

# Daily Current Affairs



जनसत्ता



The Indian EXPRESS

THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS



2  
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10 MCQ QUIZ

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

Top 10 MCQ from the session for  
every exam

- 1. Which country developed the AI model "DeepSeek-V3" that outperformed OpenAI's ChatGPT?
- किस देश ने एआई मॉडल "DeepSeek-V3" विकसित किया, जिसने OpenAI के ChatGPT को पीछे छोड़ दिया?
- A. United States / संयुक्त राज्य अमेरिका
- ~~• B. China / चीन~~
- C. Russia / रूस
- D. India / भारत

- What major financial impact did DeepSeek-V3 have on Nvidia's market value?
- DeepSeek-V3 के लॉन्च से Nvidia के बाजार मूल्य पर क्या बड़ा प्रभाव पड़ा?
- A. Increased by \$1 trillion / \$1 ट्रिलियन की वृद्धि हुई
- ~~B. Declined by half a trillion dollars / आधे ट्रिलियन डॉलर की गिरावट आई~~
- C. Remained stable with no change / कोई बदलाव नहीं हुआ
- D. Increased by \$500 billion / \$500 बिलियन की वृद्धि हुई

- What key advantage does DeepSeek-V3 claim over GPT-4?
- DeepSeek-V3 का GPT-4 पर क्या प्रमुख लाभ है?
- A. Uses 10 times less energy / 10 गुना कम ऊर्जा का उपयोग करता है
- ~~B. 50 times lower cost for specific tasks / विशिष्ट कार्यों के लिए 50 गुना कम लागत~~
- C. Works without an internet connection / इंटरनेट कनेक्शन के बिना काम करता है
- D. Developed entirely using quantum computing / पूरी तरह क्वांटम कंप्यूटिंग का उपयोग कर विकसित किया गया

- Which AI hardware did DeepSeek-V3 utilize despite U.S. export restrictions?
- य.एस. निर्यात प्रतिबंधों के बावजूद, DeepSeek-V3 ने किस एआई हार्डवेयर का उपयोग किया?
- A. Intel Xeon processors / इंटेल जीऑन प्रोसेसर
- B. AMD Ryzen AI chips / एएमडी राइजन एआई चिप्स
- ✓ C. Nvidia H800 chips / एनवीडिया H800 चिप्स
- D. Google TensorFlow processors / गूगल टेंसरफ्लो प्रोसेसर



- Which major space mission is ISRO planning to launch from SDSC, Sriharikota?
- ISRO श्रीहरिकोटा के SDSC से कौन सा प्रमुख अंतरिक्ष मिशन लॉन्च करने की योजना बना रहा है?
- ~~A. GSLV-F15 / जीएसएलवी-F15~~  
B. Chandrayaan-4 / चंद्रयान-4  
C. Aditya L2 / आदित्य L2  
D. Mangalyaan-2 / मंगलयान-2

- When did ISRO conduct its first launch from Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC)?
- ISRO ने सतीश धवन अंतरिक्ष केंद्र (SDSC) से अपना पहला लॉन्च कब किया था?
- A. 1975
- ✓ B. 1979
- C. 1984
- D. 1991

- Which Indian variety of apples is known for growing in warm climates?
- कौन सा भारतीय सेब की किस्म गर्म जलवायु में उगने के लिए जानी जाती है?
- A. Kinnaur Red / किन्नौर रेड
- ✓ ~~B. HRMN-99 / HRMN-99~~
- C. Kashmir Golden / कश्मीर गोल्डन
- D. Himachal Green / हिमाचल ग्रीन

- Who is known as the "Apple Man of India"?
- "एप्पल मैन ऑफ इंडिया" के रूप में कौन जाना जाता है?
- A. Dr. M.S. Swaminathan / डॉ. एम.एस. स्वामीनाथन
- ~~• B. Shri Hariman Sharma / श्री हरिमन शर्मा~~
- C. Dr. Verghese Kurien / डॉ. वर्गीज करियन
- D. Dr. R.S. Paroda / डॉ. आर.एस. पराडा

- What was a key recommendation of the WHO regarding salt consumption?
- नमक की खपत को लेकर WHO की प्रमुख सिफारिश क्या थी?
- ~~A.~~ Reduce daily sodium intake to less than 2 grams / प्रतिदिन सोडियम सेवन को 2 ग्राम से कम करें
- B. Avoid salt completely / पूरी तरह से नमक का सेवन न करें
- C. Use only rock salt for cooking / केवल सेंधा नमक का उपयोग करें
- D. Increase salt intake for better digestion / पाचन के लिए नमक की खपत बढ़ाएं

- What is the PM Surya Ghar Scheme's primary goal?
- PM सूर्य घर योजना का मुख्य लक्ष्य क्या है?
- A. Distribute free solar panels to every home / हर घर में मुफ्त सोलर पैनल वितरित करना
- ~~• B. Install rooftop solar systems in 1 crore households / 1 करोड़ घरों में रूफटॉप सोलर सिस्टम स्थापित करना~~
- C. Provide electricity subsidies to rural areas / ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में बिजली सब्सिडी प्रदान करना
- D. Promote solar farming among Indian farmers / भारतीय किसानों के बीच सौर कृषि को बढ़ावा देना

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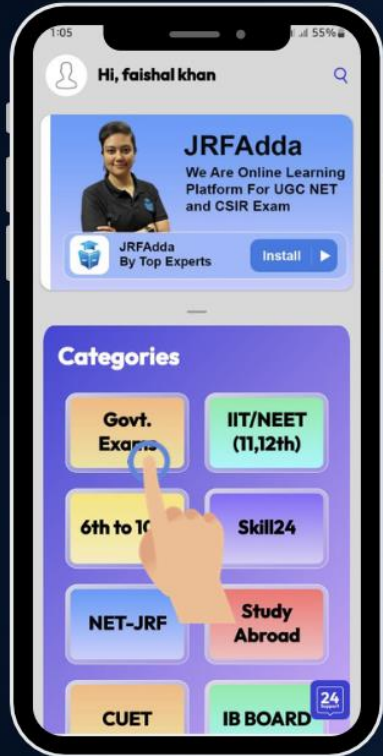
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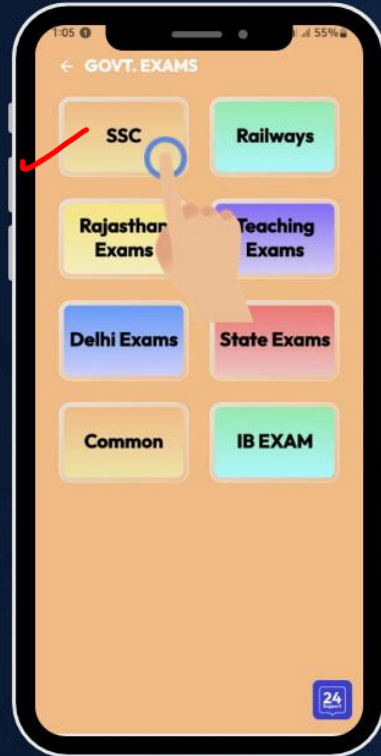
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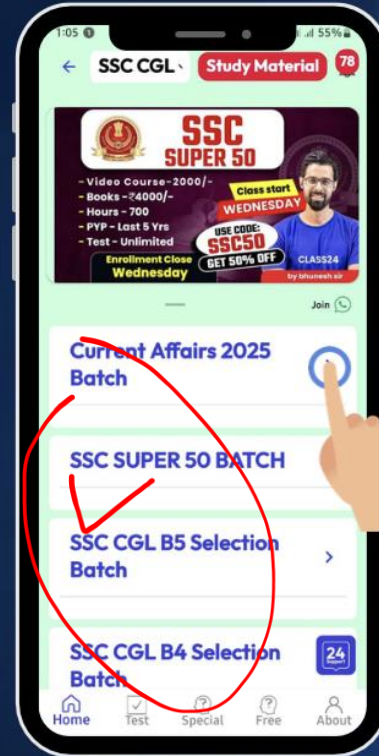
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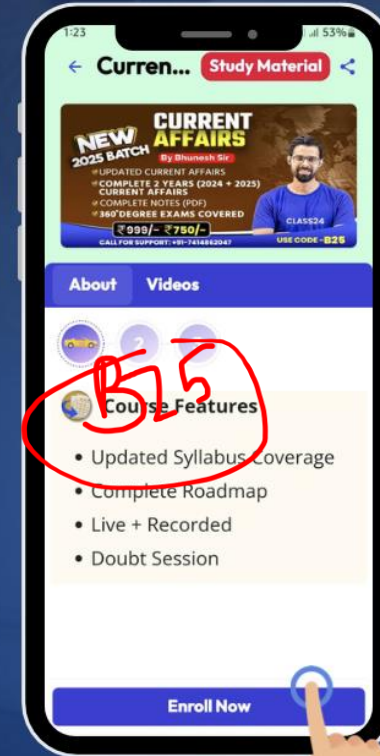
# Step 2



# Step 3



# Step 4





जो बाहर की  
सुनता है वो बिखर जाता है,  
जो भीतर की सुनता है  
वो संवर जाता है !!

Feel



# U.S. aircraft collides with chopper; 67 feared dead

Passenger plane collides with U.S. military helicopter mid-air before crashing into Potomac river in Washington; authorities recover 28 bodies, with debris being found a mile downriver

## Crash course

Wednesday night's collision is possibly the deadliest U.S. airline crash since November 2001, when an American Airlines flight crashed after take-off in New York, killing all 260 people aboard



**64** A total of 60 passengers and 4 crew members were onboard the **Bombardier jet**

**122 metres**

Radio data show the jet suffered a rapid loss of altitude from 122 metres above **Potomac river**



**Rapid reaction:** Emergency response teams searching for survivors in Potomac river near Ronald Reagan National Airport following the crash on Thursday. AFP

**3** soldiers were aboard the army's **UH-60 Blackhawk** helicopter with call sign PAT-25

**Agence France-Presse**  
WASHINGTON

**D**ivers pulled bodies from the icy waters of Washington's Potomac river on Thursday after a U.S. military helicopter collided mid-air with a passenger plane carrying 64 people, with officials saying there were likely no survivors.

As dawn broke over the crash site just 5 km from the White House, wreckage from both aircraft protruded from the water and emergency vessels and diving teams scoured the area.

"We are now at a point where we are switching from a rescue operation to a recovery operation," Washington Fire Chief John Donnelly told a news conference at Reagan National Airport. "We don't believe there are any survi-

vors," he said, adding that 28 bodies had been recovered so far – including one from the helicopter. The helicopter is believed to have had three soldiers on board.

At least 300 first responders were involved in the operation – conducted in pitch darkness for several hours – with recovery teams discovering debris a mile downriver.

There were no details on the cause of the crash, with transport officials saying both aircraft were on standard flight patterns on a clear night.

"Do I think this was preventable? Absolutely," Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy told the news conference.

The Bombardier plane operated by an American Airlines subsidiary was approaching the airport at around 9:00 p.m. on Wed-

nesday night after flying from Wichita, Kansas, when the collision happened.

President Donald Trump launched a political attack on Thursday, blaming "diversity hires" under the Obama and Biden administrations for the accident.

"I put safety first. Obama, Biden, and the Democrats put policy first," Mr. Trump said. "They actually came out with a directive: 'too white.' And we want the people that are competent."

Mr. Trump had earlier posted a critical take on social media. "Why didn't the helicopter go up or down, or turn. Why didn't the control tower tell the helicopter what to do instead of asking if they saw the plane. This is a bad situation that looks like it should have been prevent-

ed. NOT GOOD!!!", he wrote.

Dramatic audio from air traffic controllers showed them repeatedly asking the helicopter if it had the passenger jet "in sight," and then just before the crash telling it to "pass behind" the plane. "I just saw a fireball and it was gone," one air traffic controller was heard telling another after communication with the helicopter was cut.

Both aircraft crashed into Potomac river, and the fuselage of the passenger jet was broken into three sections.

U.S. Figure Skating said several athletes, coaches, and officials were aboard the flight, while officials in Moscow confirmed married Russian couple Evgenia Shishkova and Vadim Naumov – who won the 1994 world pairs title – were also on the jet.

