardiwala said a stay would result in a large amount to cancellation of bail. The top court, however, agreed to examine the Karnataka government's challenge against the High Court bail order, and issued notice to the actor.

The High Court had on December 13 last year granted bail to Mr. Darshan and others. The State, represented

by senior advocate Siddharth Luthra, said the High Court had "whitewashed" the whole case against Mr. Darshan.

"Decide on merit" — "To protect the interest of prosecution, if any co-accused pleads for stay, it should be decided on its own merit."

"To protect the interest of prosecution, if any co-accused pleads for stay, it should be decided on its own merit."

## Pralay, India's first quasi-ballistic missile, to be showcased at Republic Day parade

Dinakar Peri  
NEW DELHI

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) is set to showcase "Pralay", an indigenous short-range quasi-ballistic missile, at the Republic Day parade in New Delhi on Sunday.

Meant for the Army and the Air Force, Pralay is the first ballistic missile in India's arsenal for conventional strikes. The Army's Battle Surveillance System (BSS) will also be part of the parade.

With a range of 400 km, Pralay adds to the BrahMos and Parashu missiles already in the inventory, giving the Indian military an option for stand-off

The Hindu Bureau  
BENGALURU

The Mysuru unit of the Lokayukta Police submitted its investigation report into the Mysore Urban Development Authority's (MUDA) site allocation scam, to the Additional Director-General of Police, Lokayukta, on Friday.

The case pertains to the allotment of 14 alternative sites to Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's wife, R.M. Parvathi, in lieu of 3.16 acres of land.

The report is expected to be examined and submitted to the High Court of Karnataka on Saturday. The case will come up for hearing on Monday.

While hearing a petition by the complainant and his lawyer, the Bench, in the presence of Krishna, seeking a Central Bureau of Investigation probe into the case, expressed lack of confidence in the Lokayukta probe, the High Court on January 15 asked the Inspector-



Under scrutiny: Siddaramaiah leaves Lokayukta office after being questioned in MUDA site allotment case, in Mysuru in Nov. 2024. PTI

General of Police, Lokayukta, to oversee the probe by its Mysuru unit ADGP, Lokayukta, to examine the report, and submit it to the court and adjourned the case to January 27.

The Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has claimed that the report by its Mysuru unit ADGP, Lokayukta, to examine the report, and submit it to the court and adjourned the case to January 27.

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Leyland 12x12 high-mobility vehicle as seen during the ongoing rehearsals for the Republic Day parade.

In 2023, the Defence Acquisition Directorate (DAC) proved procurement of the short-range quasi-ballistic missiles with a range of 400 km and Nirbhay long-range cruise missiles with a range of 1,000 km. The new missiles will give a long-range conventional strike option for the Indian Army and the Navy.

A new derivative of the Pralay missile is under development for over a decade now, has been given launcher capability and trials are under way.

## China's refusal to sign water treaties worrying: Khandu

The Hindu Bureau  
GURGAOHA

Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu said China's refusal to enter into binding international water treaties, and selective sharing of hydrological data have raised concerns in the northeastern region.

Speaking at the inaugural function of a seminar titled "Environment and Security" organised at the Assembly in Itanagar on Friday, he drew the attention of all stakeholders towards the Chinese plan to construct the world's largest hydropower project on the Yarlung Tsangpo river in the state.

The State as Siang and becomes the Brahmaputra in Assam before flowing into Bangladesh as the Jamuna.

In December, China confirmed plans to build a 60,000 megawatt dam on the Karakoram in the Arunachal Pradesh border in Tibet. Beijing claimed the hydroelectric project would have minimal impact on the Hima and sub-Himalayan regions.

The dam will flow China control the timing and volume of water flowing downstream, which could have devastating effects during periods of low flow or drought. The mighty Siang or the Brahmaputra



Pema Khandu

river will dry up during winters, disrupting life in the Siang belt and the plains of Assam," Mr. Khandu warned.

On the other hand, sudden release of water from the dam could cause severe flooding downstream, displacing communities, destroying crops, and damaging infrastructure.

Furthermore, the dam will alter the sediment flow, affecting agricultural lands that rely on the river's natural replenishment of nutrients," he said.

China's construction of the hydropower dam on the Yarlung Tsangpo River poses significant risks to the water security, ecology, and livelihoods of people downstream in Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, and Bangladesh. "The potential disruption of water flow, flooding, and ecosystem degradation could have far-reaching consequences," he said.

## SC declines petition to scrap TDS framework

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday refused to entertain a petition to scrap the tax deducted at source (TDS) framework under the Income Tax Act, saying the system was prevalent in many countries.

A Bench headed by the Chief Justice of India Sanjay Khanna allowed advocates-petitioner Ashwin Ujjay to approach the Delhi High Court.

The petition sought to scrap the TDS system, calling it "arbitrary and irrational", and violative of various fundamental rights.

It challenged the TDS framework under the Income Tax Act, which mandates the deduction of tax at the time of payment by the payer, and its deposit with the Income Tax Department. The deducted amount is adjusted against the payee's tax liability.

## Hindu families must have 3 children: VHP

Shilpa Mishra  
NEW DELHI

The Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) on Friday urged Hindu families to have at least three children "as it is the most important responsibility to protect the existence of Hindu society".

It stated that the main reason for the "declining birth rate" of the Hindu community is the "imbalance in the population".

The VHP's statement was made during a two-day meeting of its Kendriya Prasthiti Mandal held at the Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh. VHP spokesperson Vinod Bansal said members of the Kendriya Prasthiti Mandal have called

for "increasing the birth rate of the Hindu community" to keep its population "balanced".

The VHP has already started a nationwide campaign to free Hindu temples from government control. Now, we have got the approval and support of the Hindu community as well," Mr. Bansal said.

He added, "The Hindu saints believe that all temples should be freed from government control. The management of temples should be handed over to the devotees." "As an important responsibility to protect the existence of Hindu society, at least three children should be born in every Hindu family," he added.

# Pralay, India's first quasi-ballistic missile, to be showcased at Republic Day parade

**Dinakar Peri**

NEW DELHI

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) is set to showcase "Pralay", an indigenous short-range quasi-ballistic missile, at the Republic Day parade in New Delhi on Sunday.

Meant for the Army and the Air Force, Pralay is the first ballistic missile in India's arsenal for conventional strikes. The Army's Battle Surveillance System "Sanjay" will also be part of the parade.

With a range of 400 kilometres, Pralay adds to the BrahMos and Parahar missiles already in the inventory, giving the Indian military an option for stand-off



The Pralay Weapon System on display during the full dress rehearsal for the Republic Day parade in New Delhi on Thursday. PTI

missile strikes across the border. It is meant for deployment along both the Line of Control (LoC) and the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

The development trials of Pralay are over and it is

now complete, officials said, noting that the Defence Ministry had already accorded the Acceptance of Necessity for its induction. The system features a twin launcher configuration mounted on an Ashok

Leyland 12x12 high-mobility vehicle as seen during the ongoing rehearsals for the Republic Day parade.

In 2023, the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) approved procurement of the Pralay tactical ballistic missiles with a range of 400 km and Nirbhay long-range subsonic land attack cruise missiles with a range of 1,000 km, both of which will give a long-range conventional strike option for the Indian military. Put together, a few hundred missiles were approved for procurement by the DAC.

A new derivative of Nirbhay, which has been under development for over a decade now, has been flight-tested recently and trials are under way.

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## **Missile Overview:**

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**Pralay** is India's **first quasi-ballistic missile** developed by **DRDO**.

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It is a **short-range tactical ballistic missile** designed for **conventional strikes**.

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**Showcased at the Republic Day parade** in New Delhi.

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## **Technical Specifications:**

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**Range:** 400 km.

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**Deployment:** Along **LoC (Line of Control)** and **LAC (Line of Actual Control)**.

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Adds to India's missile inventory along with **BrahMos** and **Prahar**.

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Mounted on an **Ashok Leyland 12x12 high-mobility vehicle**.

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## Strategic Importance:

- Provides a **long-range conventional strike option** for the Indian military.
- Approved for **mass procurement** by the **Defence Acquisition Council (DAC)** in 2023.
- **A few hundred missiles have been sanctioned for induction.**

## Comparison with Other Missiles:

- **Nirbhay:** Long-range subsonic land attack cruise missile (1,000 km range), under development for over a decade.
- Both Pralay and Nirbhay **enhance India's offensive capabilities.**

IN BRIEF

Wildfire threatens villages in Arunachal's Tawang

A wildfire, threatening to single several villages, is raging in the Tawang district of Arunachal Pradesh. District officials said the fire broke out in the Twang Chu (river) belt below the Sakayur village in the Langza subdivision at around 10 a.m. on Friday. "The fire spread quickly. It was contained to some extent through the joint efforts of the local administration, police, Army and Assasstra Seema Bal personnel, and the villagers," a district official said. "The fire is spreading to a wooded area that is not easily accessible. We are monitoring the situation and trying to bring the fire under control," the officer added.

Autrickshaw driver arrested for raping woman in Mumbai

An autrickshaw driver was arrested by the Mumbai Police for allegedly raping a 20-year-old woman, police said on Friday. The 32-year-old accused, a resident of Kharpada in Wally, reportedly assaulted the victim on the Arunala beach near Vasal before bringing her to Mumbai in his autrickshaw on Tuesday. According to the police, the accused left the woman unconscious and fled the scene. A senior police officer probing the case told *The Hindu* that the victim was shifted to a hospital. A case was registered under Section 64(2) (b) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita at the Varur police station, and an investigation was launched.

Mumbai Police record actor Saif Ali Khan's statement

Actor Saif Ali Khan has provided a detailed account of the January 16 attack at his Bandra residence, when he was stabbed multiple times during an alleged robbery attempt. The actor, who recently underwent two surgeries, spoke to the Mumbai Police late on Thursday night, narrating the events that left his family shaken. According to sources, Mr. Khan described how the ordeal began with the screams of his younger son Jehangir's nanny. Rushing to his son's room, he confronted the intruder, who then stabbed him repeatedly in the back and neck. The Bandra Magistrate Court on Friday extended the police custody of the accused till January 29.

