

Daily Current Affairs



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10 MCQ QUIZ

1

10 MCQ



Which country recorded the highest number of internet shutdowns in 2024?

2024 में सबसे अधिक इंटरनेट बंदी किस देश में हुई?

- A. India / भारत
- B. Pakistan / पाकिस्तान
- C. Myanmar / म्यांमार
- D. Russia / रूस



How many internet shutdowns did India experience in 2024?



2024 में भारत में कितनी बार इंटरनेट बंद किया गया?



- A. 72
- B. 84
- C. 91
- D. 102

-
- Which Indian state became the first to implement the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) on January 27, 2025?
 - भारत में 27 जनवरी 2025 को समान नागरिक संहिता (UCC) लागू करने वाला पहला राज्य कौन सा बना?
 - A. Uttar Pradesh / उत्तर प्रदेश
B. Madhya Pradesh / मध्य प्रदेश
C. Uttarakhand / उत्तराखंड
D. Rajasthan / राजस्थान

-
- Under the new UCC law in Uttarakhand, failing to register a live-in relationship can result in which of the following penalties?
 - उत्तराखंड के नए UCC कानून के तहत, लिव-इन संबंधों का पंजीकरण न कराने पर क्या दंड दिया जाएगा?
 - A. ₹50,000 fine / ₹50,000 का जुर्माना
 - B. Up to 6 months imprisonment & ₹25,000 fine / 6 महीने तक की जेल और ₹25,000 का जुर्माना
 - C. Community service for 1 year / 1 साल की सामुदायिक सेवा
 - D. No penalty / कोई दंड नहीं

- . What is the key objective of Microsoft's 'Farm Vibes' project?
- माइक्रोसॉफ्ट के 'फार्म वाइब्स' परियोजना का मुख्य उद्देश्य क्या है?
- A. Improving farming efficiency using AI-based solutions / एआई-आधारित समाधानों का उपयोग करके कृषि दक्षता में सुधार करना
- B. Providing financial assistance to farmers / किसानों को वित्तीय सहायता प्रदान करना
- C. Developing genetically modified crops / अनुवांशिक रूप से संशोधित फसलों का विकास करना
- D. Encouraging organic farming practices / जैविक कृषि प्रथाओं को बढ़ावा देना

-
- Which festival is celebrated by Assam's Mising tribe as an agricultural and cultural event?
 - असम की मिसिंग जनजाति द्वारा कृषि और सांस्कृतिक उत्सव के रूप में कौन सा त्योहार मनाया जाता है?
 - A. Ali Ai Ligang / अली आई लिगांग
B. Hornbill Festival / हॉर्नबिल महोत्सव
C. Mopin Festival / मोपिन महोत्सव
D. Chapchar Kut / चपचार कुट

A high-level delegation from Maharashtra is in Paris to seek UNESCO World Heritage status for how many forts of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj?

महाराष्ट्र का एक उच्च स्तरीय प्रतिनिधिमंडल छत्रपति शिवाजी महाराज के कितने किलों के लिए यूनेस्को विश्व धरोहर का दर्जा मांगने के लिए पेरिस गया है?

- A. 10
- B. 12
- C. 15
- D. 18

-
- Which country recently received humanitarian assistance from India after being hit by Tropical Storm SARA?
 - कौन सा देश हाल ही में उष्णकटिबंधीय तूफान सारा से प्रभावित होने के बाद भारत से मानवीय सहायता प्राप्त कर रहा है?
 - A. Honduras / होंडुरास
 - B. Mexico / मैक्सिको
 - C. Indonesia / इंडोनेशिया
 - D. Philippines / फिलीपींस

- The Ministry of Mines recently reclassified which of the following as major minerals?
- खनन मंत्रालय ने हाल ही में निम्नलिखित में से किसे प्रमुख खनिज के रूप में पुनर्वर्गीकृत किया?
- A. Bauxite, Iron Ore, Copper, Lead / बॉक्साइट, लौह अयस्क, तांबा, सीसा
- B. Barytes, Feldspar, Mica, Quartz / बैरीट्स, फेल्डस्पार, अभ्रक, क्वार्ट्ज
- C. Graphite, Nickel, Zinc, Tin / ग्रेफाइट, निकल, जिंक, टिन
- D. Silver, Uranium, Lithium, Titanium / चांदी, यूरेनियम, लिथियम, टाइटेनियम

Who has been appointed as the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister?

प्रधानमंत्री के प्रधान सचिव के रूप में किसे नियुक्त किया गया है?

- A. Ajay Bhushan Pandey / अजय भूषण पांडे
- B. Shaktikanta Das / शक्तिकांत दास
- C. Arvind Panagariya / अरविंद पनगढ़िया
- D. Amitabh Kant / अमिताभ कांत



Be nonjudgmental

Be sensitive

Chennai » Coimbatore » Bangalore » Hyderabad » Madurai » Mysuru » Varanasi » Thiruvananthapuram » Kochi » Vijayawada » Mangaluru » Thiruvananthapuram » Kolkata » Guwahati » Imphal » Manipal » Lucknow » Cuttack » Patna



ALLEGED ANTI-INDIA SLOGAN
Man's shop razed over accusation against son
NEWS » PAGE 5



MOVE FOR WAGE
Women shift from domestic work: survey
NEWS » PAGE 6



EX-CJ LALIT TELLS PANEL
'Simultaneous polls Bill will fail legal challenge'
NEWS » PAGE 5



DATA POINT
India sole nation to curb Net over communal unrest
Most of these shutdowns occurred in Manipur
OPINION » PAGE 9



RANJIT FINAL
High-flying Kerala takes on Vidarbha
SPORT » PAGE 17

NEARBY

T.N. CM calls an all-party meet on delimitation
CHENNAI Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin has convened an all-party meeting at the Secretariat in Chennai on March 5 to discuss the impact of the proposed delimitation exercise, which may lead to a reduction in the number of Lok Sabha seats in the State. » PAGE 5

A plebiscite was promised during J&K's accession
BRAINAR Days after former Chief Justice of India D.V. Chandrachud said that Article 370 was a "temporary" provision, Jammu & Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday said that a plebiscite was promised at the time of the erstwhile State's accession. » PAGE 4

'India, U.S. are in talks to mitigate impact of tariffs'
MUMBAI Rating agency Moody's said on Tuesday that India and the U.S. are reportedly in talks to lower import tariffs on select U.S. products, increase market access for U.S. products and increase U.S. energy purchases, to mitigate pressure from reciprocal tariffs. » PAGE 12

U.K. to increase defence spending to 2.5% of GDP
LONDON The U.K. Labour government will increase its defence spending to 2.5% of GDP during 2027 and maintain that level annually beyond the current level of 2.3%, Prime Minister Keir Starmer told the House of Commons on Tuesday. » PAGE 14

Slush and water seepage hinder Telangana tunnel rescue efforts

Around 5,000 litres of water seeping into the tunnel every minute; rescue agencies find the last 50-metre stretch filled with mud and debris. Border Roads Organisation to join operations today; State Minister says accident site has become unstable

B. Chandrashekhara
HYDERABAD

Seepage of water and slush are hampering the operation to locate the eight persons trapped 14 km inside the Srisailem Left Bank Canal (SLBC) tunnel in Telangana since Saturday morning. The joint teams of multiple agencies at the site said on Tuesday that any attempt to cross the last 50-metre stretch, which is completely filled with mud and debris, could endanger the lives of the rescue personnel.

Speaking to newsmen at the site after a review meeting with all the agencies involved in the operation, State Irrigation Minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy said the tunnel around the collapse spot had become unstable.



Hitting a hurdle: Rescue teams at the SLBC project site in Telangana on Tuesday. NAGARA.GOPAL

Seepage of water inside the tunnel was assessed to be about 5,000 litres to 5,000 litres per minute, which was huge. This, coupled with the slush, was making the task very difficult for

the rescue teams, he said. Two more agencies — the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) and the CSIR-National Geophysical Research Institute (NGRI) — will join the rescue opera-

tion. The Minister said that even the divers of the Navy's special forces unit

Geological tests He said efforts were on to dewater and remove slush to reach the spot where two engineers, two technical staffers and four workers were trapped after a part of the roof collapsed. A tunnel boring machine is also stuck there.

The samples of slush were also sent for geological tests to determine whether removal of the debris around the tunnel boring machine will lead to further caving in.

AAP caused Delhi exchequer loss of ₹2,000 crore: CAG

The Delhi exchequer lost ₹2,000 crore in revenue due to the poor implementation of the Delhi Excise Policy, 2021-22 by the previous Aam Aadmi Party government in Delhi, said a Comptroller and Auditor-General (CAG) report tabled in the Delhi Assembly on Tuesday.

"These implementation issues of the new policy (Delhi Excise Policy 2021-22) led to a loss of revenue of approximately ₹2,000 crore. Excise Policy aimed to eradicate sale of spurious liquor and check bootlegging. However, important measures which were planned in the policy like setting up of liquor testing laboratories, batch testing for rigorous quality assurance, and monitoring and regulation through creation of a dedicated post were not ensured," the CAG report said.

AAP chief and former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, senior AAP leader and former Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia are among those who were arrested and jailed on charges of corruption in the excise policy. The two top leaders are currently out on bail.

'Deliberate obstruction' The AAP blamed the revenue department on "deliberate obstruction" of the excise policy by the Lieutenant-Governor, Enforcement Directorate

(ED), and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). "Based on CAG report, there must be investigation against the L-G, CBI, and ED to determine why the government exchequer was made to incur a ₹2,000-crore loss," AAP leader Aishwariya said.

The AAP government's failure to table 14 CAG reports had become a point of contention, with BJP MLAs filing a petition in the Delhi High Court last year, seeking a direction to the Speaker to call a sitting of the Assembly for the tabling of the reports.

The High Court had said the CAG reports should have been promptly placed before the Assembly for discussion, adding that the government "dragging its feet" on the issue raised "doubts" on its bonafides.

At its first meeting the new BJP-led Cabinet had decided to table the pending CAG reports in the Delhi Assembly. According to the CAG report, the Delhi government suffered a revenue loss of approximately ₹200 crore due to its failure to re-tender the surrendered retail licenses for liquor vendors. Exemptions for zonal licensees caused further revenue loss of about ₹341 crore, the report said, listing an additional loss of ₹144 crore due to the waiver of license fees, and ₹27 crore due to the incorrect collection of security deposits from zonal licensees.

Strands of all hues



Mela sale: A vendor selling threads at the Sangam on the eve of the Maha Sivaratri festival celebrated as part of the Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj on Tuesday. PTI (RELATED REPORT: PAGE 5)

U.S. sides with Russia at UN, calls for 'swift end' to war

Reuters UNITED STATES

The UN Security Council on Monday adopted a U.S.-drafted resolution on the third anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine that takes a neutral position on the conflict as U.S. President Donald Trump seeks to broker peace. The resolution, which was adopted by a vote of 12-0, with the U.S. abstaining, calls for a "swift end" to the war.

FULL REPORT ON » PAGE 14

Congress ex-MP Sajjan Kumar sentenced to second life term in anti-Sikh riots case

Ishita Mishra
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Tuesday awarded life imprisonment to former Congress MP Sajjan Kumar in connection with the murder of a man and his son during the 1984 anti-Sikh riots. The sentence came over 40 years after the incident while Mr. Kumar, now 80, is serving a life term in another case pertaining to the anti-Sikh riots.



Sajjan Kumar

The PIR for the murder of Jaswant Singh and his son Tarundeep Singh in Delhi's Sawaswari Vihar on November 1, 1982 did not name the then-MP as an accused since the complainant was not aware of his credentials. He approached the police with a complaint alleging the Ku-

mar's involvement only after he saw a photo of the MP in a magazine. In 2014, the Centre constituted a committee to examine the possibility of re-investigating the anti-Sikh riot cases through an SIT. The committee recommended that the Sarawati Vihar case and 113 other cases be re-opened and probed.

The SIT, in its charge-sheet, had alleged that Kumar led a mob and upon his instigation and abetment, the mob burnt alive the victims, burnt their houses and attacked their family members.

'CLARITY ON CONG. STAND' » PAGE 2

SC reinstates Bihar RJD MLC, says ouster 'highly excessive, disproportionate'

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday reinstated Rashtriya Janata Dal leader Surin Kumar Singh to the Bihar Legislative Council, setting aside the Election Commission notification for a bye-election to his seat. A Bench headed by Justice Surya Kant concluded that Mr. Singh's expulsion from the Council following his remarks against Chief Minister Nitish Kumar was "highly excessive and disproportionate".

"The expulsion of a member from the House constitutes a higher degree of deprivation and must only be sustained in exceptional circumstances," Justice Kant observed. Noting that the main function of a legislator is to act as a reflection of the people's will in a representative democracy, Justice Kant said imposing a disproportionate punishment not only undermines democratic values by depriving a member of participating in House proceedings, but also affects the will of the electorate in such a situation, if the punishment imposed on the member concerned appears to be prima facie harsh and disproportionate.



Surin Kumar Singh

The purpose of punishment is not to serve as a tool for retribution but rather to uphold and en-

force discipline within the House, the court pointed out. The primary objective must be to maintain decorum and foster an environment of constructive debate and deliberation, it added.

The court also rebuked Mr. Singh, finding his conduct unbecoming of his position as a member. "There is no place for aggression and incendency in the proceedings of a legislative body or the Legislature," Justice Kant observed.

The judgment modified Mr. Singh's July 2024 expulsion into a suspension. He will remain eligible for the perks and benefits of a full term at the end of his tenure.

SC grants bail to ex-Minister accused of ransacking Naidu's home

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday allowed pre-arrest bail to former Minister and MLA Jogi Ramesh, who is accused of vandalising Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu's Udayavalli residence with other Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party (YSRCP) members in 2021.

The Bench headed by Justice Sudhanshu Dhulla also granted anticipatory bail to YSRCP Vijayawada East coordinator Devineni Avinash.

Mr. Avinash is accused of ransacking NTR Bhawan, the central office of the ruling Telugu Desam Party, at Mangalagiri during the YSRCP regime in October 2021.

Appearing for Mr. Avinash, senior Advocate Kapil Sibal submitted that the alleged attack involved over 80 people and happened three years ago. The investigation began only after the government changed.

Senior advocate Siddharth Luthra, for the State of Andhra Pradesh, said the accused were not cooperating with the probe and objected to the interim protection from arrest.

Police probing Kerala mass murder case seek answers

Nearly two days after the crime, the investigators are still unable to determine a clear motive behind the unprecedented violence; 23-year-old Afan has killed five people within eight hours

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Thiruvananthapuram Rural Police are continuing to piece together the disturbing events that led to the brutal killings of five people, including a young boy, allegedly carried out by 23-year-old A.R. Afan.

The murders took place across three separate locations in a span of just eight hours, sending shockwaves through the community.

Nearly two days after the crime, the investigators



People mourn as the bodies of the deceased are brought for public homage near Venjaranmoola in Thiruvananthapuram on Tuesday.

while severely injuring his mother, Shemil. The post-mortem examinations of the deceased were completed on Tuesday.

The victims were all found to have suffered blunt force trauma, consistent with multiple hammer strikes to the head, face, neck and chest. The victims were laid to rest on Tuesday.

Shemil's condition remains critical. Afan, who is being treated at the Government Medical College Hospital for suspected rat poison ingestion, is in a stable condition. On speculation that Afan may have been under the influence of narcotics, a senior official said the blood test results were awaited.

LDF gains slight lead in local body bypolls

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The ruling Left Democratic Front (LDF) appears to have gained a modest upper hand in the by-elections for 30 local body wards in Kasaragod district.