Potomac  
↓  
Washington

- A U.S. military helicopter collided mid-air with a passenger plane carrying 64 people over Washington's Potomac River.
  - वाशिंगटन के पोटोमैक नदी के ऊपर एक अमेरिकी सैन्य हेलीकॉप्टर एक यात्री विमान से हवा में टकरा गया, जिसमें 64 लोग सवार थे।
- Officials report that there are likely no survivors.
  - अधिकारियों ने बताया कि इस दुर्घटना में किसी के बचने की संभावना नहीं है।
- The crash site is located 5 km from the White House.
  - दुर्घटना स्थल व्हाइट हाउस से 5 किमी दूर स्थित है।

- Fire Chief John Donnelly stated that the operation had transitioned from rescue to recovery.
  - फायर चीफ जॉन डोनेली ने बताया कि अभियान अब बचाव से पुनर्प्राप्ति की ओर बढ़ गया है।
- 28 bodies have been recovered so far, including one from the helicopter.
  - अब तक 28 शव बरामद किए गए हैं, जिनमें से एक हेलीकॉप्टर से मिला है।
- Over 300 first responders were involved in the search efforts.
  - 300 से अधिक प्रथम प्रतिक्रिया दल के सदस्य खोज अभियान में शामिल थे।

- Cause of the Collision | टकराव के कारण
- Transport officials stated that both aircraft were on standard flight patterns on a clear night.
  - परिवहन अधिकारियों ने कहा कि दोनों विमान एक स्पष्ट रात में मानक उड़ान पथ पर थे।
- Dramatic audio from air traffic control revealed repeated warnings to the helicopter about the passenger jet.
  - ~~हवाई यातायात नियंत्रण से प्राप्त ऑडियो रिकॉर्डिंग में हेलीकॉप्टर को यात्री जेट के बारे में कई बार चेतावनी दी गई थी।~~

- **The helicopter was instructed to "pass behind" the plane just before the collision.**
  - टकराव से ठीक पहले हेलीकॉप्टर को विमान के पीछे से जाने के लिए कहा गया था।
- **Both aircraft crashed into the Potomac River, and the passenger jet broke into three sections.**
  - दोनों विमान पोटोमैक नदी में गिर गए, और यात्री जेट तीन हिस्सों में टूट गया।

- **Notable Passengers on Board | विमान में सवार प्रमुख यात्री**
- **U.S. Figure Skating confirmed that several athletes, coaches, and officials were aboard the flight.**
  - अमेरिकी फिगर स्केटिंग संघ ने पुष्टि की कि इस विमान में कई एथलीट, कोच और अधिकारी सवार थे।
- **Russian officials confirmed that married figure skaters Evgenia Shishkova and Vadim Naumov, 1994 World Pairs Champions, were on board.**
  - रूसी अधिकारियों ने पुष्टि की कि 1994 वर्ल्ड पेयर्स चैंपियंस एवगेनिया शिशकोवा और वादिम नौमोव इस विमान में सवार थे।



# U.S. aircraft collides with chopper; 67 feared dead

Passenger plane collides with U.S. military helicopter mid-air before crashing into Potomac river in Washington; authorities recover 28 bodies, with debris being found a mile downriver

UH-60  
3 back/forward

## Crash course

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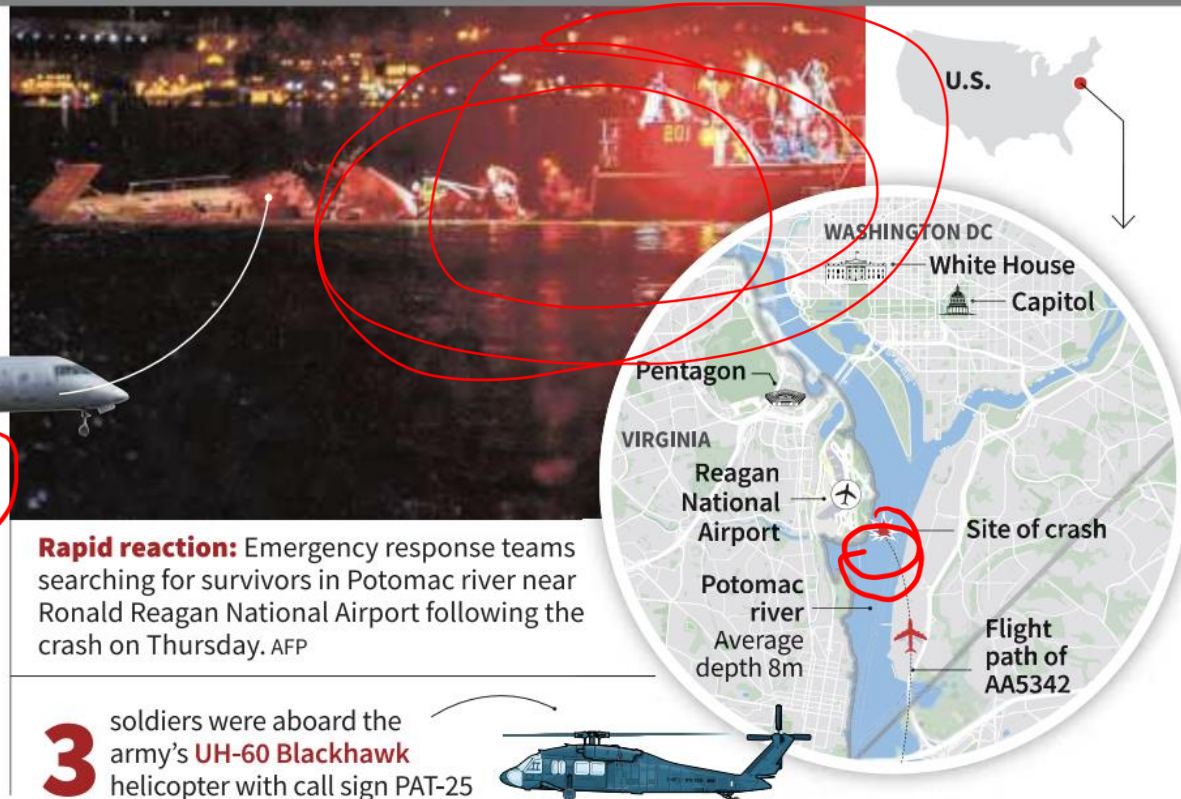


**64**

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**122 metres**

Radio data show the jet suffered a rapid loss of altitude from 122 metres above **Potomac river**



**Rapid reaction:** Emergency response teams searching for survivors in Potomac river near Ronald Reagan National Airport following the crash on Thursday. AFP

**3**

soldiers were aboard the army's **UH-60 Blackhawk** helicopter with call sign PAT-25



# BARELY MILES FROM WHITE HOUSE AND PENTAGON

Photo: NYT

- **Flight conditions clear** as American Airlines jet from Kansas is about to land at Washington's Reagan airport
- Both plane & Black Hawk in **standard flight patterns; no breakdown in communication** between the two and ATC
- Suddenly, the helicopter comes into jet's path. Video shows collision and explosion
- **Russian ice-skating couple – ex-world champs – dead.** So is their son, an ice skater, and many of his teammates

- **Trump blames army pilot and ATC controllers.** Also accuses Obama and Biden of 'lowering air safety standards'
- **Pentagon launches probe,** in new defence secretary Pete Hegseth's 1st big test
- **300 near collisions involving commercial airlines in US in past 12 mths**
- **43 yrs ago, a plane crashed into a nearby bridge & fell into the same Potomac river, leaving 74 people dead**

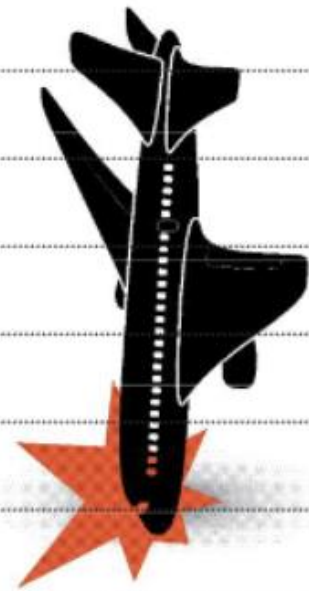
**FULL COVERAGE | P 13**



The wreckage of the Bombardier CRJ 700 against the backdrop of Reagan airport on Thursday

# AIR CRASH DEATHS VS TOTAL DEATHS GLOBALLY

Year	Deaths in air accidents	Total deaths (million)	Air accident deaths per million total deaths
2014	638	55.5	11.5
2015	99	56.3	1.8
2016	198	56.8	3.5
2017	19	57.6	0.3
2018	512	57.8	8.9
2019	240	58.4	4.1
2020	125	63.5	2
2021	121	69.7	Air accident deaths from International Air Transport Association (IATA) 1.7
2022	158	62.3	2.5
2023	72	61.7	1.2
<b>10yrs total</b>	<b>2,182</b>	<b>599.5m</b>	<b>3.6</b>



Deaths

Airplane - few

3.6

5/10/2023

IN BRIEF



Milkipuri bypoll: Dimple Yadav campaigns for SP candidate

Samajwadi Party (SP) MP Dimple Yadav held a roadshow in Milkipuri Assembly constituency on Thursday to seek votes for party candidate Ajit Prasad ahead of the February 5 by-election. Ms. Yadav, MP from Mainpuri and wife of SP chief Akhilesh Yadav, also lashed out at Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath over the stampede at Maha Kumbh and said the incident has exposed the Uttar Pradesh government's "negligence". She appealed to the people to vote for Mr. Prasad and ensure a "massive victory" for him. She alleged that the BJP government has only given inflation, unemployment, and corruption to the country.

BPSX examination row: police disperse protesters in Patna

Protesting Bihar Public Service Commission (BPSX) candidates on Thursday tried to stage a demonstration in front of the commission's office in Patna, only to be dispersed by the police. The aspiring candidates had gathered demanding cancellation of the Combined Preliminary Competitive Examination held across the State on December 13 last year. Patna District Magistrate Nandkishore Singh asserted that "there was no lathi charge on the protesters", but they would "nevertheless be booked for disrupting traffic in the area", which is close to important offices like the police headquarters.

Rashid to go on fast over right to attend Budget Session: AIP

Prerazada Ashiq SRINAGAR

The Awami Ittehad Party (AIP) on Thursday, the eve of the Budget Session, said its chief and Baramulla MP, Engineer Rashid, 57, would go on an indefinite hunger strike at Tihar Jail in Delhi from Friday to "protest against being denied the right to represent his constituency in Parliament". Mr. Rashid was arrested in August 2019 and faces charges under provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. According to the AIP, Mr. Rashid has written to the Lok Sabha Speaker informing him about his decision. "In spite of being an elected parliamentarian, Rashid is being denied the right to attend the Parliament session. He has decided to go on a hunger strike from 10 a.m. We express our solidarity with him and party workers have decided to sit on hun-

Engineer Rashid

ger strike in Srinagar's Pratap Park, Jammu, and Delhi's Jantar Mantar," party leader G.N. Shaheed said. "Respect Mandate" is important and Mr. Rashid has the "moral and constitutional right" to represent the people of Kashmir in Parliament. "It is incumbent upon the Government of India that he is allowed to take part in the session," he said. "Mr. Rashid is neither a terrorist nor attracts unlawful acts. People have given him a mandate and it should not be respected," Mr.

As number of births falls in Tamil Nadu, concerns rise about the elderly population

The number of live births fell by 6.6% last year, dipping below 9 lakh for the first time, according to State government data; senior health official says this can lead to social and economic challenges

Serena Josephine M. CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu's birth rate has been on the decline. In 2024, the number of live births fell sharply to 8,42,412. In at least two years leading up to 2024, the number of live births stayed above the nine lakh mark. "The number of live births fell by 6.6% last year as the preceding year 2023 recorded 9,02,246 births, according to data from the Directorate of Public Health and Preventive Medicine. The State's birth rate stood at 10.9 in 2024 against 11.7 the previous year. The State's Total Fertility Rate (TFR) (the average number of children born to a woman during her lifetime) stands at 1.4, which is lower than the replacement level of 2.1. While there are social and economic concerns surrounding falling birth rates, there are public health concerns that are interconnected as



Source: Directorate of Public Health and Preventive Medicine

well, T.S. Selvarajayagam, Director of Public Health and Preventive Medicine, said Tamil Nadu was going along the lines of several other developed and developing countries where birth rates were declining. "There was a steep drop in the number of live births in 2024. We will monitor the annual report that will be out in a few months to get the full picture," he said. However, the decline in births is due to a number of reasons, including

decline in Maternal Mortality Ratio as the denominator itself remains low, he said. Dr. Selvarajayagam added that as a policy, it was time to focus on higher order births and infertility.