Melanistic leopard spotted in West Bengal's Kurseong

A melanistic leopard has recently been spotted at Kurseong, around 53 km from West Bengal's Siliguri town. The animal was sighted on the way to Chimney at the Bagora forest about eight kilometres from Kurseong at 6,800 feet above the sea level. The video of the leopard sparked enthusiasm among wildlife lovers and panic among local people. Divisional Forest Officer, Kurseong, Devesh Pandey said the melanistic leopard had not ventured out into populated areas but was instead roaming within its natural jungle habitat. The DFO said that people should respect the animal's habitat and if left undisturbed, it will not pose a threat.

Odisha tops NITI fiscal health index, Chhattisgarh next best

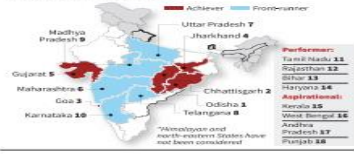
Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, and Kerala were the worst-performing States, as per the NITI Aayog report, while Maharashtra, U.P., Telangana, M.P., Karnataka were in 'front-runners' category

Press Trust of India

Madhya Pradesh topped the annual fiscal health index of Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Goa, and Jharkhand have emerged as top-performing 'achievers' among the States listed in NITI Aayog's first Fiscal Health Index (FHI) report released on Friday. The report titled "Fiscal Health Index 2025" ranked States for 2022-23, covering 18 major States that drive the Indian economy in terms of their contribution to India's GDP, demography, total public expenditure, revenues, and overall fiscal stability. According to the report, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, and Kerala were the worst-performing States in the Fiscal Health Index (FHI), each facing significant fiscal challenges and listed under the "aspirational" category. The report aims to evolve an understanding of the fiscal health of States and it has listed Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, and Gujarat as "front-runners" category. Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Rajasthan, and Haryana were classified as performers.

Fine balance

Analysis in the NITI Aayog's report on the fiscal health index for FY23 highlights that strong revenue mobilisation, effective expenditure management and prudent fiscal practices are critical determinants of success



plus, and have low interest payments which is up to 7% of revenue receipts. The government think tank said the front-runner States reported high total developmental expenditure up to 73%, witnessed consistent growth in own tax revenue, had balanced fiscal management and improved debt sustainability with debt-to-GSDP ratio of 24%. The report noted that the aspirational States of Kerala, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh and Punjab are struggling to meet the fiscal and revenue deficit targets. They have low revenue mobilisation, witnessing a growing debt burden with debt sustainability concerns in these States. As per the report, Odisha tops the debt index (0.9) and debt sustainability (0.64-0) rankings with better than average scores under quality of expenditure and revenue mobilisation. Odisha has maintained low fiscal deficits, a good debt profile, and an above average capital outlay-GSDP ratio. While Kerala and Punjab struggle with low quality of expenditure and debt sustainability, the report said, States with high revenue mobilisation and debt index issues. Andhra Pradesh has the highest deficit and Haryana has a poor debt profile, it said. According to the report, Odisha, Goa, Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Chhattisgarh scored the highest average FHI score for 2014-15 to 2022-22 period. The data used to calculate the Fiscal Health Index were sourced from the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG).

Two Elgar Parishad case accused walk out of prison

Press Trust of India

Researcher Rona Wilson and activist Sudhir Dhawale, accused in the Elgar Parishad-Maoist link case, were on Friday released on bail from a Navri Maoist prison, more than six years after they were arrested. The duo walked out of the Talaja jail in neighbouring Navri Mumbai around 1.30 p.m. on completion of legal formalities before the special NIA court presiding over the case, over a fortnight after they were granted bail by the Bombay High Court. The High Court granted bail to Mr. Wilson and Mr. Dhawale on January 8, noting they had been in custody since 2018 and the trial in the case, in which NIA has been invoked, was yet to start. Apart from the duo, 14 others were arrested in the case.

Study finds link between smartphone use and mental health of adolescents

Ramya Kannan

CHENNAI

A survey of over 10,000 adolescents (13-17 years) in the United States and India has revealed that mental well-being is closely linked with earlier age of initiation of mobile phones, and overall decline significantly with each younger year of age. The report, titled "The Youth Mind: Rising Aggression and Anger", by Sapient Labs documented the responses of 10,475 internet-enabled adolescents across India and the U.S. in 2024. Although numerous factors have traditionally been identified as drivers of poor mental health, one key change in the younger generations is the arrival of smartphones, which were introduced in 2008, coinciding with the rising mental health problems. The report highlighted key trends, with a particular focus on rising feelings of aggression, anger, irritability, and hallucinations in this age group. The decline in mind health is characterised not only by sadness and anxiety but also by unwanted thoughts and a sense of being detached from reality. Highlighting the differences between the two cohorts, Tara Thiagarajan, neuroscientist with Sapient Labs, said the pace of deterioration of mental well-being is slower in India. "While the overall decline in mental well-being in younger ages is strongly present for males and females in the elementary and middle school years. "One of the possible solutions is also to provide restricted access to phones for teenagers using apps, which lock in parental control regarding app access, while allowing them to access a school counselling or messaging," Dr. Thiagarajan said.



Global concern: Expert says the pace of deterioration of mental well-being is slower in India, when compared to U.S. GETTY IMAGES

mentals in India have worse mental well-being on the whole, than their counterparts in the U.S. While aggression, anger and irritability are consistently related to the age of smartphone initiation in both U.S. and Indian females, for girls in India, their decline significantly young is more likely to result in increased sleep and health problems as adults," she said.

Merits of ed-tech

In an attempt to address the concerns in the growing debate on the merits of educational technology (ed-tech) in the elementary and middle school years. "One of the possible solutions is also to provide restricted access to phones for teenagers using apps, which lock in parental control regarding app access, while allowing them to access a school counselling or messaging," Dr. Thiagarajan said.

FAITH

Divine occurrences

The first three Azhvars, namely, Poigal Azhvar, Bhootatazhvar, and Peyazhvar were avyanjas. That means they were not born of women. Their births were divine occurrences. V.S. Karunakarachariar said in a discourse, Poigal Azhvar was born in Kanchesepuram in the Tamil month of Aippasi (mid-October to mid-November) in the star Shrivana. Bhootatazhvar was born in the same month in the town of Maralappuram in the star Avittam. Peyazhvar was born in Mylapore in Aippasi in the star Sadayam. The three of them had their avatars in different places, but they were united by one common goal - the attainment of Lord Narayana.

The name Bhoota for a human being may seem strange, but in the case of the Azhvar, it was meaningful. Bhoota means existing. Sage Narada spoke of a breathing corpse. How can a body bereft of life breathe? Why did Narada say something so contradictory? A person who never thinks of God may be technically alive but, in fact, he is considered dead. In a world where most people fall in this category, Bhootatazhvar was always thinking about the Lord. So he deserved to be called the "existing" one. All three Azhvars travelled to different temples of Vishnu and underwent different addresses. Free from desire, free from possession, their lives consisted only of worship and devotion. Their verses are the earliest of the verses collectively known as Nalayira Divya Prabandham. One night, they met in a small room, and had darshan of Lord Narayana. The three were obviously there by divine design. For their words, when they saw the Lord, mark the beginning of the Divya Prabandham.

Crossword puzzle grid with clues. 13. Narrow-minded snail stifles peer beside right away (9). 14. Feeling hurt, staying single after end of relationship (12). 15. Perceived as hot but super-erect? (7) (5,3,4). 21. Confines dirty revolutionary cracking safe (8). 22. Petition about conserving a little rare English bird (5). 24. Endless craving for drug (7). 25/4. Boyfriends captivated by remarkably hot Bulgarians - the outcome is inevitable (13,4,3,2). 26. Legend in gala conducting finale (6). 27. Most intense irritation after terrible rash (8). Down: 1. Exclamation of wonder after revolutionary work by women in conference (6). 2. Stylish bird on island, passing close to lake (6). 3. Unusual premise about helium in astronomical almanac (9). 4. See 25 Across. 6. Excellent! Bowled precisely (5). 7. Princess egyptologist's latest nub, it's devious (8). 8. Contacted American associate taking endless time to provide info about info (8). 9. What person swimming underwater will do to wait in anxious expectation (4,4). 10. Crooked liar! Urge Republican to change (9). 12. Expert hoping sarnam on power shaver (9). 17. Whipped fatty stuff containing pure junk (8). 19. Wants large art museum to conserve European painter's complete works (6). 20. Mysterious cult conducting religious education (6). 22. Miserable Monroe wanting ecstasy and slope (6).

Sudoku puzzle and solution. The puzzle is a 9x9 grid with numbers 5, 8, 9, 3, 5, 3, 5, 5, 8, 4, 7, 3, 9, 8, 4, 8, 7, 8, 3, 3, 1, 4, 9, 4, 8, 7, 1, 6, 4, 8, 4, 9, 7, 1, 6, 9, 5, 7, 2, 2, 6, 4, 3, 8. The solution is provided below the puzzle.

# Odisha tops NITI fiscal health index, Chhattisgarh next best

Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, and Kerala were the worst-performing States, as per the Niti Aayog report, while Maharashtra, U.P., Telangana, M.P., Karnataka were in 'front-runners' category

**Press Trust of India**  
NEW DELHI

**M**ineral-rich Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Goa, and Jharkhand have emerged as top-performing 'achievers' among the States listed in NITI Aayog's first Fiscal Health Index (FHI) report released on Friday.