The State Election Commission (SEC) said the LDF won 15 seats, the United Democratic Front won 12, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) [CP(M)] candidates were elected unopposed.

The CP(M) State secretary said the bypolls were not "those who work sincerely and to not 'those who lobby with Ministers in Bengaluru'."

"We need people who work sincerely on the ground at the taluk level

'Party positions only for those who work'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

With the possibility of a reshuffle of office-bearers at the grassroots level in the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC), Deputy Chief Minister and KPCC president D.K. Shivakumar on Tuesday said party positions were rewarded only to those who work sincerely and to not "those who lobby with Ministers in Bengaluru."

"We need people who work sincerely on the ground at the taluk level

counted on Tuesday. The SEC conducted the byelections in local body wards in 13 districts in the State, excluding Wayanad district.

In the Kollitumma and Pallippara wards in Kasaragod district, Communist Party of India (Marxist) [CP(M)] candidates were elected unopposed.

The CP(M) State secretary said the bypolls were not "those who work sincerely and to not 'those who lobby with Ministers in Bengaluru'."

"We need people who work sincerely on the ground at the taluk level



D.K. Shivakumar

and not those who are with Ministers in Bengaluru. We are prioritising those who work sincerely on the ground and get results," the Deputy Chief Minister told presspersons here.

Agitation by staffers leaves govt. offices across T.N. deserted

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI/TRICHUR

Many State government offices in Tamil Nadu, including those in the State capital, wore a deserted look on Tuesday, with many employees going on 'mass casual leave' as part of a call for agitation given by the Joint Action Council of Tamil Nadu Teachers Organisations-Government Employees Organisation (JACTTO-GEO).

The members of the two organisations staged a demonstration at Ezhilagam Complex in Chennai, exerting pressure on the State government to consider their charter of demands.

The marathon talks held between the JACTTO-GEO representatives and a four-member team of Ministers on Monday had brought no conclusive resolution.

Many demands Speaking to mediapersons, JACTTO-GEO members said their 10-point charter of demands, including the DMG government for the past four years.

They said Chief Minister M.K. Stalin had extended support to the JACTTO-GEO's demands when he was the Leader of the Opposition but failed to support them after coming to power.

The protesters also raised slogans in front of the State government. "Despite having met the Chief Minister seven times and

Talks between the JACTTO-GEO representatives and Ministers brought no conclusive resolution

the group of Ministers thrice in the last four years, the State government is seeking more time to consider our demands. We strongly condemn the government. The organising committee of the JACTTO-GEO will meet and decide on the further course of action," said Gandhiraj, an office-bearer of JACTTO-GEO.

The State government employees took part in the one-day demonstration in various parts of the State.

Though teachers took part in the JACTTO-GEO protest, government school teachers continued to function. Several government employees and teachers staged demonstrations organised by the JACTTO-GEO in various districts in the central districts on Tuesday. The demonstrations were held at the respective district headquarters.

The Land Restriction in Tiruchirappalli was organised in Tiruchirappalli District Collector's office, with around 400 JACTTO-GEO members taking part. The participating members raised slogans in support of their demands. Police sources said many government employees and teachers in the region had taken casual leave to take part in the demonstration.

The mother said. They added that they were not under any political influence or pressure either to file the case or to withdraw it.

Karnataka Rashtra Vedike president Narayana Gowda has alleged that the Karnataka activities continue in Belagavi because a few local leaders are supporting anti-social elements to vote bank politics. The "Marathi appeasement politics" of some Ministers and other leaders has cost Belagavi greatly, he said. "These leaders are allowing Marathi groups to engage in violence against Kannada speakers in Belagavi for their own selfish interests."

But unfortunately, some of these interests turned it into a Kannada-Marathi fight. We do not want to be part of this. We are taking the case back,"

Conductor assault case: minor girl's parents to withdraw POCSCO case

The Hindu Bureau
BELAGAVI

In a fresh development, the minor girl's family has decided to withdraw the POCSCO case filed against the bus conductor, Mahadev Hukkeri, in Belagavi on Tuesday. The girls' parents released a video statement saying they would take back the case filed by them against the conductor.

"There was an altercation in the bus over a ticket. But unfortunately, some of these interests turned it into a Kannada-Marathi fight. We do not want to be part of this. We are taking the case back,"

long days without break. Therefore, the action of the KRRTC placing the petitioner under suspension for the folly of the corporation is undoubtedly an action which suffers from want of bonafides."

If the petitioner had slept while on duty, when his duty was restricted to a single shift, it would not become "misconduct."

The court also pointed out that the covenants in the contract dealing with Organisation to which India is a party, recognise the work and life balance and the hours of work should not exceed 48 hours a week and 8 hours in a day, except in exceptional circumstances, is what is im-

posed by other high courts. Justice Nagarasanna said that the petitioner is made to overwork by 24 shifts in 24 hours, for 60

petitioner was made to work two shifts (16 hours) for 60 long days without a break, a court says court

Justice M. Nagarasanna has set aside the suspension order passed by the disciplinary authority of KRRTC's Koppal division while the petitioner, Chandrashekar's petition, the court pointed out. The court also noted that corporation's Vigilance Department, which had recommended petitioner's suspension, had also submitted a report that there were only three concrete reasons for the workload on the existing staff is extremely high while suggesting to appoint two more constabulary.

Citing the articles of unjural declaration of human rights dealing with "right to rest and leisure, and the right to a reasonable limitation of working hours...", and judgments on this issue by other high courts, Justice Nagarasanna said that the petitioner is made to overwork by 24 shifts in 24 hours, for 60

IN BRIEF



Release of captured leopard triggers protest in Kerala

The release of a leopard that was captured from the Bellur grama panchayat in Kasaragod into the nearby forest has triggered protests, with local residents expressing the concern that it might return. On Monday, the five-year-old leopard was captured at a private farm at Bellur. It was released into the forest. However, residents led by grama panchayat president M. Sreedhara laid siege to the Divisional Forest Office (DFO office) on Monday night in protest against the release of the animal.

Three killed in elephant attack near A.P's Rajampeta

In a tragic incident, three persons were killed and two others critically injured when a herd of wild elephants attacked a batch of devotees on their way to Siva temple nestled in the thick forests of Seshachalam hills at Gundalokoma in Annamayya district of Andhra Pradesh on Tuesday morning. According to officials, the devotees were from Y.Kota village nearby. The herd suddenly emerged from the road side thicket, blocking their way. While a dozen of the batch could escape from the attack, three were trampled to death.

Child trafficking unearthed in Hyderabad, 11 people arrested

A gang of 11 individuals, including "customers", were arrested in connection with an Inter-State child trafficking racket during the operation, the police rescued four infants who had been illegally procured and sold to families in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Investigation revealed that prime accused Krishnaveni came in touch with one Vandana, a resident of Ahmedabad via social media, who supplied infants for a price ranging from ₹1.5 to ₹2.5 lakh each. Krishnaveni, in turn, worked alongside accomplices to transport infants to Hyderabad.

Sivaratri preparations



Vendors from Rajasthan setting up stalls at the R.K. Beach on the eve of Sivaratri in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday. K.R. DEEPAK

In Kerala, rift between associations of actors, producers intensifies

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

The rift between the associations of producers and actors over the proposed cinema strike seems to be widening.

The Kerala Film Producers' Association has said that the box-office returns of movies will be published regularly as part of the measures being taken to reveal the losses being suffered by the producers.

G. Suresh Kumar, vice-president of the producers' association, points out that a few actors seem upset about the decision to publish the box-office returns. He made this statement

HC overturns suspension of transport employee for sleeping during duty hours

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Emphasising the importance of "right to sleep", the High Court of Karnataka has found no fault with a constable of State Transport Corporation sleeping during duty hours as he was compelled to work for double shifts (16 hours) of 24 hours every day for 60 days without a break.

The Association of Malayalam Movie Artists (AMMA) has alleged that the stubbornness of a few is forcing the industry to go on strike that would affect the livelihood of several persons.

Petitioner was made to work two shifts (16 hours) for 60 long days without a break, a court says court

Justice M. Nagarasanna has set aside the suspension order passed by the disciplinary authority of KRRTC's Koppal division while the petitioner, Chandrashekar's petition, the court pointed out. The court also noted that corporation's Vigilance Department, which had recommended petitioner's suspension, had also submitted a report that there were only three concrete reasons for the workload on the existing staff is extremely high while suggesting to appoint two more constabulary.

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HC overturns suspension of transport employee for sleeping during duty hours

The Hindu Bureau

BENGALURU

Emphasising the importance of “right to sleep”, and work-life balance of employees, particularly those working in shifts, the High Court of Karnataka has found no fault with a constable of State Transport Corporation sleeping during duty hours as he was compelled to work for double shifts (16 hours) of 24 hours every day for 60 days without a break.

Chandrashekar, a constable with the Kalyan Karnataka Road Transport Corporation (KKRTC), was suspended on July 1, 2024, after a video, showing him sleeping during duty hours, went viral on social media.

Petitioner was made to work two shifts (16 hours) for 60 long days without a break, says court

Justice M. Nagaprasanna has set aside the suspension order passed by the disciplinary authority of KKRTC’s Koppal division while allowing Mr. Chandrashekar’s petition.

Shortage of staff

Though the KKRTC had justified the suspension order, the corporation did not deny the fact that Mr. Chandrashekar was made to work for 16 hours a day for 60 days without a break due to shortage of personnel in the posts of constables,

the court pointed out.

The court also noted that corporation’s Vigilance Department, which had recommended petitioner’s suspension, had also submitted a report that there were only three constables in the depot; and the workload on the exiting staff is extremely high while suggesting to appoint two more constables.

Citing the articles of universal declaration of human rights dealing with “right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours...”, and judgments on this issue by other high courts, Justice Nagaprasanna said that “the petitioner is made to overwork by two shifts in 24 hours, for 60

long days without break. Therefore, the action of the KKRTC placing the petitioner under suspension for the folly of the corporation is undoubtedly an action which suffers from want of bonafides.”

If the petitioner had slept while on duty, when his duty was restricted to a single shift, it would undoubtedly become “misconduct”.

The court also pointed out that the covenants in the International Labour Organisation to which India is a part, recognises the work and life balance and the hours of work should not exceed 48 hours in a week and 8 hours in a day, except in exceptional circumstances, is what is indicated in the covenants.

J&K was promised plebiscite at time of accession: Omar

Deerzad Ashraf Srinagar

Jammu & Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday said the description of Article 370 as a "temporary or transitional provision" was "unthinkable earlier for J&K's status had not been fully formalised" at the time of its accession to India in 1947.

"What was the promise made to the people of J&K at the point of accession that made Article 370 temporary and transitional? The promise was a plebiscite. At the time of accession, J&K's status was not fully formalised. It was understood that its future would be determined through democratic means," Mr. Abdullah said in an interview to a television channel.

His remarks come after a recent interview of former Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud to the BBC, where he described Article 370 as "temporary and transitory".



Omar Abdullah

Mr. Abdullah, however, praised the change in atmosphere in J&K after the abrogation of provisions of Article 370 in 2019. Referring to decline in separatist activity since 2019, he said, "It would have been unthinkable earlier for the Mirwaiz to be provided with CKRP cover." However, the office of the Mirwaiz termed his remarks "insulting" and said in a statement that the Mirwaiz to the security provided as "nonsensical". Peoples Democratic Party legislator Waheed-ur-Rehman Parra too questioned Mr. Abdullah's remarks about the change in situation post-2019.

'Accepting Taliban envoy in Delhi will undermine India's credibility'

Afghan exiles at Herat Security Dialogue urge India to maintain its stated foreign policy regarding terrorists; appeals come after reports surface that India is on the verge of allowing Taliban appointee to head Afghanistan Embassy in New Delhi

Sahasini Haidari MADRID

Amidst a growing number of reports that India will accept a Taliban-appointed diplomat to head the Afghanistan Embassy in Delhi, speakers at a conference of prominent Afghan exiles urged New Delhi to not "normalize" its engagement with the regime in Kabul. The reports carried by Afghan media, citing Taliban Foreign Ministry officials and international news agency Bloomberg, followed weeks after India's Foreign Secretary Vikram Miri met with the Taliban's Acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi in Dubai on January 8. This is the highest-level engagement the Indian government has conducted with the Taliban since the latter took power in Kabul in August 2021.

In November 2024, New Delhi accepted a Taliban-approved nominee, Ikramuddin Kamil, as Acting Consul-General in Mumbai. If India were to allow a Taliban-appointed nominee to head the Afghanistan Embassy in Delhi, it would join other countries, including China, Pakistan, Russia, Iran, the UAE, Qatar and Central Asia, which have rejected the Taliban's nominees, and still host ambassadors of the Afghan Republic.



Afghans-in-exile leaders and diplomats gather for a conference in Madrid to discuss Afghanistan's future.

Speaking to The Hindu at the Herat Security Dialogue in Madrid organised by the Afghanistan Institute of Strategic Studies, which is now based in London, former senior officials and diplomats cautioned against any such move. "This statement marks a stark departure from India's historical stance and undermines its credibility as a nation that has long condemned terrorism in all forms. The Afghan people expect India to uphold its own stated foreign policy of making no distinction between 'good' and 'bad' terrorists, demonstrating a principled and consistent approach rather than one driven by short-term geopolitical calculations," former Afghan Ambassador Ashraf Haidari said. Mr. Haidari is a founder and president of Displaced International, an agency advocating for the rights of those displaced by conflict.

Mr. Haidari, who was also Afghanistan's Deputy Chief of Mission in New Delhi and then Ambassador to Sri Lanka in the pre-Taliban era, has been critical of India's decision to engage with the Taliban while refusing visas to Afghans, including thousands of students who gained admission to universities in India.

Asked about the possible move, India's former Ambassador to Afghanistan Jayant Prasad, who too attended the conference, said India had "done well" to engage the Taliban, as it was the "de facto authority" and connection to the Afghan people. However, he stressed that the government "should not provide wide legitimacy to the Islamic Emirate at a time it has refused political dialogue to create an inclusive government, and is engaged in the persistent and systematic oppression of women and minorities".

According to reports carried by Amu TV, Indian officials are "close to finalising an agreement" for two Taliban-approved officials to manage the affairs at the Afghanistan Embassy in Delhi, which has been in limbo for over a year.

The far-left External Affairs Ministry has maintained that any such reports were "hypothetical". (The correspondent covered the Herat Security Dialogue at the invitation of the Afghanistan Institute of Strategic Studies.)

Tamal, India's last imported warship, likely to be commissioned in June

Dinakar Perli New Delhi

The Indian Navy crew that will operate Tamal, the stealth frigate under construction, is expected to reach St. Petersburg last week in preparation for its commissioning, which is expected to take place in early June.

The event is significant as Tamal will be the last warship to be commissioned outside India or imported. The country now designs and constructs its own warships. The commissioning crew of around 200 personnel reached St. Petersburg around 10 days ago for training as the ship will undergo a series of trials leading up to its commissioning, officials sources in the navy confirmed. The crew will shift to Kalinin-



INS Tamal was the first ship to be manufactured in Russia under the present deal. It was commissioned in December 2024.

grad after the training to oversee the trials. The ship is being built as part of the deal for four additional follow-on stealth frigates under an Inter-Governmental Agreement signed in October 2016. Under the deal, two ships are to be imported and two manufactured by Goa Shipyard Ltd. (GSL) under

technology transfer. A \$1-billion deal was subsequently signed for the two frigates under direct purchase. Tamal has completed manufacturer trials and is undergoing sea trials. The ship is under the supervision of the Committee Trials. It will then go through delivery acceptance trials, both in harbour and at sea, which

will be spread over 45 to 50 days, sources said, explaining the process. The ship's weapons will also be fired after which it will be ready for commissioning.

