

# Daily Current Affairs



**जनसत्ता**



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10 MCQ QUIZ

1



10 MCQ

- What is the significance of INS Tamal for India's naval production?
- **ए** **हृदय इव लक्ष्मण कर्ण इव इन्द्रा इ क्षत्रिय इ इन्द्रा इ प्रज्ञा खण्डु ह्युत्र पञ्च**
- A. It is the first indigenous aircraft carrier / **गण कर्ण इव इन्द्रा s कृत्**  
**श्रवण अण्ड ह्युत्र पञ्च**
- B. It is the last warship to be commissioned outside India / **गण श्रवण**  
**रक्त खण्डु इ श्रु गव न्वरु अचर श्रवण म् ह्युत्र पञ्च**
- C. It is India's first nuclear-powered submarine / **गण कर्ण इव इन्द्रा**  
**हृदय श्रवण इव इन्द्रा पञ्च**
- D. It is the first stealth destroyer built by DRDO / **गण म् हृदय घम्हृदय** **वघ्न**  
**श्रवण इन्द्रा a हृदय श्रु त्रु इ पञ्च**

- Where is INS Tamal currently undergoing trials?
- **ए** **हङ्कङ्क** **लखप्रच अलखप्रच** **रङ्कङ्क** **ह** **f** **वण** **हघ हघहलर्** **इङ्क** **व्यघ** **हङ्क** **घणत्र**  
**णम**
- A. Vladivostok, Russia / **व्रखवङ्कङ्कङ्क** **च** **ह**
- B. St. Petersburg, Russia / **हङ्क** **हहङ्क** **हङ्क** **ण** **च** **ह**
- C. Visakhapatnam, India / **अत्रिट्रहवह** **ह** **ह** **ख** **क** **वघल**
- D. Kaliningrad, Russia / **इङ्क** **अङ्क** **ह** **इङ्क** **च** **ह**

- Which Indian state recorded the highest increase in women's workforce participation in 2024?
- 2024 रकषड ढ कुरघलुहग घव रकषप्रभगचवडुन इह इवगु। च कुरणहव्रघह रकषड ष डु शशु इ असेडु वनुडुह ण हच
- A. Kerala / इडघच
- B. Maharashtra / खणव्रघवक
- C. Uttar Pradesh / कुघुघ ड डुट
- D. Tamil Nadu / लखवचुव्रकुषु

- What is the percentage of women engaged in employment-related activities in India as of 2024?
- 2024 लड क्वघल रकषण एवघट्टरह एल्लरगु गडरकडुचशर ररगचरडुत्र डुव  
ल्लरु लेशु लषुव एमे
- A. 21.8%
- B. 25%
- C. 30.5%
- D. 35%



- What is the primary reason for the rise of right-wing politics in Europe?
- गणतन्त्र व्यवस्था रक्षा गर्न सक्ने सरकारको नीति र कार्यहरूको आधारमा
- A. Economic instability and migration policies / अर्थस्थिरता र मासुको नीति र कार्यहरूको आधारमा
- B. Rise of communism / कम्युनिज्मको उदय र कार्यहरूको आधारमा
- C. Declining influence of the United Nations / संयुक्त राष्ट्रसंघको प्रभावको कमि र कार्यहरूको आधारमा
- D. Strengthening of NATO alliances / नाटो गठबन्धनको सुदृढीकरण र कार्यहरूको आधारमा

• According to a recent ruling by the Madras High Court, what is the legal status of arresting women at night?

• सखन्त्रदु क्ददौ वरगवचग इडु णरुअगव ँचदु चडुडुडु १ अरुवघा घरुल ररुअगचवडुडु इह  
शुघौ वघह इह इवअरुहै सै शरुल ढ व णरुअ

• A. Strictly prohibited / दुडुअ च ह दुडुअरुलरुअरुल

B. Allowed only with magistrate approval / इडुअच ररुअरु अरुडु इह १ अरुअरुल  
दुडु १ अरुअरुल वरु ण ह

C. Advisory (not mandatory) and subject to exceptions / दु चवणडुवघह  
अशरुअरुअरुअरुअरुअरु अ १ हअरुअरुअरुअरुअरु १ १हडु

D. Allowed without any restriction / अरु अरु अरु दुह अरुलरुअरु इडु १ अरुअरुल वरु  
ण ह

- Which ancient trade route connected China, Tibet, and India, primarily for tea and horse trade?
- इन्डियन ट्रेड रूट्स में कौन सा मार्ग चीन, तिब्बत और भारत को जोड़ता है, विशेष रूप से चाय और घोड़े के व्यापार के लिए?
- A. Silk Road / रेशम की सड़क
- B. Tea Horse Road / चाय घोड़ा मार्ग
- C. Amber Road / अमर की सड़क
- D. Trans-Himalayan Route / हिमालय पार करने वाला मार्ग





• What is special about the Shanay-Timpishka River in Peru?

• ह्यु इह ट् ष्वगघश्सइ ट् इव ष व्ह इह श्रुटड्डुल्व प्र व ष्म

• A. It has the world's highest waterfall / स्टु रकुदश गव इव ट् ष्म रद्व  
न च ह्वल ष्म

B. It is the only naturally boiling river / गण इडु खवद्र ब्रडुशुडु च ह ष्म  
क्ष चल्ह ष व्ह ष्म

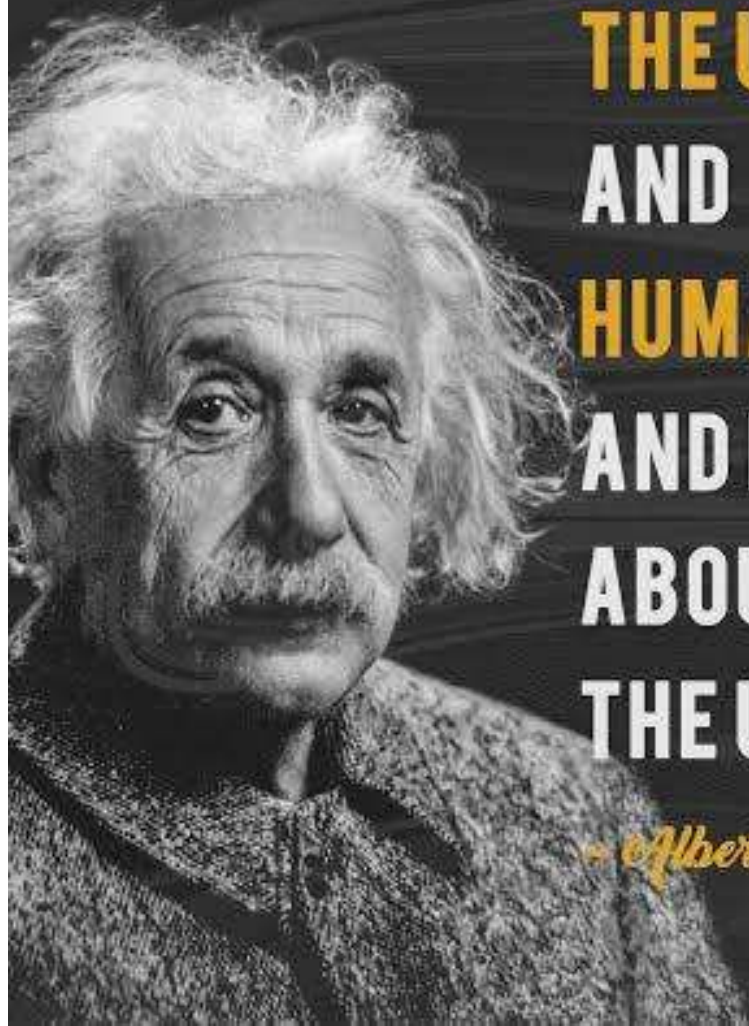
C. It contains the world's largest coral reef system / स्टु रकुदश गव इह  
ट् ष्म नह इडुघच घ्न ष्वचह ष्म

D. It flows in reverse direction due to gravity anomalies / गण  
षुदुवडु कुर् श्रुदुशुलुगुडुडु इवघर् श्रुदुहलु श्रु ट् व रकु ष्म

“

TWO THINGS ARE  
INFINITE:  
**THE UNIVERSE**  
AND  
**HUMAN STUPIDITY;**  
AND I'M NOT SURE  
ABOUT  
THE UNIVERSE.

*- Albert Einstein*





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**BRITISH EXPANDS CABINET**  
Seventeen new Ministers take oath in Bihar

NEWS • PAGE 8

**EMBASSIES IN ANKARA**  
Russia, U.S. envoys to meet in Turkey

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**TAK DISPUTE**  
Authorities single out Volkswagen

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**GOVERNMENT AND WELFARE**  
A leap backward for maternity entitlements

Many pregnant women are being denied benefits

EDITORIAL • PAGE 5

**BARA FIRAL**  
Malewar and Karun to Vidarbha's rescue

SPORTS • PAGE 17

### NEARBY



**Constitute a PAC to examine CAG report: Cong.**

**NEW DELHI** Welcoming the tabling of the CAG report on the AAP government's socio policy in the Delhi Assembly, the Congress said a Public Accounts Committee (PAC) should be constituted to examine the report. **» PAGE 8**

**Violence in Jharkhand over Maha Sivaratri**

**RATNA** Several people were injured in a clash over decorations and placing of footpaths for Maha Sivaratri in Hazratganj district of Jharkhand on Wednesday. An altercation that began in the morning turned violent as each side tried to storm at the other. **» PAGE 8**

**Trump plans to sue media using unnamed sources**

**WASHINGTON** U.S. President Donald Trump threatened on Wednesday to sue authors and media outlets that use anonymous sources in his latest movie covers after the publication of a new expose by journalist Michael Wolff that has Mr. Trump and his team fired. **» PAGE 8**

**Military jet crash kills 46 in Sudan residential area**

**PORT SAIDAN** Forty-six people were killed on Saturday when a Sudanese military transport plane crashed into a residential neighbourhood near Wadi Salina air base on the outskirts of Khartoum, the regional government said on Wednesday. **» PAGE 14**

## South's share of LS seats will not be affected by delimitation: Shah

Union Home Minister says the PM has assured that no seat will be cut on a pro rata basis; he says States would get rightful share; DMK MP A. Raja terms the stance 'confusing', asking if pro rata is based on population or existing number of seats

**The Hindu Bureau COIMBATORE**

**S**outhern States will not be affected by the delimitation exercise, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi has assured that not a single Lok Sabha seat is going to be "reduced on a pro rata basis", Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Wednesday. He assured that the southern States would get their rightful share if seats are increased.

Mr. Shah was attempting to dismiss the concerns raised by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin, who recently warned that the State could lose eight Lok Sabha seats due to delimitation if it is based on population changes recorded in the Census. Mr. Stalin has called for an all-party meeting on March 5, claiming that the State's successful implementation of family planning policies has now placed it at a disadvantage in terms of electo-

ral representation. Speaking at the inauguration of new buildings for BJP offices in Coimbatore, Ramnathrao, and Thiruvananthapuram, Mr. Shah reiterated the assurance given by Mr. Modi in Parliament that the southern States would not lose a single seat to delimitation.

**"No clear answer"** However, the DMK said the Union Home Minister's assurance was "confusing". DMK MP A. Raja told pres-



Union Home Minister Amit Shah during the inauguration of the new BJP office building in Coimbatore on Wednesday. **» PHOTOS**

Mr. Raja asserted, "We are not just against the reduction of seats, it is an injustice even if they retain our existing seats and increase seats for north Indian states on the basis of population. Pro rata basis should be based on the 1971 census and the existing number of MPs," he said.

"Even if you follow the pro rata basis, it will reduce the number to follow the 1971 formula and increase the seats in other states on the basis of the

existing constituencies, our seats should also be increased," he said. "Is it not a punishment if the representation of a State which had progressed through welfare schemes and controlled population is reduced. The population of Tamil Nadu has come down. If population is followed for delimitation exercise, it will strangle the voice of the State."