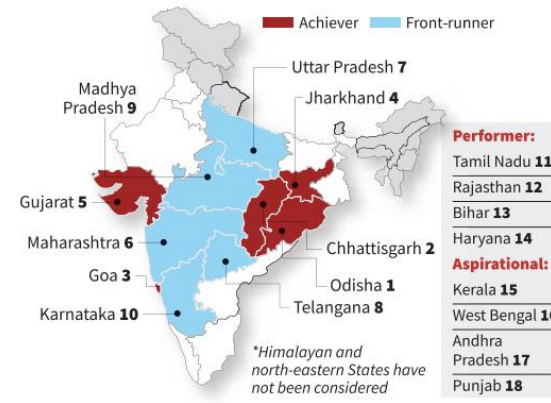
The report titled "Fiscal Health Index 2025" ranked States for 2022-23, covering 18 major States that drive the Indian economy in terms of their contribution to India's GDP, demography, total public expenditure, revenues, and overall fiscal stability.

According to the report, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, and Kerala were the worst-performing States in the Fiscal Health Index (FHI), each facing significant fiscal challenges, and listed under "aspirational" category.

The report aims to evolve an understanding of the fiscal health of States and it has listed Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka under the "front-runners" category. Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Rajas-

## Fine balance

Analysis in the Niti Aayog's report on the fiscal health index for FY23 highlights that strong revenue mobilisation, effective expenditure management, and prudent fiscal practices are critical determinants of success



than, and Haryana were classified as performers.

As per the report, released by 16th Finance Commission Chairman Arvind Panagariya, Odisha excelled in fiscal health, with the highest overall index score of 67.8.

Referring to top five achiever States, NITI Aayog said these States have higher capital outlay of up to 4% of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP), effective mobilisation of non-tax revenue, are revenue sur-

plus, and have low interest payments which is up to 7% of revenue receipts.

The government think tank said the front-runner States reported high total developmental expenditure up to 73%, witnessed consistent growth in own tax revenue, had balanced fiscal management and improved debt sustainability with debt-to-GSDP ratio of 24%.



The report noted that the aspirational States of Kerala, West Bengal, And-

hra Pradesh and Punjab are struggling to meet the fiscal and revenue deficit targets, have low revenue mobilisation, witnessing a growing debt burden with debt sustainability a concern in these States.

As per the report, Odisha tops the debt index (99.0) and debt sustainability (64.0) rankings with better than average scores under quality of expenditure and revenue mobilisation. Odisha has maintained low fiscal deficits, a good debt profile, and an above average capital outlay/GSDP ratio.

While Kerala and Punjab struggle with low quality of expenditure and debt sustainability, the report said, West Bengal faces revenue mobilisation and debt index issues. Andhra Pradesh has high fiscal deficit and Haryana has a poor debt profile, it said.

According to the report, Odisha, Goa, Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Chhattisgarh scored the highest average FHI score for 2014-15 to 2021-22 period. The data used to calculate the Fiscal Health Index were sourced from the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG).

- 
- **Top Performers (Achievers Category)**
  - **Odisha** ranked **first** in fiscal health with an index score of **99.0**.
  - **Chhattisgarh, Goa, and Jharkhand** also emerged as **top-performing States**.
  - These states had **high revenue mobilization, effective expenditure management, and strong fiscal practices**.
- 

- **Worst-Performing States (Aspirational Category)**
- **Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, and Kerala** ranked at the bottom due to **high fiscal deficits and weak debt sustainability**.
- These states are struggling with **revenue mobilization** and **rising debt burden**.





- **Front-Runners in Fiscal Performance**
- **Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka** were listed as 'front-runners'.
- These states have **high development expenditure (up to 73% of GSDP), strong tax revenue growth, and fiscal discipline.**




- **Fiscal Challenges of Poor Performers**
- **Kerala and Punjab** suffer from **low expenditure quality and weak debt sustainability**.
- **West Bengal** faces challenges in **revenue collection and debt repayment**.
- **Andhra Pradesh** has a **high fiscal deficit**, and **Haryana** has a **poor debt profile**.





## 1. Overall Findings

1. The report, compiled by **16th Finance Commission Chairman Arvind Panagariya**, emphasized the importance of **revenue generation and fiscal discipline**.
  2. Data used for the **Fiscal Health Index** was sourced from the **Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG)**.
- 

# Study finds link between smartphone use and mental health of adolescents

**Ramya Kannan**

CHENNAI

A survey of over 10,000 adolescents (13-17 years) in the United States and India has revealed that mental well-being is closely linked with earlier age of initiation of mobile phones, and could decline significantly with each younger year of age.

The report, titled “The Youth Mind: Rising Aggression and Anger”, by Sapien Labs documented the responses of 10,475 Internet-enabled adolescents across India and the U.S. in 2024. Although numerous factors have traditionally been identified as drivers of poor mental health, one key change in the younger generations is the arrival of smartphones, which were introduced in 2008, coinciding with the onset of rising mental health problems.

The report highlighted key trends, with a particu-



**Global concern:** Expert says the pace of deterioration of mental well-being is slower in India, when compared to U.S. GETTY IMAGES

lar focus on rising feelings of aggression, anger, irritability, and hallucinations in this age group. The decline in mind health is characterised not only by sadness and anxiety but also by new symptoms, including unwanted thoughts and a sense of being detached from reality. Highlighting the differences between the American and Indian cohorts, Tara Thiagarajan, neuroscientist with Sapien Labs, said the pace of deterioration of mental well-be-

ing is slower in India. “While the overall decline in mental well-being in younger ages is strongly present for males and females in the U.S., it is only present for females in India and not in males (where only select aspects deteriorated, while others improved). Even for females, it (the overall decline in mental well-being) is not as steep in India,” Dr. Thiagarajan said.

“On the other hand, both adolescent males and


females in India have worse mental well-being on the whole, than their counterparts in the U.S. While aggression, anger and hallucinations are consistently related to the age of smartphone initiation for both U.S. and Indian females, for girls in India, getting their phones very young is more likely to result in increased sleep and health problems as adults,” she said.

## Merits of ed-tech

In an attempt to address this, there is a growing debate on the merits of educational technology (ed-tech) in the elementary and middle school years. “One of the possible solutions is also to provide restricted access to phones for teenagers using apps, which lock in parental controls regarding apps teens can access, while allowing them to access a school portal or messaging,” Dr. Thiagarajan said.

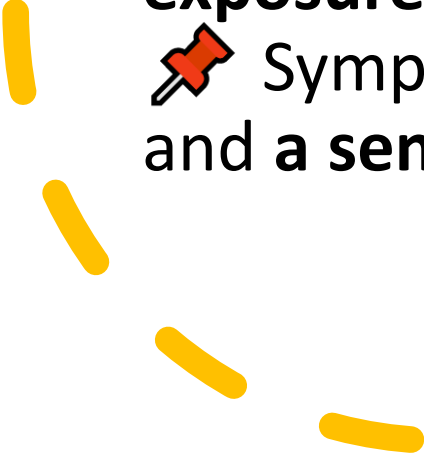








- **Key Findings (English)**

-  A study of **10,475 adolescents (13-17 years)** in India and the U.S. found that **mental well-being declines** with **earlier smartphone use**.

-  The study, “**The Youth Mind: Rising Aggression and Anger**”, by **Sapien Labs**, highlights the **negative impact of early smartphone exposure on mental health**.

-  Symptoms include **aggression, anger, irritability, hallucinations, and a sense of detachment from reality**.



- 
-  **Females in India** have **worse mental well-being** compared to their counterparts in the U.S.
    -  In **males**, the **mental decline is only seen in the U.S.**, while in **India**, only select aspects of mental health worsened.
    -  In **females**, **early smartphone use** leads to **increased sleep and mental health issues** in adulthood.
    -  **Solution Proposed** – **Restrict access to apps using parental controls**, while allowing access to **study portals and messaging**.
- 

# At 75, constitutional justice and personal liberty

## Competitive populism

The BJP is promising Delhi's voters what it had earlier dismissed as AAP's culture

A campaigning intensifies for the Delhi Assembly elections, scheduled for February 5. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Congress are raising promises of welfare schemes on every section of voters. The BJP, which was critical of the ruling AAP's unbridled populism as "revd", of a freebie culture, has not only promised that the schemes that are already in place in Delhi will continue but has also promised more. The sum of ₹2,100 that AAP has promised to women every month has seen the BJP and the Congress offering ₹2,500 instead. In the speeches of Chief Minister and AAP leader Arvind Kejriwal, there is an attempt to instil fear in the electorate that if they vote for the BJP, the free electricity, water, health care and education available to the poor would stop. He is also promising to extend the gravy train to the middle class; more specifically to sections of society such as doctors, pilots, resident welfare associations and autorickshaw drivers. But he has also made a public admission that three guarantees, namely, cleaning the Yamuna river, ensuring that Delhi's roads meet European standards and providing 24x7 clean drinking water to all, have not been fulfilled, and that if re-elected, will have the AAP government focus on the issue of unemployment.

The BJP's campaign has centred around the promise of a double-digit government. It is elected to govern the National Capital Territory. It is also making an all-out effort to tarnish AAP's claim of incorruptibility. Allegations of corruption in the allotment of liquor licences and the exorbitant amount of public money that was spent on the official residence of Mr. Kejriwal are the BJP's talking points. The AAP government has not shied away from the Comptroller and Auditor General in the Delhi Assembly that the BJP and the Congress say highlight proof of AAP's corruption. The BJP has promised to put out these reports in the public domain and constitute a probe. The central pitch of the Congress, which has seen its Chief Ministers, current and former, from other States campaigning for it, is that Congress governments have been more efficient and prompt in delivering welfare schemes. The Congress is also trying to involve the party, highlighting the infrastructure development in Delhi that was carried out under former Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit. The party has sensed that the late leader still evokes some nostalgia in the Delhi electorate. The party has criticised Mr. Kejriwal's leadership on the demand for a caste census. The BJP is fielding Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath as his appeal may influence migrant voters from U.P. and Bihar, now the fastest growing voters' segment in Delhi.

## Further south

Archaeologists must look for more iron-specific sites in south India.