INS Tamal, the first ship to be manufactured in Russia under the deal, was commissioned on December 9, 2024 at Kaliningrad in the presence of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. The ship reached its port in Karwar on February 14 after sailing over 12,500 nautical miles, visiting eight countries across three continents and decommo- The Indian Navy, which set up a Directorate of Naval Design way back in 1970, has, for sometime now, graduated into a builder's navy with over 60 warships being constructed at Indian shipyards.

Coast Guard helps secure India's sovereignty, stops illegal infiltration: Rajnath

The Hindu Bureau New Delhi

The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) caught 115 pirates off the east coast of India, worth ₹7,000 crore, and seized an illegal drug shipment worth ₹2,000 crore, in addition, ICG saved 19 lives through various rescue operations and provided medical assistance to 29 seriously injured people," Mr. Singh said.

Flagging the emergence of unconventional threats such as cyberattacks, signal jamming, and other emerging crimes that threaten the country, he added. By being alert on the maritime borders, the Coast Guard not only stops illegal infiltration but also positively impacts India's sovereignty and internal



Rajnath Singh at Coast Guard's investiture ceremony at Bharat Mandapam in Delhi.

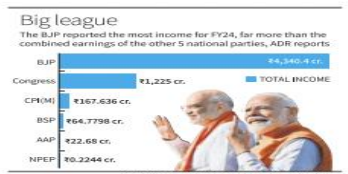
security, the Defence Minister said at the 18th ICG Investiture Ceremony at Bharat Mandapam in Delhi, on Tuesday. He conferred 32 gallantry, distinguished service and other medals on Coast Guard personnel. "In the last one year, ICG has achieved significant achievements in maritime safety, security and humanitarian operations. It apprehended 14 boats and 115 pirates, apart from carrying out a major drug seizure of about ₹7,000 crore. In addition, ICG saved 19 lives through various rescue operations and provided medical assistance to 29 seriously injured people," Mr. Singh said.

Flagging the emergence of unconventional threats such as cyberattacks, signal jamming, and other emerging crimes that threaten the country, he added. By being alert on the maritime borders, the Coast Guard not only stops illegal infiltration but also positively impacts India's sovereignty and internal

'BJP spent ₹1,755 crore on troll campaigns, general propaganda in 2023-24'

The Hindu Bureau New Delhi

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) spent ₹1,755 crore on election or general propaganda in 2023-24, the lion's share of its expenditure that year, according to an analytical report by the non-profit organisation Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR). The Congress spent ₹69.72 crore on election-related expenses, said the report, which analysed the total income and expenditure of all six national parties as declared by them in their annual audit reports submitted to the Election Commission of India (ECI). Among other expenses, the BJP spent ₹349.71 crore towards administrative costs, while the Congress spent ₹540.7 crore towards administrative and general expenses, followed by ₹47.57 crore



on employee costs. The six national parties - BJP, Congress, Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), Aam Aadmi Party, and National People's Party (NPP) - declared a total income of ₹2,669.865 crore from donations or contributions. The BJP, Congress, and AAP received electoral bonds worth ₹1,225 crore, while the CPI(M), Congress and BJP received ₹10.15 crore. The due date for submission of annual audited accounts for the parties was October 31, 2024, but only the BSP, NPP and AAP submitted their audit reports on time, while the CPI(M), Congress and BJP submitted after a delay of 22 days, 53 days and 60 days, respectively.

SC reserves verdict on suit against police encounters in Assam

Krishnadhas Rajanagala New Delhi

The Assam government on Tuesday strongly objected to a public interest petition questioning it of violating a 2014 Supreme Court judgment for a scientific, well-documented and decisive investigation by an Independent Inquiry into the police encounters that allegedly took place in the state between March 2020 and August 2022. Appearing before a Bench headed by Justice Surya Kant, Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta said the judgment in People's Union of Civil Liberties (PUCIL) versus State of Assam (PUCIL) on police encounter deaths was binding on the State and was followed "to the hilt". The judgment had held that "killings in police encounters require independent investigation" to restore the public's faith in the police force. It does not matter whether the victim was a common person or a militant or a terrorist, nor does it matter whether the ag-

gressor was a common person or the State. The law is the same for both and is equally applicable to both. This is the requirement of a democracy," the Supreme Court had observed over two decades ago in the verdict. Prashant Bhushan, appearing for petitioners, said that the 171 Yeasin Juaelder, said the 16 guidelines of the PUCIL judgment, which were to be mandatorily followed by the State agencies, were "rampantly violated" by the Assam state police. He said the petitioners sought an independent investigation by a retired Supreme Court judge. The court said FIRs were registered against the victims and not the police officers involved. He referred to the statements given by independent investigators in their legs by an "encounter specialist". "The incidents were not random. They showed a general pattern," he submitted. The court reserved the case for judgment.

Radical Meitei group seeks border fencing, Manipur NRC, 'return' of ST status

The Hindu Bureau New Delhi

Representatives of the radical Meitei group on Tuesday met Manipur Governor Anbumbe Chhangma and submitted a memorandum seeking border fencing, implementation of the NRC with 1991 as cut-off, and two arrest or legal action" against village volunteers, including members of AT. "This comes within days of a call given by Mr. Meitei among other demands. On Tuesday, the Spear-Head Corps of the Indian Army said that the Army, Assam to express its outrage over the administration interacted with relevant stakeholders to encourage surrendering of arms in its bid to demilitarise the population. The result in the surrendering of 48 weapons in valley and hill districts, it said. Meanwhile, the Congress on Tuesday once again targeted Prime Minister Narendra Modi after



Manipur NRC members speak to the media after meeting the Governor.

he left Manipur out of the schedule his visit to Guwahati for the Assam 2.0 Summit. In a post on X, Jairam Ramesh said, "The PM has yet again deeply disappointed the people of Manipur... It is all the more perplexing given that the State is now under President's Rule." This comes days after the Delhi Meitei Coordinating Committee, a civil society organisation of Meitei people in Delhi, had sent an open invite to PM Modi, asking him specifically to make a stop in Manipur. On Tuesday, while the DMCC held a press meet to express its outrage over the administration interacted with relevant stakeholders to encourage surrendering of arms in its bid to demilitarise the population. The result in the surrendering of 48 weapons in valley and hill districts, it said. Meanwhile, the Congress on Tuesday once again targeted Prime Minister Narendra Modi after

Existing norms duly address caste bias concerns, NAAC tells SC

Abhinav Lakshman New Delhi

Weeks after the Supreme Court directed the University Grants Commission (UGC) to collate complaints of caste discrimination across higher education institutions (HEIs) in India, the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) has told the top court that its existing measures for assessment and grading of HEIs "effectively address concerns related to caste-based discrimination, mental health, and equal opportunities".

The NAAC was responding to the batch of pleas filed by the mothers of Rohith Vemula and Pavan Tadvi, respectively, who had prayed for the Supreme Court to act on caste discrimination allegedly "rampant" at universities, arguing this had claimed their children's lives. In the counter affidavit filed by the NAAC, an autonomous body of the UGC, which is also listed as a respondent in the plea, the accrediting body said that its "holistic approach to accreditation, which includes the detailed evaluation of the SSR (Self Study Report) and assessment of both qualitative and quantitative data, ensures that institutions maintain the highest standards of equality, industry, and social responsibility".

The NAAC said that SSRs assess 87 specific metrics directly related to "mental well-being, equal opportunities, and overall welfare of students", which includes monitoring quota implementation. It added that there are mandated requirements for universities to set up grievance redressal mechanisms. The petitioners had argued that the NAAC does not have any caste discrimination related metrics or indicators in its accreditation process. In its counter affidavit, the NAAC went on to say that it requires institutions to implement "specific measures to foster an inclusive environment" for students of all backgrounds.

Tamal, India's last imported warship, likely to be commissioned in June

Dinakar Peri

NEW DELHI

The Indian Navy crew that will operate *Tamal*, the stealth frigate under construction in Russia, reached St. Petersburg last week in preparation for its commissioning, which is expected to take place in early June.

The event is significant as *Tamal* will be the last warship to be commissioned outside India or imported. The country now designs and constructs its own warships.

The commissioning crew of around 200 personnel reached St. Petersburg around 10 days ago for training as the ship will undergo a series of trials leading up to its commissioning, officials sources in the know confirmed. The crew will shift to Kalinin-



INS Tushil was the first ship to be manufactured in Russia under the present deal. It was commissioned in December 2024. ANI

grad after the training to oversee the trials.

The ship is being built as part of the deal for four additional follow-on stealth frigates under an Inter-Governmental Agreement signed in October 2016. Under the deal, two ships are to be imported and two manufactured by Goa Shipyard Ltd. (GSL) under

technology transfer. A \$1-billion deal was subsequently signed for the two frigates under direct purchase.

Tamal has completed manufacturer trials and is currently undergoing State Committee Trials. It will then go through delivery acceptance trials, both in harbour and at sea, which

will be spread over 45 to 50 days, sources said, explaining the process.

The ship's weapons will also be fired after which it will be ready for commissioning.

INS Tushil, the first ship to be manufactured in Russia under the deal, was commissioned on December 9, 2024 at Kaliningrad in the presence of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. The ship reached its home port in Karwar on February 14 after sailing over 12,500 nautical miles, visiting eight countries across three continents through the journey.

The Indian Navy, which set up a Directorate of Naval Design way back in 1970, has, for sometime now, graduated into a builder's navy with over 60 warships being constructed at Indian shipyards.


- **INS Tamal:** The last warship to be commissioned outside India, marking a shift toward domestic warship production.
(आईएनएस तमाल: भारत का अंतिम युद्धपोत जिसे विदेश में कमीशन किया जाएगा, यह घरेलू युद्धपोत निर्माण की दिशा में बदलाव को दर्शाता है।)



- **Commissioning Timeline:**

- The Indian Navy crew arrived in St. Petersburg for training.
- Commissioning expected in early June 2025.

- **(कमीशनिंग समयरेखा:**

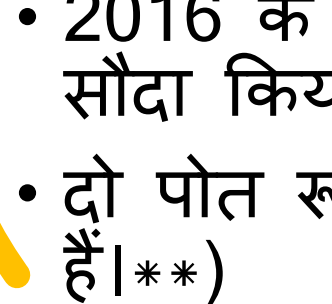
- भारतीय नौसेना का दल प्रशिक्षण के लिए सेंट पीटर्सबर्ग पहुंचा।
 - जून 2025 की शुरुआत में कमीशनिंग की उम्मीद है।**)
- 



- **Strategic Importance:**

- Part of a \$1 billion deal signed under the 2016 agreement for four stealth frigates.
- Two ships are being imported from Russia, and two are being built in India.

(रणनीतिक महत्व:


- 2016 के समझौते के तहत चार स्टील्थ फ्रिगेट्स के लिए \$1 बिलियन का सौदा किया गया।
 - दो पोत रूस से आयात किए जा रहे हैं, जबकि दो भारत में बनाए जा रहे हैं।**)
- 



- **Final Trials:**

- The ship is undergoing **State Committee Trials** before commissioning.
- Will go through delivery acceptance tests both at **harbour and sea** before final induction.

(अंतिम परीक्षण:

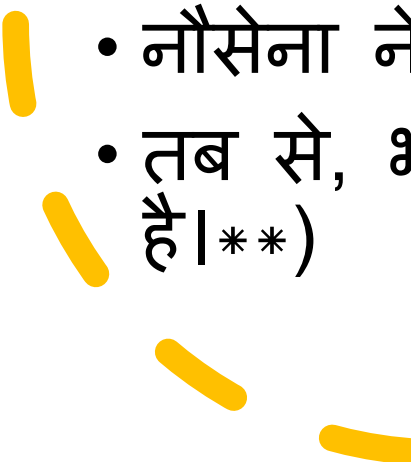
- पोत कमीशनिंग से पहले **स्टेट कमेटी ट्रायल्स** से गुजर रहा है।
 - अंतिम स्वीकृति से पहले **बंदरगाह और समुद्र** में परीक्षण किया जाएगा।**)
- 



- **Indian Naval Design:**

- The Indian Navy established a Directorate of Naval Design in 1970.
- Since then, India has steadily progressed toward self-reliance in warship construction.

(भारतीय नौसेना डिजाइन:

- 
- नौसेना ने 1970 में नौसेना डिजाइन निदेशालय स्थापित किया।
 - तब से, भारत युद्धपोत निर्माण में आत्मनिर्भरता की ओर बढ़ रहा है।**)

• **INS Tushil:**

- The first ship under this deal, built in Russia, was commissioned in **December 2024** in Kaliningrad.
- It reached India after sailing **12,500 nautical miles**, visiting **eight countries across three continents**.

(आईएनएस तुशील:


- इस समझौते के तहत निर्मित पहला पोत, जिसे **दिसंबर 2024** में कैलिनिनिग्राद में कमीशन किया गया।
- **12,500 समुद्री मील** की यात्रा करते हुए **तीन महाद्वीपों में आठ देशों का दौरा किया।**)**



- **Growth of Indian Shipyards:**

- Over **60 warships** are currently being built in Indian shipyards, boosting domestic industry and employment.

(भारतीय शिपयार्ड्स का विकास:

- वर्तमान में भारतीय शिपयार्ड में **60 से अधिक युद्धपोत** बनाए जा रहे हैं, जिससे घरेलू उद्योग और रोजगार को बढ़ावा मिल रहा है।**)
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IN BRIEF



SC to hear plea against 'trial run' to dispose Bhopal waste

The Supreme Court on Tuesday agreed to urgently hear petitioners' plea for transportation and dumping of hazardous chemical waste from the Bhopal gas tragedy site at Pithampur on Thursday as the first case. A Bench headed by Justice B.R. Gawai took the decision to hear the case without delay after petitioners made an urgent oral mentioning that a "trial run" to dispose 10 metric tonnes of waste likely to be held on Thursday. Justice Gawai addressed the State counsel of Madhya Pradesh that the court was not going to intervene unless the dumping of the waste was proved to be a hazard to the population of Pithampur.

AHMS doctors conduct rare surgical procedure on teen

Doctors at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Delhi have successfully operated and saved the life of a 17-year-old boy (the identity of the patient has been withheld), who had a "parasitic" twin, a fully developed lower limb attached to his abdomen since birth. This is an extremely rare anomaly, according to doctors. The boy came to the AIIMS in the last week of January. In a multi-department intervention, doctors undertook extensive pre-surgery investigations and then performed a two-and-a-half-hour long operation to separate the limb, which had adequate blood supply.

ED arrests journalist Mahesh Langa in PMLA case

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate has arrested The Hindu's Ahmedabad correspondent Mahesh Langa under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), the agency said on Tuesday. "Mahesh Prabhudhan Langa was produced before the Special Judge (PMLA), Mirzapur, by Ahmedabad, and the Special Judge (PMLA) has granted four days' ED custody till February 28, 2025," it said. The ED said it initiated a probe based on an FIR filed by the DCB police station, Ahmedabad City, against Mr. Langa and others for alleged cheating and criminal breach of trust. The ED said it was also probing alleged involvement in a "GST Input Tax Credit" case.

Women shifting from unpaid domestic work: govt. survey

Participation of women in employment-related work increases to 25% in 2024 from 21.8% in 2019; for men, it rose to 75% from 70.9%; women spent 305 minutes a day in unpaid domestic services

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

The participation of men and women in employment and related activities in a day increased to 75% and 25%, respectively, in 2024 from 70.9% and 21.8% in 2019, shows a survey on time use conducted by the National Statistics Office.