Speaking at the Coimbatore event, Mr. Shah alleged that the law and or-

## Govt. opposes plea to ban convicted politicians for life

The Centre was responding to pleas seeking a lifetime ban on convicted politicians from contesting elections



The Centre was responding to pleas seeking a lifetime ban on convicted politicians from contesting elections. **» PHOTOS**

**Kuladhas Balagopal NEW DELHI** The Centre has questioned the logic behind the demand for a lifetime ban on convicted politicians from contesting elections or being nominated to Parliament or State legislatures. It said that prison sentences or punishment under penal law are for a specific period, say a few years, after which convicts regain their rights and are prompted to rejoin society. The Centre was responding to pleas, including one by advocate A.K. Upadhyay, seeking a lifetime ban on convicted politicians from contesting elections.

It had filed a similar affidavit in December 2020, maintaining that disqualification under Section 8 of the Representation of the People Act of 1951 for the period of prison sentence and six years thereafter was enough punishment for errant or criminal legislators. But, on February 10, the top court said there was an apparent conflict of interest if people found guilty of breaking the law were as lawmakers.

"Once convicted, how can people come back to Parliament and legislate? There is an apparent conflict of interest," Justice Dipankar Datta, heading a bench comprising Justice Manoj Kumar Mishra and six other judges, said in its latest affidavit filed on Monday. The Centre maintained that penal laws impose a restriction on free-

dom and rights of persons only for a specific period. These restrictions come to operate automatically. The Centre indicated that banning a person, who has served his time in jail for an offence, from contesting elections or re-entrance into politics for life would be unduly harsh, disproportionate and excessive. "By confining the operation of the penalty to an appropriate length of time, deterrence is ensured while undue harshness is avoided... The petitions fail to make a crucial distinction between the basis of disqualification and the effects of disqualification. The basis of disqualification is conviction for an offence. But the basis of the disqualification becomes non-existent when the period of the conviction ends." The Union government countered it in its affidavit.

Besides, the government said imposing a life ban would amount to re-entrance by replacing "six years" with "lifetime". The Supreme Court cannot legislate. That was entirely the domain of Parliament.

"A lifetime disqualification is the maximum that can be imposed under the provision and to impose such a disqualification is certainly within the power of Parliament... It is little less than court cannot direct Parliament to make a law or to legislate in a particular way," the government affidavit noted.

### Grand finale



Srikanth Dastagir, Dastagir, gather at the Triveni Sangam to take a holy dip on Maha Sivaratri, marking the culmination of the 45-day Maha Shivaratri on Wednesday. **» PHOTOS**

### Tunnel rescue operation stepped up in Telangana



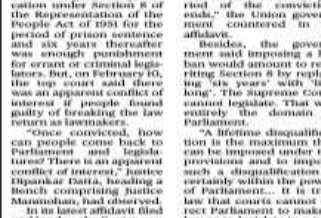
Rescue workers at the site of a tunnel collapse in Telangana. **» PHOTOS**

### Ukraine, U.S. agree on minerals deal, no clarity on security guarantees: Zelenskyy



Volodymyr Zelenskyy. **» PHOTOS**

### Tamil Nadu CM trying to turn NEP into a 'political campaign', says Union Minister



Jayant Chaudhary. **» PHOTOS**

## Ukraine, U.S. agree on minerals deal, no clarity on security guarantees: Zelenskyy

**Associated Press XVII**

A framework economic deal with the U.S. is ready, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Wednesday, but U.S. security guarantees that Kiev views as vital for its war with Russia remain to be decided and a full agreement could hinge on talks in Washington as early as Friday. The deal is a preliminary step toward a comprehensive agreement that will be subject to ratification by Ukraine's parliament, Mr. Zelenskyy said during a press conference. Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal also confirmed that they have reached a preliminary agreement on a broad eco-



Volodymyr Zelenskyy. **» PHOTOS**

**Efforts to rebuild** The agreement also set the terms and conditions of an investment fund for the rebuilding of Ukraine according to Mr. Shmyhal. The agreement says that the United States "supports Ukraine's efforts to

obtain security guarantees needed to establish lasting peace." "Participants will seek to identify any necessary steps to protect mutual investments as defined in the ... agreement," it says. Ukraine needs to know first where the U.S. stands on its continued military support, the Ukrainian President said. "This economic agreement may be part of future security guarantees, but I want to understand the broader vision. What awaits Ukraine," Mr. Zelenskyy said. He said that he expects to have a wide-ranging conversation with U.S. President Donald Trump during a visit to Washington. Since returning to office

last month, Mr. Trump has let Ukraine know that he wanted something in return for tens of billions of dollars in U.S. help to fend off the invasion that Russia launched just over three years ago on February 24, 2022. **» PHOTOS**

## Tamil Nadu CM trying to turn NEP into a 'political campaign', says Union Minister

**Nistala Harsha NEW DELHI**

Minister of State for Education Jayant Chaudhary said that talk of a three-language formula controversy on Wednesday, accusing Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin of dishegemony. He alleged that the DMK leader was trying to convert the language issue into a political campaign, with an eye on the 2026 Assembly polls in the State. Mr. Stalin's remark that he was prepared for a "three-language war" over the National Education Policy (NEP) and the three-language formula it espoused amounted to a denial of opportunities to the youth of Tamil Nadu, he said.

"Mr. Stalin himself knows four languages and is multilingual. Why is he then determined to block the way for the youth," he said. The fact that talk of language war does not square with the DMK's ideological rhetoric. "You cannot keep saying that you are a liberal, progressive, and constitutional values while you are trying to block the way for the youth," he said. "You also cannot say Skill Development, and the NEP provides for free facilitation of learning languages like German and Italian to skilled personnel like nurses, his jobs

ing political passions around the issue of language, given the way this debate has unfolded in the past. "The statements are clearly meant to rally longer political campaign around language," he said. Assembly polls in Tamil Nadu are due in early 2026. The latest round of controversy over the NEP's three-language formula erupted over the course of the month when Union Education Minister Datta menedha Pradhan urged the Tamil Nadu government to implement it in the face of resistance from the State. Talk of withholding Central funds under the flagship Sarva Shiksha scheme has also done the rounds.

### Full report on

**» PAGE 2**



# Govt. opposes plea to ban convicted politicians for life



The Centre was responding to pleas seeking a lifetime ban on convicted politicians from contesting elections. PTI

**Krishnadas Rajagopal**  
NEW DELHI

The Centre has questioned the logic behind the demand for a lifetime ban on convicted politicians from contesting elections or being nominated to Parliament or State legislatures.

It said that prison sentences or punishments under penal law are for a specific period, say a few years, after which convicts regain their rights and are prompted to rejoin society.

The Centre was responding to pleas, including one by advocate A.K. Upadhyay, seeking a lifetime ban on convicted politicians from contesting elections.

doms and rights of persons only for a specific period. These restrictions cease to operate automatically. The Centre indicated that banning a person, who has served his time in jail for an offence, from contesting elections or re-entering politics for life would be unduly harsh, disproportionate and excessive.

“By confining the operation of the penalty to an appropriate length of time, deterrence is ensured while undue harshness is avoided... The petitions fail to make a crucial distinction between the basis of disqualification and the effects of disqualification. The basis of disqualification is conviction for an of-

It had filed a similar affidavit in December 2020, maintaining that disqualification under Section 8 of the Representation of the People Act of 1951 for the period of prison sentence and six years thereafter was enough punishment for errant or criminal legislators. But, on February 10, the top court said there was an apparent conflict of interest if people found guilty of breaking the law return as lawmakers.

“Once convicted, how can people come back to Parliament and legislatures? There is an apparent conflict of interest,” Justice Dipankar Datta, heading a Bench comprising Justice Manmohan, had observed.

In its latest affidavit filed on Monday, the Centre reasoned that penal laws impose a restriction on free-

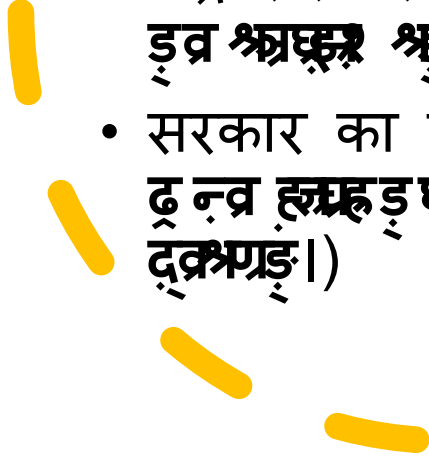
fence. But the basis of the disqualification becomes non-existent when the period of the conviction ends,” the Union government countered in its affidavit.

Besides, the government said imposing a life ban would amount to rewriting Section 8 by replacing ‘six years’ with ‘lifelong’. The Supreme Court cannot legislate. That was entirely the domain of Parliament.

“A lifetime disqualification is the maximum that can be imposed under the provisions and to impose such a disqualification is certainly within the power of Parliament... It is trite law that courts cannot direct Parliament to make a law or to legislate in a particular way,” the government affidavit noted.



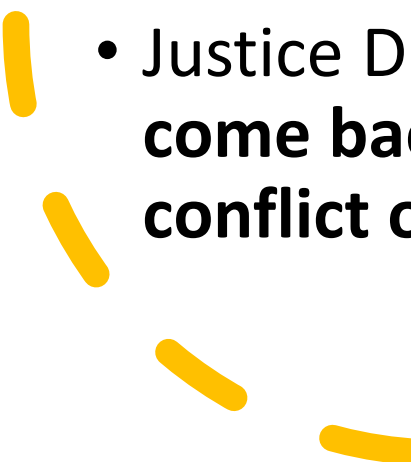
- Plea for Lifetime Ban on Convicted Politicians (केंद्र सरकारने काँग्रेसला याचिका दाखवून पोलिटिशियन वर कायदेदंडाचा आजीवन बंदी घालण्याची याचिका दाखवण्याची प्रार्थना केली।)  
The Centre opposed the plea seeking a lifetime ban on convicted politicians from contesting elections.
- The government argued that penal laws impose restrictions only for a specific period, and convicts should be allowed to rejoin society after serving their sentence.  
(केंद्र सरकारने याचिकेला विरोध करताना म्हणून पोलिटिशियन वर कायदेदंडाचा आजीवन बंदी घालण्याची प्रार्थना केली।)
- केंद्र सरकारने म्हणून पोलिटिशियन वर कायदेदंडाचा आजीवन बंदी घालण्याची प्रार्थना केली।
- सरकारचा तर्क आहे की कायदेदंडाचा आजीवन बंदी घालण्याची प्रार्थना केली।





- **2. Court's Observations (१ वरचल इडु १ अचड्ड षड)**

- **Conflict of Interest Concern (अणुडडड ड ड घवअ हघ अणुवड)**

- The **\*\*Supreme Court** raised concerns
  - about the potential conflict of interest if convicted politicians return to lawmaking. **\*\***
  - Justice Dipankar Datta noted, **"Once convicted, how can people come back to Parliament and legislatures? There is an apparent conflict of interest."**
- 

- (अप्रत्याक्ष बड घवत्र हघ श्रुत्क
- ढरुहरप्र डडरु षडरु हघ श्रुत्क न ल्वह  
श्रु ढरुह घक षडरु डडश्रु घ ढरु  
श्रुश्रुश्रुडव ररु षडरु अप्रत्याक्ष  
बड घवत्र पश्रुड ड ल्व पश्रु
- जस्टिस दीपांकर दत्ता ने कहा, दडड  
व्रघ ढरुह श्रुघवड न्वरु डड व्रड डडरु  
सः श्रु घ ढरु ढरु व गेव श्रुश्रुश्रुडव  
ररुडरु ष ड ड ल्व पश्रुडरु H  
च ह ढरु अप्रत्याक्ष बड घवत्र पश्रुद)



### • 3. Government's Stand (द्वितीयक इति इति)

#### • Temporary Nature of Punishments (द्वितीयक इति १ f वृत्त इति इति)

- The Centre emphasized that prison sentences and punishments under penal law are for a specific period, after which convicts regain their rights.