Momentum overshoot Jacob John, additional vice-principal (research) and professor and head, Centre for Public Health, Christian Medical College, Vellore, said the efforts made to arrest the TFR at some point in time had been successful in States, such as Tamil Nadu and Kerala, largely because of initiatives from their governments and also due to economic factors.

"What is important and what the real problem is, is the dependency ratio — the number of elderly people who will need support. We may have social and economic challenges in the future because of the high proportion of elderly population which needs to be cared for. Not to forget the dip in the working population as well," he said. One immediate public health issue will be the slow-paced

ABVP's Kashmir wing holds 'Tiranga Rally' at Srinagar's Lal Chowk

The Hindu Bureau SRINAGAR

Kashmiri members of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), an affiliate of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), on Thursday held a "Tiranga rally" at Lal Chowk, the historic city centre. "We urge the authorities to respect democracy and allow him to fulfil his duties as an elected MP," AIP chief spokesperson Inam Ullin said in a tweet. Holding a 50-foot-long Tiracolour, over two dozen ABVP supporters commenced the "Tiranga rally" from the Tourist Reception Centre here. "This rally conveys the message of how Kashmiri youth are carrying the Tricolour with pride. Kashmiri youth are with Bharat and will always remain so. There are a few on social media who give out a distorted impression about the youth of Kashmir as being anti-national. We have been holding such rallies in Kashmir for many years now," a local ABVP leader said.

Cross-voting helps BJP win Mayor post in Chandigarh

Vikas Vanshdev CHANDIGARH

The BJP on Thursday won the election to the post of Mayor in the Chandigarh Municipal Corporation following cross-voting, dealing a blow to INDIA as well as AAP and Congress. BJP's Harpreet Kaur Bhatia won the post by securing 19 votes in the 35-member House, defeating AAP's Prem Lata, the joint candidate of AAP-Congress, who secured 17 votes. "Presiding officer Kamraj said the BJP announced the result of the election held through secret ballot. All 36 polled votes were found valid. While the election to the civic body is held every five years, the mayoral poll is held annually. This time, the Mayor's post, with a tenure of one year, was reserved for women. Despite having a higher number of votes in the House, the AAP-Congress

Odisha govt. gearing up to fill up 65,000 vacancies in 2 years

Satyasundar Barik BHUBANESWAR

The Mohan Majhi Government in Odisha has prepared a blueprint to fill 65,000 vacancies in the public sector over the span of next two years, as the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) moves to fulfil its poll pledge of filling 1.5 lakh vacancies within five years. The General Administration and Public Grievance (GAPG) department has directed nodal officers of all departments to update vacant positions so that those posts can be filled up.

"It is reported in the recruitment web portal that there is a vacancy of 94,419 posts at the base level sanctioned strength of 3,87,537 as on January 27. Out of 94,819 posts at the base level approved by the Government, 40,234 posts have been approved by empowering a committee for recruitment while 33,420 posts have been sent to different recruiting agencies for conducting recruitment by GAPG department.

As per the information, the health and Family Welfare has highest 22,711 vacant posts against sanctioned strength of 65,528 posts. The School and

Mass Education department closely follows with 21,354 vacant posts as against 1,59,416 sanctioned posts. The Home department has 3880 posts lying vacant against the sanctioned strength of 56,238 posts.

Similarly, Revenue and Disaster Management and Higher Education departments have 5301 and 4733 vacant posts respectively. In the lead up to the elections, the BJP strongly criticised the previous Navnirman government, alleging that the BJP had refrained from filling the vacant positions under the pretext of maintaining financial prudence. It left thousands of educated youths stranded in unemployment. Unemployment was one of major issues in the 2024 vacancy. 40,234 posts have been approved by the Government while 33,420 posts have been sent to different recruiting agencies for conducting recruitment by GAPG department.

As per the information, the health and Family Welfare has highest 22,711 vacant posts against sanctioned strength of 65,528 posts. The School and

Nitish draws Oppn. ire for clapping on death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi

Anil Bihelari PATNA

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar sparked a row on Thursday when he started clapping after paying tributes to Mahatma Gandhi on his 77th death anniversary, while also observed as Martyrs' Day. A video of the incident went viral on social media. In the video, Assembly Speaker Nand Kishore Yadav, who was standing beside the CM, was seen signalling to Mr. Kumar to stop clapping. The CM along with several ministers, including Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Sinha, had gathered to pay tribute to Mahatma Gandhi at Gandhi Ghat here. The Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) slammed Mr. Kumar



Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar paying tributes to Mahatma Gandhi at Gandhi Ghat in Patna on Thursday.

was not fit to run the state? He had also thrown down his bow and arrow during the Ravana Vadh programme organised on Monday. Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, a Godse worshipper, claps and celebrates the murder of Father of the Nation Gandhi. Doesn't this incident show that his mental

Governor criticises T.N. govt. over choice of venue for Gandhi's memorial events

The Hindu Bureau CHENNAI

Expressing disapproval over the Tamil Nadu government hosting events in "a corner of a city museum" to honour the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, Governor R.N. Ravi on Thursday said his repeated requests to Chief Minister M.K. Stalin to stop this practice was met with stubborn refusal. In a social media post, Mr. Stalin said that Ravi as saying: "Does it make any sense to hold Gandhi memorial events in a corner of a city museum? My repeated requests to the Chief Minister to accord respect to the Father of the Nation and hold such events at the



Governor R.N. Ravi pays tributes to Mahatma Gandhi on his death anniversary in Chennai on Thursday.

Gandhi Mandapam in a befitting manner. He said the Governor was further quoted as saying: "During his lifetime, Gandhiji was a man of the people and mocked by followers of the Dravidian ideology. But



Chief Minister M.K. Stalin

should be mocked even during his memorial events." He said the Gandhi Mandapam was "a grand memorial" built on a sprawling land adjacent to the Gandhi National Park in 1956 by the then Chief Minister K. Kamaraj.



Mayor Vikas Vanshdev with other party councilors on Thursday.

candidate fell short of the majority. BJP has 16 councilors, AAP 13, and Congress six. AAP and Congress jointly have 20 votes as the Chandigarh MP (Manish Tewari of the Congress) also has voting right as an ex-officio member.

Later, AAP-backed Congress candidates, Jasbir Singh Bundi and Taruna Mehta, with 10 votes each, were elected Senior Deputy Mayor and Deputy Mayor, respectively. Though BJP lost both

R.N. Ravi expresses disapproval over State govt. hosting events in 'a corner of a city museum'

CHENNAI

Earlier in the day, Mr. Ravi paid floral tributes to a portrait and bust of the late leader at the Gandhi Mandapam on the occasion of his death anniversary. CM pays tributes to Mahatma Gandhi on the government's death anniversary. Mr. Stalin and Ministers paid floral tributes to the statue of Mahatma Gandhi on the government's death anniversary. Mr. Stalin and Ministers entered the pledge against untouchability to the Ministers, senior officials, and staff at the Secretariat in Fort St. George in Chennai.

# As number of births falls in Tamil Nadu, concerns rise about the elderly population

The number of live births fell by 6.6% last year, dipping below 9 lakh for the first time, according to State government data; senior health official says this can lead to social and economic challenges

**Serena Josephine M.**  
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu's birth rate has been on the decline. In 2024, the number of live births fell sharply to 8,42,412. In at least five years leading up to 2024, the number of live births stayed above the nine-lakh mark.

The number of live births fell by 6.6% last year as the preceding year (2023) recorded 9,02,306 births, according to data from the Directorate of Public Health and Preventive Medicine. The State's birth rate stood at 10.9 in 2024 as against 11.7 the previous year.

The State's Total Fertility Rate (TFR) (the average number of children born to a woman during her lifetime) stands at 1.4, which is lower than the replacement level of 2.1. While there are social and economic concerns surrounding falling birth rates, there are public health concerns that are interconnected as

## Worrying trend

A look at the number of live births and birth rate in Tamil Nadu over the years



Year	Live births	Birth rate
2018	9,16,676	12.1
2019	9,45,701	12.5
2020	9,39,783	12.3
2021	9,12,864	11.9
2022	9,36,367	12.2
2023	9,02,306	11.7
2024*	8,42,412	10.9

\*as of January 6, 2025

Source: Directorate of Public Health and Preventive Medicine

According to the Health Department's Policy Note 2024-2025:

■ Total Fertility Rate (TFR) of Tamil Nadu was 3.9 in 1971

■ The State's TFR in 2020 was 1.4

well. T.S. Selvavinayagam, Director of Public Health and Preventive Medicine, said Tamil Nadu was going along the lines of several other developed and developing countries where birth rates were declining.

"There was a steep drop in the number of live births in 2024. We will wait for the annual report that will be out in a few months to get the full picture," he said. However, the decline in births is due to a number of reasons, including

good development indicators, he added.

"What is important and what the real problem is, is the dependency ratio – we will have more older people who will need support. We may have social and economic challenges in the future because of the high proportion of elderly population which needs to be cared for. Not to forget the dip in the working population as well," he said. One immediate public health issue will be the slow-paced

decline in Maternal Mortality Ratio as the denominator itself remains low, he said. Dr. Selvavinayagam added that as a policy, it was time to focus on higher order births and infertility.

## Momentum overshoot

Jacob John, additional vice-principal (Research) and professor and head, Centre for Public Health, Christian Medical College, Vellore, said the efforts made to arrest the TFR at some point in time had been successful in States, such as Tamil Nadu and Kerala, largely because of initiatives from their governments and also due to economic factors. "The issue with demographic transition is that the momentum often overshoots; we have overshoot where we needed to be. So, we need deliberate efforts to get to the replacement level," he said.

Lower fertility here is not due to health-related conditions but has more to do with economic and social development factors, he said.

South India  
Education  
TFR  
Pop

1971  
3.9

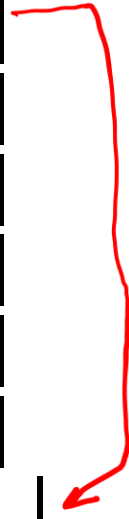
2020 = 1.4

- **Decline in Birth Rate | जन्म दर में गिरावट**
- **Tamil Nadu's birth rate has been consistently declining over the years.**
  - तमिलनाडु की जन्म दर वर्षों से लगातार गिर रही है।
- **In 2024, the number of live births fell sharply to 8,42,412, the lowest in the last five years.**
  - 2024 में, जीवित जन्मों की संख्या तेजी से घटकर 8,42,412 हो गई, जो पिछले पांच वर्षों में सबसे कम है।
- **The number of live births decreased by 6.6% compared to 2023, when 9,02,306 births were recorded.**
  - 2023 में 9,02,306 जन्म दर्ज किए गए थे, जिनकी तुलना में 2024 में जीवित जन्मों की संख्या 6.6% घट गई।

- Birth Rate Trends Over the Years | वर्षों में जन्म दर के रुझान

- | Year | वर्ष | Live Births | जीवित जन्म | Birth Rate | जन्म दर |

Year	वर्ष	Live Births	जीवित जन्म	Birth Rate	जन्म दर
<del>2018</del>	<del>9,16,676</del>	12.1			
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(As of January 6, 2025 | 6 जनवरी 2025 तक)

- Social and Economic Concerns | सामाजिक और आर्थिक चिंताएँ
- The state's Total Fertility Rate (TFR) is now 1.4, lower than the replacement level of 2.1.
  - राज्य की कुल प्रजनन दर (TFR) अब 1.4 है, जो प्रतिस्थापन स्तर 2.1 से कम है।
- Experts fear that a declining birth rate may lead to economic challenges due to a higher dependency ratio.
  - विशेषज्ञों को आशंका है कि जन्म दर में गिरावट के कारण उच्च निर्भरता अनुपात से आर्थिक चुनौतियाँ उत्पन्न हो सकती हैं।

$$2.1 \times 100 = 210$$



- An increasing elderly population means a larger proportion of people needing care and support. बजर्गों की बढ़ती आबादी का मतलब है कि अधिक लोगों को देखभाल और सहायता की आवश्यकता होगी।
- There may be a dip in the working population, affecting productivity. कार्यशील आबादी में कमी आ सकती है, जिससे उत्पादकता प्रभावित होगी।