The time spent by women in unpaid domestic services dropped to 305 minutes in 2024 compared with 315 minutes in 2019, indicating a shift from unpaid to paid pursuits, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation said in a statement based on the survey.

The "Time Use Survey" measured the time spent by individuals on different activities. It found that in 2024, people involved in employment and related activities spent 440 minutes a day for such activities. While men spent 473 minutes, women spent 341 minutes in such engagements.

Men spent 88 minutes a day in unpaid domestic services for household



Although women are spending a little more time on paid work, they still manage the bulk of caregiving activities at home. FILE PHOTO

members, the survey said. Females spent 137 minutes a day in caring for their household members compared to 75 minutes spent by male members of the household," the survey said.

Leisure activities Persons aged six and above who responded to the survey's questions spent 171 minutes a day for activities

for persons of age 6 years and above," the survey said.

The Ministry added in a statement that about 41% of women in the 15-59 age group participated in caregiving for their household members. The participation of men in this age group in such activity stood at 21.4%.

"Also, female participants in care-giving activities spent about 140 minutes in a day compared to 74 minutes by male respondents of the same age group. This corroborates the Indian social fabric wherein most of the care-giving responsibilities for household members are borne by the females of the household," the Ministry said.

About 16.8% of the population participated in by-producting goods for their own use. The participants spent 66 minutes a day in doing such activities.

The survey covered 1,39,487 households — 83,247 in rural areas and 56,240 in urban areas, it enumerated 4,54,192 persons aged six and above (rural: 2,85,389 and urban: 1,68,803).

related to culture, leisure, recreation and sports. Participants aged 17 and above spent 177 minutes and 166 minutes, respectively, in a day in such activities," it said.

Children between the age of six and 14 spent 413 minutes a day in learning-related activities. "Self-care and maintenance activities comprised an average of 708 minutes in a day

CBSE proposes draft policy for conducting two Board examinations from 2025-26

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has proposed that from the academic year 2025-26, students of Class 10 can appear for Board examinations twice, in a bid to improve their performance.

A draft policy has been put in public domain by the CBSE and the Board will accept responses from all stakeholders — schools, teachers, parents, students and the public — till March 9.

The scheme proposes that Class 10 and 12 exams will begin on the first Tuesday after February 15. The second exam will be in July.

The National Education

The scheme proposes that Class 10 and 12 exams will begin on the first Tuesday after February 15. The second exam will be in July.

Policy, 2020 recommends that students be given an opportunity to improve their performance in Board exams.

Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan chaired a meeting which discussed the issue.

The scheme proposes that Class 10 and 12 exams will begin on the first Tuesday after February 15, 2026. The improvement exam of the second exam will be scheduled in July 2026. Up to 26.6 lakh students in Class 10 and 20

lakh in Class 12 are expected to appear in the exams.

Students' choice Students can either choose to appear for the Board exams the second time to improve their scores, or they can opt out from appearing for the second time.

"Performance in the first exam will be made available on DigiLocker, which can be used for admission to Class 11, in case the student does not wish to appear for the second examination," Mr. Bhargava said.

Marksheet and pass certificate will have marks secured in first exam, and the second exam, as well as marks secured in practice and internal assessments and grades. The best of the two marks will be mentioned.

CBSE lets schools open playschools and kindergartens on their premises

Maitri Parecha NEW DELHI

To accommodate playschools and kindergartens within the school premises, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has issued a notification approving opening of branch schools under the same name and affiliation as those of the parent school.

CBSE Secretary Himanshu Gupta told The Hindu on Tuesday that the change in the policy was in line with the National Education Policy (NEP) recommendation that schools should open Bal Vatikas or playschools for children aged three to five within their premises.

"With the new tweak in the CBSE policy, schools located within areas and cities where relaxed land norms are applicable and the land requirements for setting schools, can establish a branch school that includes services for Bal Vatikas to Class 5," Mr. Gupta said.

The branch school will have a minimum contiguous land area of 1,200 sq metres. The school is bound by a six-foot-high permanent wall, the CBSE has stated. While the branch school can be opened under the



The CBSE Secretary says the change in the policy is in line with the NEP recommendation to open playschools. FILE PHOTO

same name and affiliation number, a separate set of resources for physical and academic infrastructure as well as teaching and supporting staff is required, says the Affiliation Bylaws (Branch School), 2025. The main school shall run classes 6 to 11, they say.

Mr. Gupta said that close to 30,000 schools affiliated with the CBSE are eligible

to apply for opening branch schools. "The schools can apply for establishing branch schools with effect from the academic year 2026-27 on the SARAS portal," he said.

Separate panel "The school management committees shall be separate, but there will be a common website for both schools, with a section dedicated to branch school," the notification says.

The main and branch school shall have separate principals and headmistresses or headteachers and there will be a seamless transition from branch school to main school for students.

"The school will not consider these students as new admissions in main school," it notes. For Bal Vatikas to be established, the CBSE has stated that the teacher-pupil ratio will be 1:30.

Free webinar on hypertension to be held on February 28

The Hindu Bureau CHENNAI

Naruvi Hospitals, Vellore, in collaboration with The Hindu, is set to host a webinar titled "Blood pressure: what you need to know" on February 28.

This event is part of the "Healthy India, Happy India" initiative, a series of 15 webinars aimed at promoting health awareness, disease prevention, and overall wellness across India.

The webinar, scheduled to be held at 11.30 a.m., is the fifth installment in the series.

Panel of experts It brings together a distinguished panel of experts to discuss various aspects of hypertension.

Dr. V. Chockalingam, Professor Emeritus of Cardiology at Tamil Nadu Dr. MGR Medical University, Chennai, will address the treatment of hypertension.

Dr. Jacob Jose, consultant cardiologist at Naruvi Hospitals, will provide an introduction to hypertension and its growing prevalence.

Dr. K. Suresh Kumar, consultant interventional cardiologist at Naruvi Hospitals, will explain how to measure blood pressure



It is part of a series of 15 webinars aimed at promoting health awareness, disease prevention, and overall wellness across India.

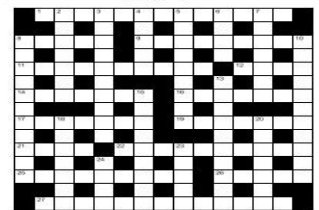
Panel of experts It brings together a distinguished panel of experts to discuss various aspects of hypertension.

Dr. V. Chockalingam, Professor Emeritus of Cardiology at Tamil Nadu Dr. MGR Medical University, Chennai, will address the treatment of hypertension.

Dr. Jacob Jose, consultant cardiologist at Naruvi Hospitals, will provide an introduction to hypertension and its growing prevalence.

Dr. K. Suresh Kumar, consultant interventional cardiologist at Naruvi Hospitals, will explain how to measure blood pressure

THE CROSSWORD 14418 (set by Dr. X)



- Across 1 One found in bathroom cuddling sounder in the row so naughty (6,7) 2 Slight delay? Time is money (5) 3 Book is remarkably safe far, outlining many skills for surviving in the wilderness (9) 11 Mock trial organised to tackle doubt about spics (10)

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

- 12 Member of a Native American people in dance institute (4) 14 Showed most outstanding butt (7) 15 Hampered by racial's vile deed (7) 17 The french criminal stealing milkers is brilliant (7) 19 Trash container in French station (7) 21 Stormy weather to begin with - cancelled motor race in US (4) 22 Bus of reporters taking bribes, backing faction endlessly (10) 25 Spooner observed magnificent type of sedimentary rock (9) 26 Encourage one struggling to control horse (3,2) 27 Powerful person in the background is cool during treatment of emergencies (8,3) Down 2 Loves to cuddle husband in easy places by the fire (7) 3 Shy person left crushed by error, turning more depressed (10) 4 Spilled beer on top of costly medical instrument (5) 5 Removing unreliable agent in US (9) 6 Senorita cooking some Mexican dish (4) 7 Where letters are found, briefly (2,1,4) 8 Brilliant acting! Small girl secures top position in ad for show (4,7) 9 Heapers sent horrid criminal to abduct prince (5,4) 13 Place to catch glimpse of ravishing woman in brown athletic clothes (10) 15 Put down container over top of armoire, please (9) 18 Trimmed junk in period of propano, time (7) 19 Statisticians with nerve gas, outlining many skills for surviving in the wilderness (9) 23 Father and daughter in dock (5) 24 Privy to star wanting cocaine for nerves at premiere (2,2)

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★ Solution to yesterday's Sudoku 6 2 9 1 7 4 3 8 5 5 3 1 8 6 9 3 9 2 2 2 9 5 8 4 7 6 1 3 7 8 6 3 9 1 2 5 4 4 8 5 6 2 7 1 9 3 8 6 1 7 3 2 6 8 5 4 9 8 5 4 7 3 9 1 2 6 9 6 2 4 1 5 8 3 7

FAITH

Maha Sivaratri significance

Maha Sivaratri is an important Hindu festival celebrated to commemorate Lord Shiva. It is observed on the fourteenth day of the first half of the lunar month of Phalgun. The festival finds mention in the Skanda Puranam, Linga Puranam, Padma Puranam and Shiva Puranam. On this day the natural flow of cosmic energies are particularly potent. Shiva is believed to be the absolute timeless Supreme Being, the ultimate creator and destroyer, said Prof. Kumudh Abbai.

Various cosmological legends and narratives reflecting the multiple, diverse beliefs are associated with the festival of the night. One legend celebrates Sivaratri as the night when Lord Shiva, in the Shavita tradition, it is held that the dance of creation, preservation and destruction is performed by Shiva on this night; the dance of cosmic, galactic particles throbbing and resonating with the divine rhythm, of creation and dissolution of infinite universes.

Another legend states that Shiva swallowed the Halahala (poison) that was created during the churning of the ocean, to save creation. He held it in his neck which became blue, thus giving him the title of Neelakanth. Maha Sivaratri honours this deed. It is also believed that on this day Shiva became one with Mount Kailash. He became like a mountain, absolutely still, in the yogic tradition considered as a Adhyogi immersed in his own being. The Linga Purana states that on this day Shiva took the form of the Lingam. Offerings of bilva leaves, sweets and milk are made and the sacred mantra, 'Om namah Shivaya', is chanted and Shivalinga rectified. Devotees fast and keep a vigil, praying all night.

Women shifting from unpaid domestic work: govt. survey

Participation of women in employment-related work increases to 25% in 2024 from 21.8% in 2019; for men, it rose to 75% from 70.9%; women spent 305 minutes a day in unpaid domestic services

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The participation of men and women in the 15-59 age group in employment and related activities in a day increased to 75% and 25%, respectively, in 2024 from 70.9% and 21.8% in 2019, shows a survey on time use conducted by the National Statistics Office.

The time spent by women in unpaid domestic services dropped to 305 minutes in 2024 compared with 315 minutes in 2019, indicating a shift from unpaid to paid pursuits, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation said in a statement based on the survey.

The “Time Use Survey” measured the time spent by individuals on different activities. It found that in 2024, people involved in employment and related activities spent 440 minutes a day for such activities. While men spent 473 minutes, women spent 341 minutes in such engagements.

Men spent 88 minutes a day in unpaid domestic services for household



Although women are spending a little more time on paid work, they still manage the bulk of caregiving activities at home. FILE PHOTO

members, the survey said. “Females spent 137 minutes in a day in caring for their household members compared to 75 minutes spent by male members of the household,” the survey said.

Leisure activities

Persons aged six and above who responded to the survey’s questions spent 171 minutes a day for activities

related to culture, leisure, and mass media use. “Male and female participants spent 177 minutes and 164 minutes, respectively in a day in such activities,” it said.

Children between the age of six and 14 spent 413 minutes a day in learning-related activities. “Self-care and maintenance activities comprised an average of 708 minutes in a day

for persons of age 6 years and above,” the survey said.

The Ministry added in a statement that about 41% of women in the 15-59 age group participated in caregiving for their household members. The participation of men in this age group in such activity stood at 21.4%.

“Also, female participants in care-giving activities spent about 140 minutes in a day compared to 74 minutes by male respondents of the same age group. This corroborates the Indian social fabric wherein most of the caregiving responsibilities for household members are borne by the females of the household,” the Ministry said.

About 16.8% of the population participated in producing goods for their own final use and they spent 116 minutes a day in doing such activities.

The survey covered 1,39,487 households – 83,247 in rural areas and 56,240 in urban areas. It enumerated 4,54,192 persons aged six and above (rural: 2,85,389 and urban: 1,68,803).



- **Increase in Women's Employment Participation:**





- The percentage of women (aged 15-59) engaged in employment-related activities increased to **25% in 2024** from **21.8% in 2019**.

- For men, participation increased to **75% from 70.9%**.

(महिलाओं की रोजगार में भागीदारी में वृद्धि:

- **2024 में 25%** महिलाएँ रोजगार में संलग्न हुईं, जबकि 2019 में यह **21.8%** थी।

- पुरुषों के लिए यह **70.9%** से बढ़कर **75%** हो गई।**)





- **Time Spent on Unpaid Domestic Work:**

- Women spent **305 minutes daily** on unpaid domestic services in 2024, compared to **315 minutes in 2019**.

- Men spent **88 minutes daily** on unpaid household work.

(अवैतनिक घरेलू कार्य में व्यतीत समय:

- **2024 में महिलाएँ 305 मिनट प्रतिदिन अवैतनिक घरेलू कार्यों में लगीं, जो 2019 में 315 मिनट था।**

- **पुरुषों ने 88 मिनट प्रतिदिन घरेलू कार्यों में लगाए।**)**





- **Caregiving Responsibilities:**




- **41% of women** participated in caregiving activities for household members, compared to **21.4% of men**.

- Women spent **140 minutes per day** on caregiving, whereas men spent **74 minutes**.

(देखभाल की जिम्मेदारी:

- **41% महिलाएँ** अपने परिवार के सदस्यों की देखभाल में शामिल रहीं, जबकि **21.4% पुरुष**।

- महिलाएँ **140 मिनट प्रतिदिन**, जबकि पुरुष **74 मिनट** देखभाल में खर्च करते हैं।**)





- **Self-care & Leisure Activities:**

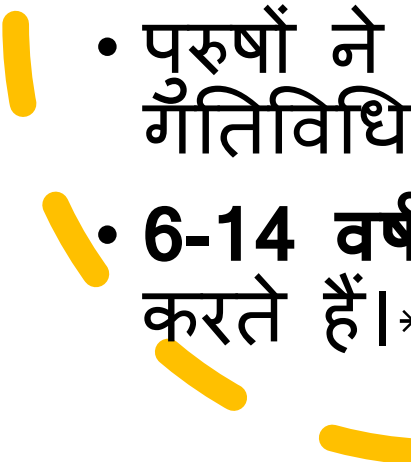
- Men spent **177 minutes** and women **164 minutes** daily on leisure and cultural activities.

- Children (aged 6-14) spent **413 minutes** on learning activities.

(स्व-देखभाल और अवकाश गतिविधियाँ:

- पुरुषों ने **177 मिनट**, जबकि महिलाओं ने **164 मिनट** अवकाश गतिविधियों में व्यतीत किए।

- **6-14 वर्ष के बच्चे** सीखने की गतिविधियों में **413 मिनट** व्यतीत करते हैं।**)





- **Participation in Household Production:**

- **16.8% of the population** participated in producing goods for their own use, spending **116 minutes daily** on such activities.