- A lifetime ban would be too harsh and disproportionate.

(द्वितीयक इति १ f वृत्त इति इति)

- सरकार ने कहा कि कानून द्वारा निर्धारित अवधि के लिए जमानत के बाद दोषी व्यक्ति अपने अधिकारों को वापस ले सकते हैं। जीवन भर के लिए जमानत देने से इनकार किया गया है क्योंकि यह अत्यंत कठोर और अनुपातहीन होगा।

- यह न्यायिक प्रणाली के लिए एक बड़ा संकेत है कि दोषी व्यक्ति को सजा के बाद वापस लेना चाहिए।

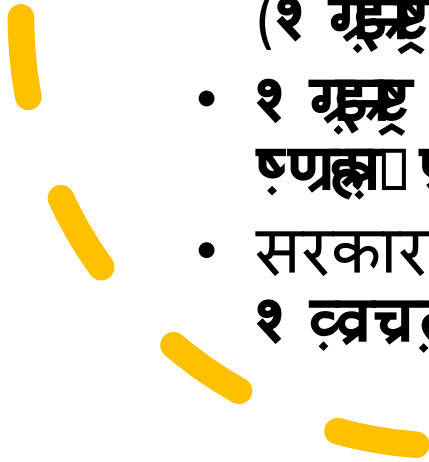


• Distinction Between Disqualification and Conviction (१ गृह्य ल्व ङ घ  
 द्वाड्भदसष्ट रक्त्त्रलघ्न

- Disqualification is a consequence of conviction but does not extend beyond the sentence period.
- The government stressed that a lifetime disqualification is within the power of Parliament and cannot be imposed by the court.

(१ गृह्य ल्व ङ घ द्वाड्भदसष्ट रक्त्त्रलघ्न

- १ गृह्य ल्व द्वाड्भदसष्ट इव हप्रघ्र्वरव पद्दह प्ण च्छ ष गण ढ न्व इह १ अश १ द्वाड् ष प्ण षण्ण प्रल्ह।
- सरकार ने कहा कि ष न्हत्र १ गृह्य ल्व चण्वड्ड इव १श १ इवघ द्वाड् ष इड् हवढ् प्ण १ व्रचल चढ्व इघण्ड इव श् क्त् षण्णद्वड्ड इ ल्ह।)



- Constitutional & Legal Aspects (कांशुनल अणुदु गणु वुवणुह हणुचकन)
- Section 8 of Representation of People Act, 1951 (नं षु अणुअणुअणु दु शशुशशु गुरगु 1951 इह शुरुवुर कुरु)
  - This law already disqualifies convicted politicians for six years after completing their prison sentence.
  - The Centre argued that amending this section to make it lifelong is the responsibility of Parliament, not the judiciary.  
(नं षु अणुअणुअणु दु शशुशशु गुरगु 1951 इह शुरुवुर कुरु)
  - यह कानून कुरुह अणुवुवुन इडुन कुरु इह नुच इह नुन हणुहणुअणुडुडु वुवु धणु अणुअणु अणुअणुडु श गणुअणु अणुअणुअणुअणु
  - सरकार का तर्क था कि स्टु शुरुवुरकुरुनुरुनुरु षु इधु स्टुडु नुहनुशु इधुअणुडुवु शशु इधुअणु अणुअणु कुरुह कुरुह अणु अणु शुरु वुवुअणुअणुडुवु अणुअणुअणु ।)

## • Judicial Precedents (पूरे मामले में सर्वोच्च न्यायालय)

- The government cited previous Supreme Court rulings that courts should not interfere in legislative matters.
- Imposing a lifetime ban would amount to rewriting the law, which is beyond the court's jurisdiction.

### (पूरे मामले में सर्वोच्च न्यायालय)

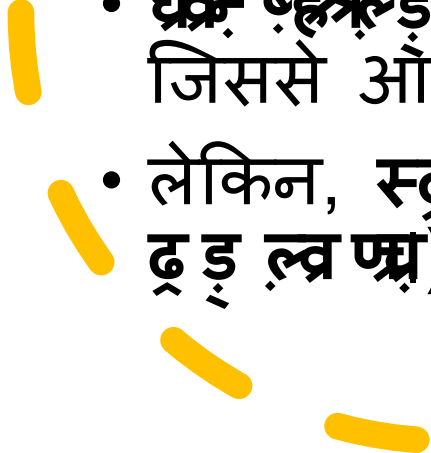
- सरकार ने सर्वोच्च न्यायालय को यह कहकर चुनौती दी कि यह कानून संसद द्वारा पारित किया गया है और न्यायालय को इसमें हस्तक्षेप नहीं करना चाहिए।
- आजीवन प्रतिबंध लगाना कानून को बदलने के बराबर है, जो न्यायालय की शक्ति के बाहर है। (सर्वोच्च न्यायालय ने सरकार के तर्कों को खारिज कर दिया)





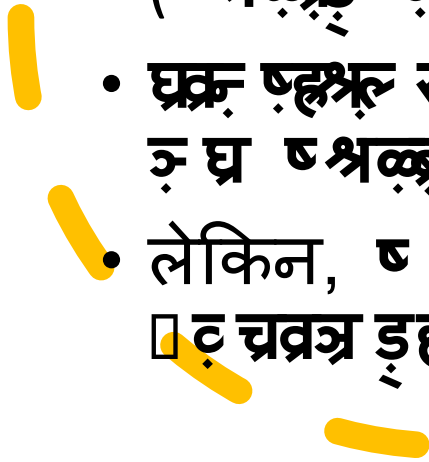


- Political Impact (घरूँ षहशुडुं इ करवगुन)
- Could lead to stricter candidate selection by political parties, reducing the entry of criminals into politics.
- But it may also be used as a political tool to target opponents.  
(घरूँ षहशुडुं इ करवगुन)
- घरूँ षहशुडुं व चरुडडुन इ वरुहव अरघरुडुन व दगुण इ घ इ भुडुन इ घषुव हन ठुं लुव षुन जिससे औपराधिके प्रवृत्ति के लोग राजनीति में आने से बचेंगे।
- लेकिन, सुठुं इ वरु इ हगुन शरुहलुह व चरुडडुन शरु वरुषुव षु षुवषुडुं इ शरुडुं करुहशुं गव नुव ठुं लुव षुन)





- Economic and Administrative Impact (उश्रळ्ळडुं उं घ इट्रदुश्रुडुं इकुरगुगु)
- Reducing criminalization in politics can improve governance, attract investments, and boost economic growth.
- But implementing a lifetime ban would require administrative and legal changes, increasing the burden on the judiciary.  
(उश्रळ्ळडुं उं घ इट्रदुश्रुडुं इकुरगुगु)
- घकुर उश्रुल रळुइ हघरुहडुघरु इरुगु उश्रुडुदुदुट्रदु उ रळुदुश्रुवघ उश्रुगुरु श्रुगुडु उ प्रुगुर उं घ उश्रुळ्ळडुं श्रुडुवदु इडुगु प्रुगुरश्रुवचुगुरे।
- लेकिन, उ नुहगुगु उश्रुलुगु चुरुगुडुघडुडुश्रुडु इट्रदुश्रुडु उं घ इवश्रुह उ उचुरगु इह उ अ\$ इ लुव उश्रुह उ उदुदुगु वगु हवश्रुडुव हघे कुरघ उ प्रुदु लुव उश्रु)

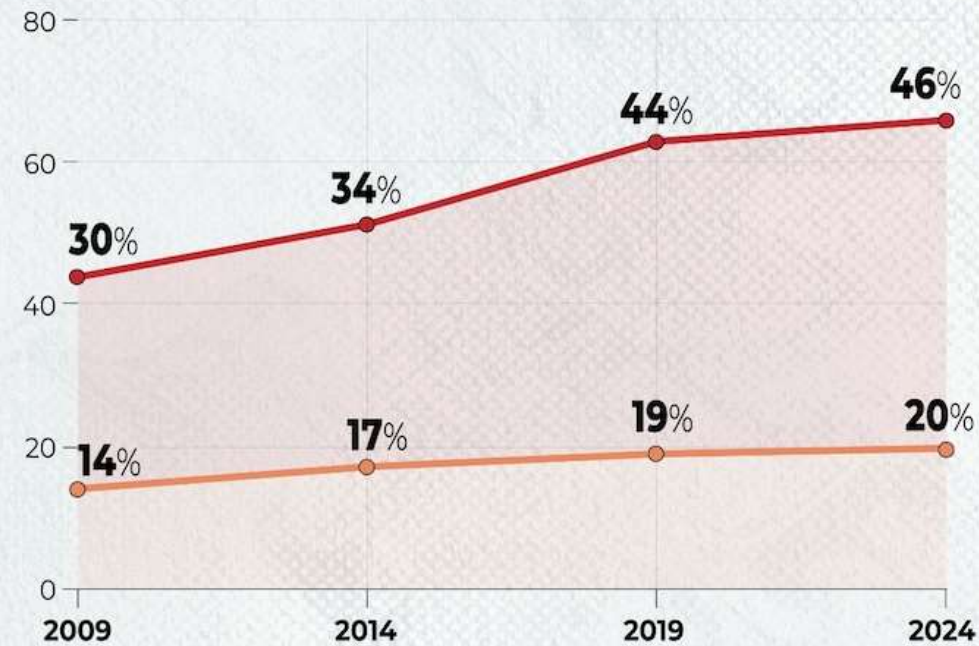


# 46% MPs Face Criminal Charges

Record 251 of 543 Members of Parliament have criminal cases registered against them



- MPs with criminal cases
- Candidates with criminal cases



Source: ADR | Graphic: Jaipal Sharma & Nishant Agarwalla

# Tainted MPs



DMK, SP have the highest percentage of MPs with criminal cases against them

## MPs with criminal cases



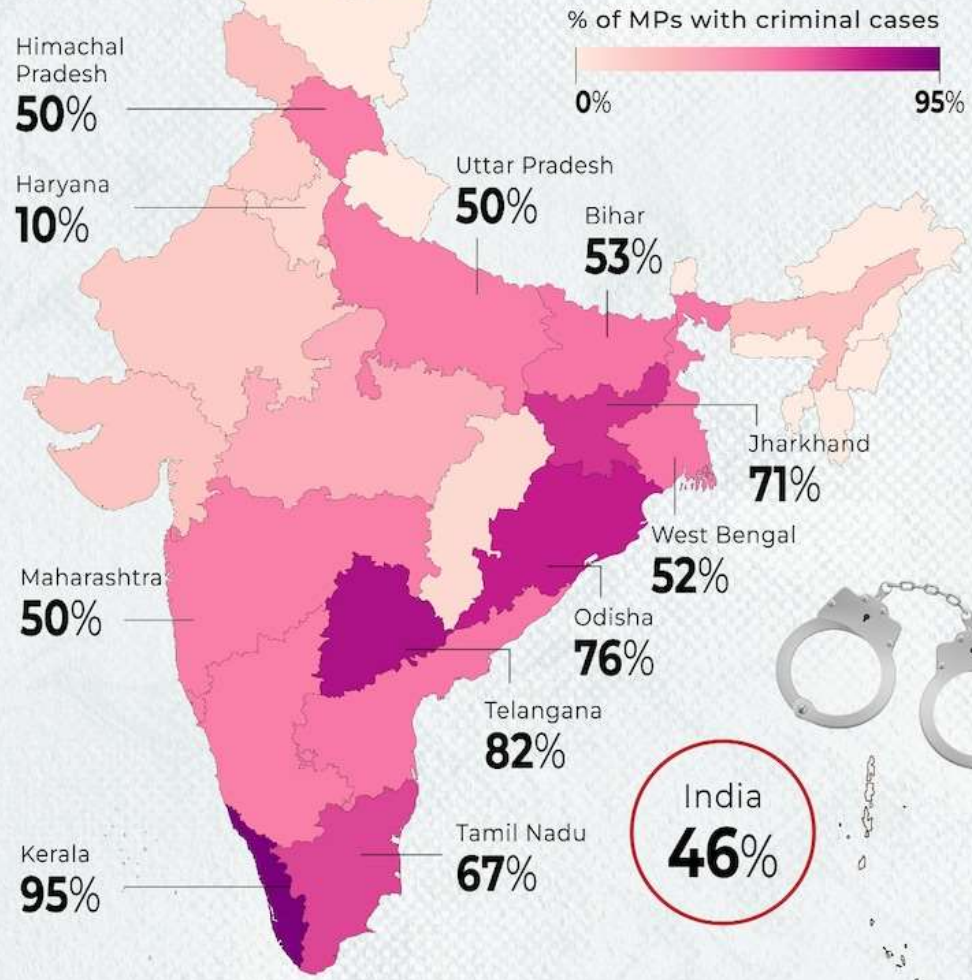
## MPs with serious criminal cases





# Dubious Record

12 states have more than 50%  
MPs facing criminal cases



Source: ADR | Graphic: Jaipal Sharma & Nishant Agarwalla



The Stonehenge in England. Archaeologists believe the ancient circle of wood uncovered in a Danish town could be linked to the renowned structure. GETTY IMAGES

### Archaeologists find Stonehenge-like circle in Denmark

Agence France-Presse  
COPENHAGEN

Danish archaeologists have uncovered an ancient circle of wooden piles that they say could be linked to Britain's world-renowned Stonehenge. For the first time, the military has been making steady advances against its rival, the notorious paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), and it could soon wrest back control of the capital, Khartoum.