- **Government and Expert Reactions | सरकार और विशेषज्ञों की प्रतिक्रिया**
- **Dr. Selvavinayagam, Director of Public Health, stated that Tamil Nadu follows a trend seen in developed countries where birth rates are declining.**
  - डॉ. सेल्वविनयगम, लोक स्वास्थ्य निदेशक, ने कहा कि तमिलनाडु विकसित देशों की प्रवृत्ति का अनुसरण कर रहा है, जहाँ जन्म दर घट रही है।
- **He emphasized that lower birth rates are not due to health-related factors but economic and social conditions.**
  - उन्होंने जोर देकर कहा कि कम जन्म दर स्वास्थ्य से संबंधित कारकों के कारण नहीं, बल्कि आर्थिक और सामाजिक स्थितियों के कारण है।

- Jacob John, professor at Christian Medical College, noted that policy efforts have helped in reducing TFR in states like Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

- क्रिश्चियन मेडिकल कॉलेज के प्रोफेसर जैकब जॉन ने कहा कि नीति प्रयासों ने तमिलनाडु और केरल जैसे राज्यों में TFR को कम करने में मदद की है।

Seats - Lok Sabha - (WP / Bha / W.B) ←

- **Future Projections and Measures | भविष्य की संभावनाएँ और उपाय**
- **Experts suggest that policies should now focus on higher-order births and addressing infertility issues.**
  - **विशेषज्ञ सुझाव देते हैं कि नीतियों को अब उच्च क्रम की जन्म दर और बांझपन की समस्याओं पर ध्यान केंद्रित करना चाहिए।**

- **The state may need to implement strategies to balance the elderly population with economic productivity.**
  - राज्य को बजुर्गों की आबादी को आर्थिक उत्पादकता के साथ संतुलित करने के लिए रणनीतियाँ लागू करनी पड़ सकती हैं।
- **Long-term economic policies must be devised to address labor shortages.**
  - श्रम की कमी से निपटने के लिए दीर्घकालिक आर्थिक नीतियाँ बनाई जानी चाहिए।

# An opportunity to settle Sri Lanka's ethnic problem

## More and better infrastructure in all districts

The Supreme Court of India's ruling that there can be no reservation based on residence in admission to PG medical courses is consistent with the constitutional principle of equality before law, but may adversely affect the priorities and health-care requirements of the States. The Court has ruled that there is only one 'domestic' for Indians, and that the right to seek admissions anywhere in the country must be open to residents of all States. This is in line with a series of verdicts on the question whether there can be admissions based on institutional preference or residential requirements. The view is that institutional preference, that is choosing candidates who had passed out of an institution for admission to PG courses in the same institution, is constitutionally permissible; and that admission to UG medical courses can have a residential requirement, primarily because the basic medical needs of a region can be better addressed by admitting more people from the same background so that doctors emerging from the system would render public service there. However, on the principle that higher qualifications brook no compromise with merit, the prevailing view is that PG courses should not be open for any such residential preference, as the need to attract the best talent is higher.

Many States do fill up PG seats in government medical colleges and seats available in their private colleges, barring those that are filled on an all-India basis, with candidates drawn from their own States and other States. If other States can enter PG medical courses in a State only through the national quota. This system, now impermissible, has its own justification, as PG students form the backbone of medical services in government hospitals. In addition, they also have the additional incentive of joining government service and other benefits that do not apply for PG courses as 'service candidates'. The southern States, in particular, have invested heavily in medical education, establishing a college in almost every district. These would like to accommodate more candidates from their States to keep their medical services going and with an eye on future manpower needs. It is expected that aggrieved States may seek a review of this judgment. It is likely that the verdict will result in the Union government finding one more way to restrict the role of the States in medical admissions. Interestingly, the distinction the Court has made between PG and UG courses when it comes to prioritising local needs may be a sound argument in itself for questioning the continuing tendency to centralise even UG admissions. The solution lies in creating educational infrastructure of near-uniform quality in every district.

## Unclear agenda Trump is on a precarious path as he seeks to cut funds for social services

The policy agenda of U.S. President Donald Trump suffered a political setback when a controversial memo issued by his administration's Office of Management and Budget (OMB), proposing to freeze federal funding for a range of social services was blocked by a District Court judge. In the wake of confusion and chaos regarding which programmes would be impacted, the White House rescinded the memo, a forced act of back-peddling. Federal grants and loans worth trillions of dollars were potentially shut off for health-care initiatives for millions of low-income Americans — including within the Medicaid system — earlier this week when the OMB memo was apparently published without vetting by key officials in the White House. It appeared that funds for schools, hospitals and shelters were also in jeopardy, in many cases policies that would have assisted vulnerable groups. The District Court judge has now clarified that such programmes as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programme and student loans would not be affected by the freeze. The OMB memo also raised the issue of Medicaid and Social Security payments and funds for small business, farmers, farm grants, Head Start, rental assistance, and similar programmes. Despite the backdown, the Trump administration reiterated that it would not, at a broader level, compromise on the President's commitment to review and recalibrate federal funding allocations towards cutting down on government waste and unrequired regulations. White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said on social media, "This is NOT a rescission of the federal funding freeze. It is simply a rescission of the memo".

While there was little doubt that Mr. Trump would, during his second term, seek to slash public expenditure on certain social services, the ad hoc and apparently uncoordinated approach towards this cut left many, including some Republicans, baffled. The OMB memo also raised the spectre of Mr. Trump's fiat by executive orders seeking to supplant the traditional role of Congress, which is the prime vector for appropriations and earmarking funds for specific projects across sectors. This is a precarious path to follow, and it is likely to face further pushback from Congressional lawmakers if it continues. There is also concern that Mr. Trump has surrounded himself with acolytes who subscribe to the ideas in the so-called "Project 2025", which some regard as a right-wing agenda that could prove to be more divisive than it is capable of genuinely addressing urgent political priorities. While Mr. Trump may have become more adept at personnel management, it is equally important that he does not exacerbate the bitter polarisation of the American polity over the coming four years.

India's move to name the Jaffna Cultural Centre after the Tamil poet-philosopher, Thiruvalluvar, is a symbolic gesture by New Delhi to reinforce the unbreakable bond with Sri Lanka. When sections of Sri Lanka's Tamil were agitated originally over the renaming of 'Jaffna' in the Centre's nomenclature, the Indian authorities were swift in offering a course of correction. It is now called Jaffna Thiruvalluvar Cultural Centre. This is a recent landmark, built by the Indian government. No one needs to emphasise the significance of bilateral ties between two south Asian neighbours, which have a shared history and culture.

In the last 40-odd years, the nature of political relations has undergone significant changes ever since the 1983 anti-Tamil pogrom in Sri Lanka. India has played the role of a mediator, initially, and that of an active player, later, in the attempt to resolve the vexatious ethnic problem. It was such a complex relationship that led to the signing of the Indo-Lanka Accord of 1987 and the consequent 13th Amendment (ISA) to Sri Lanka's Constitution, creating a new layer of government — Provincial Councils — and granting it limited autonomy. At that time, the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) — the party to which Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake belongs — was among those which opposed the Accord and the Amendment. According to critics, the deal was considered to be impositions of India on Sri Lanka.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), which was another critic and then the most important Tamil force, was not happy with the settlement formula. The LTTE was against the division of Sri Lanka and the creation of a Tamil Eelam (encompassing the Tamil-majority Northern and Eastern provinces), an idea that India can never agree with.

India's nudges on ISA Despite the passage of over 35 years, the crucial amendment has not been given a fair trial, especially in the Tamil-speaking areas of Sri Lanka, even though, by the Provincial Councils, there in most parts of the country, functioned between 1988 and 2019.

Successive Indian leaders have been urging their Sri Lankan counterparts for the "early, full or effective implementation" of ISA. In fact, when India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar met



T. Ramakrishnan

Mr. Dissanayake in Colombo in early October 2024 to invite him formally to visit India, he too referred to this much-used phrase.

But, the absence of any explicit reference to the Amendment in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's public remarks during Mr. Dissanayake's state visit to New Delhi in December 2024 has raised the question whether India has begun to backpedal on the issue of the ISA. The implementation of ISA. Even though it is too early to say, it is tempting to call the suggestion made by Mr. Jaishankar, in his capacity as Foreign Secretary in February 2017, to the non-aligned Tamil National Alliance to move beyond the merger issue. The Northern and Eastern provinces had remained together for 20 years till the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka annulled such an arrangement in October 2006. Mr. Modi's silence is to be viewed against the backdrop of the JVP's traditional position on the Amendment. It is not yet clear whether Sri Lanka's ruling coalition of the JVP-led National People's Power (NPP) still favours the repeal of the Amendment.

While Sri Lanka's Prime Minister Harini Amaratunga told The Hindu news agency in 2023 that "we [NPP] believe that it [ISA] should be implemented but we have a debate whether it is a solution for the ethnic problem in Sri Lanka", Mr. Dissanayake, in his campaign in Jaffna for a few weeks before the 2023 polls, did not touch upon the issues of greater power devolution and a political settlement to the ethnic question. The policy position was found in the NPP manifesto during the September 2024 presidential poll, wherein the coalition had assured people that there would be a new constitution "that strengthens democracy and ensures equality of all citizens".

Local bodies are no substitute While it is clear that the incomplete constitutional reform process, which began in 2015, would be a step towards the creation of a "devolution of political and administrative power to every local government, district and province" and holding elections "within a year" to provincial councils and local bodies "which are currently postponed indefinitely". If the political discourse in Sri Lanka is any indication, elections

to the local authorities may take place sooner rather than later. There is nothing wrong in holding the elections to the local bodies, which have a much longer history in Sri Lanka than the provincial councils. However, the rulers should be under no illusion that however efficient they may be, local bodies are no substitutes for the provincial councils. As in many other countries, the local self governments in Sri Lanka too are hardly equipped to solve all the problems being thrown up by growing urbanisation on the one hand and other issues such as limited sources of own revenue and high dependence on fiscal transfers on the other. This is why the layer of provincial councils becomes essential to address many of the issues.

It was not without reason that the interim report of the Steering Committee of the Constitutional Assembly, in September 2017, pointed to the wide consensus among Chief Ministers, Provincial Councils, and various panels of the Assembly, that provinces be recognised as the primary unit of devolution.

The people and a deal The time that the JVP's leaders stop viewing the Provincial Councils as a creation of India, as, after all, any constitutional concept, in the contemporary period, is an outcome of palimpsest. This holds good for the Accord and ISA too, which were produced through an evolutionary process that involved the scrutiny of a number of proposals at different levels in the two countries during 1983-87. Also, Sri Lanka's three Constitutions — the Soulbury Constitution of 1948 and two Republican Constitutions of 1972 and 1978 — were drafted, based on the British, American and French systems of government. The ruling coalition should do well to keep in mind that the people of Sri Lanka, known for their democratic spirit and effecting the transition of power mostly through the ballot box, deserve a deal that is in tune with their character. The NPP, which commands a two-thirds majority in Parliament with an extremely popular President, has the golden opportunity now to find a durable solution to the ethnic problem, which is an offshoot of a combination of economic and political factors.

ramakrishnan.thehindu.com

# The science is clear, crowd crushes are preventable

In his week, in India, 30 people were killed in a deadly crowd crush that occurred at the Maha Kumbh. This writer's heart goes out to their families and friends. Tragedies such as this one have become far too common across the world at religious pilgrimages, sporting events, and even music concerts. As someone who studies and writes about disasters, what makes them even more terrible is that they are almost entirely preventable.

Crowd crushes are dangerous, deadly, and immensely scary. They are also scientifically well understood and inexpensive to prevent. Yet, they continue to occur with surprising frequency in highly modern societies. While this writer has written extensively about mourning the dead and the senseless loss of life, it is his hope that the news and events concerning every year to use this tragedy as an opportunity to commit to making the changes necessary to keep crowds safe.

Linked to crowd density Crowd crushes occur when the density of a crowd becomes too high. Scientific studies have repeatedly shown that, at crowd densities of five persons per square metre, there is a risk of crowd injuries, and that at seven people per sqm or more, the likelihood of deadly injury is high. Crowd density is strongly influenced by the physical space around the crowd. If, for example, a crowd must navigate or gather in a space that is too small, crowd density can increase to dangerous levels rapidly and become deadly. Preliminary reporting from the Maha Kumbh suggests that this is precisely what happened there: a large crowd developed behind a barrier, compressing its members into a dangerous density with tragic consequences.



Tracy Hresko Pearl

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Similar disasters have occurred all throughout the world in recent years. In November 2021, 10 people were killed in a crowd crush at a religious music concert in Houston, Texas, U.S. In October 2022, a crowd crush in Incheon, South Korea, killed 159 people at a Halloween festival. In April 2023, nearly 90 people were killed in Sana'a, Yemen, at a charity distribution. In India, in December 2024, 35 people were killed at a religious festival in Nagercoil, a small sampling of a type of catastrophe that happens more often than people may think.