(घरेलू उत्पादन में भागीदारी:

- **16.8% लोग** घरेलू उपयोग के लिए वस्तुएँ बनाने में शामिल हुए, और **116 मिनट** प्रतिदिन खर्च किए।**)



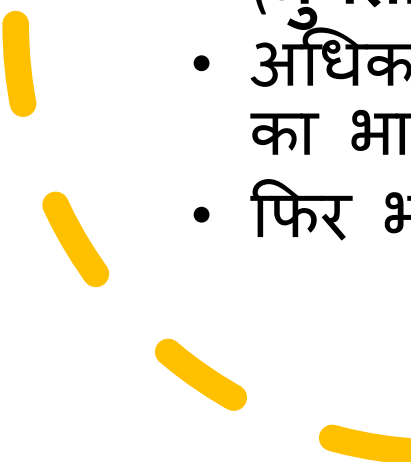
- **2. Social Aspects (सामाजिक पहलू)**

- **Shift Towards Paid Work:**

- More women are entering the workforce, reducing the burden of unpaid household work.

- However, women still carry the majority of caregiving responsibilities.

(भुगतान योग्य कार्य की ओर बदलाव:

- अधिक महिलाएँ कार्यबल में प्रवेश कर रही हैं, जिससे अवैतनिक घरेलू कार्य का भार कम हो रहा है।
 - फिर भी, देखभाल की अधिकांश जिम्मेदारी महिलाओं पर ही बनी हुई है।**)
- 

- **Gender Disparity in Domestic Work:**

- Despite more participation in paid work, women spend significantly more time than men on household tasks.

(घरेलू कार्यों में लैंगिक असमानता:

- रोजगार में बढ़ती भागीदारी के बावजूद, महिलाएँ पुरुषों की तुलना में कहीं अधिक समय घरेलू कार्यों में व्यतीत करती हैं।**)

3. Economic Aspects (आर्थिक पहलू)

Contribution to the Economy:

- With **more women in paid work**, household income is expected to rise, leading to **economic growth**.
(अर्थव्यवस्था में योगदान:
- अधिक महिलाएँ भुगतान योग्य कार्य में संलग्न होने से घरेलू आय बढ़ेगी और आर्थिक विकास को बढ़ावा मिलेगा।**)

Unpaid Work and Economic Impact:

- Unpaid household work, if monetized, would significantly contribute to GDP.
(अवैतनिक कार्य और आर्थिक प्रभाव:
- यदि घरेलू अवैतनिक कार्य का मौद्रिकरण किया जाए, तो यह जीडीपी में महत्वपूर्ण योगदान देगा।**)

The right's rise, Europe's state of denial

Blunt weapon

India should end Net curbs, especially when imposed without good reason

The number of Internet shutdowns in India was slightly lower in 2024 than in 2023, according to the Software Freedom Law Center (SFLC). India's annual report. A separate report by the web rights advocacy, Access Now, shows that India continues to lead globally in the number of government-ordered Internet shutdowns. The Union government has maintained that mobile Internet shutdown is its indispensable instrument in the toolkit to control law and order situations. Most of the Internet use in India is mobile. A closer examination of the shutdowns imposed even over the last year reveals disturbing data: 41 of the 84 shutdowns in India in 2024 were imposed during protests, compared to the 23 that were imposed for communal clashes. Five were even issued for cheating during examinations. In situations on the brink of violence where rapidly spreading disinformation may sweep out of control of the authorities, there may be a case for considering restrictions on communications. But no shutdowns is without a cost — the delayed information regarding violence can also impede fast response. The Supreme Court in India recognised this when it ruled, in *Anuradha Bhasin vs Union of India*, that each shutdown must meet the tests of necessity and proportionality. Internet shutdown impedes people's livelihoods, access to medical care and education. It is a blunt weapon the least that government could do is to measure its impact and use it sparingly. The government has urged on preparing such an assessment for years, but no headway has been made here.

Even for those in favour of retaining shutdowns as a tool in the repertory of emergency policing, the process being followed is cause for alarm. Many a time, as Access Now and SFLC report, there is no valid order uploaded on government websites in the notification and order, as required by the Telecommunications (Temporary Suspension of Services) Rules, 2024 and its preceding rules of 2017. Ideally, every shutdown should be followed by a timely examination of whether it was necessary and what its deployment cost was. The ideal number of Internet shutdowns in any country is zero. It is especially troubling that 206 orders were imposed on millions around the world last year. India's case shows that there is an urgent need for circumspection and restraint. The Internet shutdowns index is, after all, one of the indices in which India should not aspire to lead.

Wild and safe

Habitat fragmentation has led to rise in human-wildlife conflict

Recent human fatalities due to wild animal attacks, deep inside forests, in forest-fringed human habitations, and even within villages, have highlighted growing human-wildlife conflict in Kerala, where nearly 29% of the land is forested. With a dry spell and an unusually hot summer, there is an urgent need to prevent further escalation of this conflict, which now has political, social, and environmental dimensions. The Kerala government is facing criticism for its perceived inability to manage wildlife. Groups such as the Kerala Independent Farmers' Association (KIFA) and sections of the church advocate for culling wildlife, citing an alleged population boom. However, the State Department data suggest otherwise. The wild elephant population, linked to 18% of human fatalities, has declined by 7%. Snakebites, responsible for 78% of wildlife-related deaths, have fallen from 113 in 2012 to 34 in 2023. Overall, human deaths from wildlife encounters have decreased from 146 in 2018 to 57 last year. Yet, this is no cause for complacency. A concerning trend is that many victims are from tribal communities, traditionally adept at coexisting with wildlife. The government should investigate this as part of its newly announced mission to document and assess the traditional knowledge of Kerala's 36 tribal communities in tackling wildlife encounters.

There are also several anthropogenic factors. Habitat fragmentation, particularly in elephant corridors such as Aralam Farm (Kannur) and Chinnakkal (Idukki), has forced animals into human settlements. Unregulated tourism, cattle grazing near forests, encroachments, and food waste dumping on forest fringes further exacerbate the issue. Invasive plants (*Sesuvia portulacastris*) and monoculture industrial plantations have also disrupted wildlife feeding patterns. In response, the Kerala government, in 2022, empowered local bodies to eliminate feral wild boars damaging farmland. Last year, the Cabinet classified human-wildlife conflict as a state-specific disaster, allowing the Disaster Management Authority to intervene. The government's decision to emphasise participatory forest and wildlife management is a step in the right direction, given the extreme views propagated by some sections. The Forest Department has restricted 5,031 hectares of natural forest and built ponds and check dams. However, restrooms dominated by industrial plantations such as eucalyptus and acacia is a challenge. While solar fencing has shown some success, the 152-km or elephant proof wall at Aralam, one of 12 conflict landscapes, remains incomplete. The State's 10 missions to mitigate human-wildlife conflict must be prioritised. Given the region-specific nature of the problem, a multi-agency approach involving the Disaster Management, Revenue, Local Self-Government, Tribal Welfare, Agriculture, Health and Forest departments is crucial to balancing human safety and sustainable wildlife management.

Tony died a thousand deaths in the Munich Security Conference in Germany, that was held recently, and the United Nations General Assembly vote on Ukraine.

A few days ago, in Riyadh, Arabia, the United States and Russia, led by their respective Foreign Ministers, had held bilateral discussions on the Ukraine war. The Ukrainians and Europeans were not invited since it was felt that they need not be included at this point. In June 2024, at the behest of Ukraine, the European Union (EU) and the U.S., Switzerland organised a 'Summit on Peace in Ukraine' at the Bürgenstock. Russia was not invited since they felt that Russia was not needed at that point.

In Munich, U.S. Vice-President JD. Vance accused Europe of strangling its right-wing parties, "shutting down" elections, "stifling" free speech and religious freedoms and encouraging "out of control" migration from non-EU countries, thereby endangering democratic polity, freedoms and "fundamental values". But before November 2024, the Americans and the Europeans had tried to prevent their right-wing and far-right parties from gaining legitimacy through the ballot since they were convinced that the rise of right in their countries endangered democracy and freedoms — and, in effect, their liberal western values. Romania's constitutional court even annulled the presidential election results favouring right-independent candidate, Cluj Georghescu, who lobbied to cut off assistance to Ukraine, won the first round.

What the U.S. forgets In February 2025, the U.S. is accusing Ukraine. In the minds of the Europeans of not doing enough to find a solution to the conflict, pursuing an avoidable war with Russia. But the U.S. forgets that it has already spent over \$110 billion in the Ukraine war, with \$65 billion for ammunition and the rest for the least top western countries have collectively given Ukraine. The U.S. also forgets that in March 2022, it was the leader of a European country who, at the behest of the U.S., sabotaged negotiations (which had already begun) in Ankara between the Russians and the Ukrainians.

And, in September 2022, close allies of Germany sabotaged the Nord Stream pipelines, rendering them inoperable and preventing Russia from supplying natural gas to Germany, which was its lifeline. But a reluctant, but much-chastised, Germany supplied Leopard tanks and other munitions to Ukraine.

In addition, the U.S. exhorts Europe to take responsibility for its own security, substantially enhances its defence spending and not sponge on



T.S. Thirumathi was Ambassador/Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations, New York (2020-22)

the disproportionate American role in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The U.S. fielded more than 40% of NATO's annual budget and to most of its troops. But the U.S. forgets that since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the U.S. has been reluctant to let the Europeans organise their own security and defence.

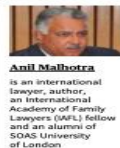
Today, the U.S. accuses the EU of not doing enough either on illegal migration from non-EU countries or on countering militant radicalism to stop terror attacks that disrupt the western way of life. In 2019, in the U.N., the U.S. and Europe, barring France, proclaimed that the danger of terrorism came from "racially and ethnically motivated extremist terrorism" (EMVTO) in the U.S. as well as the rise of right-wing violent parties, "shutting down" elections, "stifling" free speech and religious freedoms and encouraging "out of control" migration from non-EU countries, thereby endangering democratic polity, freedoms and "fundamental values". But before November 2024, the Americans and the Europeans had tried to prevent their right-wing and far-right parties from gaining legitimacy through the ballot since they were convinced that the rise of right in their countries endangered democracy and freedoms — and, in effect, their liberal western values. Romania's constitutional court even annulled the presidential election results favouring right-independent candidate, Cluj Georghescu, who lobbied to cut off assistance to Ukraine, won the first round.

The problem with Europe Europe, on its part, refuses to accept that its current policies, which, over the years, encourage violent dissidents, radicals, terrorists, and refugees to seek citizenship, have transformed its demography, perhaps irrevocably. Its liberal open societies were taken advantage of by Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) terrorists, Khalistan separatists and terrorists, the infamous Hamburg Cell of Al Qaeda (the pilots of the 9/11 attacks were from Hamburg) and by Islamic radicals killing Europeans in their own cities — Vienna, Oslo, Vienna, and elsewhere. Therefore, it was no surprise that right-wing parties began to sweep elections in a reaction to the least top western countries have collectively given Ukraine. The U.S. also forgets that in March 2022, it was the leader of a European country who, at the behest of the U.S., sabotaged negotiations (which had already begun) in Ankara between the Russians and the Ukrainians.

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EU leaders are complicit in the gradual eclipse of their own liberal values, allowing for the gradual rise of the right

Human smuggling must engage Parliament's attention



Anil Malhotra is an international lawyer, author, an international academy of family lawyers (IAFL) fellow and an alumnus of SOAS University of London

How they were forced to sit in piles of human waste, deprived of food and water, while they around them have died and their bodies dumped at sea or on road sides. Human smuggling is a high profit business for criminals, who in turn fuel corruption and organised crime. This is a deadly business that needs to be combated with urgency.

Naive youth fall prey to agents and land up somewhere in the desert, or in the mountains, or in ammunition dumps or fields in Iraq, or as illegal immigrants elsewhere, who suffer immensely from the harsh conditions. The smuggling of migrants is a very profitable business with a low risk of detection. For criminals, it is becoming increasingly attractive to deal in human merchandise. The business of death is becoming more organised or sophisticated — one of the most profitable forms of trade. It requires no technical skill, no educational or professional qualifications, no financial investment, and has no fear or respect for any law, checks, punishment or even criminal action.

Horror and misery Although this menace is not new to India, we must learn from what has happened. The tradesmen of these flourishing rackets of human smuggling thrive on gullible youth who fantasise about making it big with dollar-filled dreams. In reality they are only waiting to be duped. This is organised crime that perpetuates horror and misery, and flourishes with impunity. Once in the hands of these human smugglers, these migrants are vulnerable to exploitation and face grave risks to their life. As the world has seen, they end up being suffocated in containers, perish in scorching deserts, drown at sea or be herded into slave camps to work as forced labour. These human smugglers conduct their activities brazenly, without any regard for a precious human life.

Survivors often narrate harrowing tales of their ordeal — of how they were forced to sit in piles of human waste, deprived of food and water, while they around them have died and their bodies dumped at sea or on road sides. Human smuggling is a high profit business for criminals, who in turn fuel corruption and organised crime. This is a deadly business that needs to be combated with urgency. Naive youth fall prey to agents and land up somewhere in the desert, or in the mountains, or in ammunition dumps or fields in Iraq, or as illegal immigrants elsewhere, who suffer immensely from the harsh conditions. The smuggling of migrants is a very profitable business with a low risk of detection. For criminals, it is becoming increasingly attractive to deal in human merchandise. The business of death is becoming more organised or sophisticated — one of the most profitable forms of trade. It requires no technical skill, no educational or professional qualifications, no financial investment, and has no fear or respect for any law, checks, punishment or even criminal action.

The deportations from the U.S. must push Parliament to enact a central law that strikes at the roots of human smuggling

India needs to be alert and check this global menace. Sadly, the Emigration Act, 1963, is officially 'an Act to consolidate and amend the law relating to emigration of persons of India' — neither defines human smuggling nor look at the serious problems connected with this deadly trade. The Parliament must waste no time in legislating an Indian human smuggling law. There are pieces of State legislation that are piecemeal and outdated and need to be replaced by a new State territorial borders. Having a new central law is a complete solution and Parliament must take the ball rolling. There has been some discussion about the Emigration (Overseas Mobility Facilitation and Welfare) Bill, 2024. It remains uncertain. Till then, any piece of State legislation would be piecemeal and outdated. The Punjab deserves praise for its efforts. But, sadly, its implementation is poor.

Punjab's Act The Punjab Travel Professionals Regulation Act, 2012, is described as a law to provide for the regulation of the profession of travel agents with a view to check and curb illegal, fraudulent activities, and malpractices such as organised human smuggling in the State of Punjab. Enacted to provide a licensing regime for travel agents, and with certain provisions, it has some regulatory functions to check human smuggling. In this enactment, "travel agent" means a person who is doing a profession which involves arranging, managing or conducting affairs related to the sending of persons abroad or which arise out of the affairs of persons sent to a foreign country, and shall include a range of activities covering diverse practices. Licenses of "human smuggling" shall mean and include illegally exporting, sending or transporting persons out of India by receiving money from them or their parents, relatives or any other persons interested in their welfare, by inducing, alluring or deceiving or cheating them.

Parliament must act A comparison of both Acts, i.e., the Emigration Act, 1963 and the Punjab Travel Professionals Regulation Act, 2012, shows that they enshrine regulatory mechanisms for recruiting agents and travel agencies separately. Viewed objectively, both have complementary purposes in their own spheres. They are neither inconsistent or redundant to each other. In fact, the two laws complement each other as they provide similar objectives, aims and functions for recruiting and travel agents, respectively. Punjab has enacted a law which no other State in India has done. In fact, human smuggling is a silent issue in the Emigration Act. The authority of law vested in Punjab must be exercised to enforce the law. Finally, Parliament must seriously contemplate enacting a national law to control Indian borders to regulate the human smuggling industry and deal with irregularities with an iron hand. Parliamentarians must strive to save precious human Indian lives. The needs to be reported law which has teeth.