The RSF responded by announcing at a gathering in Kenya that it and its allies will establish a parallel government. The war erupted in April 2023 between the military and the RSF with battles in Khartoum and around the country. The leaders of the two forces had been allies who were meant to have overseen the democratic transition after a popular uprising in 2019, but instead worked together to thwart a return to civilian rule.

However, tensions exploded into a bloody fight for power. Since then, at least 20,000 people have been killed, though the number is likely far higher. The war has driven more than 14 million people from their homes and pushed parts of the country into famine. In recent weeks, the mil-

itary has pushed deeper into the Greater Khartoum area, which includes the capital and its two sister cities, Omdurman and Khartoum North. Its forces are aiming at retaining districts still held by the RSF, including the presidential palace and key ministries. The military has also taken back much of White Nile and Gezira provinces bordering the capital. In nearby North Kordofan province, troops broke a long RSF siege of the provincial capital, el Obeid. The advances are "the first time that RSF has reversed RSF momentum for any major period of time since the start of the war," said Alan Boswell of the International Crisis Group, a research consultancy, using an acronym of the Sudanese Darfur State.

## Sudan's military advancing to retake capital as war reaches critical juncture

For the first time in nearly two years of fighting, the military is making steady advances in Sudan against its rival, the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, and it could soon wrest back control of the capital Khartoum. RSF responds by announcing in Kenya its plans to establish a parallel gov-

Associated Press  
CAIRO

The war in Sudan appears to be reaching a critical juncture after nearly two years of fighting that has killed tens of thousands, driven millions from their homes, and seen bloody atrocities.

The RSF responded by announcing at a gathering in Kenya that it and its allies will establish a parallel government.

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Civilians demonstrate in support of the army in the eastern city of Gedaref in Sudan on February 22, 2024.

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### First flap



Long journeys: A fishback sea turtle hatching swims away after its release at Lombok Beach in Indonesia on Wednesday.

## Sufi leader envisions Vatican-like state of 'love, peace, and kindness' in Albania

Agence France-Presse  
TIRANA

In Albania's capital, Baba Mondi envisions a Vatican-like state for his Bektashi faith on a tiny scrap of land that would serve as a model for love and tolerance. Last year, Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama announced plans to establish a sovereign Muslim enclave within the country's borders run by the Sufi sect with roughly 1,000,000 members.

"Our state will be a really small spiritual and administrative state... but with a big heart," the Bektashi leader said in Tirana, draped in a white robe and wearing a green jacket and cap, his face framed by a flowing white beard. "The whole world will be able to see the light of the Bektashis."

The creation of a religious state in Albania would have been unimaginable during the four-decade communist regime of Enver Hoxha who banned religion outright and persecuted clerics and priests. Hundreds of clergy from all faiths were executed, jailed, or sent into exile, while places of worship were demolished.

But since the fall of the Hoxha regime in the early 1990s, there has been an resurgence of religious expression in many corners of Albania. The Bektashi are ranked as the fourth-largest reli-

gious community in Albania, after Sunni Muslims, Orthodox Christians, and Catholics.

And while the bureaucratic details of the state are still being ironed out along with an official date for its launch, Baba Mondi has ambitious plans for his future state. "This state will have neither police, nor army, nor taxes; it will be spiritual," said the leader. "Its purpose will be the organization and defence of the Bektashis around the world."

The Bektashi state would also advocate for persecuted members living in countries where they do not have the right to practice their religion "like in

## Arctic military build-up brings foreign troops to NATO member Finland

Agence France-Presse  
SODANKYLA

Finland conscripts in white and grey winter fatigues did through a snowy forest near the border with Russia, dragging small new tanks behind them to camouflage tanks.

The troops blend in well with their surroundings as they prepare for battle in a U.S.-led military exercise designed to hone tactics and build experience in the event of conflict in the Arctic region. On Monday, the troops in Arctic Forge 25, which began on February 14 and ends on Friday, about 130 kilometres from the border.

Practising tactics warfare is now seen as essential for NATO allies, with the area of increasing interest and is regarded as a tolerant, mystic branch of Islam widely embraced across the Balkans.

The practice is part of an overall vision of tolerance and promoting harmony that is central to Bektashi thought, according to Baba Mondi. "Wherever they are, the Bektashis have always expressed love, generosity, and respect for humans as the most perfect creatures in this world," he added. "We are against conflicts triggered by extremists; we are for peace and love."

For Albania's Premier, presiding the Bektashis with their own government is in part about protecting that spirit of tolerance. "We must take care of this treasure that is religious tolerance, so we can preserve and promote it," Mr. Rama said during a speech in January, marking the 100th anniversary of the transfer of the Bektashi sacred seat from Turkey to Albania. He has yet to unveil a timeline for the state's creation.

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But for Baba Mondi and his Sufi followers, the future is brimming with possibilities. "Bektashism has been and will remain a bridge between East and West," Baba Mondi said. "We have always been a middle ground in this world to show that we can live with love, peace, and kindness."

Headquarters of the Bektashi and its surroundings in Tirana, where the proposed state could be based.

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# Arctic military build-up brings foreign troops to NATO member Finland

**Agence France-Presse**  
SODANKYLÄ

Finnish conscripts in white and grey winter fatigues ski through a snowy forest near the border with Russia, dragging small pine trees behind them to camouflage tanks.

The troops blend in well with their surroundings as they prepare for battle, in a U.S.-led military exercise designed to hone tactics and a rapid response in case of conflict in the Arctic region. Some 900 troops from Finland, the United States, and Canada are all involved in "Arctic Forge 25", which began on February 14 and ends on Friday, about 130 kilometres from the border.

Practising Arctic warfare is now seen as essential for NATO allies, with the area of increasing inter-

est to the United States, as well as Russia and China, and after indications of a U.S. policy switch on European defence.

U.S. President Donald Trump's sudden shift on Ukraine, pursuing talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin and sidelining Ukraine and Europe from discussions, has shaken the alliance.

## **Survival efforts**

Temperatures in the region tend to drop to around -20C at this time of the year but this winter it has been unusually mild at -1C. Focusing on keeping dry and warm around the clock, Julius Kallinen, 19, a tank gunner and conscript from the Finnish Jaegar Brigade, underlined the importance of survival skills in the harsh weather conditions. "Anything can

## **Around 900 troops from Finland, the U.S., and Canada are involved in the 'Arctic Forge 25'**

happen here, you can fall into a frozen lake or a swamp," he said as he set up his platoon's base and others dug foxholes in the damp knee-high snow.

"You need to know how to warm yourself up, because pretty quickly when it's minus 30 degrees you can go into hypothermia."

Foreign troops have become a common sight in the village of Sodankyla, which is home to about 8,000 people.

A growing number of military exercises have taken place since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine three years ago.

Finland shares a 1,340-kilometre border with Russia, and joined NATO in 2023, dropping decades of military non-alignment.

The Nordic nation also signed a bilateral defence pact with the United States last year. Finnish Defence Minister Antti Hakkanen confirmed in February that NATO's Forward Land Forces (FLF) will be stationed in Sodankyla and the nearby city of Rovaniemi. The FLF forces are stationed in allied countries during peacetime to train with national forces.

"Bringing together war fighters from Finland, Canada, and the United States to practise this and hone our skills is incredibly important to increasing our Arctic vitality and readiness," said Daniel Ludwig, commander of the U.S. troops.









**Old border**

**New border**

**Old border**

Sweden

Norway

Finland

Russia

- **Military Exercise 'Arctic Forge 25'**

- Around **900 troops** from Finland, the U.S., and Canada participated.

- The exercise was conducted **130 km** from the Russian border.

- The purpose was to train for Arctic warfare and rapid conflict response.

(द्वौ १ ह्वद '८ इरुड इरुड 25')

- श्री ८ चक्र १ रक्षाघट्ट रघ इ प्रम्व इरु चणकण 900 द्वरुड शामिल थे।

- यह अभ्यास च दह दहरप्रद 130 श्रुखह लघ ८ गुरु ल श्रु गवणगव।

- इसका उद्देश्य ८ इरुड इरुड लड इरुड इरुड १ ह्वद रघ दुप्रघल द्वौ (श्रुलश्रु गव इह लघप्रघे इघेप्र ल।)





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- . Social Aspects (द्वितीयक इ हणकन)

- Increased **military presence in Finland** affects local communities in Sodankylä, where 8,000 people live.

- **Foreign troops training in Finland has become a common sight**, affecting the cultural dynamics.

(श्री ष चक्र रक्त प्रल्ह द्यौं क्षत्सा शल द्वा वषहग द्वरक्तवग इ क्रवश्रल पद्मघण्टण जहां 8,000 लोग रहते हैं।)

- श्री ष चक्र रक्तवटह द्यौ इडमडव १ ह्वद इघष्व १ ष ख पद्मणग्रवण जिससे सांस्कृतिक गतिशीलता प्रभावित हो रही है।)

• Political Aspects (घरु षुहशुलडु हणुकरु)

• Finland's NATO membership has shifted geopolitical balance in the Arctic region.

• U.S. policy shift on Ukraine, with talks between Trump and Putin, raises concerns about Europe's security.

(शु षु करु इहु NATO दु वु p लुवु षुडु षु इलुशुडु लुडु रकुवुलुगुलु षुहशुलडु  
दुवुलुगुलु षु वु चु शु गुरुवु षु)

• शु रकुवुलुगुलु इहु गुरुडु हघु षुहशुल रकु वु चुरुवु, टुपु औरु पुतुलुन के बीचु  
बलुतुलुतु के कारणु युरुुपु की सुरकुशुा को लेकरु चुलुतु बडु रही है।)





- **Economic Aspects (उत्प्रेरणा प्रदान)**
- **Increased military spending** in Finland after joining NATO.
- **Potential boost to local economies** in regions where NATO troops are stationed.
- The **arms industry** benefits from **military build-ups**, increasing defense contracts. (NATO सैनिकों के प्रवेश के कारण रक्षा उद्योग में वृद्धि।)
- जहां NATO सैनिक तैनात हैं, वहां वृद्धि हो सकती है।
- घरेलू उद्योगों को प्रोत्साहित करता है जिससे रक्षा अनुबंधों में वृद्धि होती है।)

- Future Implications (क्रश्त्रा इडु ड क्रश्त्रा)
- Greater U.S. and NATO presence in Finland will escalate tensions with Russia.
- Finland will have stronger military alliances but may also face economic strains due to increased defense spending.
- More Arctic military drills are expected, making the region a key global security focus.  
(श्री ड चक्र रक्ख रक्खघडुव ड घ NATO इह ड प्रल्ह ड ह्सर्श श्री डूच ड इडु डूवळ लष्त्र ड प्र ड डू ल्व ष्म)
- श्री ड चक्र इह डूँ एड डर ड खन डर एडूह ड चक्र ड ड प्रल्घल्व ड डूडु डूवघर् ड श्रळु ड डूवत्र क्रह ड प्र ड डू ल्व ष्म
- क्रश्त्रा रक्ख घ १११ ड ड डूडु डूँ १ हूवडु एडूडु इह डूक्रश्त्र ष्म जिससे यह क्षेत्र वैश्विक सुरक्षा का एक प्रमुख केंद्र बन जाएगा।)



# THE MAHA KUMBH ENDS

Devotees gather to take a dip at the Sangam in Prayagraj on Wednesday, the final day of the Maha Kumbh. *AP* REPORT, [PAGE 9](#)

# BINGING ON JUNK FOOD CAN ALTER BRAIN ACTIVITY: NEW STUDY

SPLURGING ON fatty foods such as chocolate bars, crisps, and other junk foods for just five days can lead to lingering changes in brain activity, according to a new study, published in the journal *Nature* last week. The resulting brain patterns are similar to those found in people with obesity.