The Iron Age in India has been a subject of fascination and discussion. In the rest of the world, the Iron Age succeeded the Copper-Bronze Age or bridged the gap between the Bronze Age and the Iron Age. However, the situation in India is different; when the region north of the Vindhyas belonged to the pre-Iron Chalcolithic or Copper Age, the south, with over 3,000 sites, was associated with iron. Many archaeologists have, generally and conservatively, placed the Iron Age to be in the second millennium BCE. Given this backdrop, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin's recent statement, that the origin of iron in the State could be traced to the first quarter of the fourth millennium, is significant as this pushes the antiquity of iron further. After excavations in the mid-Ganga Valley of Uttar Pradesh about 25 years ago, early evidence of iron technology was dated to 1800 BCE. But now, the work in Sivagangai in Tamil Nadu, which was carried out between 2019 and 2022, has made authorities attribute the introduction of iron in the country to the latter part of the second millennium BCE, even though the period of 2500 BCE-3000 BCE is taken as a mid-range value. This forms the highlight of a study by the State Department of Archaeology (TNSDA), titled "Antiquity of Iron: Recent radiometric dating in Tamil Nadu". The TNSDA had the scientific dating results of its study validated by renowned institutions such as the Beta Analytic laboratory in the U.S. Mr. Stalin's observation was made keeping the findings in mind. Early this month, he had announced a \$1-billion price scheme for deciphering the script of the Indus Valley Civilisation.

The work by the TNSDA should spur new thinking with regard to the strategies to be adopted by archaeologists who are working on the Iron Age of India. They may have to look for more iron-specific sites than copper-cum-iron sites, which will save precious and scarce resources. Even though the Tamil Nadu government supports research projects on a wide range of themes in other States, the TNSDA has its constraints with regard to territorial jurisdiction. This underscores the need for complementing Tamil Nadu's efforts with those of other southern States. The Archaeological Survey of India should take the initiative of bringing the entire southern region under a common fold and enabling well-designed and coordinated work. After all, the idea is to utilise available resources and expertise in the country to arrive at more reliable findings. At a time when certain forces are increasingly using history and culture as powerful instruments to pursue their political agenda, credible and concrete evidence on the antiquity of the country will naturally put to rest any claim based on baseless assumptions.

As we mark 75 years of the Constitution of India, I urge everyone to remember the ways in which the core values of the Constitution founder in a deep ethical and moral crisis, trapped as we are in reductionist, mechanical readings of the constitutional value of personal liberty and human dignity. In the midst of the celebration, we need to step back and take a sober look at the right to personal liberty, which is a core constituent of an idea of justice.

**Reinstating dissent as constitutional ethic**  
The Supreme Court of India reinstated dissent in *A.K. Gopalan vs State of Madras*, unanimously in *Puttaswamy vs Union of India* (2017), a case about the fundamental right to privacy. The preventive detention of the communist leader, A.K. Gopalan, by the government of independent India and the Supreme Court's majority ruling on constitutional interpretation in that case, in the inaugural year of the Constitution, (1950), have now been effectively declared as a judicial error. The retraction of this dissent (which, in effect, upheld Gopalan's right to political dissent) and two later ones (all three on the question of personal liberty), saw the majority judgments truncating liberty as being flawed from the standpoint of constitutional ethics. Within a broader framing of justice, the technicalities of the interpretation of a fundamental right were seen as inseparable from the centrality of personal liberty to constitutional ethics.

It can scarcely be forgotten that Article 21 (the right to life and personal liberty) is 'designed to assure the dignity of the individual as a most cherished human value which ensures the means of full development and evolution of a human being' (Justice K.E. Nariman in *Puttaswamy* paragraph 42). How and on what basis might we piece together memories that render the constitution 'workable', 'flexible' and 'strong' (in the words of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar)? How may we discern pathways through which the Freedom lights up ways to 'hold the country together' at a time when the dominant political discourse colours and degrades points to the 'darkened banality of shards' — such as the 'tukde tukde' narratives?

Preventive detention, arbitrary arrests, denial of fair trial through the impunity that is guaranteed statutorily in anti-terror laws, and demagogical-domicidal violence enact 'rituals of



K. Kannabiran is a sociologist based in Hyderabad

humiliation' — to use Sunder Boopalan's words — and impose indescribable wrongs on conscientious resisters in India today. I posit a juxtaposition that is instructive — there is the case of A.K. Gopalan (1950) challenging the inauguration of constitutional constraints and being detained at one end, and Umar Khalid, Sharjeel Imam, Gulshifa Fatima and several other anti-Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) resisters in prison (2025) challenging the CAA 2019 and living with bulldozers, dispossessions and the partisan prison context, at the other end.

By 2017, when the *Puttaswamy* judgment came down, the preventive detention in custody without bail had proliferated under the aegis of constitutional courts; there was an escalation in arrests and the prolonged detention of dissenters under the spiralling list of laws (State and Central) that were used for the detention and custody with scant regulations. Over the years, the process has become the punishment. We witness young and spirited dissenters who courageously challenged the CAA 2019, now trapped in the talons of anti-terror laws. There is an impermissible opacity of procedure and an endless deferment of decisions on the vital issue of personal liberty.

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K.G. Kannabiran, while reflecting on the travails of civil libertarian lawyers and their petitioners in courts over five decades, observed that the Gopalan judgment "is our own. It is the first 'Indian-made foreign judgement' which upheld an Indian-made colonial law". In this, 75 years later, we have now added more Indian-made colonial laws. But will the courts hold the *Puttaswamy* view of dissent and dignity in place and extend their reach as constitutional values that further the cause of personal liberty as the ultimate expression of justice under the Constitution?

**No room for retrospective regret**  
The case of the 16 arrests made in the Bithna Koreogon case (writers, intellectuals, cultural activists, poets, performers, teachers), the 19 arrests made in the Delhi riots case of anti-CAA protesters (most of them community leaders and student leaders and activists, of whom 17 are Muslim), and the anticipation of violence, arrest and domicile in the 'before and present danger' confronted especially by Muslims who dare to challenge unlawful state action, must make us pause. They call for a slew of interventions by constitutional courts in the exercise of 'creative constitutionalism' (to use Professor Upreksha Baxi's phrase) in the cause of the right to personal liberty as justice. This is needed so that India does not end up waiting 'another seven decades and four generations' to discover that we were again on the wrong side of the Constitution. Or that we understood and worked the Constitution in its seventh decade in ways that negated its ethical spirit, instead of upholding and furthering the idea of justice embedded within.

# Foundational values, the journey of the Indian state

In the 75th anniversary of the coming into effect of the Constitution of India, it is imperative to evaluate the journey of the Indian state from the perspective of its foundational values.

Therefore we plan the course ahead. After nearly three years of debate and deliberation, the Constituent Assembly of the newly independent India adopted its founding document, the Constitution of India. Two months thereafter, the Republic officially came into force with the Constitution being given effect to. When Dr. B.R. Ambedkar delivered the closing address to the Constituent Assembly on November 25, 1949, he characterised the complex challenges ahead. He anxiously wondered whether Indians would place "the country above their creed". Today, we realise that the words from the closing address carry meaning and lessons for the next 75 years and propel us to guard the Constitution.

**The federal republic**  
Many of the constitutional issues that have been intensely debated in recent times have been around the interpretation of India's federal structure. Tussles between State governments and some of the State Governors have made their way to the Supreme Court of India. Pitched battles are being fought within and outside Parliament on the issue of simultaneous elections. The neglect of 'regional languages' such as Tamil, Kannada, Bengali, Marathi and so on is being argued from the vanguard of multilingualistic equality and State autonomy. Fiscal federalism has been a major sticking point for States that are suffering under the dual regime of the Finance Commission and the Goods and Services Tax Act. The need for decentralised exercise, which will determine the democratic future of India, is set to result in the showdown between the Union and States that have controlled their population.

It is strange that given how integral federalism has been to the constitutional discourse over the last 50 years or so, the word 'federalism' has nowhere to be found in the text of the Constitution.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

**Rail travel**  
The Indian Railways have to make concerted efforts to improve passenger safety. But there is another issue: ensuring that passengers do not face situations that cause their discomfort and endanger the safety of their belongings. Very often, one finds reserved compartments being overcrowded by 'passengers' who do not have reserved tickets. There are also vendors and vagrants who take advantage of the indifference of railway staff. The plight of passengers/unserved compartments

is even worse. The authorities must ensure that every passenger has a happy and safe journey. S. Soudarajan, Hyderabad, Tamil Nadu

**The Trump approach**  
It is quite clear from U.S. President Donald Trump's pronouncements and executive decisions that he wants to run the U.S. government like a business enterprise. But he should know that even business enterprises have what is called 'corporate social responsibility'. Promoting the U.S. as a world leader in

every sense of the word requires its leader to play the role of a responsible leader. He must help multilateral organisations ensure that the welfare, humanity and the environment to function in a harmonious manner. Manjeet Singh Sandhu, Amritsar, Punjab

**Elephant in well, its rescue**  
A report on the drama around the rescue of a tusker that had fallen into a well in Malappuram district in Kerala (January 26, 2025) indicates growing friction in the man-wildlife

relationship and shrinking sentient ethics. At the root of the problem are poaching, deforestation, mining, poaching, agricultural expansion, climate change, the dumping of waste in the environment and the colonisation along elephant corridors. We need a focused strategy that includes widespread awareness, strict enforcement of laws, and involving local residents, with a political leader standing by focusing on sustainable development, safeguarding elephant corridors, installing 'bee buzzers' in fields and roping in local people in conservation. R. Srivatsan, Chennai

It was shocking that there was vehement resistance by local residents, with a political leader saying that

'the elephant should be buried alive'. People should be more co-operative during such critical situations. Hemal Satheshan, Nagercoil, Tamil Nadu

Had the elephant been a human, would it have not forgotten the same cruel sentiments? People should not forget that elephants face dire situations due to human activities. Hemal Kannekar, Mumbai

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the postal address.