India's victory India's six-wicket victory

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The political environment The resurgence of right-wing populism is threatening the very basis of western liberalism. What explains citizens' support for parties such as the AfD in Germany or leaders such as Donald Trump and Giorgia Meloni? Is it simply a reaction against liberal values? Or are there more profound socio-economic causes at work? It is essential to address these questions instead of rejecting them to comprehend the changing political environment. Regusara, Bihar

It would not be wrong to conjecture that growing support for far-right forces, in Germany, Italy, France and other European countries have put the leaders of the United States and India in the same basket, portraying them as nationalists under attack from liberals. The possibility of national self-interest seems to be gaining ground with the rapidity with which Mr. Trump is increasingly turning to pursue national interests above any other issues. India will have to tread with caution and have to be prepared for a more inward-looking Europe at a time when the U.S. is increasingly turning to protectionism and shedding its support for free trade. The PM names celebrities to add heft to battle against obesity. Obesity is more than just an

as anti-immigration policies and dealing with refugees issues. Singh Adhikari, Nainital, Uttarakhand

The fight against obesity That Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched a campaign against the raging demon of obesity is praiseworthy. ('PM names celebrities to add heft to battle against obesity' Feb 25, 2025). Obesity is more than just an

enemy of the body. It is a risk factor in catastrophic ailments such as heart disease, diabetes, and cancer. The step taken by the Prime Minister is a call to awaken the people of India and build a strong, health-empowered India. We must rise and become the warriors of this revolution. Barwani, Madhya Pradesh

India's victory India's six-wicket victory over Pakistan in the ICC Champions Trophy was a moment of national pride. While cricket rivalry can be intense, especially in the instance, there is a more important message. It is crucial to seek peace, bridge to peace. Let us celebrate this victory and the potential it offers. Guwannt Vyankat ADE, Pune, Maharashtra

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.com must carry postal address.

The right's rise, Europe's state of denial

Irony died a thousand deaths in the Munich Security Conference in Germany, that was held recently, and the United Nations General Assembly vote on Ukraine.

A few days ago, in Saudi Arabia, the United States and Russia, led by their respective Foreign Ministers, had held bilateral discussions on the Ukraine war. The Ukrainians and Europeans were not invited since it was felt that they need not be included at this point. In June 2024, at the behest of Ukraine, the European Union (EU) and the U.S., Switzerland organised a 'Summit on Peace in Ukraine' at the Bürgenstock. Russia was not invited since they felt that Russia was not needed at that point.

In Munich, U.S. Vice-President J.D. Vance accused Europe of strangling its right-wing parties, "shutting down" elections, "stifling" free speech and religious freedoms and encouraging "out of control" migration from non-EU countries, thereby endangering democratic polity, freedoms and "fundamental values". But before November 2024, the Americans and the Europeans had tried to prevent their right-wing and far-right parties from gaining legitimacy through the ballot since they were convinced that the rise of right in their countries endangered democracy and freedoms – and, in effect, their liberal western values. Romania's constitutional court even annulled the presidential election results where far-right independent candidate, Calin Georgescu, who lobbied to cut off assistance to Ukraine, won the first round.

What the U.S. forgets

In February 2025, the U.S. is accusing Ukraine, Germany and the Europeans of not doing enough to find a solution to the conflict, pursuing an unwinnable war with Russia. But the U.S. forgets that it has already spent over \$110 billion in the Ukraine war, with \$65 billion for ammunition only – more than what top western countries have collectively given Ukraine. The U.S. also forgets that in March 2022, it was the leader of a European country who, at the behest of the U.S., sabotaged negotiations (which had already commenced in Türkiye) between the Russians and the Ukrainians.

And, in September 2022, close allies of Germany sabotaged the Nord Stream pipelines, rendering them inoperable and preventing Russia from supplying gas to Germany, which was its lifeline. But a reluctant, but much-chastised, Germany supplied Leopard tanks and other ammunition to Ukraine.

In addition, the U.S. exhorts Europe to take responsibility for its own security, substantially enhances its defence spending and not sponge on



T.S. Tirumurti

was Ambassador/
Permanent
Representative of
India to the United
Nations, New York
(2020-22)

EU leaders are complicit in the gradual eclipse of their own liberal values, allowing for the gradual rise of the right

the disproportionate American role in North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The U.S. contributes 16% of NATO's annual budget and to most of its troops. But the U.S. forgets that since the collapse of the Cold War, it was America that was reluctant to let the Europeans organise their own security and defence.

Today, the U.S. accuses the EU of not doing enough either on illegal migration from non-EU countries or on combating militant radical Islam to stop terror attacks that disrupt the western way of life.

A few years ago, in the UN, the U.S. and Europe, barring France, proclaimed that the danger of terrorism came from "racially and ethnically motivated violent extremism" (REMVE) in the U.S. as well as the rise of right-wing violent extremism in Europe, and not from radical Islam or disastrous migration policies of the West. At the UN, their "liberal" Ambassadors kept silent when the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) tried to undermine the collective fight against terror and the UN Alliance of Civilization (UNAOC) dismissed the terrorist attacks in France in 2020 as reaction to Islamophobia.

The problem with Europe

Europe, on its part, refuses to accept that its domestic policies, which, *inter alia*, encourage violent dissidents, radicals, terrorists, and refugees to seek citizenship, have transformed its demography, perhaps irrevocably. Its liberal open societies were taken advantage of by Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) terrorists, Khalistani separatists and terrorists, the infamous Hamburg Cell of Al Qaeda (the pilots of the 9/11 terrorist attacks were from here) or by Islamic radicals killing Europeans in their own cities – Paris, Nice, Oslo, Vienna, Madrid, Brussels or elsewhere. Therefore, it was no surprise that right-wing parties began to sweep elections in Europe as a reaction to their leaders' misplaced priorities. The recent election results in Germany which kept the far-right at bay, but only just, may be the last chance to find that elusive balance within the EU.

As Mr. Vance said in Munich, "If you're running in fear of your own voters, there is nothing America can do for you." Of course, the U.S. forgets that Trump 1.0 refused to accept the 2020 election loss and that the first act of Trump 2.0 was to pardon the perpetrators of the storming of the U.S. Capitol in 2021. But Europe's claim that the U.S. is no less undemocratic or no less culpable in these issues, or the pointing to Germany's Nazi past and the danger of its resurgence or to Russian aggression are not excuses for illiberal action against their far-right.

Europe seems to be in a state of denial. While the pursuit of ideology, liberal democracy and western values are laudable objectives, the EU leaders are complicit in the gradual eclipse of their own liberal values by allowing migrants, whose ethos are at direct variance with theirs. Their peoples' counter-reaction is to vote for the far-right fearing for their own identity, way of life and even religion. It is a classic case of liberal policies being taken advantage of by illiberal values.


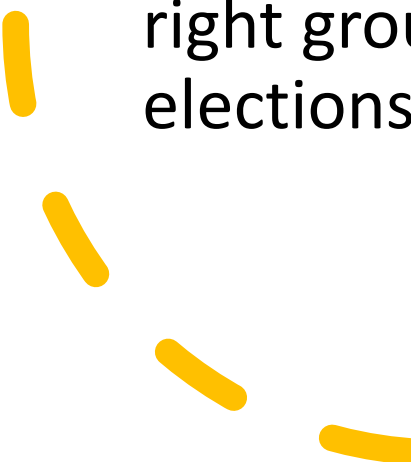
In Munich, India's External Affairs Minister, S. Jaishankar, called out the West for claiming to promote democratic values at home but supporting non-democratic forces outside, especially in the Global South. Recent instances of the West effecting regime changes in the Global South include the forcible takeover of power by radical Taliban in Afghanistan in August 2021 and the overthrow of the Syrian President in December 2024 by Ahmed al-Shaara, a former leader of al-Qaeda in the region – all in the name of ushering in democracy.

However, on the Ukraine war, while Europe and the U.S. hitched themselves to the Zelensky bandwagon to emasculate Russia, in a dramatic turn of events, the chasm between the new U.S. initiatives and entrenched European positions burst into the open in the UN General Assembly when the U.S. voted with Russia against the European/Ukrainian draft resolution but could not stop it from being adopted. More drama could follow in the UN Security Council, but it is only a pyrrhic win for Europe – without America, the Ukraine war is as good as over.

The trans-Atlantic partnership is relevant


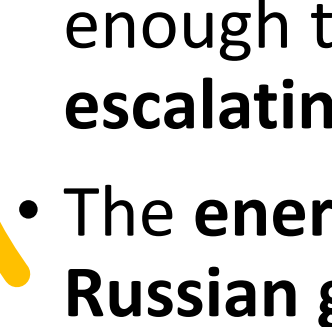
Despite the jolts at Munich and the UN General Assembly, proclaiming that the trans-Atlantic partnership between the U.S. and Europe is over is premature. The call from the U.S. administration for retreat from Europe seems tactical, to renegotiate a better deal, and not strategic. With a new centrist leadership in Germany, maybe it is time for Europe to undertake course correction, invest more in its own security, combat the rise of radical values in its societies, pursue a more independent foreign policy and rework its relations with the U.S. Ironically, the trans-Atlantic partnership is even more relevant now in the face of "no-limits" partnership between Russia and China. The U.S.'s ability to walk away from Europe is overstated, just as the ability of Europe to weather the storm is understated.

When a reporter asked Mahatma Gandhi what he thought of western civilisation, he is reported to have replied: "I think it would be a good idea."

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- **Right-wing Political Rise in Europe (यूरोप में दक्षिणपंथी राजनीति का उदय)**
 - The article highlights the increasing popularity of **right-wing parties** in Europe, particularly in countries like **Germany, France, and Italy**.
 - The **U.S. and European governments** tried to prevent the rise of far-right groups but failed due to their growing legitimacy through elections.
- 

- **Migration policies, security concerns, and economic instability** have fueled right-wing movements.
(यूरोप में दक्षिणपंथी राजनीति का बढ़ता प्रभाव:
- जर्मनी, फ्रांस और इटली जैसे देशों में दक्षिणपंथी पार्टियों की लोकप्रियता बढ़ रही है।
- य.एस. और यूरोपीय सरकारों ने दक्षिणपंथी समूहों के उदय को रोकने की कोशिश की लेकिन वे चुनावों के माध्यम से वैधता प्राप्त कर रहे हैं।
- प्रवासन नीति, सुरक्षा चिंताएँ और आर्थिक अस्थिरता दक्षिणपंथी आंदोलनों को बढ़ावा दे रही हैं।)

- **Denial of Western Leaders (पश्चिमी नेताओं की इनकार की स्थिति)**
- Many **liberal leaders in Europe** are in a **state of denial**, ignoring the growing dissatisfaction among the people.
- Western leaders **failed to acknowledge** the consequences of their **migration policies and security failures**, leading to **radicalization and terrorism**.
(पश्चिमी नेताओं की इनकार की स्थिति:
- यूरोप के उदारवादी नेता इस सच्चाई को अनदेखा कर रहे हैं कि जनता में असंतोष बढ़ रहा है।
- **पश्चिमी नेता अपनी प्रवास नीति और सुरक्षा विफलताओं के प्रभाव को समझने में असफल रहे हैं, जिससे चरमपंथ और आतंकवाद को बढ़ावा मिला।)**

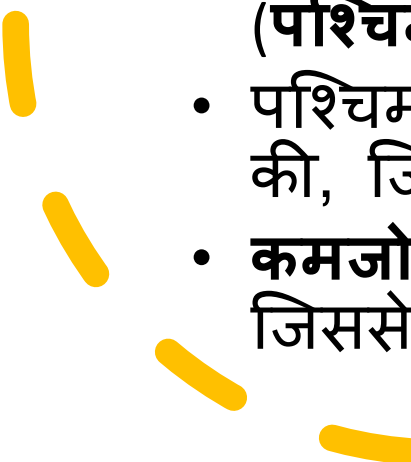
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- **U.S. and European Handling of Ukraine Conflict (यूक्रेन संघर्ष को लेकर यू.एस. और यूरोप की भूमिका)**
 - The U.S. and Europe have **criticized** each other regarding the handling of the **Ukraine-Russia war**.
 - The U.S. accused **Germany and other European nations** of not doing enough to **support Ukraine**, while Europe accused the U.S. of **escalating the conflict**.
 - The **energy crisis** worsened as European allies failed to manage **Russian gas supplies**, increasing reliance on **U.S. energy**.
- 







- **Failure of Western Policies on Terrorism (पश्चिमी आतंकवाद नीति की विफलता)**

- The West initially **ignored the threat** posed by **radical Islamic groups**, which later led to **major terrorist attacks** in **France, Germany, and the UK**.
- **Weak immigration controls** have allowed radicalized individuals to **enter Europe**, leading to increasing **public fear and resentment**.

(पश्चिमी आतंकवाद नीति की विफलता:

- पश्चिम ने प्रारंभ में **चरमपंथी इस्लामी समूहों से उत्पन्न खतरे** की अनदेखी की, जिसके कारण **फ्रांस, जर्मनी और ब्रिटेन** में बड़े आतंकवादी हमले हुए।
 - **कमजोर प्रवासन नियंत्रण** के कारण **कट्टरपंथी लोग यूरोप में प्रवेश कर गए**, जिससे जनता में **भय और असंतोष बढ़ा**।)
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- **2. Political Aspects (राजनीतिक पहलू)**
 - **Rise of Right-Wing Nationalism (दक्षिणपंथी राष्ट्रवाद का उदय)**
 - Right-wing parties in Europe are gaining strength due to their **hardline stance on immigration and national security.**
 - The **liberal democratic order** is being challenged by **conservative movements.**
(दक्षिणपंथी राष्ट्रवाद का उदय:
 - यूरोप में दक्षिणपंथी पार्टियाँ **प्रवासन और राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा** पर सख्त रुख अपनाकर मजबूती पा रही हैं।
 - **उदारवादी लोकतांत्रिक व्यवस्था को रूढ़िवादी आंदोलनों द्वारा चुनौती दी जा रही है।)**

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- **Geopolitical Shift (भू-राजनीतिक बदलाव)**
 - **U.S. and Europe's divide** on global security and economic policies is widening.
 - **Russia's influence in Europe** is growing due to energy dependence and economic instability.
- (भू-राजनीतिक बदलाव:**
- **यू.एस. और यूरोप के बीच वैश्विक सुरक्षा और आर्थिक नीतियों पर मतभेद बढ़ रहे हैं।**
 - **ऊर्जा निर्भरता और आर्थिक अस्थिरता के कारण यूरोप में रूस का प्रभाव बढ़ रहा है।)**
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3. Economic Aspects (आर्थिक पहलू)

Energy Crisis (ऊर्जा संकट)

- The **closure of Russian gas pipelines** due to geopolitical tensions has worsened Europe's **energy crisis**.
- Europe is now more dependent on **U.S. energy exports**, increasing costs.

(ऊर्जा संकट:

- **भू-राजनीतिक तनाव** के कारण **रूसी गैस पाइपलाइनों** का बंद होना यूरोप के **ऊर्जा संकट** को बढ़ा रहा है।
- यूरोप अब **यू.एस. ऊर्जा निर्यात** पर अधिक निर्भर हो गया है, जिससे लागत बढ़ रही है।)

- **Impact on Trade and Industry (व्यापार और उद्योग पर प्रभाव)**

- European **industrial growth** is slowing due to **high energy costs** and economic uncertainty.