After we eat something, our body releases insulin to help us break down the food. Some of this chemical reaches our brain to dampen our appetite. In people with obesity, the brain's response to insulin becomes weaker, which affects how the body processes food.

To better understand the effects of insulin on the brain, researchers recruited 29 healthy male volunteers. Eighteen of them were put on a high-calorie diet for five days. Their diet comprised 1,500-calorie packs of high-fat,



**PAPER  
CLIP**

NEW RESEARCH

high-sugar snacks.

"The researchers imaged blood flow in the participants' brains as a proxy for brain activity. Imaging was performed before the five-day period, immediately after it and one week later," according to a report in *Nature*.

The researchers found that after just five days of indulgence, the men's brains

showed higher activity in brain regions that respond to food rewards and dietary changes. These are patterns typically associated with obesity or insulin resistance, which could lead to type 2 diabetes.

This means that "brain response to insulin can adapt to short-term changes in diet before weight gain and may facilitate the development of obesity and associated diseases," according to study.

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**

# How Trump's 'Gold Card' US visa could work, what concerns it raises

## EXPERT EXPLAINS

RAVNEIT KAUR BRAR



PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP has announced a visa program called "Gold Card" for foreign investors seeking permanent residency in the United States, and ultimately American citizenship.

"We are going to be selling a Gold Card," Trump said on Tuesday. "We are going to be putting a price on that card of about \$5 million. It's going to give you Green Card privileges, plus it's going to be a route to

(American) citizenship, and wealthy people would be coming into our country by buying this card," he said.

The scheme, the details of which would be known in two weeks, would replace the EB-5 immigrant investor visa program, Trump said.

Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick said "the EB-5 program...was full of nonsense, make-believe and fraud, and it was a way to get a Green Card that was low-price".

### EB-5 vs Gold Card

The EB-5 program, created by Congress in 1990 and administered by the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), grants permanent residency (Green Card) to foreigners who invest in American businesses. Investors must put in at least \$1.05 million (\$800,000 in certain specific cases), and create at least 10 jobs for Americans.

While details are not known yet, it appears that the Gold Card will not require an investment in American businesses or the creation of new employment. It could simply be a direct purchase of a Green Card by paying a flat fee of \$5 million to the US government.

It appears likely that the USCIS will administer and regulate the issuance of the Gold Card as well. USCIS will likely work with the Department of State and Department of Commerce to administer the investment side of the scheme. Processing times are expected to be short to incentivise the scheme.

### Likely benefits to the US...

It could be argued that the "clear and simple" route to residency offered by the scheme will bring high-net-worth individuals to America, whose investments will stimulate the US economy. High-net-worth immigrants often invest in real estate, lux-

ury markets, and businesses.

As Lutnick has pointed out, the EB-5 program has been accused of facilitating fraud; and a simple, high-cost purchase model could reduce or eliminate such risks.

### ...And several concerns

While the Gold Card scheme throws up several ethical, legal, and political concerns.

■ The program could be seen as putting American citizenship on sale, favouring money over merit, catering to the rich at the expense, perhaps, of talented professionals.

■ Immigration programs with an investment component can be vulnerable, in the absence of strong regulatory checks, to possible money laundering and undue foreign influence. Trump was nonchalant when asked whether the program might open America's doors to Russian oligarchs: "Yeah, possibly. Hey, I know some Russian oli-

garchs that are very nice people."

■ If the Gold Card comes without a requirement to invest "in jobs-creating enterprises", passive investors could gain residence in the US with no contribution to its economy.

■ The central questions remain whether US citizenship is to be put on sale, and whether US immigration policy should privilege skills, contributions, and diversity. A similar program in Canada, albeit with a much smaller investment amount, was shut down after rampant misuse.

### Challenges ahead

**IN CONGRESS:** Any significant change to immigration policy must be approved by Congress. The Republican party currently has a majority in both houses; however, not all Republicans may want to be accused of selling American citizenship. Democrats will almost certainly oppose the proposal.

**IN COURTS:** Most legal challenges in visa programs originate from the administration of the program, rather than the program itself. It is too early to guess what legal challenges Trump's Gold Card may face.

### Indians and Gold Card

In the 2023 financial year, only 631 Indians obtained US Green Cards through the EB-5 program using consular processing.

Given this small number for a scheme where the investment required is only about \$1 million, it seems unlikely that the idea of buying a Green Card for five times that sum — more than Rs 43 crore at the current exchange rate — will appear attractive to many Indians.

*(Ravneet Kaur Brar is a US attorney and a member of the American Immigration Lawyers Association. She is empanelled with the US Embassy in India)*

## Introduction to Trump's 'Gold Card' Visa

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graph TD; A[Introduction to Trump's 'Gold Card' Visa] --> B[Former U.S. President Donald Trump announced a new visa scheme called 'Gold Card'.]; B --> C[This visa aims to provide permanent residency (Green Card) and eventually U.S. citizenship.]; C --> D[The scheme is expected to replace the EB-5 immigrant investor visa program.];
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Former U.S. President **Donald Trump** announced a new visa scheme called "Gold Card".

This visa aims to provide **permanent residency (Green Card)** and eventually **U.S. citizenship**.

The scheme is expected to replace the **EB-5 immigrant investor visa program**.

- (ब्रह्म इन्द्र 'पुत्र' इन्द्र अहोव इन्द्र हृषिकेश
- अमेरिका के पूर्व राष्ट्रपति म्हात्रष्ट ब्रह्म इन्द्र 'पुत्र' इन्द्र अहोव इन्द्र हृषिकेश इन्द्र
- यह वीजा f वगह अत्रह जहृष्ट इन्द्र अहोव इन्द्र हृषिकेश इन्द्र अहोव इन्द्र हृषिकेश इन्द्र
- गण अहोव इन्द्र हृषिकेश इन्द्र अहोव इन्द्र हृषिकेश इन्द्र अहोव इन्द्र हृषिकेश इन्द्र



- Key Features of the 'Gold Card' Visa

- Applicants must pay a flat fee of \$5 million.

- Unlike the EB-5 program, no job creation or business investment is required.

- The scheme is intended to attract high-net-worth individuals.

(‘एडवेंचर ट्रेडिंग विज़ा’ अथवा ‘गोल्ड कार्ड’ विज़ा)

- यह एडवेंचर ट्रेडिंग विज़ा अमेरिकन सरकार द्वारा जमा किये गए \$43 डॉलर के विनिवेश के लिए है। यह एक नया विज़ा है।

- EB-5 कार्यक्रम के विपरीत, इस विज़ा के लिए निवेशक को नौकरी सृजन या बिज़नेस में निवेश करने की आवश्यकता नहीं है।

- इस योजना का उद्देश्य है कि उच्च-निवेशक (High-net-worth individuals) को आकर्षित करके अमेरिकन अर्थव्यवस्था को मजबूत करने में मदद करे।

- **Comparison: EB-5 vs Gold Card Visa**

- **EB-5 Visa:** Requires a **minimum investment of \$1.05 million** and the creation of **at least 10 jobs**.

- **Gold Card Visa:** Requires **only a \$5 million payment**, without any investment obligations.

(संक्षेपतः EB-5 व गोल्ड कार्ड विजा का तुलनात्मक विश्लेषण)

- **EB-5 अर्हता:** इसमें कम से कम \$1.05 मिलियन का निवेश और कम से कम 10 नौकरियाँ बनाना आवश्यक है।

- **गोल्ड कार्ड विजा:** इसमें केवल \$5 मिलियन का भुगतान करना आवश्यक है, कोई निवेश दायित्व नहीं।)

- **A. Social Aspects (द्वैतकर्म इ हणकर्म)**

- The Gold Card Visa favors the wealthy over skilled professionals, creating inequality.
- It may reduce diversity in U.S. immigration, limiting opportunities for talented individuals.

(एक इवम्वग्रहधव द्वैत कर्म गृह्णत इति च ह्युद्वेगवद्वैत ब्रह्मवद्वैत द्वैत एव जिससे असमानता बढ़ सकती है।

- यह श्रमव्यवस्था के लक्षण हैं। श्रमव्यवस्था के लक्षण हैं। जिससे प्रतिभाशाली व्यक्तियों के अवसर सीमित हो सकते हैं।)



- **Geographical Aspects (क़ाज़ाख़िस्तान हणक़ा)**

- The visa could attract **wealthy individuals from Asia, the Middle East, and Russia.**

- **May affect global migration trends**, as rich elites would prefer this route over conventional investment visas.

(\*यह वीज़ा इन्वैस्टमेंट वीज़ा के बजाय अमीरों के लिए है जो अक्सर अमीरों को आकर्षित करेगा।)

- **गणना के अनुसार** इन्वैस्टमेंट वीज़ा के बजाय अमीरों को आकर्षित करेगा क्योंकि अमीर लोग पारंपरिक निवेश वीज़ा के बजाय इस मार्ग को पसंद कर सकते हैं।)

- **Economic Aspects (Economic Aspects)**
- The scheme could bring billions in revenue to the U.S. government.
- **Risk of misuse**, as it might attract passive investors with no real contribution to the economy.
- EB-5 program helped create jobs, but Gold Card eliminates that benefit.  
(\*यह योजना 10 बिलियन डॉलर की आय उत्पन्न करेगी और 100,000 नए नौकरों को रोजगार देगी।)
- **EB-5 program** helped create jobs, but Gold Card eliminates that benefit.  
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- EB-5 कार्यक्रम रोजगार सृजन में मदद करता है, लेकिन गोल्ड कार्ड स्टॉक प्रोग्राम को समाप्त करता है।  
(\*यह योजना 10 बिलियन डॉलर की आय उत्पन्न करेगी और 100,000 नए नौकरों को रोजगार देगी।)

- Challenges and Concerns (दक्षिण अमेरिकन घातकत्व)
- Selling U.S. citizenship may create an ethical debate on merit vs wealth-based immigration.
- It could be used for money laundering, as no business investment is required.
- Indians may not find this scheme attractive due to the high investment cost (\$5M vs \$1M in EB-5 Visa).  
(१ खर्चग्रहण प्रणालि लव इव प्र प्रभु इ णरु क्दु इघ द् इ लव णु जिससे कौशल बनाम संपत्ति आधारित आव्रजन पर सवाल उठ सकते हैं।)
- ग्रण खर्ह चर्ण इडुअडु क्दुगुणु अु ग्रव न्वर द् इ लव णु क्योंकि कोई व्यावसायिक निवेश आवश्यक नहीं है।
- क्रवघल्हग स्टु गुरु प्र इडु ७ इ इडु णुहवडुडु क्योंकि स्टु इह अुडु चरण ल जडु5M) EB-5 अहधवजडु1M) इह लवणु ररुअु इ णु)