For planners and governments to note So, why do these tragedies and deaths keep happening after so many high-profile disasters? If you believe the news and events, the commentary that often surround such tragedies, these crushes are the fault of crowds that are "out of control". We are too quick to blame the victims in these scenarios, and too eager to use conventional wisdom, and rules of thumb as substitutes for actual science.

But, the science itself is clear: preventing crowd crushes requires the implementation of safe levels, and the only entities who can do so effectively are the local governments, event organisers and promoters who plan and oversee these large events. Individual members of crowds themselves have a very limited ability to perceive what is happening to the crowd as a whole, and virtually no ability to control it. Once a crowd becomes dangerous density, the risk that the crowd in the crowd can meaningfully influence what is happening to the crowd is very limited. Individual crowd members themselves may not even be able to take a full breath.

Event planners and local governments can take effectiveness of crowd management during religious festivals in India. R. Sivakumar, Chennai Better crowd management and some patience and adherence to the guidelines by the pilgrims could have saved lives. No VIP should be allowed to flout the rules. A festival that showcases India's spiritual splendour cannot afford to have setbacks. B. Sivanandam, Noida, Uttar Pradesh Special trains and flights have been arranged for the Kumbh, with thousands pouring into Prayagraj by the hour. How is the infrastructure sufficient to handle all these people? The Government of India and the Government of Uttar Pradesh seem to be more interested in income generated from a festival than in the facilities provided to the visiting millions who do not eat, and how to manage as it is a case of crowds, and even more so, crowds everywhere. Raj Gopinath, Hyderabad Homeopathy, regulation Homeopathy has proven to be an effective treatment option for many. However, it is not a cure-all. Homeopathic mother tinctures are not necessarily safe, and their use is regulated. The article on the

relatively easy steps to nearly eliminate the risk of crowd crush. They can open more entries and exits. They can stagger arrival times for large events. They can make sure passageways travelled by crowds are free from debris and other obstacles that might congest the crowd into bottlenecks. They can also segment the crowd into groups to prevent a sudden crowd surge. Planners do this each year on New Year's Eve at Times Square in New York City, placing the crowd into segmented areas of roughly 100 people each to prevent the massive crowd from phasing in ways that might create a dangerous crowd density. It is simple, it is relatively inexpensive, and it works.

On organisers and the economic factor The problem is that, currently, in most nations, nothing requires promoters, planners, or local governments to do any of this. Worse, event organisers themselves have a vested interest in keeping such laws off the books. Instead, they have a strong economic incentive to pack as many people as possible into events to maximise ticket, food, and merchandise sales.

The tragedy at the Maha Kumbh, however, should inspire governments everywhere to reconsider their hands-off approach to crowd crush and other preventable large events requiring event planners, promoters, and venues to take the basic steps needed to reduce the risk to individuals at large events. Even small amounts of planning and minimal changes to a venue can almost eliminate the risk that crowd members will be injured, trampled, or squeezed to death on their feet while still allowing everyone to have a good time. The cost of waiting to make such changes will continue to be measured in human lives.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

**Crowds, safety** The 'run fast, reach first' attitude and approach have been a disaster in the damper and also a factor in crowd management (Page 1, "30 dead, 60 injured in stampede as crowds surge at Maha Kumbh", January 30). The order ordered by the Uttar Pradesh government to suggest additional safety measures along the path follow, and it is likely to face further pushback from Congressional lawmakers if it continues. There is also concern that Mr. Trump has surrounded himself with acolytes who subscribe to the ideas in the so-called "Project 2025", which some regard as a right-wing agenda that could prove to be more divisive than it is capable of genuinely addressing urgent political priorities. While Mr. Trump may have become more adept at personnel management, it is equally important that he does not exacerbate the bitter polarisation of the American polity over the coming four years.

It is not for the first time that such a devastating tragedy has happened at the Kumbh. The truth behind the claims of a world-class system of people management has been exposed. The authorities must strive to ensure that lives are safe. S.K. Khosla, Chandigarh Human lives in India have been at stake and the least value and the adherance to the guidelines by the pilgrims could have saved lives. No VIP should be allowed to flout the rules. A festival that showcases India's spiritual splendour cannot afford to have setbacks. B. Sivanandam, Noida, Uttar Pradesh Despite extensive security measures, including the use of surveillance cameras, drones, and a command and control centre, the incident raises serious concerns about the

effectiveness of crowd management during religious festivals in India. R. Sivakumar, Chennai Better crowd management and some patience and adherence to the guidelines by the pilgrims could have saved lives. No VIP should be allowed to flout the rules. A festival that showcases India's spiritual splendour cannot afford to have setbacks. B. Sivanandam, Noida, Uttar Pradesh Special trains and flights have been arranged for the Kumbh, with thousands pouring into Prayagraj by the hour. How is the infrastructure sufficient to handle all these people?

The Government of India and the Government of Uttar Pradesh seem to be more interested in income generated from a festival than in the facilities provided to the visiting millions who do not eat, and how to manage as it is a case of crowds, and even more so, crowds everywhere. Raj Gopinath, Hyderabad Homeopathy, regulation Homeopathy has proven to be an effective treatment option for many. However, it is not a cure-all. Homeopathic mother tinctures are not necessarily safe, and their use is regulated. The article on the

liquor in bars and restaurants. One also wonders how they conclude that homeopathic tinctures are incapable of affecting the heart. P. Swaminatha Krishna, Hyderabad **Cricketing honour** One can hardly think of a better recipient for the honour of ICC Cricketer of the Year prize than asprit Bumrah. His hard work, consistency and ability to improvise have made him a modern legend. His sublime control over the ball and cricketing intelligence are what make him lethal. Nagarajaram M.K., Hyderabad Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.com in must carry the postal address.

# The science is clear, crowd disasters are preventable

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of  
[Hand-drawn diagram with a square and internal lines]

This week, in India, 30 people were killed in a deadly crowd crush that occurred at the Maha Kumbh. This writer's heart goes out to their families and friends. Tragedies such as this one have become far too common across the world at religious pilgrimages, sporting events, and even music concerts. As someone who studies crowd disasters, what makes them even more terrible is that they are almost entirely preventable.

Crowd crushes are dangerous, deadly, and immensely scary. They are also scientifically well understood, easy to predict, and inexpensive to prevent. Yet, they continue to occur with surprising frequency in highly modern societies. While this writer joins the people of India in mourning the shocking and senseless loss of life, it is her hope that governments and event organisers everywhere use this tragedy as an opportunity to commit to making the changes necessary to keep crowds safe.

## **Linked to crowd density**

Crowd crushes occur when the density of a crowd becomes too high. Scientific studies have repeatedly shown that, at crowd densities of five persons per square metre, there is a risk of crowd injuries, and that at seven people per sq.m or more, the likelihood of death or serious injury is high. Crowd density is strongly influenced by the physical space around the crowd. If, for example, a crowd must navigate or gather in a space that is too small, crowd density can increase to dangerous levels rapidly and become deadly. Preliminary reporting from the Maha Kumbh suggests that this is precisely what happened there: a large crowd developed behind a barrier, compressing its members into a dangerous density with tragic consequences.



**Tracy Hresko Pearl**

is William J. Alley  
Professor of Law,  
University of  
Oklahoma, U.S.

Crowd crushes are scientifically well understood, easy to predict, and inexpensive to prevent

Similar disasters have occurred all throughout the world in recent years. In November 2021, 10 people were killed in a crowd disaster at a live music concert in Houston, Texas, U.S. In October 2022, a crowd crush in Itaewon, South Korea killed 159 people at a Halloween festival. In April 2023, nearly 90 people were killed in Sanaa, Yemen, at a charity distribution event. And, in December 2024, 35 people were killed at a religious festival in Nigeria.

These examples are just a small sampling of a type of catastrophe that happens more often than people may think.

## **For planners and governments to note**

So, why do these injuries and deaths keep happening after so many high-profile disasters? If you believe many of the news stories and commentary that often surround such tragedies, these crushes are the fault of crowds that are "out of control". We are too quick to blame the victims in these scenarios, and too eager to use conventional wisdom, stereotypes, and rules of thumb as substitutes for actual science.

But, the science itself is clear: preventing crowd crush requires keeping crowd densities at safe levels, and the only entities who can do so effectively are the local governments, event organisers, and promoters who plan and oversee these large events. Individual members of crowds themselves have a very limited ability to perceive what is happening to the crowd as a whole, and virtually no ability to control it. Once a crowd reaches a dangerous density, moreover, nobody in the crowd can meaningfully influence what is happening around them. In fact, at that point, the crowd members themselves may not even be able to take a full breath.

Event planners and local governments can take

relatively easy steps to nearly eliminate the risk of crowd crush. They can open more entries and exits. They can stagger arrival times for large events. They can make sure passageways travelled by crowds are free from debris and other obstacles that might compress the crowd into bottlenecks. They can also segment the crowd into groups to prevent a sudden crowd surge. Planners do this each year on New Year's Eve at Times Square in New York City: placing the crowd into segmented areas of roughly 100 people each to prevent the massive crowd from clustering in ways that might create a dangerous crowd density. It is simple, it is relatively inexpensive, and it works.

## **On organisers and the economic factor**

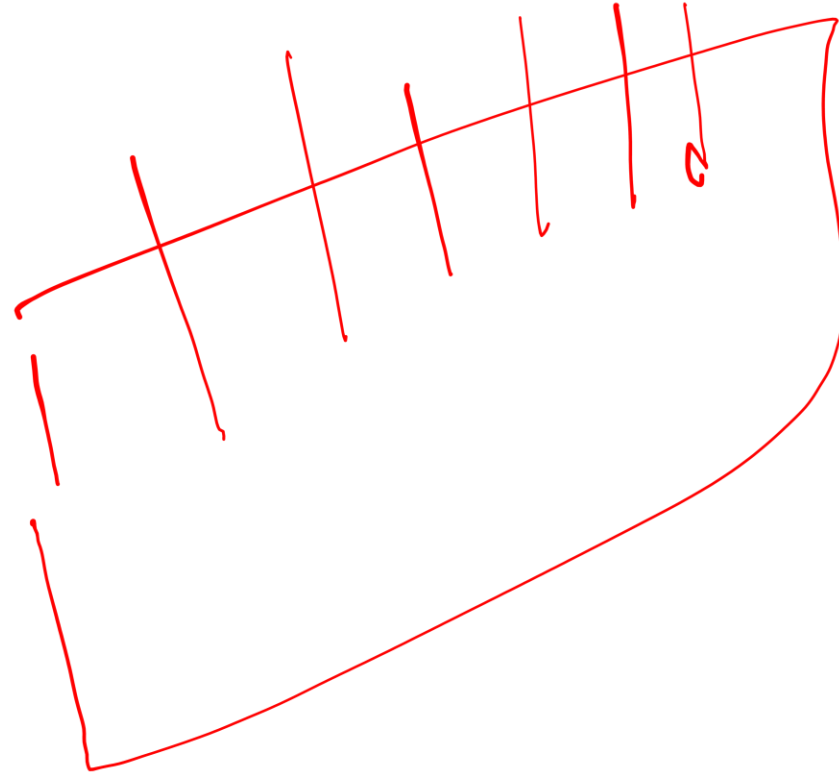
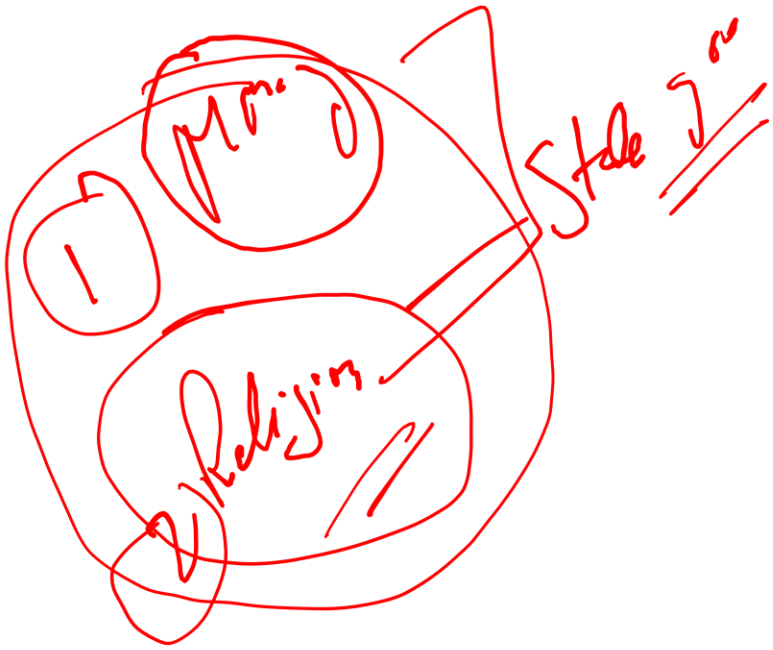
The problem is that, currently, in most nations, nothing requires promoters, planners, or local governments to do any of this. Worse, event organisers themselves have a vested interest in keeping such laws off the books. Instead, they have a strong economic incentive to pack as many people as possible into events to maximise ticket, food, and merchandise sales.