Manuvel Shrimungusundaram is Spokesperson, Ambedkar Movement, Kashiappa and an advocate in the Madras High Court



**An unequal democracy**  
The intellect of the Constituent Assembly is on whether and how India is to mature into a true federal social democracy that is guided by the constitutional values of liberty, equality and fraternity. The argument of critics of the government is that it has become a police state. The other argument is that stringent special statutes such as the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and the Prevention of Money Laundering Act makes the nation but the people who are called to govern.

What is required today is clear-headed guidance on the future of our constitutional philosophy. In Plato's *Republic*, he argues the case for a class of guardians who are philosopher-kings. India today needs guardians who can place the country above their creed and stand firm that to democracy itself. He went on to underline the importance of fraternity for the future of the nation. Only then can we truly aspire to fulfil the promise of the Constitution.

**Corrections & Clarifications**  
Mohammed Abdul Nazir represents the Living Assembly constituency of Marappur, not Arifnagar, as mentioned in a report, '2000's lone MLA withdraws support to govt. in Manipal' (Inside pages, January 23, 2025).

The reporter's office can be contacted by telephone: +91 44 28242027/28243020. Email: mohammedabulnazir@rediffmail.com

# At 75, constitutional justice and personal liberty

**A**s we mark 75 years of the Constitution of India, I urge everyone to remember the ways in which the core values of the Constitution flounder in a deep ethical and moral crisis, trapped as we are in reductionist, mechanical readings of the constitutional value of personal liberty and human dignity. In the midst of the celebration, we need to step back and take a sober look at the right to personal liberty, which is a core constituent of an idea of justice.

## Reinstating dissent as constitutional ethic

The Supreme Court of India reinstated Justice S. Fazl Ali's dissenting opinion in *A.K. Gopalan vs State of Madras*, unanimously in *Puttaswamy vs Union of India* (2017), a case about the fundamental right to privacy. The preventive detention of the communist leader, A.K. Gopalan, by the government of independent India and the Supreme Court's majority ruling on constitutional interpretation in that case, in the inaugural year of the Constitution, (1950), have now been effectively declared as a judicial wrong. The resurrection of this dissent (which, in effect, upheld Gopalan's right to political dissent) and two later ones (all three on the question of personal liberty), saw the majority judgments truncating liberty as being flawed from the standpoint of constitutional ethics. Within a broader framing of justice, the technicalities of the interpretation of a fundamental right were seen as inseparable from the centrality of personal liberty to constitutional ethics.

It can scarcely be forgotten that Article 21 (the right to life and personal liberty) is 'designed to assure the dignity of the individual as a most cherished human value which ensures the means of full development and evolution of a human being' (Justice R.F. Nariman in *Puttaswamy*, paragraph 42). How and on what basis might we piece together memories that render the Constitution 'workable', 'flexible' and 'strong' (in the words of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar)? How may we discover pathways through which the Preamble lights up ways to 'hold the country together' at a time when the dominant political discourse reduces and degrades politics to the fractured banality of shards – such as the '*tukde tukde*' narratives?

Preventive detention, arbitrary arrests, denial of fair trial through the impunity that is guaranteed statutorily in anti-terror laws, and democidal-domicidal violence enact 'rituals of



**Kalpna Kannabiran**

is a sociologist based in Hyderabad

In the midst of marking 75 years of the Constitution of India, India needs to take a sober look at the right to personal liberty being a core constituent of an idea of justice

'humiliation' – to use Sunder Boopalan's words – and impose indescribable wrongs on conscientious resisters in India today. I posit a juxtaposition that is instructive – there is the case of A.K. Gopalan (1950) challenging the inauguration of constitutional contradictions and being detained at one end, and Umar Khalid, Sharjeel Imam, Gulfisha Fatima and several other anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) resisters in prison (2025) challenging the CAA 2019 and living with bulldozers, dispossessions and the partisan prison complex, at the other end.

By 2017, when the Puttaswamy judgment came, preventive detention and prolonged custody without bail had proliferated under the aegis of constitutional courts; there was an escalation in arrests and the prolonged detention of dissenters under the spiralling list of laws (State and central) that, by now, authorised detention and custody with scant regulations. Over the years, the process has become the punishment. We witness young and spirited dissenters who courageously challenged the CAA 2019, now trapped in the talons of anti-terror laws. There is an impenetrable opacity of procedure and an endless deferment of decisions on the vital issue of personal liberty.

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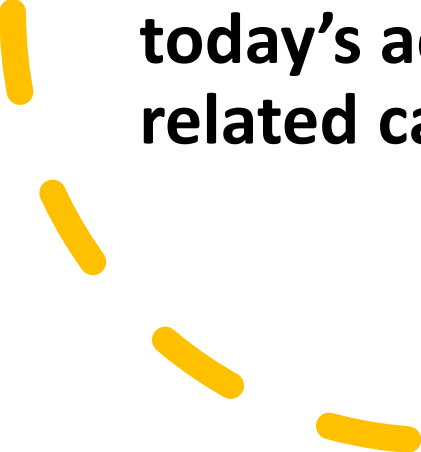
## No room for retrospective regret



The case of the 16 arrests made in the Bhima Koregaon case (writers, intellectuals, cultural activists, poets, performers, teachers), the 19 arrests made in the Delhi riots case of anti-CAA protesters (most of them community leaders and student leaders and activists, of whom 17 are Muslim), and the anticipation of violence, arrest and domicile as a 'clear and present danger' confronted especially by Muslims who dare to challenge unlawful state action, must make us pause. They call for a slew of interventions by constitutional courts in the exercise of 'creative constitutionalism' (to use Professor Upendra Baxi's phrase) in the cause of the right to personal liberty as justice. This is needed so that India does not end up waiting 'another seven decades and four generations' to discover that we were again on the wrong side of the Constitution. Or that we understood and worked the Constitution in its seventh decade in ways that negated its ethical spirit, instead of upholding and furthering the idea of justice embedded within.





- 
- **India marks 75 years of the Constitution**, prompting a reflection on constitutional justice, personal liberty, and fundamental rights.
    - 📌 The Supreme Court reinstated Justice Fazl Ali's dissent in **A.K. Gopalan vs. State of Madras (1950)** in **Puttaswamy vs. Union of India (2017)**, reaffirming the **fundamental right to privacy**.
    - 📌 The **1950** ruling in **Gopalan's** case upheld **preventive detention**, while the **2017** ruling upheld **individual liberty** against **state overreach**.
- 

- 
-  **Preventive detention, arbitrary arrests, and prolonged custody** are still misused, challenging **personal liberty and justice**.
  -  The **CAA protests and subsequent arrests** reflect **state repression and curbing of dissent**, drawing parallels to past cases.
  -  The **case of A.K. Gopalan**, who was jailed in **1947** for "**criminal intent**" against the **then-oppressor C. Rajagopalachari**, mirrors **today's activists** facing arrests under **UAPA, sedition laws, and CAA-related cases**.
- 

-  The **Bhima Koregaon case** (16 activists, including intellectuals, artists, and students, imprisoned for years) raises concerns over **freedom of expression and justice.**  
 The **judicial system should uphold constitutional values** and **re-examine outdated legal interpretations that hinder liberty.**



FACILITY LIKELY TO COST \$20-30 BN

# RIL's 3-GW data centre set to be world's biggest

SARITHA RAI  
January 24

**RELIANCE INDUSTRIES (RIL)** is building what may become the world's biggest data centre by capacity in India, the latest in a blitz of global investments to capitalise on booming demand for artificial intelligence services.

RIL is buying Nvidia's powerful AI semiconductors and setting up a data centre in the town of Jamnagar that is expected to have a total capacity of three gigawatts, according to people familiar with the matter, who asked not to be identified because the details aren't public. That would make it far bigger than any data centre now operating.

RIL CMD Mukesh Ambani is joining a growing cohort of tech companies including Microsoft, Alphabet and Amazon.com that are pouring billions of dollars into data centres to deliver AI capabilities to customers worldwide. This week, OpenAI, SoftBank Group and Oracle pledged to invest \$100 billion to \$500 billion in AI infrastructure in the US through a new entity called Stargate Project.

A Reliance spokesman declined comment, directing Bloomberg to a

## PROJECT JAMNAGAR

■ RIL is buying Nvidia's powerful AI semiconductors and setting up a data centre in the town of Jamnagar



■ The largest data centres operating now are less than 1 gigawatt, according to data provided by DC Byte



■ RIL, the group's primary listed entity, has equivalent of about \$26 billion on its balance sheet






■ The Jamnagar facility would boost India's data centre capacity



■ Jamnagar is the hub of Reliance's oil refining and petrochemicals complex

recent speech from Reliance Jio Infocomm CEO Akash Ambani, Mukesh's son.





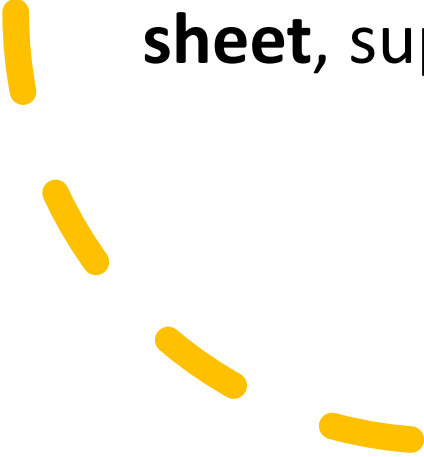
The executive said at the time the conglomerate was building a data centre to be completed within two years.

Continued on Page 11

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-  **Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL)** is constructing what could be the **world's largest data centre by capacity** in **Jamnagar, India**.
    -  The facility is expected to have a **total capacity of 3 gigawatts**, significantly larger than any existing data centre (which currently operate at less than **1 gigawatt**).
    -  **RIL is purchasing Nvidia's AI semiconductors** to power the facility, tapping into the growing **global demand for AI services**.
- 

-  **The project is expected to cost between \$20-\$30 billion**, making it one of the most significant tech investments in India.  
 **RIL joins major global tech firms like Microsoft, Alphabet, and Amazon**, which are collectively investing **\$100B-\$500B** into AI infrastructure.