- **U.S. sanctions on Russia** have disrupted global supply chains.

(व्यापार और उद्योग पर प्रभाव:

- युरोपीय औद्योगिक विकास उच्च ऊर्जा लागत और आर्थिक अनिश्चितता के कारण धीमा हो रहा है।

- य.एस. द्वारा रूस पर लगाए गए प्रतिबंधों ने वैश्विक आपूर्ति श्रृंखला को बाधित किया है।)

4. Social Aspects (सामाजिक पहलू)

Growing Public Discontent (बढ़ता जन असंतोष)

- Many European citizens feel that **liberal leaders have failed to address security and economic concerns.**
- There is increasing **support for nationalist and conservative ideologies.**
(बढ़ता जन असंतोष:
 - कई यूरोपीय नागरिकों का मानना है कि उदारवादी नेताओं ने सुरक्षा और आर्थिक मुद्दों को हल करने में विफलता दिखाई है।
 - राष्ट्रवादी और रूढ़िवादी विचारधाराओं का समर्थन बढ़ रहा है।)

- **Migration and Integration Challenges (प्रवासन और एकीकरण की चुनौतियाँ)**

- Europe is struggling to integrate **large numbers of migrants**, leading to **cultural clashes and security risks.** (प्रवासन और एकीकरण की चुनौतियाँ:
 - यूरोप बड़े पैमाने पर प्रवासियों को एकीकृत करने में संघर्ष कर रहा है, जिससे सांस्कृतिक टकराव और सुरक्षा जोखिम बढ़ रहे हैं।)



Text & Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Cases of illegal storage, excavation of minerals in Chhattisgarh

7,723 More than 7,700 cases of illegal excavation, and the Ukrainian government found that housing, transport, energy, commerce and education were the most affected sectors. Russian attacks sent energy sector damages up 70% in one year. SOURCE

The cost of rebuilding Ukraine's economy after Russia's invasion

524 In \$ 5 billion. A new study by the World Bank, UN, European Commission and the Ukrainian government found that housing, transport, energy, commerce and education were the most affected sectors. Russian attacks sent energy sector damages up 70% in one year. SOURCE

Amount of money Singapore's citizens lost to scams last year

822 In \$ 5 million. The total number of scams and cybercrime released by the Singapore Police Force. The total number of scam cases also increased by 10.6% to 51,501 cases in 2024. SOURCE

The share of GDP the U.K. aims to spend on defence in 2029

3 In per cent. Britain will aim to spend 3% of its GDP on defence in the next parliament, due to begin in 2029, and will help to fund that increased spending by cutting its aid budget. Prime Minister Keir Starmer said the aid budget would be reduced from 0.5% of GDP to 0.3% in 2027. SOURCE

Tribal students who protested the living conditions in Odisha

100 Over 100 tribal students of a State-run residential school in Odisha's Mayurbhanj district walked the whole night to reach the district headquarters town of Bargarh to protest the "inhumane" living conditions. SOURCE

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Should a third language be compulsory?

Why is the Union government delaying funds under the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan to Tamil Nadu? When was the three-language policy first introduced and what did it mandate? What are the challenges in having extra language courses in government schools?

EXPLAINER

Rangarajan R

The story so far: There has been a tussle between the Centre and the Tamil Nadu government over the three-language formula in schools under the New Education Policy (NEP), 2020. The Union government has indicated that it needs to be complied with for release of funds tied to the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan. However, the Tamil Nadu government views it as a 'smokescreen' for Hindi imposition and insists that it would continue with its two-language policy.

What are constitutional provisions? The Constitution provides that Hindi is the official language of the Union. English was originally meant to continue as the official language for 15 years from the commencement of the Constitution (till 1965). However, the Official Languages Act, 1963 provides for the continued use of English, in addition to Hindi, for all official purposes of the Union without any time limit. The legislature of a State may adopt any one or more of the languages in use in the State or Hindi as the official language(s) for official purposes of that State.

Further, the Constitution provides that it shall be the duty of the Union to promote the spread of the Hindi language so that it may serve as a medium of expression for all the elements of the composite culture of India.

What is the three-language policy? The three-language formula was first introduced in the NEP of 1968. This policy and the Official Language Resolution, 1968 mandated the teaching of Hindi as a language in non-Hindi speaking States. There were protests against the same in Tamil Nadu and it has steadfastly followed its two-language policy of teaching Tamil and English in its government schools.



Firm stance: A protest against the three-language policy, in Chennai, on February 18. PTI

The NEP, 2020 has retained the three-language formula albeit with a key difference that it doesn't impose any language on any State. It specifies that the languages to be learnt will be the choice of States, regions and the students, so long as at least two of the three languages are native to India.

What are the issues? The Annual Status of Education Research (ASER) conducted regularly by renowned NGO Pratham leaves much to be improved upon with respect to learning abilities. The report of 2022 indicates that close to 60% of students in Class V could

while 85% is spent by the States. The total expenditure on elementary, secondary, higher and technical education by the Centre and States combined hovers around 4-4.5% of the GDP as against the target of 6% set out in the NEP 2020. Thus, the expenditure on education is yet to reach the desired levels.

What can be the way forward? While English is not a native language, its proficiency has helped us in becoming globally competitive in various service industries. India is a multi-lingual country and the objective of learning more Indian languages in schools is desirable. However, the existing issues of learning outcomes coupled with constraints on resources require that the efforts of government run schools should be focused on improving the teaching of the mother tongue/local language and English, apart from foundational numeracy skills. Even in private schools where a third language is taught till Standard VIII, there is limited proficiency being attained by the students in such language.

The 2011 Census data reveals that approximately 26% of India is bilingual and 7% is trilingual. The corresponding figures for urban areas are 44% and 15%, as against 22% and 5% for rural areas. With rapid urbanisation and migration of labourers across the country, this number is bound to increase in the forthcoming Census, indicating that the young and adult population would learn additional languages according to their needs.

There must be a constructive dialogue between the Centre and the Tamil Nadu government to ensure that funding is not delayed.

Considering the share of expenditure borne by the States as well as regional diversities, there also needs to be a productive discussion on providing more autonomy to the States in policy matters relating to school education. *Rangarajan R is a former IAS officer and author of 'Policy Simplified'. Views expressed are personal.*

THE GIST

The three-language formula was first introduced in the NEP of 1968. This policy and the Official Language Resolution, 1968 mandate the teaching of Hindi as a language in non-Hindi speaking States.

The ASER report of 2022 indicates that close to 60% of students in Class V could not read a Class II level text. The report of 2023 reveals that 25% of youth in the age group of 14-18 years could not read a Class II level text fluently in their regional language.

The 2011 Census data reveals that approximately 26% of India is bilingual and 7% is trilingual. The corresponding figures for urban areas are 44% and 15%, as against 22% and 5% for rural areas.

What did the HC rule about arresting women at night?

Is the provision which restricts the arrest of women after sunset and before sunrise absolute? What did the 135th report of the Law Commission of India on Women in Custody recommend?

R.K. Vij

The story so far: The Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court in *Deepa versus Vijayakumar* and *Others* ruled that the legal provision in the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023, which restricts the arrest of a woman after sunset and before sunrise, is directory and not mandatory. In this case, a woman was arrested at 8pm. A single Judge of the High Court held that the arrest was in breach of Section 46(4) of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC). However, a two-judge Bench of the High Court, in an appeal, held that Section 46(4) of the CrPC was directory and not mandatory.

What are the safeguards? Two safeguards are provided under Section 43(S) of BNSS (which corresponds

to Section 46(4) of CrPC) for the arrest of a woman by the police. First, no arrest of a woman shall be made after sunset and before sunrise except in exceptional circumstances. Second, even in exceptional circumstances, the prior permission of the jurisdictional magistrate must be sought by a woman police officer by making a written report. Section 46(4) of the CrPC is a beneficial provision incorporated to ensure the safety of women. However, the provision does not explain what would constitute an exceptional situation. In addition, the proviso to Section 46(4) states that the arresting police officer should not touch the person of the woman, unless it is a woman police officer or if the circumstances otherwise require it.

What did the Madras HC rule? The Madras High Court said that Section 46(4) of CrPC does not spell out the

consequence of non-compliance of the provision. If the provision was intended to be mandatory, the legislature would definitely have provided for the consequences of non-compliance. A person who effects arrest, carries out a public duty. The Court underlined that there could be a situation where a heinous offence is committed by a woman in the night and the magistrate may not be available for obtaining permission. Under such a situation, the accused woman may escape. Therefore, such mechanical adherence to procedure can injure public interest.

What is history of Section 46(4) CrPC? The 125th report of the Law Commission of India on Women in Custody (1989), recommended that ordinarily no women shall be arrested after sunset and before sunrise. If there are exceptional cases, prior permission of the immediate

superior officer shall be obtained, or if the case was of extreme urgency, then an arrest report with reasons shall be made to the immediate superior officer and to the magistrate. Similar recommendations were made in the 134th report of the Law Commission in 1996, and Section 46(4) of CrPC was inserted with some changes in 2008.

What has the Supreme Court said? In a case, the Nagpur Bench of the Bombay High Court directed the State to issue directions to all police officials that no female persons shall be detained without the presence of a lady constable, and in no case after sunset and before sunrise. Here, the Supreme Court observed that a strict compliance with the said directive in a given circumstance would cause practical difficulties.

Will the ruling dilute the provision? The Court has clearly said that despite holding Section 46(4) of CrPC(43(S) as directory and not mandatory, the provision cannot be rendered futile by the police. While failure to adhere to the statutory requirement may not lead to the arrest being declared illegal, the officer may have to offer explanation for the inability to comply with the provision. The Court also directed the police to issue guidelines, clarifying as to what constitute exceptional circumstances. *R.K. Vij is a former IPS officer.*

THE GIST

The Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court ruled that the legal provision in the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023, which restricts the arrest of a woman after sunset and before sunrise, is directory and not mandatory.

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The Court has clearly said that despite holding Section 46(4) of CrPC(43(S) as directory and not mandatory, the provision cannot be rendered futile by the police.

What did the HC rule about arresting women at night?

Is the provision which restricts the arrest of women after sunset and before sunrise absolute? What did the 135th report of the Law Commission of India on Women in Custody recommend?

R.K. Vij

The story so far:

The Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court in *Deepa versus S. Vijayalakshmi and Others* ruled that the legal provision in the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023, which restricts the arrest of a woman after sunset and before sunrise, is directory and not mandatory. In this case, a woman was arrested at 8pm. A single Judge of the High Court held that the arrest was in breach of Section 46(4) of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC). However, a two-Judge Bench of the High Court, in an appeal, held that Section 46(4) of the CrPC was directory and not mandatory.

What are the safeguards?

Two safeguards are provided under Section 43(5) of BNSS (which corresponds

to Section 46(4) of CrPC) for the arrest of a woman by the police. First, no arrest of a woman shall be made after sunset and before sunrise except in exceptional circumstances. Second, even in exceptional circumstances, the prior permission of the jurisdictional magistrate must be sought by a woman police officer by making a written report. Section 46(4) of the CrPC is a beneficial provision incorporated to ensure the safety of women. However, the provision does not explain what would constitute an exceptional situation. In addition, the proviso to Section 46(1) states that the arresting police officer should not touch the person of the woman, unless it is a woman police officer or if the circumstances otherwise require it.

What did the Madras HC rule?

The Madras High Court said that Section 46(4) of CrPC does not spell out the

consequence of non-compliance of the provision. If the provision was intended to be mandatory, the legislature would definitely have provided for the consequences of non-compliance. A police officer who effects arrest, carries out a public duty. The Court underlined that there could be a situation where a heinous offence is committed by a woman in the night and the magistrate may not be available for obtaining permission. Under such a situation, the accused woman may escape. Therefore, such mechanical adherence to procedure can injure public interest.

What is history of Section 46(4) CrPC?

The 135th report of the Law Commission of India on Women in Custody (1989) recommended that ordinarily no women shall be arrested after sunset and before sunrise. If there are exceptional cases, prior permission of the immediate

superior officer shall be obtained, or if the case was of extreme urgency, then an arrest report with reasons shall be made to the immediate superior officer and to the magistrate. Similar recommendations were made in the 154th report of the Law Commission in 1996, and Section 46(4) of CrPC was inserted with some changes in 2005.



What has the Supreme Court said?

In a case, the Nagpur Bench of the Bombay High Court directed the State to issue directions to all police officials that no female persons shall be detained without the presence of a lady constable, and in no case after sunset and before sunrise. Here, the Supreme Court observed that a strict compliance with the said directive in a given circumstance would cause practical difficulties.

Will the ruling dilute the provision?

The Court has clearly said that despite holding Section 46(4) of CrPC/43(5) as directory and not mandatory, the provision cannot be rendered futile by the police. While failure to adhere to the statutory requirement may not lead to the arrest being declared illegal, the officer may have to offer explanation for the inability to comply with the provision. The Court also directed the police to issue guidelines, clarifying as to what constitute exceptional circumstances.

R.K. Vij is a former IPS officer.

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- **Legal Provision on Arresting Women at Night (रात में महिलाओं की गिरफ्तारी पर कानूनी प्रावधान)**Section 46(4) of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) and **Section 43(5) of Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023** restrict the arrest of **women after sunset and before sunrise** except in exceptional circumstances.
 - The **Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court** ruled that this provision is **directory (advisory) and not mandatory**.
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- The court emphasized that strict mechanical adherence to this rule could sometimes lead to an accused escaping legal action.
(रात में महिलाओं की गिरफ्तारी पर कानूनी प्रावधान:
 - दंड प्रक्रिया संहिता (CrPC) की धारा 46(4) और भारतीय नागरिक सुरक्षा संहिता (BNSS) की धारा 43(5) के अनुसार, सूर्यास्त के बाद और सूर्योदय से पहले महिलाओं की गिरफ्तारी प्रतिबंधित है, जब तक कि असाधारण परिस्थितियाँ न हों।
 - मदुरै पीठ, मद्रास उच्च न्यायालय ने इस प्रावधान को निर्देशात्मक (सलाहकारी) और गैर-अनिवार्य माना।
 - अदालत ने कहा कि इस नियम का सख्ती से पालन करने से कई बार आरोपी कानूनी कार्रवाई से बच सकते हैं।)

2. Court's Ruling (अदालत का निर्णय)

What Did the Madras HC Rule? (मद्रास उच्च न्यायालय का निर्णय क्या था?)

- The court held that **Section 46(4) of CrPC is advisory** and does not specify what constitutes an **exceptional situation**.
- In **urgent situations**, police officers may proceed with the **arrest of women at night** but must provide a **written justification**.
- The **police must seek prior approval from a magistrate** in case of night arrests, except for **heinous crimes or escape risks**.

- (मद्रास उच्च न्यायालय का निर्णय:अदालत ने माना कि CrPC की धारा 46(4) केवल सलाहकारी है और इसमें "असाधारण परिस्थितियाँ" स्पष्ट नहीं की गई हैं। जरूरी मामलों में, पुलिस अधिकारी रात में महिलाओं की गिरफ्तारी कर सकते हैं, लेकिन उन्हें लिखित स्पष्टीकरण देना होगा। गंभीर अपराधों या फरार होने की संभावना वाले मामलों में, मजिस्ट्रेट से पूर्व अनुमति अनिवार्य नहीं होगी।

• What Has the Supreme Court Said? (सुप्रीम कोर्ट का क्या कहना है?)

- The Nagpur Bench of the Bombay High Court ruled that no female accused should be detained without a lady constable and should not be arrested at night unless absolutely necessary.
- The Supreme Court acknowledged that a strict application of this rule may create practical difficulties in law enforcement.