The tragedy at the Maha Kumbh, however, should inspire governments everywhere to reconsider their hands-off approach to crowd crush and pass sensible laws and regulations requiring event planners, promoters, and venues to take the basic steps needed to reduce the risk to individuals at large events. Even small amounts of planning and minimal changes to a venue can almost eliminate the risk that crowd members will be injured, trampled, or squeezed to death on their feet while still allowing everyone to have a good time. The cost of waiting to make such changes will continue to be measured in human lives.

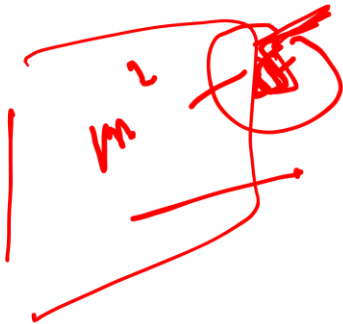
- **Introduction | परिचय**
- **The article discusses the tragic crowd crush at the Maha Kumbh in India, where 30 people lost their lives.**
  - यह लेख भारत में महाकुंभ में हुई दुखद भीड़ भगदड़ पर चर्चा करता है, जिसमें 30 लोगों की जान चली गई।
- **Crowd disasters are becoming increasingly common at religious gatherings, sports events, and concerts worldwide.**
  - धार्मिक आयोजनों, खेल आयोजनों और संगीत कार्यक्रमों में भीड़ आपदाएँ दुनिया भर में बढ़ती जा रही हैं।



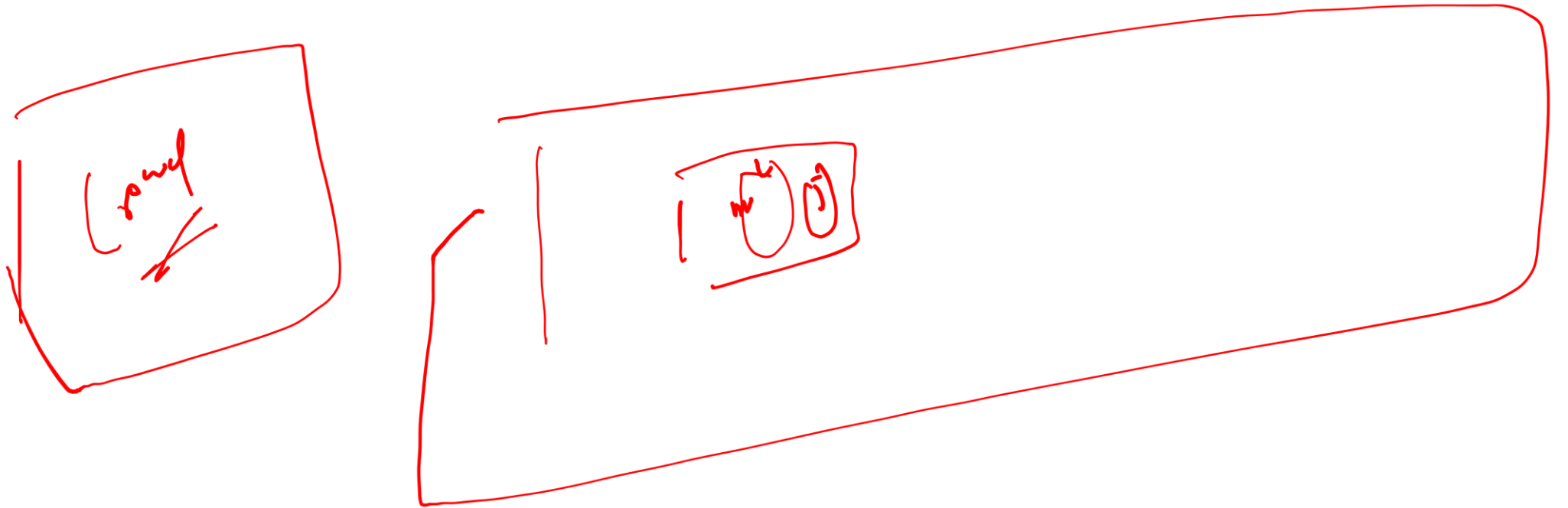
- The most terrifying aspect is that these disasters are scientifically understood, predictable, and preventable. सबसे डरावनी बात यह है कि ये आपदाएँ वैज्ञानिक रूप से समझी जा सकती हैं, पूर्वानुमेय हैं और इन्हें रोका जा सकता है।



- Link Between Crowd Density and Disasters | भीड़ घनत्व और आपदाओं के बीच संबंध
- Crowd crushes occur when the number of people per square meter exceeds a safe limit.
  - भीड़ भगदड़ तब होती है जब प्रति वर्ग मीटर लोगों की संख्या सुरक्षित सीमा से अधिक हो जाती है।
- Scientific studies show that at five people per square meter, there is a risk of crowd injuries. At seven or more, fatalities are highly probable.
  - वैज्ञानिक अध्ययन बताते हैं कि प्रति वर्ग मीटर पाँच लोगों की उपस्थिति से चोट का खतरा रहता है। सात या अधिक होने पर मृत्यु की संभावना अधिक होती है।

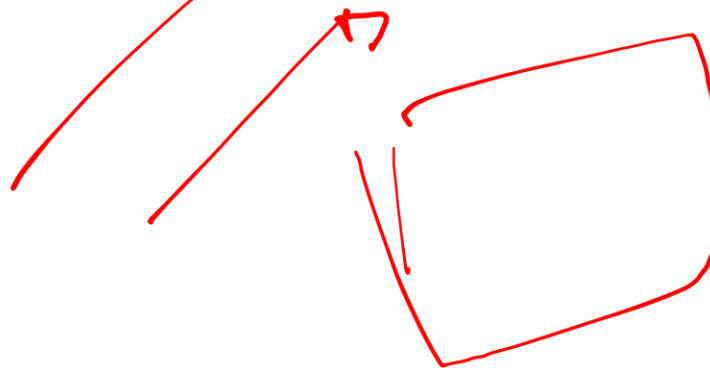


- The physical space available determines how quickly a situation can escalate to dangerous levels.
  - उपलब्ध भौतिक स्थान यह निर्धारित करता है कि स्थिति कितनी जल्दी खतरनाक स्तर तक पहुँच सकती है।



- **Global Examples of Crowd Disasters | दुनिया भर में भीड़ आपदाओं के उदाहरण**
- **Several major crowd disasters have occurred in recent years:**
  - **हाल के वर्षों में कई प्रमुख भीड़ आपदाएँ हुई हैं:**
  - **Houston, Texas (2021) – 10 people killed at a music concert.**
    - ह्यूस्टन, टेक्सास (2021) – संगीत कार्यक्रम में 10 लोगों की मौत।
  - **Itaewon, South Korea (2022) – 159 people killed at a Halloween festival.**
    - इटावन, दक्षिण कोरिया (2022) – हैलोवीन उत्सव में 159 लोगों की मौत।
  - **Sanaa, Yemen (2023) – 90 people killed in a charity event.**
    - सना, यमन (2023) – चैरिटी इवेंट में 90 लोगों की मौत।
  - **Nigeria (2024) – 35 people killed at a religious gathering.**
    - नाइजीरिया (2024) – धार्मिक आयोजन में 35 लोगों की मौत।

- Role of Planners and Governments | योजनाकारों और सरकारों की भूमिका
- Most crowd disasters are preventable through better event planning and crowd management.
  - अधिकांश भीड़ आपदाओं को बेहतर आयोजन योजना और भीड़ प्रबंधन के माध्यम से रोका जा सकता है।
- Blaming the crowd for being "out of control" ignores scientific solutions.
  - भीड़ को "बेकाबू" ठहराना वैज्ञानिक समाधानों की अनदेखी करना है।



- The key solution is maintaining safe crowd densities.
  - मुख्य समाधान सुरक्षित भीड़ घनत्व बनाए रखना है।
- Only governments and event organizers can implement these changes effectively.
  - केवल सरकारें और आयोजनकर्ता ही इन बदलावों को प्रभावी ढंग से लागू कर सकते हैं।

(असुरक्षित)

- Preventive Measures | रोकथाम के उपाय
- Governments and event organizers can take simple steps to prevent crowd crushes:
  - सरकारें और आयोजनकर्ता भीड़ भगदड़ को रोकने के लिए सरल कदम उठा सकते हैं:
  - Increase entry and exit points to avoid bottlenecks.
    - भीड़भाड़ को रोकने के लिए प्रवेश और निकास बिंदुओं की संख्या बढ़ाएँ।
  - Stagger arrival times for large events.
    - बड़े आयोजनों के लिए आगमन समय को अलग-अलग करें।
  - Ensure pathways are clear of obstacles to prevent compression.
    - सुनिश्चित करें कि रास्ते बाधाओं से मुक्त हों ताकि भीड़ को कुचले जाने से रोका जा सके।
  - Divide crowds into smaller groups to control movement.
    - भीड़ को छोटे समूहों में विभाजित करें ताकि उनका संचलन नियंत्रित किया जा सके।



- Responsibility of Event Organizers | आयोजनकर्ताओं की जिम्मेदारी
- In most countries, event organizers are not required by law to take safety precautions.
  - अधिकांश देशों में, आयोजनकर्ताओं को कानूनन सुरक्षा उपाय लेने की आवश्यकता नहीं होती।
- Many event organizers prioritize maximizing ticket sales over crowd safety.
  - कई आयोजनकर्ता भीड़ की सुरक्षा से अधिक टिकट बिक्री को प्राथमिकता देते हैं।

Team with Bhanu

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Revenue



TEHRAN

Ready for nuclear discussions if Western nations are serious: Iran



Iran is prepared to discuss its nuclear programme if Western countries demonstrate "seriousness", according to Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Qasbi. He said that discussions depend on the actions of other parties and expressed hope for a realistic approach from the U.S. administration under President Trump.

KYIV

Russian drone barrage kills at least four, injures nine in east Ukraine



A Russian drone attack on a residential building in Sumy, Ukraine, killed at least four people and injured nine others, including a child. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy condemned the assault as a "terrible tragedy" and urged the international community to maintain pressure on Russia for its actions.

NANTERRE

Dominique Pelicot questioned in other cases of rape and murder



Dominique Pelicot, convicted for drugging and raping his ex-wife Gisèle Pelicot, was questioned on Thursday about other suspected rape and murder cases from the 1990s. He denies involvement in the killings but acknowledges contact with a victim in a separate attempted rape case, as investigations continue.

DUBAI

Dubai airport, busiest for world travel, sees 92.3 mn footfall in 2024



Dubai International Airport recorded a historic 92.3 million passengers in 2024, surpassing its previous record from 2018. This achievement highlights Dubai's recovery from the pandemic and solidifies its position as the world's busiest airport for international travel, with plans for future expansion.

Philippines to remove U.S. missile system if China stops 'sea aggression'

China had demanded the removal of the missile system, claiming it incites geopolitical confrontation and an arms race; the missile system was repositioned closer to Manila to enhance military readiness amid Philippines' rising tensions with China

Associated Press  
MANILA

Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. offered on Friday to remove a U.S. missile system from the Philippines if the United States halts what he called "aggressive and coercive behaviour" in the South China Sea.

The U.S. had installed the Typhon air defence missile system in the northern Philippines in April last year to support what the longtime treaty allies described as training for joint combat readiness.

China has repeatedly demanded that the Philippines remove the missile



Hard stances: Chinese President Xi Jinping and Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. during a ceremony in Beijing in 2023.

system, saying it was "inciting geopolitical confrontation and an arms race".

Asked by reporters about China's criticism of the missile system, Mr. Marcos said he did not un-

derstand the Chinese position because the Philippines does not comment on China's missile systems which "are a thousand times more powerful than what we have".

weeks ago from the northern Philippines to a strategic area nearer the capital, Manila, in consultation with Philippine defence officials, a senior Philippine official said.