- 
-  **The data centre is set to be completed within two years and will significantly boost India's data centre capacity.**
  -  **Jamnagar is already the hub of Reliance's oil refining and petrochemicals operations,** making it a strategic location for the new facility.
  -  **RIL's primary listed entity has about \$26 billion on its balance sheet,** supporting this major investment.
- 



**THE PAINTER AND THE MAHATMA:** Nandalal Bose (in dark shawl), who blended art with constructive nationalism, was the closest to Gandhiji's idea of an artist

## THE ARTISTS

Nandalal Bose (team leader), Beohar Rammanohar Sinha, Dinanath Bhargava, Vinayak Shivram Masoji, A Perumal, Jagdish Mittal, Rajniti, Dharendra Krishna Deb Barman, Kripal Singh Shekhawat, Sumitra Narayan, Biswarup Bose, Nibedita Bose, Gouri Bhanja, Jamuna Sen, Bani Patel, and others



## THE CALLIGRAPHERS

Prem Behari Narain Raizada (English) and Vasant K Vaidya (Hindi)



A scene from the life of Mahavira, the 24th and last Tirthankara of Jainism, was painted by artist Rajniti and used in Part VI of the Constitution

(All pictures from Lalit Kala Akademi's book, Art & Calligraphy in the Constitution of India)





Nandi



Ashwa



Airavata



Vyaghra

The Preamble page was designed by **Beohar Rammanohar Sinha**, who came from Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh. His son Anurag Sinha's blog says that the artist made "exploratory trips to such places as Ajanta, Ellora, Bagh, Badami, Sanchi, Sarnath and Mahabalipuram", from where he used "summary motifs" such as "**Padma, Nandi, Airavata, Vyaghra, Ashwa, Hans and Mayur** to symbolically convey the essence of Indian Constitution pictorially."



# Tatas buy 60% in Pegatron's India unit for iPhone plant

## Tata Electronics Emerges As Major Apple Supplier Like Foxconn

Reeba.Zachariah  
@timesofindia.com

**Mumbai:** Tata Electronics has acquired a 60% stake in Taiwanese contract manufacturer Pegatron's India unit that operates an iPhone plant in Tamil Nadu. This follows Tatas' earlier acquisition of Wistron's India operations in Karnataka in March 2024.

The financial details of the stake acquisition remain undisclosed. This transaction positions Tata Electronics as a major Apple supplier alongside Foxconn, another Taiwanese manufacturer.

On Jan 7, the Competition Commission of India said it has approved Tata Electronics' proposed purchase of a majority stake in Pegatron Technology India and its 100% arm TEL Components' proposed business transfer to the Indian unit. CCI further said TEL Components is establishing a greenfield facility for smartphone electronics manufacturing.

Pegatron Technology India contributes approximately 10% of iPhone production in India through its Chennai

### 10% OF LOCAL IPHONE MFG

> Pegatron India contributes approximately 10% of local iPhone production through its Chennai facility, which has annual capacity of **5 million iPhones** & employs **10k people**

> The financial details of the stake buy remain **undisclosed**

> The negotiations between Tata Group and Pegatron had extended over several



quarters as the latter sought a local partner due to **slim profit margins** and **workforce management** challenges

> Tata Electronics is negotiating with Chinese smartphone manufacturers — **Xiaomi and Oppo** — to produce components, aiming to diversify beyond Apple and develop a business model similar to **Foxconn's**

facility, which has a yearly capacity of five million iPhones and employs about 10,000 people. The facility exports electronic products to Apple's operations across North America, Asia and Europe, while serving the Indian market.

Tata Electronics and Pegatron Technology India will collaborate to merge their teams, according to a Friday statement from the Tata Sons-owned company. PTI will undergo rebranding to reflect its new ownership structure. Previously, the company renamed Wistron Infocomm Manufac-

turing (India) to Tata Electronics Systems Solutions.

The negotiations between Tata Group and Pegatron had extended over several quarters as the latter sought a local partner due to slim profit margins and workforce management challenges. Notably, Wistron, an early Apple supplier in India, had experienced worker unrest at its facility in late 2020, resulting in property damage and attacks on senior executives' offices.

Tata Electronics is negotiating with Chinese smartphone manufacturers — Xiaomi






### Tata Sons seeks CCI nod to buy 10% in Tata Play



**New Delhi:** Group holding company Tata Sons has sought approval from fair trade regulator CCI for acquiring another 10% stake in DTH operator Tata Play from Singapore's sovereign wealth fund Temasek. Tata Sons owns a 60% stake in Tata Play. AGENCIES

and Oppo — to produce components, aiming to diversify beyond Apple and develop a business model similar to Foxconn's. Tata Group initiated its ventures into electronic and semiconductor manufacturing (under Tata Electronics), healthcare (Tata Medical & Diagnostics) and battery manufacturing (Agratas) during Covid, responding to pandemic-related disruptions in human lives and supply chains. The conglomerate views these new enterprises as crucial for its expansion and development.

# Statehood Day for Manipur, Tripura, and Meghalaya



- 
- The Prime Minister of India greeted Manipur, Tripura, and Meghalaya on their Statehood Day (21st January).
  - What is the Historical Context Behind the Statehood Day?
  - Merger of Manipur: Before 1947, Manipur was an independent princely state.
  - The Maharaja, Bodhachandra Singh, signed the 'Instrument of Accession' with the Indian government, agreeing to merge with India while ensuring internal autonomy.
  - Manipur held its first election based on universal adult franchise in 1948, becoming a constitutional monarchy.
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- **Merger of Tripura:** Tripura, a princely state, merged with India in 1949, facilitated by **Queen Kanchan Prabha Devi**, who assumed regency after **King Bir Bikram's** death.
    - After merging with India, **Tripura became a Part 'C' State**. In 1956, it became a **Union Territory**, and later on 21st January 1972, Tripura became a full-fledged State under the **NEA-(R) Act, 1971**.
- 

- **Meghalaya:**
- Meghalaya's statehood journey began with demands for **greater autonomy from Assam**, particularly from the **Khasi, Jaintia, and Garo Hills**, who sought a **separate state to preserve indigenous cultures**, especially after Assam's attempt to impose **Assamese as the medium of instruction**.
- In **1969**, the **Assam Reorganization (Meghalaya) Act** established **Meghalaya an autonomous state within Assam**.

# REORGANISATION OF STATES IN INDIA

*The States Reorganisation Commission set up in 1956 suggested the formation of 14 States and 6 UTs. At present, India comprises 28 states and 8 UTs.*

1950

States classified into **4 categories**  
- **Part A, B, C and D** (1<sup>st</sup> Schedule)

- **Part A** - Ruled by **Governor** with **elected State Legislature**
  - ◇ **Andhra Pradesh** (first state on linguistic lines) - 1953
- **Part B** - Former **Princely States**
- **Part C** - Former **Chief Commissioners' Provinces**, some **Princely states**
- **Part D** - Andaman and Nicobar Islands

## **7<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment (1956) -**

- Distinction between Part-A and Part-B states done away
- Part-C states were abolished
- Made total no. of (erstwhile) states - 14 and UTs - 6


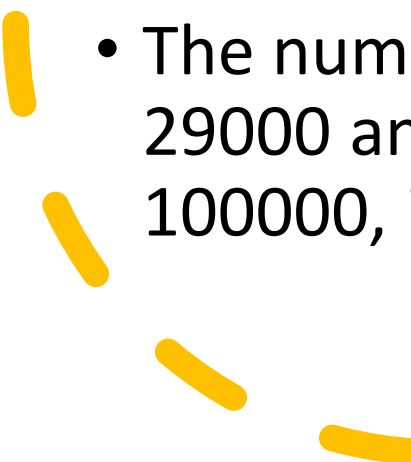
10,000 Geographical  
Indication (GI) Tags by 2030







**फेंको! फेंको अपनी पूरी शक्ति के साथ, फेंको.**

- 
- The Union Minister of Commerce & Industry, set a target of reaching **10,000 Geographical Indication (GI) Tags by 2030.**
  - **About**
  - **The number of GI tags** issued by the department till date stands at 605.
  - The number of authorized users for GI tags increased from 365 to 29000 and the number of patents granted increased from 6000 to 100000, in the last 10 years.
- 

- **What is a GI Tag?**
- A geographical indication (GI) is a **sign used on products** that have a **specific geographical origin** and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin.
- GIs are part of the **intellectual property rights** that come under the **Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property**.
- **Administration in India:** GI registration is administered by the **Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act of 1999**.