(सुप्रीम कोर्ट का क्या कहना है?:

- नागपुर पीठ, बॉम्बे उच्च न्यायालय ने आदेश दिया कि किसी भी महिला को लेडी कांस्टेबल की अनुपस्थिति में हिरासत में नहीं लिया जाना चाहिए और रात में गिरफ्तारी से बचना चाहिए।
- सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने माना कि इस नियम के सख्त पालन से कानून प्रवर्तन में व्यावहारिक समस्याएँ हो सकती हैं।)

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- **3. Legal and Historical Context (कानूनी और ऐतिहासिक संदर्भ)**
 - **History of Section 46(4) CrPC (CrPC की धारा 46(4) का इतिहास)**
 - **The 135th report of the Law Commission of India (1989) recommended that women should not be arrested at night unless in exceptional cases.**
 - **The 154th report of the Law Commission (1996) also supported this view, leading to the insertion of Section 46(4) in 2005.**
(CrPC की धारा 46(4) का इतिहास:
 - **भारत के विधि आयोग की 135वीं रिपोर्ट (1989) में सिफारिश की गई थी कि महिलाओं को रात में गिरफ्तार नहीं किया जाना चाहिए, जब तक कि कोई असाधारण स्थिति न हो।**
 - **1996 में विधि आयोग की 154वीं रिपोर्ट ने भी इसी राय का समर्थन किया, जिससे 2005 में CrPC की धारा 46(4) जोड़ी गई।**

- **4. Social and Legal Aspects (सामाजिक और कानूनी पहलू)**
- **Legal Safeguards for Women (महिलाओं के लिए कानूनी सुरक्षा उपाय)**
 - **Presence of a woman police officer** is necessary for arresting a woman at night.
 - If a **woman is accused of a serious crime**, an **arrest report with reasons must be submitted** to senior officials and the magistrate.
(महिलाओं के लिए कानूनी सुरक्षा उपाय:
 - रात में महिला पुलिस अधिकारी की उपस्थिति अनिवार्य है।
 - यदि कोई महिला गंभीर अपराध में आरोपी है, तो गिरफ्तारी का कारण वरिष्ठ अधिकारियों और मजिस्ट्रेट को प्रस्तुत करना आवश्यक होगा।)

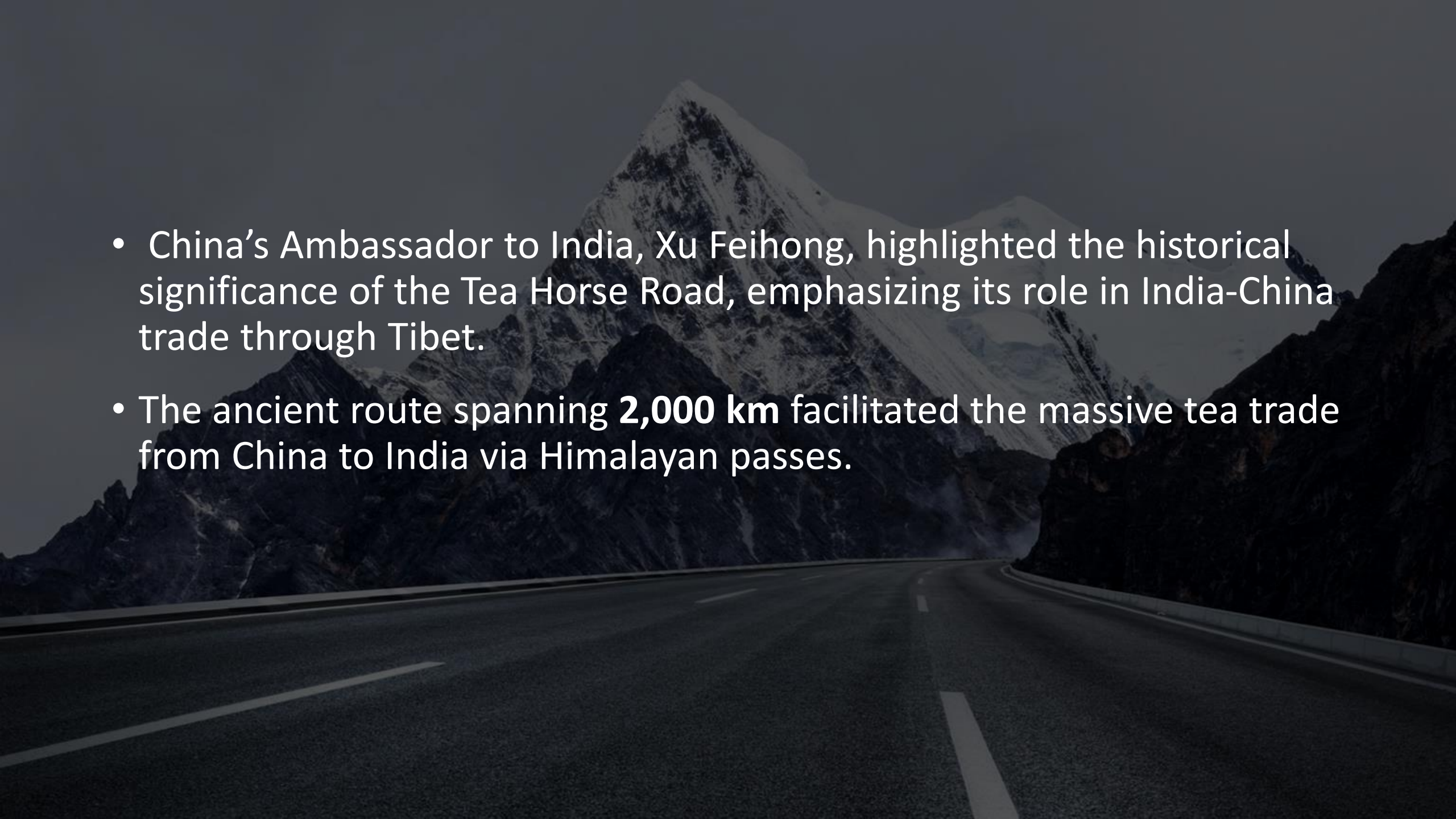
- **Impact on Law Enforcement (कानून प्रवर्तन पर प्रभाव)**
- **Strict compliance** with this rule may lead to **delayed arrests** and allow **offenders to escape**.
- **Police officers must be given discretion** to arrest women under urgent circumstances.

(कानून प्रवर्तन पर प्रभाव:

- इस नियम के कठोर पालन से गिरफ्तारियों में देरी हो सकती है और अपराधी बच सकते हैं।
- पुलिस अधिकारियों को विवेकाधिकार दिया जाना चाहिए ताकि वे आवश्यक स्थितियों में गिरफ्तारी कर सकें।)



Tea Horse Road

- 
- China's Ambassador to India, Xu Feihong, highlighted the historical significance of the Tea Horse Road, emphasizing its role in India-China trade through Tibet.
 - The ancient route spanning **2,000 km** facilitated the massive tea trade from China to India via Himalayan passes.



- **What is it?**

- The **Tea Horse Road**, also called **Chamadao**, was an **ancient trade route** connecting **China, Tibet, and India**.
- It was a **major commercial network** used for **trading tea from China and horses from Tibet**.

A market stall with many baskets of colorful, dried goods like beans and lentils. The goods are piled high in various colored baskets, creating a vibrant display. The colors include purple, green, red, yellow, and brown. The background is slightly blurred, focusing attention on the foreground baskets.

- Connection Between Regions:

- Originated in southwest China (Yunnan & Sichuan) and passed through Tibet, Nepal, and India.
- Reached Kolkata, from where tea was shipped to Europe and other Asian markets.

The background of the slide features a dark, atmospheric photograph of a mountain range. In the foreground, two horses are visible on a rocky, grassy slope. One horse is light-colored and stands on the left, while the other is dark brown and stands on the right, facing left. The overall scene is dimly lit, suggesting a dawn or dusk setting.

- **Significance of the Tea Horse Road:**

- **Facilitated Economic Exchange:** Enabled cultural and commercial ties between India, Tibet, and China.
- **Boosted Military Strength:** Supplied Tibetan war horses for China's military campaigns.
- **Cultural Exchange:** Helped spread Buddhism, medicinal herbs, and textiles across the Himalayan region.
- **Historical Tourism Today:** Parts of the route are being promoted as UNESCO heritage and tourism sites.



Unusual Rivers Around The World

- **Caño Cristales River, Colombia:**
- It is also known as the "**River of Five Colors**," as it changes its color from yellow, green, black, red, and blue between **July and November**.
 - This is due to **Rhyncholacis clavigera**, an **aquatic plant** that changes its color with sunlight and water conditions.





- **Shanay-Timpishka River, Peru:** Also known as **La Bomba**, it is the **world's largest thermal and only boiling river** (with temperature **45oC to 100oC**).

- It is heated by **deep geothermal circulation** where rainwater seeps underground, warms, and resurfaces through **faults**.

-

Hamza Aquifer (Hamza River): A vast underground aquifer beneath the Amazon River, ~4 km deep and 6,000 km long, flowing extremely slowly through porous rock formations.

Qiantang River, China: Known for the Silver Dragon, one of the world's largest tidal bores, where ocean tides push upstream at 40 km/hr, creating large waves ideal for surfing.



**Daldykan River,
Russia:** Turned **blood red** due
to **nickel and heavy metals**
contamination.

**Onyx River,
Antarctica:** The **continent's**
longest river (32 km), flowing
inland toward Lake Vanda **only**
in summer as meltwater
from **Wright Valley glaciers.**



10 MCQ

- What is the significance of INS Tamal for India's naval production?
- आईएनएस तमाल भारत के नौसैनिक उत्पादन के लिए क्यों महत्वपूर्ण है?
- A. It is the first indigenous aircraft carrier / यह भारत का पहला स्वदेशी विमान वाहक पोत है
- B. It is the last warship to be commissioned outside India / यह विदेश में कमीशन किया जाने वाला अंतिम युद्धपोत है
- C. It is India's first nuclear-powered submarine / यह भारत की पहली परमाणु-संचालित पनडुब्बी है
- D. It is the first stealth destroyer built by DRDO / यह डीआरडीओ द्वारा निर्मित पहला स्टील्थ विध्वंसक है

- Where is INS Tamal currently undergoing trials?
- आईएनएस तमाल वर्तमान में किस स्थान पर परीक्षण के दौर से गुजर रहा है?
- A. Vladivostok, Russia / व्लादिवोस्तोक, रूस
- B. St. Petersburg, Russia / सेंट पीटर्सबर्ग, रूस
- C. Visakhapatnam, India / विशाखापत्तनम, भारत
- D. Kaliningrad, Russia / कैलिनिनग्राद, रूस

- Which Indian state recorded the highest increase in women's workforce participation in 2024?
- 2024 में किस भारतीय राज्य में महिलाओं की कार्यबल भागीदारी में सबसे अधिक वृद्धि दर्ज की गई?
- A. Kerala / केरल
- B. Maharashtra / महाराष्ट्र
- C. Uttar Pradesh / उत्तर प्रदेश
- D. Tamil Nadu / तमिलनाडु

- **What is the percentage of women engaged in employment-related activities in India as of 2024?**
- **2024 तक भारत में रोजगार-संबंधी गतिविधियों में संलग्न महिलाओं का प्रतिशत कितना है?**
- **A. 21.8%**
- **B. 25%**
- **C. 30.5%**
- **D. 35%**

- What is the primary reason for the rise of right-wing politics in Europe?
- यूरोप में दक्षिणपंथी राजनीति के उदय का मुख्य कारण क्या है?
- A. Economic instability and migration policies / आर्थिक अस्थिरता और प्रवासन नीतियाँ
- B. Rise of communism / साम्यवाद का उदय
- C. Declining influence of the United Nations / संयुक्त राष्ट्र के प्रभाव में गिरावट
- D. Strengthening of NATO alliances / नाटो गठबंधन की मजबूती

- According to a recent ruling by the Madras High Court, what is the legal status of arresting women at night?
- मद्रास उच्च न्यायालय के हालिया फैसले के अनुसार, रात में महिलाओं की गिरफ्तारी की कानूनी स्थिति क्या है?
- A. Strictly prohibited / सख्त रूप से प्रतिबंधित
- B. Allowed only with magistrate approval / केवल मजिस्ट्रेट की अनुमति से अनुमति दी गई
- C. Advisory (not mandatory) and subject to exceptions / सलाहकारी (अनिवार्य नहीं) और अपवादों के अधीन
- D. Allowed without any restriction / बिना किसी प्रतिबंध के अनुमति दी गई

- Which ancient trade route connected China, Tibet, and India, primarily for tea and horse trade?
- कौन सा प्राचीन व्यापार मार्ग चीन, तिब्बत और भारत को जोड़ता था, जो मुख्य रूप से चाय और घोड़े के व्यापार के लिए उपयोग किया जाता था?
- A. Silk Road / रेशम मार्ग
- B. Tea Horse Road / टी हॉर्स रोड
- C. Amber Road / ऐंबर रोड
- D. Trans-Himalayan Route / ट्रांस-हिमालयी मार्ग

- Which country recently received humanitarian aid from India following Tropical Storm SARA?
- कौन सा देश हाल ही में उष्णकटिबंधीय तूफान सारा के बाद भारत से मानवीय सहायता प्राप्त कर रहा है?
- A. Honduras / होंडुरास
- B. Mexico / मैक्सिको
- C. Indonesia / इंडोनेशिया
- D. Philippines / फिलीपींस

- Which natural phenomenon makes Colombia's Caño Cristales River unique?
- कौन सी प्राकृतिक घटना कोलंबिया की काइनो क्रिस्टालेस नदी को अनोखा बनाती है?
- A. It turns red due to a rare algae species / यह एक दुर्लभ शैवाल प्रजाति के कारण लाल रंग में बदल जाती है
- B. It remains frozen throughout the year / यह पूरे वर्ष जमी रहती है
- C. It has the highest tidal range in the world / इसमें दुनिया की सबसे अधिक ज्वारीय सीमा है
- D. It is the only river with floating magnetic minerals / यह एकमात्र नदी है जिसमें चुंबकीय खनिज तैरते हैं

- What is special about the Shanay-Timpishka River in Peru?
- पेरू की शनाय-टिम्पिशका नदी की विशेषता क्या है?
- A. It has the world's highest waterfall / इसमें दुनिया का सबसे ऊँचा जलप्रपात है
- B. It is the only naturally boiling river / यह एकमात्र प्राकृतिक रूप से उबलती नदी है
- C. It contains the world's largest coral reef system / इसमें दुनिया की सबसे बड़ी कोरल रीफ प्रणाली है
- D. It flows in reverse direction due to gravity anomalies / यह गुरुत्वाकर्षण विसंगतियों के कारण विपरीत दिशा में बहती है



The King Changes Every Five Years



_____ has a **unique monarchy system** where **nine sultans take turns ruling** as the **King (Yang di-Pertuan Agong)** for a **five-year term**.

THE WORLD'S STINKIEST FRUIT



Word of the day

Meticulous:

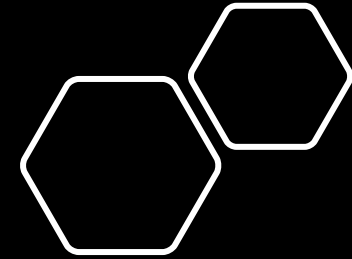
marked by precise accordance to detail


Synonym: punctilious

Usage: *This book is the result of years of meticulous research.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/meticulouspro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /mɪ'tɪkjɪlɪs/, /mɪ'tɪkjʊləs/



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