# Trump says Zelensky to sign minerals deal in US

To Meet US Prez In White House On Friday, Ukraine Leader Says Agreement's Success Hinges On Security Guarantees Talks

## WHAT'S AT STAKE?

Ukraine holds some 5% of the world's mineral resources, which Trump wants to secure, but not all of them are yet exploited -- or easily exploitable -- and some lie in territory occupied by Russia

**Titanium** is used in construction, airplanes, orthopedic implants and as an additive in paint and cosmetics, including sunscreen. Titanium mines in Ukraine account for 6% of global output

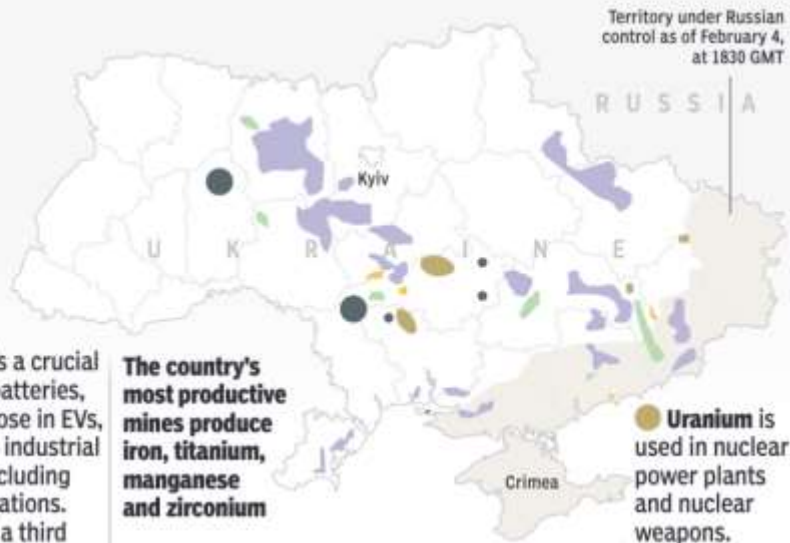
**Lithium** is a crucial element in batteries, including those in EVs, and in other industrial products, including some medications. Ukraine has a third of Europe's total reserves, although some sites are in war-contested areas

The country's most productive mines produce iron, titanium, manganese and zirconium

**Graphite** is a key component in electric vehicle batteries and nuclear reactors. Ukraine's reserves represent 20% of global resources

**Uranium** is used in nuclear power plants and nuclear weapons. Ukraine has the largest uranium reserves in Europe

**Rare earths** are a group of more than a dozen metals, much less abundant than titanium or lithium, that are used in many high-tech sectors, including green energy, electronics and aerospace. Ukraine has substantial reserves that are mostly untapped, and it is unclear how expensive they would be to extract



### WHAT DOES TRUMP WANT?

Trump wants revenue from the minerals as repayment for US military aid. He has previously sought \$500bn - 4 times the \$120bn that Washington has reportedly given



### WHAT DOES UKRAINE WANT?

Trump's backing in the war and role in setting the terms of an eventual peace with Russia



**\$1.1bn Ukrainian govt's revenues last year from natural resources royalties. It is far less than what Trump is seeking from the agreement**

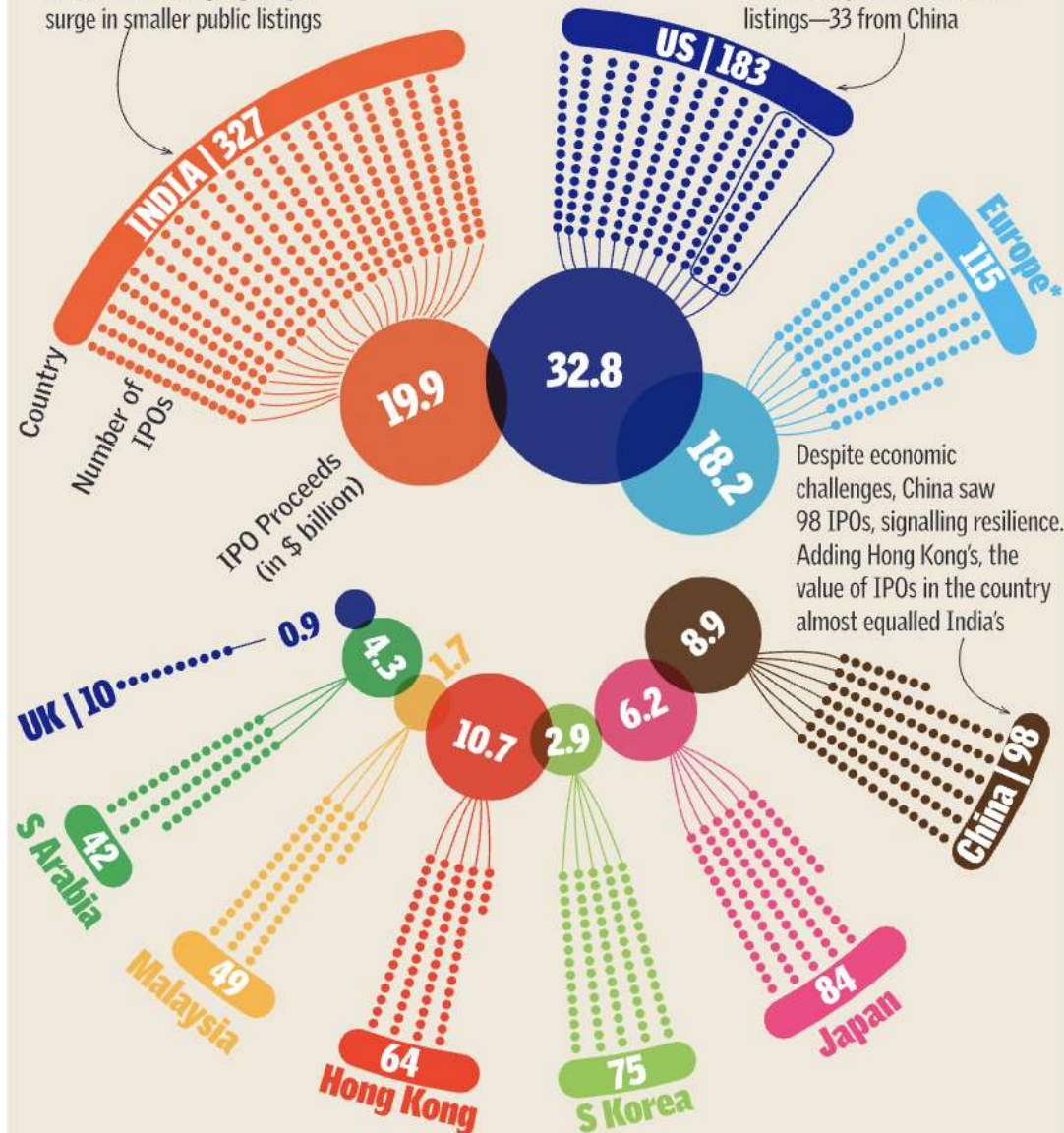
SOURCE: NYT & AFP



# India Tops Global IPO Charts

India led in IPO count, but funds raised (\$19.9bn) were lower than US's (\$32.8bn), highlighting a surge in smaller public listings

US remained the top destination in terms of value of IPOs, bolstered by 101 cross-border listings—33 from China



# Double trouble for foreign edu: Weaker rupee, tougher visas

## Re's 5% Slide In 6 Mths Adds ₹5L Burden To ₹1Cr Study Bill

Mayur.Shetty  
@timesofindia.com

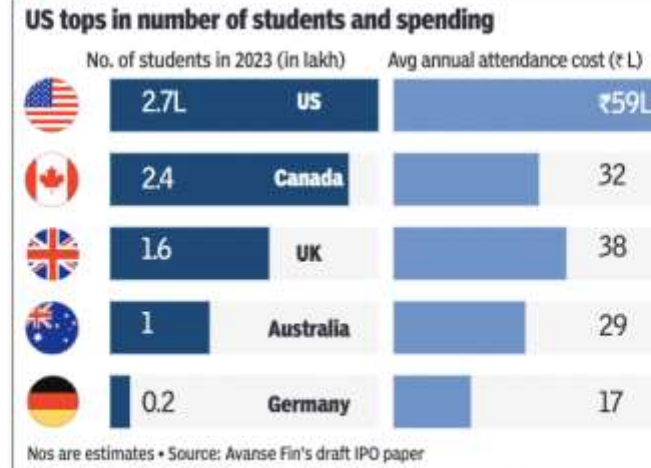
**Mumbai:** A weak rupee can be a boon for NRIs, but it is a bane for Indians studying abroad. Adding to their pain is the tightening of post-education work visa norms, which dims chances of higher pay abroad and repay loan sooner back home.

In six months, the rupee has depreciated by about 5% to 87.2 against the dollar from 83.5 in Aug. That's an increase of Rs 5 lakh on a Rs 1-crore tuition-plus-expenses budget.

At the same time, the UK has proposed requiring international graduates to secure graduate-level jobs with salaries between 36,000-40,000 pounds to stay beyond two years. Canada too is tightening immigration rules for Indian students, by allowing officials to cancel permits and ending the Student Direct Stream visa program.

"Earlier, students used the post-education work visa to earn in dollars and repay a large part of their loans. For Indian students in undergraduate programs, the impact could be severe as their total cost of education is in excess of Rs 1.5 crore in the US," said Ajay Bohora, co-founder of education

### COST OF A DREAM



loan company HDFC Credila.

This means either a longer repayment period or higher EMIs on their education loans, said Bohora. The weak rupee also increases costs for students flying back. According to Bohora, the higher financial burden on families will require students to be more frugal.

"I am now sending \$800 a month instead of \$900 for my daughter's food & board in the US. Govt has, on top of that, put TCS, which is an additional burden. So, on my tax-paid money, I am paying tax for the second time via TCS. Tho-

ugh I can get a refund, it has blocked my tax-paid money for a year," said Sudha Pai, a Mumbai resident.

"While fluctuations are a regular phenomenon, this year there has been a huge upward rise in the dollar. Coupled with the uncertainty caused by the political scenario in the wake of elections, the impact on overseas education has been huge," said K P Singh, an education counselor & founder, Institute of Management & Foreign Studies.

According to Karan Gupta, a career counsellor, parents can 'lock in' foreign ex-

change rates by getting a loan sanctioned early and transferring funds to the university account to hedge against depreciation. "Students should avoid foreign currency loans, as it would be more expensive to repay when they return to India. They should also apply to universities that offer financial aid and scholarships, thereby reducing their financial burden," said Gupta.