**Products:** Agricultural products, foodstuffs, wine and spirit drinks, handicrafts, and industrial products.



**Validity:** For a period of **10 years**, it can be renewed from time to time for a further period of 10 years each.





**Related Facts:** The first GI tag in the country was given two decades ago to the famous **Darjeeling tea**.



**Uttar Pradesh** retains its position as the state with the most GI-tagged products in India, reaching a total of 75.

**Tamil Nadu** follows behind with 58 GI products.

# Memecoins



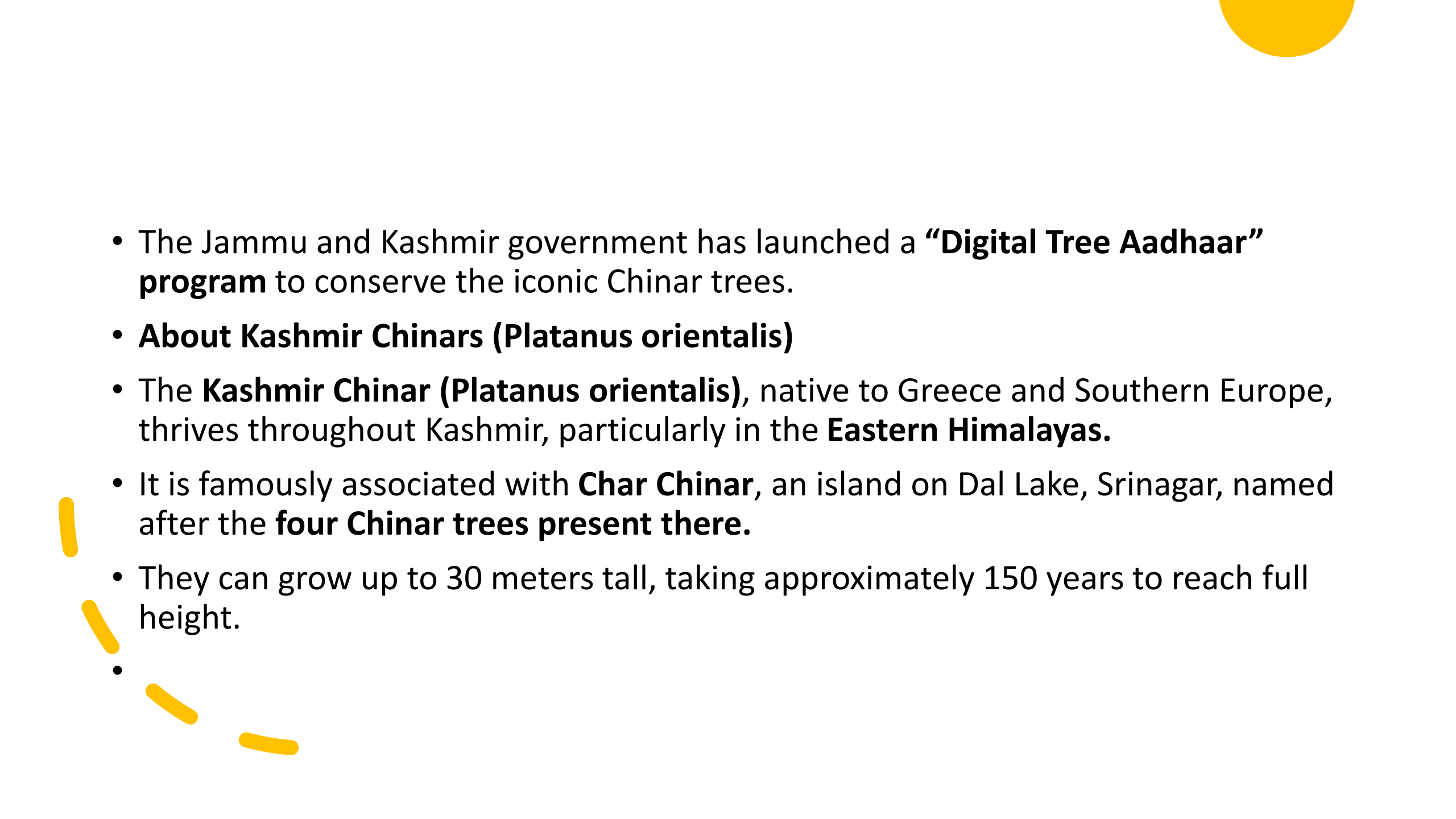
- 
- Donald Trump & Melania Trump launched their **memecoins—\$Trump and \$Melania.**
  - **What is a Memecoin?**
  - Memecoins are **cryptocurrencies** created as jokes, often based on internet memes, and typically lack intrinsic value.
  - They can be **created for free by anyone using platforms like Pump.fun**, and often **gain value through hype and public interest.**
- 

- 
- Anyone can create a memecoin using blockchain networks like Solana or Ethereum.
  - Memecoins like Dogecoin and Shiba Inu gained popularity through viral marketing and high-profile endorsements.
  - **Difference from Traditional Cryptocurrencies:** Memecoins differ from traditional cryptocurrencies (like Bitcoin) because they don't have underlying value.
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# Kashmir Chinars






- 
- The Jammu and Kashmir government has launched a “**Digital Tree Aadhaar**” **program** to conserve the iconic Chinar trees.
  - **About Kashmir Chinars (Platanus orientalis)**
  - The **Kashmir Chinar (Platanus orientalis)**, native to Greece and Southern Europe, thrives throughout Kashmir, particularly in the **Eastern Himalayas**.
  - It is famously associated with **Char Chinar**, an island on Dal Lake, Srinagar, named after the **four Chinar trees present there**.
  - They can grow up to 30 meters tall, taking approximately 150 years to reach full height.



- **Applications**

- **Medicinal Use:** Various parts of the tree, such as bark and leaves, are used in traditional medicine.
  - **Wood:** The wood is prized for making interior furniture due to its durability and aesthetic appeal.
  - **Dye Production:** The tree is also utilized in the preparation of natural dyes.
  - **Cultural Significance:** The Chinar tree is often considered a symbol of Kashmir, deeply rooted in its history, culture, and natural beauty.
- 

An aerial photograph of a tea plantation. The tea bushes are planted in neat, concentric rows that follow the contours of the land, creating a circular pattern. The tea bushes are a vibrant green color. In the lower right quadrant, there is a small, simple wooden hut with a thatched roof. The overall scene is lush and green, with a few taller trees scattered throughout the plantation.

# India Becomes Kenya's Largest Tea Importer

- India has become the largest importer of tea from Kenya, with imports rising by **288%**, from **3.53 million kg** (January-October 2023) to **13.71 million kg** during the same period in 2024.
- **India's Tea Industry: Present Status**
- **Global Ranking:** India is the **second-largest tea producer** after China, contributing **21%** of global tea production.



- **Exports:**

- India is the **fourth-largest exporter**, with a **12% global export share**.
- India's tea exports also increased from 184.46 million kg from January to October in 2023 to 209.14 million kg during the same phase in 2024.
- Top export destinations include the **UAE, Russia, Iran, U.S., and U.K.**

-

## Domestic Market:

- Domestic consumption accounts for **80% of total production**, driven by India's tea-drinking culture.

## Regional Production:

- **Assam** produces **55% of India's tea**, making it the largest tea-producing state.
- However, India's total tea production dropped by **50 million kg** in 2024, with Assam facing a loss of **20 million kg**.

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

- Which state ranked first in fiscal health with an index score of 99.0?
- कौन सा राज्य 99.0 के सूचकांक स्कोर के साथ वित्तीय स्वास्थ्य में पहले स्थान पर रहा?
- A. Maharashtra / महाराष्ट्र
- B. Odisha / ओडिशा
- C. Chhattisgarh / छत्तीसगढ़
- D. Goa / गोवा



- Which states were the worst-performing in fiscal health due to high fiscal deficits?
- कौन से राज्य उच्च राजकोषीय घाटे के कारण वित्तीय स्वास्थ्य में सबसे खराब प्रदर्शन करने वाले थे?
- A. Maharashtra, Telangana, Karnataka / महाराष्ट्र, तेलंगाना, कर्नाटक  
B. Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Kerala / पंजाब, आंध्र प्रदेश, पश्चिम बंगाल, केरल  
C. Gujarat, Rajasthan, Haryana / गुजरात, राजस्थान, हरियाणा  
D. Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh / तमिलनाडु, उत्तर प्रदेश, मध्य प्रदेश

- What is the primary reason for poor fiscal health in Kerala and Punjab?
- केरल और पंजाब में खराब वित्तीय स्वास्थ्य का मुख्य कारण क्या है?
- A. High industrial growth / उच्च औद्योगिक विकास
- B. Low expenditure quality and weak debt sustainability / कम व्यय गुणवत्ता और कमजोर ऋण स्थिरता
- C. High foreign direct investment (FDI) / उच्च विदेशी प्रत्यक्ष निवेश (FDI)
- D. Surplus budget management / अधिशेष बजट प्रबंधन

- What did the study on 10,475 adolescents in India and the U.S. reveal?
- भारत और अमेरिका में 10,475 किशोरों पर किए गए अध्ययन से क्या निष्कर्ष निकला?
- A. Early smartphone use improves mental well-being / शुरुआती स्मार्टफोन उपयोग मानसिक स्वास्थ्य में सुधार करता है
- B. Mental well-being declines with earlier smartphone use / पहले स्मार्टफोन उपयोग से मानसिक स्वास्थ्य में गिरावट आती है
- C. Smartphone use has no impact on mental health / स्मार्टफोन उपयोग का मानसिक स्वास्थ्य पर कोई प्रभाव नहीं पड़ता
- D. Mental well-being improves with social media engagement / सोशल मीडिया जुड़ाव से मानसिक स्वास्थ्य में सुधार होता है

- Which significant constitutional ruling was reaffirmed in Puttaswamy vs. Union of India (2017)?
- पट्टास्वामी बनाम भारत संघ (2017) में कौन सा महत्वपूर्ण संवैधानिक निर्णय पुनः पुष्टि किया गया?
- A. Right to Internet / इंटरनेट का अधिकार
- B. Fundamental Right to Privacy / गोपनीयता का मौलिक अधिकार
- C. Right to Equal Pay / समान वेतन का अधिकार
- D. Right to Reservation / आरक्षण का अधिकार

- Which Indian company is constructing the world's largest data center in Jamnagar?
- कौन सी भारतीय कंपनी जामनगर में दुनिया का सबसे बड़ा डेटा सेंटर बना रही है?
- A. Infosys / इंफोसिस
- B. Wipro / विप्रो
- C. Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) / रिलायंस इंडस्ट्रीज लिमिटेड (RIL)
- D. Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) / टाटा कंसल्टेंसी सर्विसेज (TCS)

- **What is the estimated capacity of RIL's upcoming data center in Jamnagar?**
- **जामनगर में RIL के आगामी डेटा सेंटर की अनुमानित क्षमता क्या है?**
- **A. 500 megawatts**
- **B. 1 gigawatt**
- **C. 2 gigawatts**
- **D. 3 gigawatts**