The Philippine official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of a lack of authority to discuss the sensitive issue in public, said the U.S. missile system is now near the area where Chinese and Philippine coast guard and Navy forces have been involved in increasingly tense face-offs in the South China Sea.

Tomahawk missiles can travel over 1,600 km, which puts parts of mainland China within their range.

As Goma remains without electricity and water, the situation has become dire, with bodies of alleged government soldiers visible on the streets. Meanwhile, French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot

significantly more than during their previous incursion in 2012. The rebels are advancing toward Bukavu, causing panic among residents. Gunfire and explosions have been reported in nearby towns. The Congolese military has faced challenges due to the withdrawal of foreign contractors and the defection of soldiers.

A regional summit called for an immediate ceasefire and urged Mr. Tshisekedi's government to engage in talks with the rebels, which Congo considers terrorists. Tensions are escalating between Rwanda and South Africa over their involvement in the conflict, raising fears of a broader regional war driven by competition for Congo's vast mineral resources.

Widespread looting The UN World Food Program reported widespread looting in Goma, exacerbating an already precarious humanitarian situation for over 6 million displaced individuals. The M23 rebels are reportedly supported by around 4,000 Rwandan troops,

Congo's President calls for massive Army mobilisation

Associated Press  
GOMA

Congo's President Félix Tshisekedi has called for a massive military mobilisation to combat Rwanda-backed M23 rebels, who have advanced into Goma, the country's largest city.

Tshisekedi urged young people to enlist in the Army, promising a "vigorous and coordinated response" while still emphasising the need for a peaceful resolution.

"Enlist massively in the Army because you are the spearhead of our country," he urged young people.

As Goma remains without electricity and water, the situation has become dire, with bodies of alleged government soldiers visible on the streets. Meanwhile, French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot



Félix Tshisekedi

arrived in Kinshasa, potentially signalling diplomatic efforts to address the conflict.

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New beginnings



People pray at a shrine on the first day of the Lunar New Year of the Snake in Bangkok. Hundreds of millions of people across Asia celebrate the Lunar New Year with their families on January 29, as they bid farewell to the Year of the Dragon and usher in the Year of the Snake.

Hamas confirms death of its military leader Deif

Agence France-Presse  
GAZA CITY

Hamas confirmed on Thursday the death of its military chief Mohammed Deif, accused by Israel of being one of the masterminds behind the October 7 attack and whose killing it announced last year.

"The Al-Qassam Brigades announce to our great people the martyrdom of a group of distinguished fighters and heroic commanders," Abu Obeida, spokesman for Hamas's armed wing, announced in a video statement, naming "commander Mohammed Deif, chief of staff of the Al-Qassam Brigades (and) commander Marwan Issa, deputy chief of staff" among them.

Israel had accused Deif of being one of the key architects of October 7, along with Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar, who was killed on October 16, 2024.

On August 1 last year, the Israeli military announced it had killed Deif in an air strike in Gaza the month before.

The military said fighter jets had struck Khan Younis on July 13 and "follow-up intelligence assessment, it can be confirmed that Mohammed Deif was eliminated in the strike."



Mohammed Deif

He was killed along with one of his top commanders, Rafa Salama, the military said.

"Deif initiated, planned, and executed the October 7th massacre," the military added.

Deif became head of Hamas's armed wing, the Executive al-Qassam Brigades, in 2002.

He was among Israel's most wanted men for nearly three decades and on a U.S. list of "international terrorists" since 2015.

Deif, whose real name is Mohammed Diab al-Masri, was born in the Khan Younis refugee camp in 1968.

His enemies dubbed Deif the "cat with nine lives" after his many close calls with death.

Deif is said to have played a key role in the huge network of tunnels built beneath Gaza.

10 Palestinians killed in West Bank drone strike: Israel

Agence France-Presse  
JERUSALEM

Israel's military confirmed on Thursday that it had killed 10 Palestinians in a strike on a village in the occupied West Bank the day before, saying it had targeted militants.

During a joint "counter-terrorism" operation by the military and domestic security agency, an air force aircraft struck a gathering of armed terrorists in the area of Tamara.

late Wednesday, the military said in a statement.

"Approximately 10 terrorists were eliminated in the strike," it said, adding two of the militants killed were involved in an attack that claimed the life of an Israeli soldier and injured three others in Tamara on January 29.

Qatari Emir tells Syria leader 'urgent need' for inclusive govt.

Agence France-Presse  
DAMASCUS

During a meeting on Thursday, Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani stressed the "urgent need" for an inclusive Syrian government with interim President Ahmed al-Sharaa.

This visit marks the first by a head of state to Damascus since the fall of Bashar al-Assad. The Emir's trip follows Mr. Sharaa's recent appointment and aims to promote stability and reconstruction in Syria.

Discussions included forming a transitional legislature and dissolving armed groups involved in Mr. Assad's overthrow. The Qatari delegation also addressed bilateral cooperation on reconstruction, focusing on vital sectors like infrastructure and banking. Regional leaders, including Saudi Arabia's king and Jordan's king, congratulated Mr. Sharaa on his new role, signalling support for Syria's transition.

Sri Lanka's senior Tamil politician and ITAK veteran Mavai Senathirajah no more

Meera Srinivasan  
COLOMBO

Senior Tamil politician Mavai Senathirajah, a key figure in the long political struggle for the rights of Tamils in Sri Lanka's north and east, passed away on Wednesday after a brief illness. He was 82.



Mavai Senathirajah

reconciled — between two factions vying for the party's leadership. Senathirajah's political career, devoted to the cause of Tamil nationalism, spanned over six de-

cadies. He joined the movement for "Tamil" self-determination in his student days and also participated in the "Silknet" led by prominent leader S.J.V. Chelvanayakam in 1981. He continued working for Tamil rights through 1960s and 1970s, often courting arrest. Senathirajah's name also came up as a potential candidate when the first election to the Northern Provincial Council was held in 2013. However, the party subsequently declined to field former Supreme Court judge C.V. Wignes-

waran, who won and served as Chief Minister. All the same, Senathirajah continued to engage in the party's activities and outreach to the international community, especially in the U.S. In a message on X, Sri Lanka's Leader of Opposition Sajith Premadasa described Senathirajah as a "readily available advocate for the rights of the Tamil people", who consistently raised his voice both within and beyond Parliament. "His contributions and dedication to the field of human rights will always be remembered."

Israel releases 110 prisoners as Hamas frees eight hostages

Agence France-Presse  
KHAN YOUNIS

Buses carrying freed Palestinian prisoners departed from Khan Younis in the West Bank on Thursday, following a chaotic release of three Israeli hostages and five Thais by Hamas.

This marks the third exchange under a ceasefire deal aimed at ending the ongoing conflict. Another release is scheduled for Saturday, with additional Israeli captives expected to be freed.

guarantees were confirmed. Israel's Prison Service, meanwhile, confirmed it had freed 110 prisoners on Thursday as part of the agreement with Hamas for a truce in Gaza, which came into effect on January 19.

The release proceeded after Israel secured assurances regarding the future safety of the hostages. Prime Minister Netanyahu's office had suspended the prisoner release until these

# Philippines to remove U.S. missile system if China stops 'sea aggression'

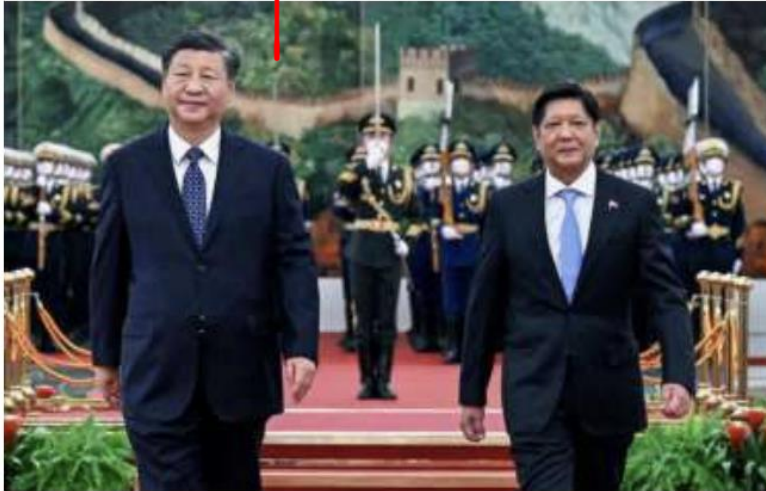
China had demanded the removal of the missile system, claiming it incites geopolitical confrontation and an arms race; the missile system was repositioned closer to Manila to enhance military readiness amid Philippines' rising tensions with China

**Associated Press**  
MANILA

**P**hilippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. offered on Friday to remove a U.S. missile system from the Philippines if China halts what he called its “aggressive and coercive behaviour” in the disputed South China Sea.

The U.S. Army installed the Typhon mid-range missile system in the northern Philippines in April last year to support what the long-time treaty allies described as training for joint combat readiness.

China has repeatedly demanded that the Philippines remove the missile



**Hard stance:** Chinese President Xi Jinping and Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. during a ceremony in Beijing in 2023. AP

system, saying it was “inciting geopolitical confrontation and an arms race”.

Asked by reporters about China’s criticism of the missile system, Mr. Marcos said he did not un-

derstand the Chinese position because the Philippines does not comment on China’s missile systems which “are a thousand times more powerful than what we have”.

“Let’s make a deal with China: Stop claiming our territory, stop harassing our fishermen and let them have a living, stop ramming our boats, stop water cannoning our people, stop firing lasers at us and stop your aggressive and coercive behaviour, and we’ll return the typhon missiles,” Mr. Marcos told reporters.

Chinese officials did not immediately comment on the Philippine leader’s remarks.

The U.S. Army’s mobile Typhon missile system, which consists of a launcher and at least 16 Standard Missile-6 and Tomahawk Land Attack Missiles, was repositioned about two

weeks ago from the northern Philippines to a strategic area nearer the capital, Manila, in consultation with Philippine defence officials, a senior Philippine official said.

The Philippine official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of a lack of authority to discuss the sensitive issue in public, said the U.S. missile system is now nearer an area where Chinese and Philippine coast guard and Navy forces have been involved in increasingly tense face-offs in the South China Sea. Tomahawk missiles can travel over 1,600 km, which puts parts of mainland China within their range.

- **Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has offered to remove a U.S. missile system if China ceases its "aggressive and coercive behavior" in the South China Sea.**
- **फिलीपींस के राष्ट्रपति फर्डिनेंड मार्कोस जूनियर ने अमेरिकी मिसाइल प्रणाली को हटाने की पेशकश की, यदि चीन दक्षिण चीन सागर में अपनी "आक्रामक और जबरदस्ती की नीति" बंद कर दे।**

- The missile system was installed in April last year in the northern Philippines as part of a long-standing defense alliance with the U.S. अमेरिकी मिसाइल प्रणाली को पिछले साल अप्रैल में उत्तरी फिलीपींस में स्थापित किया गया था, जो अमेरिका के साथ लंबे समय से चली आ रही रक्षा संधि का हिस्सा है।
- China has demanded its removal, arguing that it incites geopolitical tensions and an arms race. चीन ने मिसाइल प्रणाली को हटाने की मांग की है, यह तर्क देते हुए कि यह भू-राजनीतिक तनाव और हथियारों की दौड़ को बढ़ावा देता है।

- **China's Concerns & Philippine Response | चीन की चिंताएँ और फिलीपींस की प्रतिक्रिया**
- **President Marcos Jr. stated that he does not understand China's concerns since the Philippines never comments on China's missile systems, which are far more powerful.**
  - राष्ट्रपति मार्कोस जूनियर ने कहा कि वह चीन की चिंताओं को नहीं समझते, क्योंकि फिलीपींस कभी भी चीन की मिसाइल प्रणालियों पर टिप्पणी नहीं करता, जो बहुत अधिक शक्तिशाली हैं।
- **He criticized China for its territorial claims, harassment of Filipino fishermen, and aggressive actions in the region.**
  - उन्होंने चीन की क्षेत्रीय दावेदारी, फिलीपींस के मछुआरों को परेशान करने और इस क्षेत्र में आक्रामक गतिविधियों की आलोचना की।

- **Marcos Jr. proposed that if China stops its hostile actions, the U.S. missile system will be returned.**
  - **मार्कोस जूनियर ने सझाव दिया कि अगर चीन अपनी शत्रुतापूर्ण गतिविधियाँ बंद कर देता है, तो अमेरिकी मिसाइल प्रणाली को हटा दिया जाएगा।**