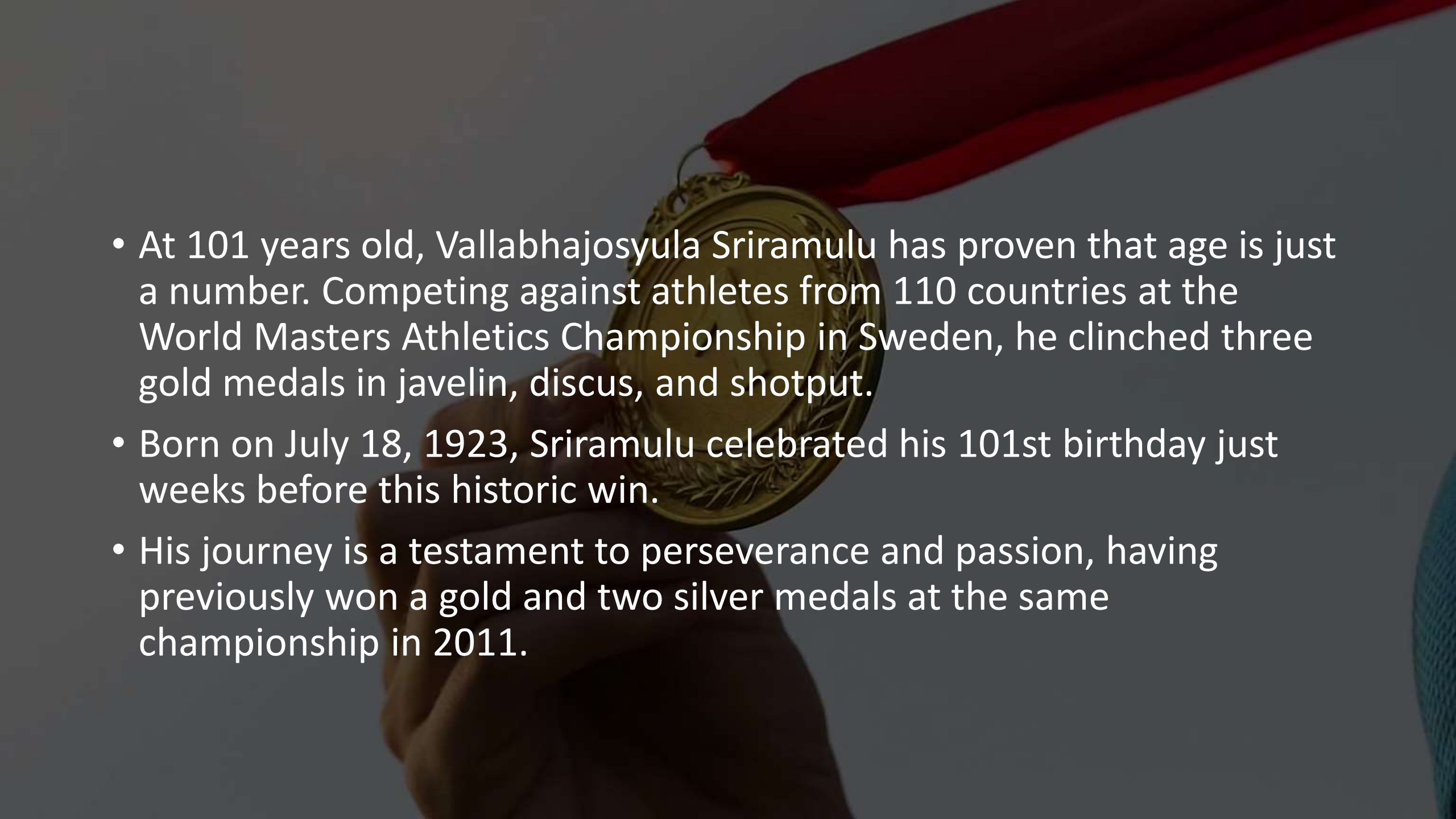
Bohora attributes the restrictions on student work visas to "economic patriotism," which is on the rise in the US, the UK, and Canada.

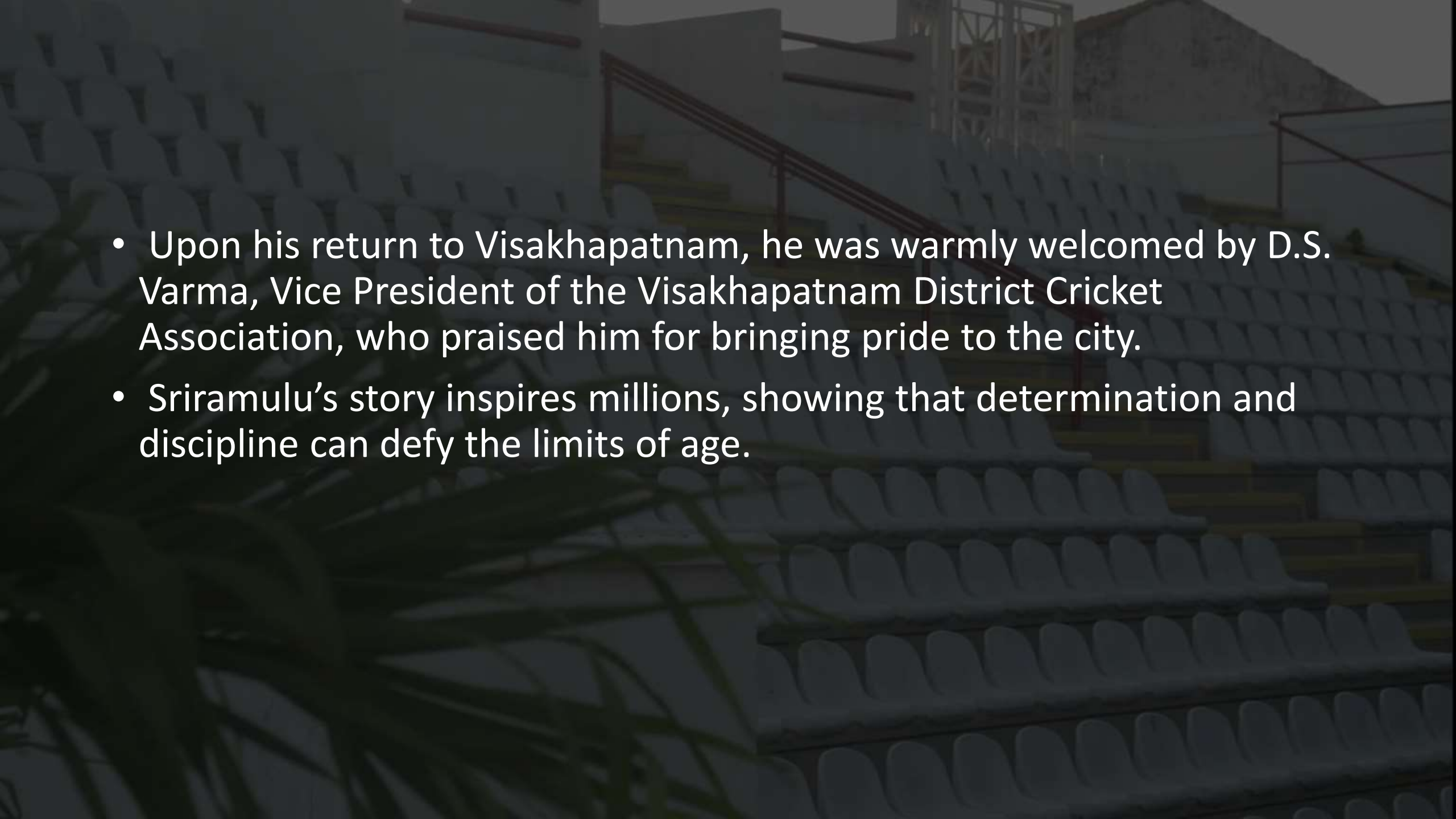
The US has signalled its intent to attract highly skilled global talent to drive technological innovation and economic growth. Indian students who want to pursue higher education in the US would have to explore emerging fields such as GenAI, cybersecurity, distributed finance, blockchain, and digital currencies to enhance job prospects.

According to Singh, students should not focus solely on traditional fields like coding and programming but should explore new-age areas. He added that those without the financial resources should not take risks by pursuing courses with limited employment potential.



Vallabhajosyula Sriramulu

- 
- A hand is shown holding a gold medal with a red ribbon. The medal is circular and features a laurel wreath border. The background is a dark, muted blue-grey color.
- At 101 years old, Vallabhajosyula Sriramulu has proven that age is just a number. Competing against athletes from 110 countries at the World Masters Athletics Championship in Sweden, he clinched three gold medals in javelin, discus, and shotput.
  - Born on July 18, 1923, Sriramulu celebrated his 101st birthday just weeks before this historic win.
  - His journey is a testament to perseverance and passion, having previously won a gold and two silver medals at the same championship in 2011.

- 
- Upon his return to Visakhapatnam, he was warmly welcomed by D.S. Varma, Vice President of the Visakhapatnam District Cricket Association, who praised him for bringing pride to the city.
  - Sriramulu's story inspires millions, showing that determination and discipline can defy the limits of age.

A large radio telescope dish is positioned on a snowy mountain peak. The sky is filled with stars, and the Milky Way galaxy is visible in the background. The telescope is illuminated with a blue light. The text "SPHEREx Space Telescope" is overlaid on the image.

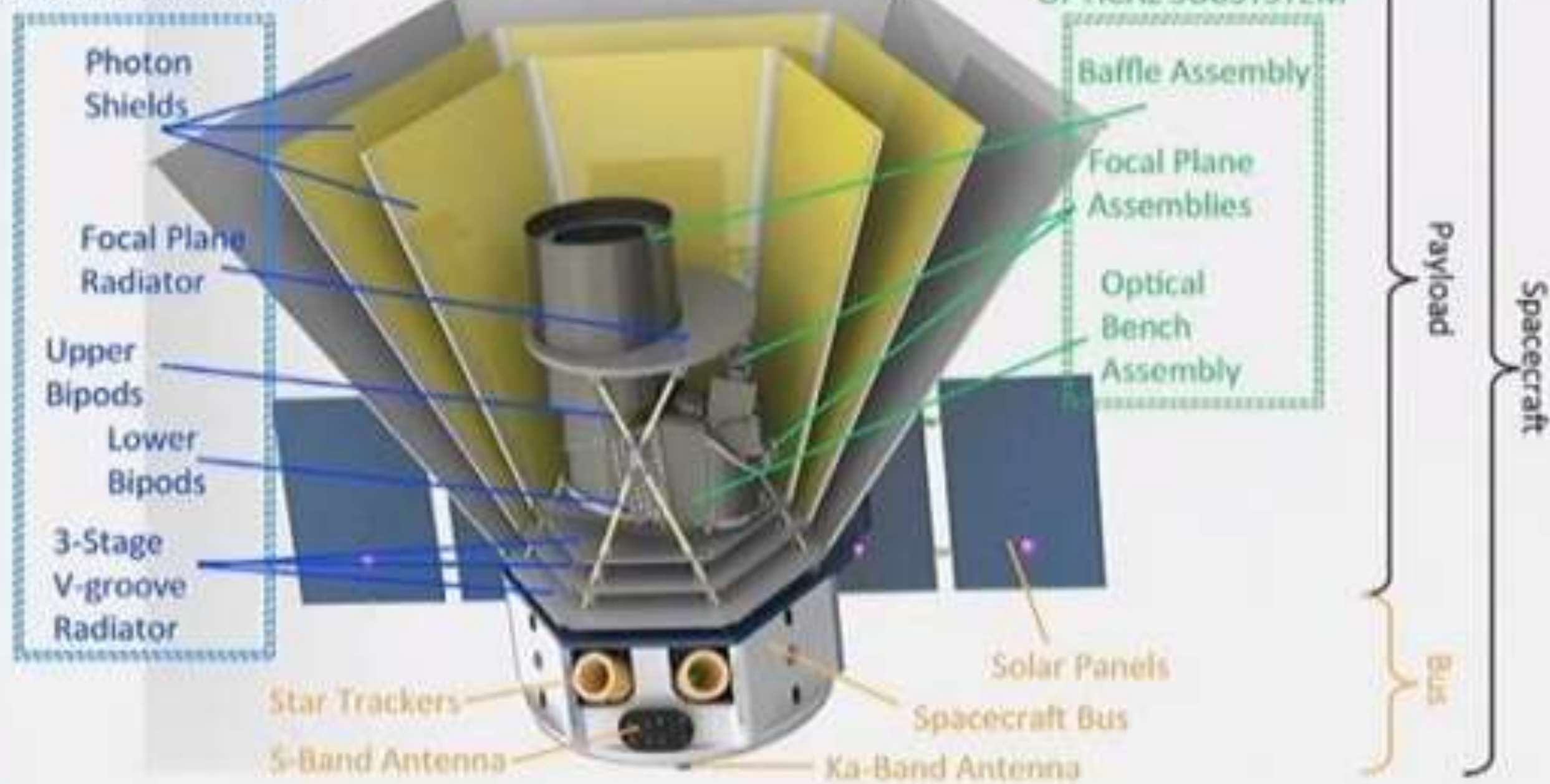
# SPHEREx Space Telescope

NASA's SPHEREx space telescope is set to launch, aiming to explore the origins of the universe and search for water and organic molecules in the Milky Way.