- Why is January 21 celebrated as Statehood Day in Manipur, Tripura, and Meghalaya?
- 21 जनवरी को मणिपुर, त्रिपुरा और मेघालय में राज्यत्व दिवस क्यों मनाया जाता है?
- A. It marks their merger with India in 1950 / यह 1950 में भारत में उनके विलय को दर्शाता है
- B. They were granted full statehood on this day in 1972 / उन्हें 1972 में इस दिन पूर्ण राज्य का दर्जा दिया गया था
- C. They became union territories on this day / इस दिन वे केंद्र शासित प्रदेश बने थे
- D. They were declared special economic zones / उन्हें विशेष आर्थिक क्षेत्र घोषित किया गया था

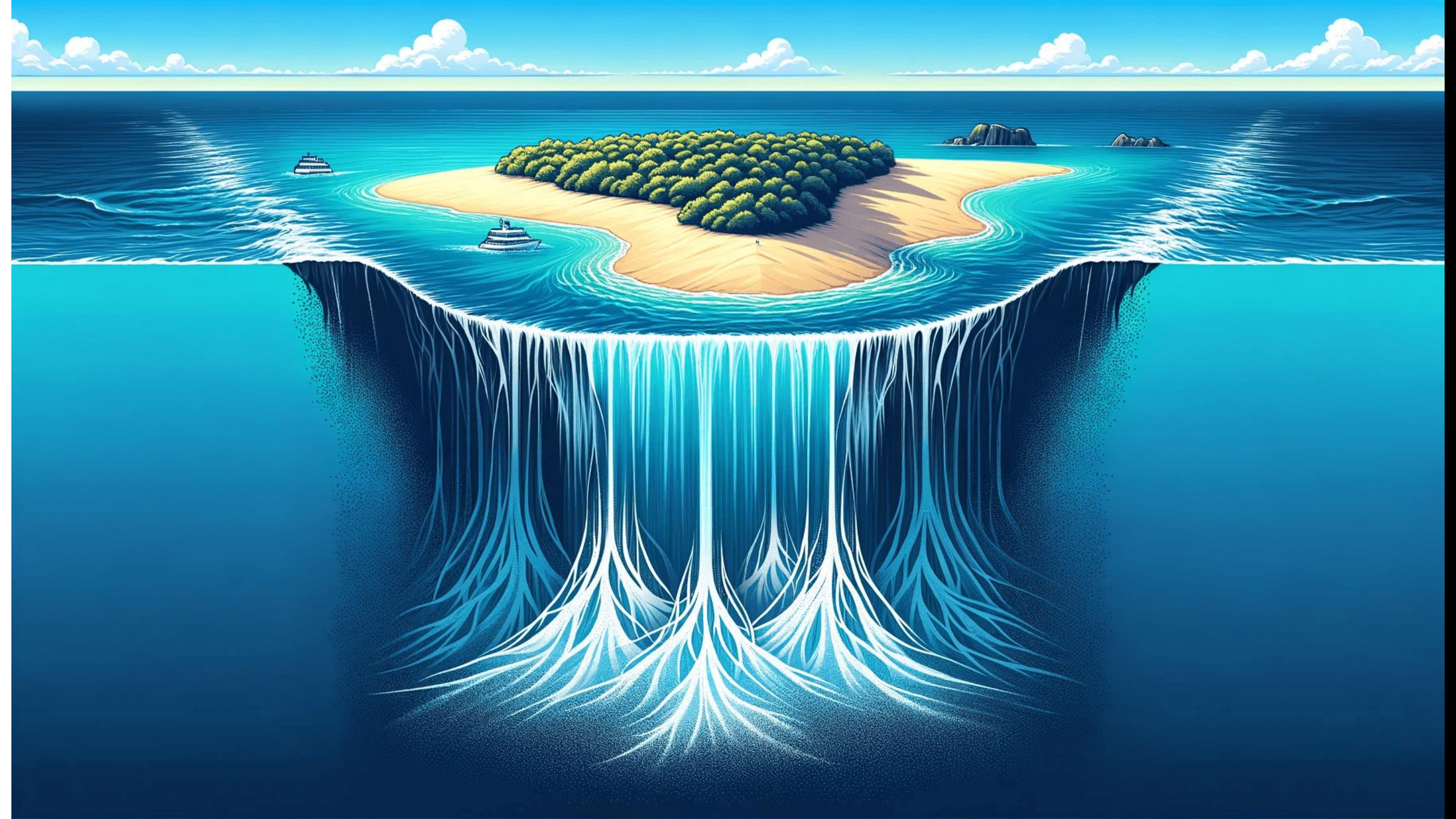
- **What is the target set by India for Geographical Indication (GI) Tags by 2030?**
- **2030 तक भारत ने कितने भौगोलिक संकेत (GI) टैग प्राप्त करने का लक्ष्य रखा है?**
- **A. 5,000**
- **B. 7,500**
- **C. 10,000**
- **D. 15,000**



- What is the “Digital Tree Aadhaar” initiative launched in Jammu & Kashmir?
- जम्मू और कश्मीर में शुरू की गई "डिजिटल ट्री आधार" पहल क्या है?
- A. A project to track and conserve Chinar trees / चिनार पेड़ों को ट्रैक करने और संरक्षित करने की परियोजना
- B. A mobile application for farmers / किसानों के लिए एक मोबाइल एप्लिकेशन
- C. A digital mapping system for all trees / सभी पेड़ों के लिए एक डिजिटल मैपिंग प्रणाली
- D. A blockchain-based land registry for forests / वनों के लिए ब्लॉकचेन आधारित भूमि पंजीकरण

Fun fact

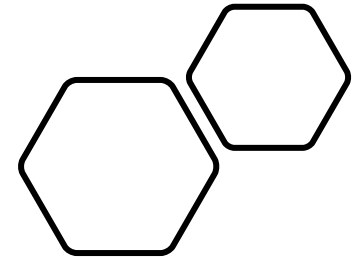






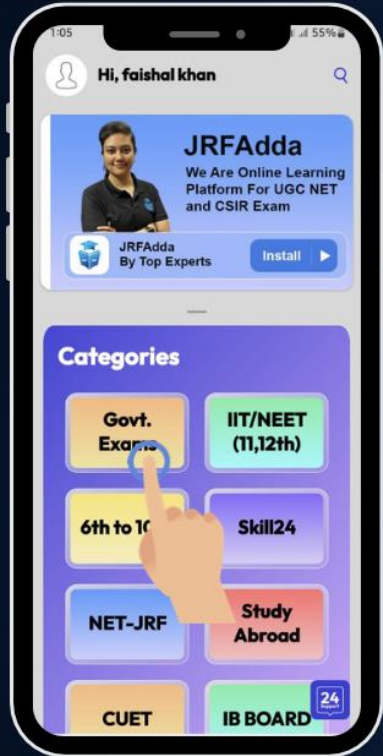
HUMOR

**THE WATERFALL IS  
ACTUALLY AN  
ILLUSION**

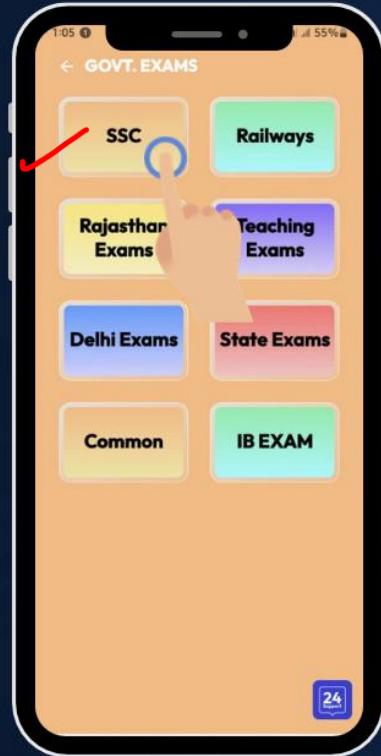




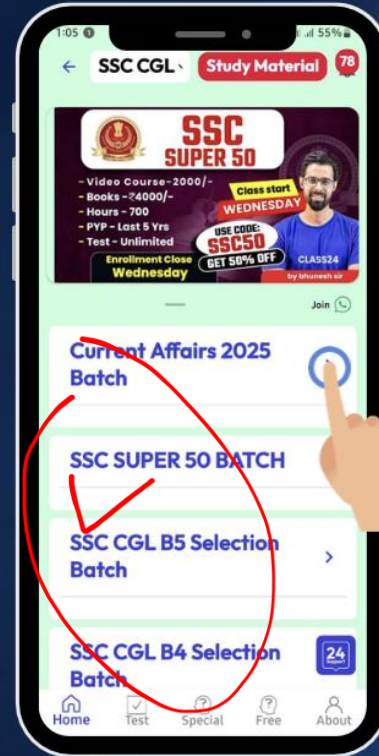
# Step 1



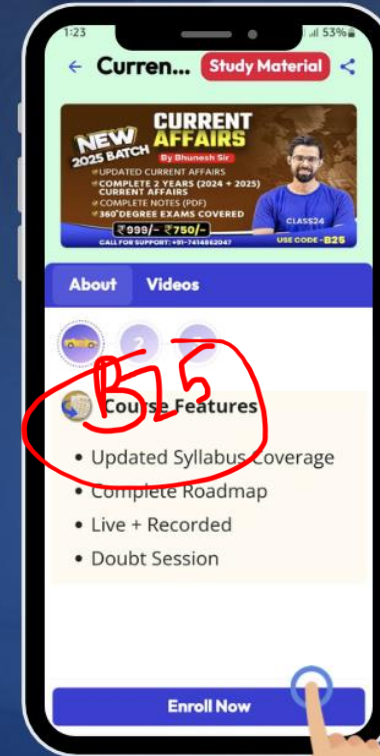
# Step 2




# Step 3



# Step 4



A group of people are clapping in a dimly lit room. The focus is on the hands and forearms of several individuals, some in the foreground and some blurred in the background. The lighting is low, with some highlights on the hands and clothing. In the top left corner, there is a solid orange horizontal bar and a cluster of small, glowing red dots. The text "Thank you guys." is overlaid on the left side of the image in a white, sans-serif font, with a thin white horizontal line underneath it.

Thank you  
guys.

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