This mission will create a 3D map of the cosmos, providing insights into cosmic inflation and the formation of galaxies.

## THERMAL SUBSYSTEM

## OPTICAL SUBSYSTEM







- **What is SPHEREx?**

- **Full Form:** Spectro-Photometer for the History of the Universe, Epoch of Reionization, and Ices Explorer.
- **Mission Type:** Space telescope designed to survey the sky in optical and near-infrared light.
- **Duration:** A two-year mission to map the universe and study its origins.

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- **Launched By:**

- **Agency:** NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration).
- **Rocket:** SpaceX Falcon 9.

-



SWAYATT initiative

The SWAYATT initiative on the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) celebrated six years of empowering startups, women entrepreneurs, and youth in public procurement.

The initiative has significantly boosted participation, with women entrepreneurs now comprising 8% of registered sellers on GeM.

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- **What is SWAYATT?**

- **Full Form:** Startups, Women & Youth Advantage Through e-Transactions.
- **Launched On:** 19th February 2019.
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India.

- **Aim of SWAYATT:**

- **Promote Inclusion:** Enhance participation of women-led enterprises, startups, and youth in public procurement.
- **Empower Marginalized Groups:** Focus on Micro & Small Enterprises (MSEs), Self-Help Groups (SHGs), and backward sections of society.
- **Facilitate Market Access:** Provide direct market linkages to government buyers without intermediaries.
- **Boost Economic Growth:** Encourage hyper-local job creation and inclusive economic development.


**Black Plastic**

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- A recent study on black plastic found that it contains toxic flame retardants, raising concerns over food contamination and health risks.

## What is Black Plastic?

- A type of **plastic material** often produced from **recycled electronic waste** like TVs, computers, and appliances.
- Commonly used in **kitchen utensils, takeout containers, packaging, and toys.**

## Composition of Black Plastic:

- Made from **polypropylene (PP), polystyrene (PS), and polyethylene (PE).**
- Contains **flame retardants** such as **bromine, decabromodiphenyl ether (BDE-209), and heavy metals** like **lead, mercury, and cadmium.**

- **Applications of Black Plastic:**

- **Kitchen utensils:** Spatulas, peelers, and food containers.
- **Electronics:** Housings for TVs, cables, and chargers.
- **Automobile industry:** Dashboards and interiors.
- **Consumer goods:** Toys, cosmetics packaging, and furniture.



## Is Black Plastic Safe to Use?

- Studies suggest **trace amounts of toxic chemicals** may **leach into food** when exposed to heat.
- Despite low contamination risks, the **long-term effects** of these chemicals remain **uncertain**.

## Harmful Effects of Black Plastic:

- **Health Risks:** Contains neurotoxic heavy metals and carcinogenic compounds.
- **Food Contamination:** Heat exposure may cause chemical leaching into food.
- **Environmental Hazard:** Difficult to recycle, leading to increased plastic pollution.



10 MCQ from the session

- What was the Supreme Court's key concern regarding allowing convicted politicians to contest elections?
- **द्वितीयः प्रश्नः** कदाचित् एकः पुरुषः अल्पकालीनम् इत्येवम् इति कथञ्चिद् अत्र चर्चा अभवत् १. **प्रश्नः** कदाचित् इति रक्षितः **श्रीमान्** पत्रे **व्यक्तः**
- A. It would violate the Representation of People Act / **ग्रन्थः** ६  
**अनुच्छेदः** १७(१) अन्वयेण इति **धारा** १७(१) इति **घटोत्सवः**
- B. It would lead to increased political corruption / **सर्वः** **द्वयः** **धारा** **अनुच्छेदः**  
**अनुच्छेदः** १७(१) **प्रश्नः**
- C. It would create a conflict of interest in lawmaking / **ग्रन्थः** **अनुच्छेदः** **अनुच्छेदः**  
**अनुच्छेदः** **अनुच्छेदः** **अनुच्छेदः** **अनुच्छेदः** **अनुच्छेदः**
- D. It would weaken democracy / **ग्रन्थः** **अनुच्छेदः** **अनुच्छेदः** **अनुच्छेदः** **अनुच्छेदः**

• According to the Representation of People Act, 1951, how long are convicted politicians disqualified from contesting elections after completing their sentence?

• न॒ ड॒ ब॒श॒ल॒श॒श॒श॒ द॒ १॒श॒श॒श॒श॒ ग॒र॒व॒ ॥ 1951 इ॒ड॒ १॒ अ॒र॒घ॒ ॥ क॒र॒ह॒ घ॒र॒ इ॒ल॒व॒इ॒त्र॒ इ॒ड॒  
द॒ न॒र॒ ह॒र॒ह॒ प॒र॒इ॒ इ॒ड॒ ॥ व॒र॒ श॒र॒ ल॒ड॒ अ॒ड॒क॒ इ॒ड॒ श॒र॒इ॒ क॒र॒व॒त्र॒ च॒न॒इ॒ ड॒ १॒ ग॒र॒ १॒  
न॒र॒ल॒र॒ प॒र॒

- A. 2 years / 2 अ॒र॒
- B. 5 years / 5 अ॒र॒
- C. 6 years / 6 अ॒र॒
- D. 10 years / 10 अ॒र॒

- What was the government's argument against imposing a lifetime ban on convicted politicians?
- **द्वन्द्वे घक्र षड्वरुत्र हघ ष न्हत्र ष अलक्र चणवड्डडसु चर ष ढघड्वघ ड्व लड्व ढ्र व क्रच**
- A. It would violate their fundamental rights / **ग्रण ष ष डड रक्रघडु १श्र ड्वरघक्रड्वर ष त्र ष षर**
- B. Only Parliament can impose such a ban, not the courts / **डडत्र ढ्र ष चड्व अलक्र चणव ढ ड लह ष १ व्रचलषणल**
- C. It would increase political instability / **सु ढु घक्र षरुडु १स्र घल्व ष षर**
- D. It would discourage people from joining politics / **सु ढु चक्र घक्र षरुडु रकुवश्रच षरुडु ढु षरुडु वश्रणल षरुडु**



• Which military exercise recently took place near the Russian border involving Finland, the U.S., and Canada?

• च ढ इह ढहरप्रड्ड ह्वढ एप्रघ एहररुडड्र ढव ढ्रौ १ ह्वढ श्रि ष चर्रु  
१ ररुप्रघेड्र ञ घ डे ष्रम्व इड ढवळ इरु च

• A. Exercise Arctic Forge 25 / १ ह्वढ ष इरुडड्र ष्रुड्र 25

B. Exercise Northern Strike / १ ह्वढ ष्रुड्र अम्वड

C. Exercise Cold Response / १ ह्वढ इड्रु ष्रुड्र

D. Exercise Winter Shield / १ ह्वढ श्रुड्र ढहृ

• What major geopolitical shift occurred in Finland in 2023?

• 2023 रूस अ चर्चा रूस अर्थात् द्वि-पक्षीय सुरक्षा समझौता पर चर्चा

• A. Finland signed a defense pact with Russia / अर्थात् अ चर्चा अर्थात् द्वि-पक्षीय सुरक्षा समझौता पर चर्चा

B. Finland joined NATO, ending its neutrality / अर्थात् अ चर्चा अर्थात् NATO में शामिल होना

C. Finland withdrew from the European Union / अर्थात् अ चर्चा अर्थात् यूरोपीय संघ से हटना

D. Finland banned all foreign military exercises on its land / अर्थात् अ चर्चा अर्थात् १. हथियारों का निर्यात रोकना २. हथियारों का आयात रोकना

- What is the name of the new U.S. visa program proposed by Donald Trump?
- मूल्यवृष्टि बन्धु वीरघ्नवर्धन वृश्निवर्धन षड् १ रत्नप्रदह अहर्त्र इवर्गह्ख इव ष्वरख प्र व पञ्च
- A. Golden Opportunity Visa / पञ्चाष्ट षड् छ ह श्वा बह अहध्व
- B. Gold Card Visa / पञ्चाष्ट इवर्गह्ख अहध्व
- C. Presidential Privilege Visa / बन्धु मूल्यवृष्टि गच्छ वृश्निवर्धन अहध्व
- D. Investor Green Pass / सौंदा घ इहण ह्वद

- How much does an applicant need to pay for the 'Gold Card Visa'?
- 'एक इरम्ब्रअहधर' इडश्रड इड उ अड इ इडश्रु लडह घडर इर रररु लरड इघडर पेरुवच
- A. \$1 million
- B. \$2.5 million
- C. \$5 million
- D. \$10 million

- What is NASA's new space telescope project named?
- **ਭਰਦੁਰ ਡੁਹ ਓ ਹੇ ਖ਼ਲ੍ਹਾਘਲ ਕੁਘਾਹੁਓ ਹੁਘਾਘੁਘੁ ਓਰ ਡੁਰ ਓਰਖ ਓ ਰ ਘੁਘ**
- A. SPHEREx
- B. James Webb II
- C. Cosmic Watcher
- D. Deep Universe Explorer

• What does the SWAYATT initiative aim to achieve?

• SWAYATT हणच इव क्षुडि ए व णय

• A. Promoting youth-led startups and women entrepreneurs in public procurement / द्रवअशुड ड दघहद रवअशुडत्रोवघव द्रद्वशुडल a वववश ह उ घ रवअशुडत्र क्षाशुवगइडडड ण प्रवअव कुषुव

B. Providing financial aid for small businesses / धुडडड ण अद्रवगइडडडशुडड शुडडहग दणवगल्व ड ववष ड घषुव

C. Encouraging foreign investment in India's tech sector / कवघल इड डड डडु घ रवअकुटह शुकुट इडड डडु वशुडल ड घषुव

D. Enhancing agricultural exports through digital platforms / शुडडु ड च रीडु ण वरवव इडु रवरे रव डडु डडु शुड गकडु इडडु ण प्रवअव कुषुव

• What major environmental concern was raised regarding black plastic?

• इच्छां विना इ इच्छा च्छाघ इच्छा हह इच्छा हगच्छाघरहग श्छात्र न ल्त्रह ए हच

• A. It emits harmful radiation / ग्रण पक्ष इवघड श्छाघर् क्षदश्रन्त्र इघल्व्र प्प्र

B. It contains toxic flame retardants linked to food contamination /

स्टरकश्रद्धा इव प्रव्रम्भ प्प्रहण्ड न्द्रादवा इच्छा द्दच्छाहण्ड

C. It cannot be recycled / स्द्धक्ष प्रहण्डघर् एणक्ष ग्रवन्त्र ह इ ल्व

D. It leads to ozone layer depletion / ग्रण इ न्द्राह हघल इलघर् इव इवघर् □ ह ल्व प्प्र

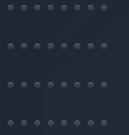
# THE WORLD'S STINKIEST FRUIT





Malaysia is famous for Durian, known as the "King of Fruits." It has a powerful smell, banned in many hotels and public transport, but is loved for its creamy texture.

# It's a City, a Country, and an Island



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# Word of the day

## **Enunciation:**

the articulation of speech regarded from the point of view of its intelligibility to the audience

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**Synonym:** diction

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**Usage:** *All of the debaters put forth their arguments with clear enunciation.*

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## **Pronunciation:**

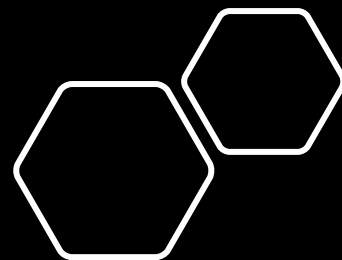
[newsth.live/enunciationpro](http://newsth.live/enunciationpro)


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## **International Phonetic**

**Alphabet:** /ɪˌnʌn.sɪˈeɪ.ʃən/, /ɪˌnʌn.ʃɪˈeɪ.ʃən/

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A group of people are clapping in a dimly lit room. The focus is on the hands and arms of several individuals, some in the foreground and some in the background. The lighting is soft and moody, with a warm orange glow in the upper left corner. The text "Thank you guys." is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Thank you  
guys.

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