- U.S. Missile System & Strategic Importance | अमेरिकी मिसाइल प्रणाली और इसकी रणनीतिक महत्ता
- The Typhon missile system includes a launcher and at least 16 Standard Missile-6 and Tomahawk Land Attack Missiles.
  - टाइफून मिसाइल प्रणाली में एक लॉन्चर और कम से कम 16 स्टैंडर्ड मिसाइल-6 और टॉमहॉक लैंड अटैक मिसाइल शामिल हैं।

- These missiles have a range of over 1,600 km, allowing them to reach parts of mainland China. इन मिसाइलों की रेंज 1,600 किमी से अधिक है, जिससे वे चीन के मुख्य हिस्सों तक पहुँच सकती हैं।
- Recently, the missile system was repositioned from northern Philippines to a more strategic location near Manila, closer to Chinese-Philippine conflict zones. हाल ही में, मिसाइल प्रणाली को उत्तरी फिलीपींस से हटाकर मनीला के पास एक रणनीतिक स्थान पर तैनात किया गया, जो चीन-फिलीपींस विवादित क्षेत्र के करीब है।



# CHINA

## CLAIMS

- China
- Taiwan
- Philippines
- Vietnam
- Malaysia
- Brunei



Taiwan

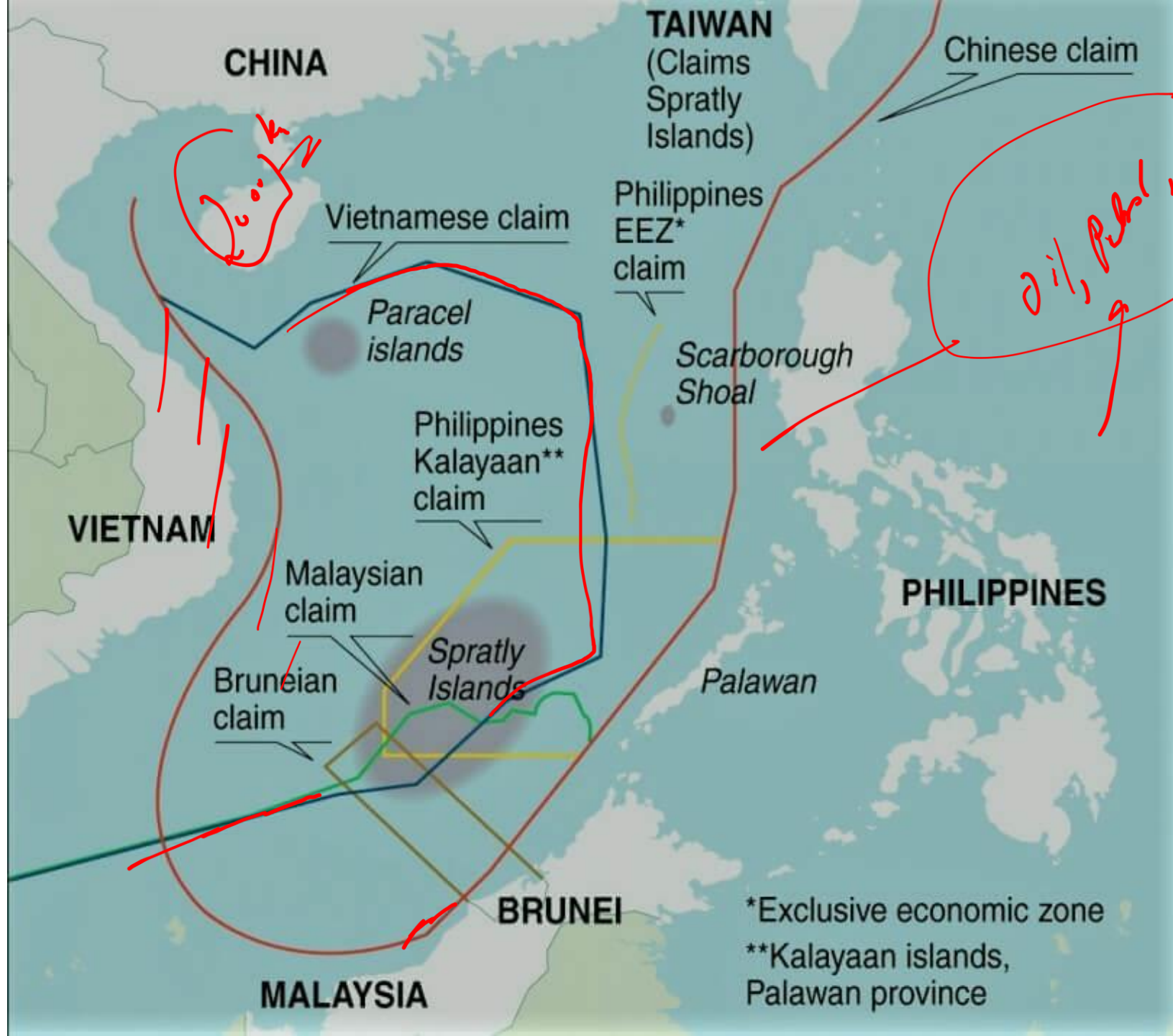
PHILIPPINES

MALAYSIA

BRUNEL

BYJU'S  
CLASSES



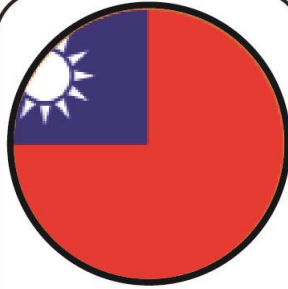




# Key Players in South China Sea (SCS)



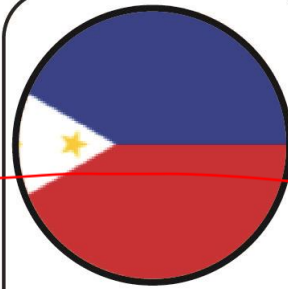
**China:** It claims the biggest share, maintaining its right to almost 90 per cent of SCS, occupying all of the Paracel Islands and nine reefs in the Spratly's.



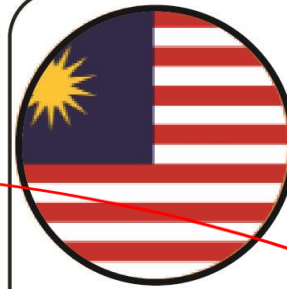
**Taiwan:** With their shared history, Taiwan's broad claims to the area reflect those of China's.



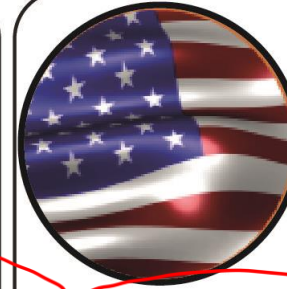
**Vietnam:** It has actively ruled over both the Paracels and the Spratlys since the 17th Century.



**The Philippines:** China's claims overlap with the Philippines' exclusive economic zone, which Manila calls the West Philippine Sea.



**Malaysia and Brunei:** Argue the areas they claim fall within their Exclusive Economic Zones, as defined by the UN Convention on the Laws of the Sea (UNCLOS).



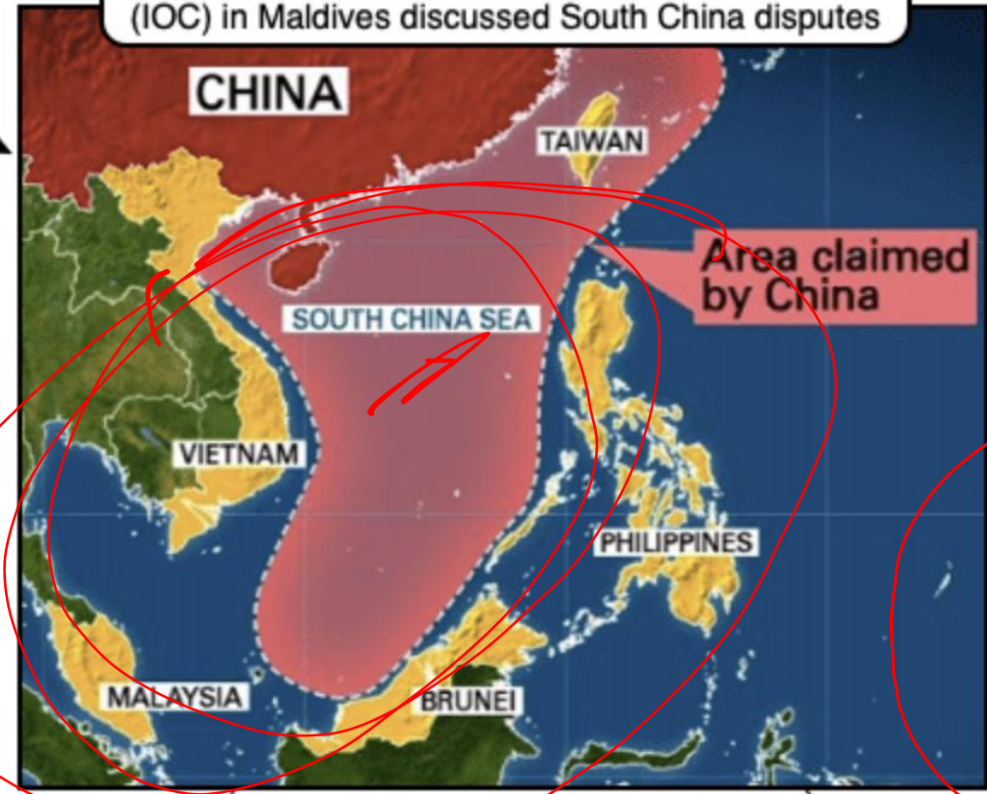
**The US:** has no territorial rights, but it has become a significant figure conducting freedom of navigation exercises.



# South China Sea

## Context

Recently, Indian Ocean Conference (IOC) in Maldives discussed South China disputes



The Philippines, Vietnam, China, Brunei, Taiwan and Malaysia hold different, sometimes overlapping, territorial claims over the sea, based on various accounts of history and geography

Beijing outlines the area it claims in the South China Sea with a **nine-dash line**

It stretches as far as 2,000km from the Chinese mainland, reaching waters close to Indonesia and Malaysia

It is violative of the principle of Exclusive Economic Zones

US has wide-ranging security commitments in East Asia, and is allied with several of the countries bordering the South China Sea

It is a vital trade route in the global supply chain, used by American companies who produce goods in the region

Accordingly, it has emerged as a flashpoint in China-US relations in Asia

It is a key commercial thoroughfare connecting Asia with Europe and Africa

## Importance

huge reserves of resources such as  
oil  
natural gas  
fisheries



# Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024

- 
- The Joint Committee on the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024 adopted its report by a majority vote, clearing the way for the government to move the Bill during the upcoming Budget Session of Parliament.

## What is a Waqf Board?

Established in: The concept of Waqf Boards was formalized under the **Waqf Act, 1954**, and further strengthened by the **Waqf Act, 1995**. (It is statutory body)

Governed by: The Ministry of Minority Affairs, Government of India, oversees the functioning of Waqf Boards.



Charities

---


• **Functions and Powers:**

- **Administration:** Manages and supervises Waqf properties.
- **Recovery:** Recovers lost or encroached Waqf properties.
- **Transfer:** Sanctions the transfer of immovable Waqf properties through sale, gift, mortgage, exchange, or lease.
- **Appointment:** Appoints custodians to ensure Waqf revenues are used for designated purposes.
- **Legal Authority:** Can sue and be sued in court.





- **Board and Members:**

- **Chairperson:** Appointed by the state government.
  - **Members:** Include Muslim legislators, parliamentarians, members of the state Bar Council, Islamic scholars, and **mutawalis (managers)** of Waqfs with an annual income of ₹1 lakh and above.
  - **Central Waqf Council (CWC):** Established in 1964 to oversee and advise state-level Waqf Boards.
- 

## Proposed Amendments in the 2024 Bill:

### Inclusion of Non-Muslim Members:

- Mandates at least two non-Muslim members in the **Central Waqf Council** and **State Waqf Boards**.
- Allows non-Muslim members to form a majority in these bodies.



Removal of Waqf by User: Eliminates the concept of **Waqf by User**, which recognized properties used for religious or charitable purposes over time as Waqf.



District Collector's Role: Grants District Collectors the authority to determine ownership of disputed properties and update revenue records.



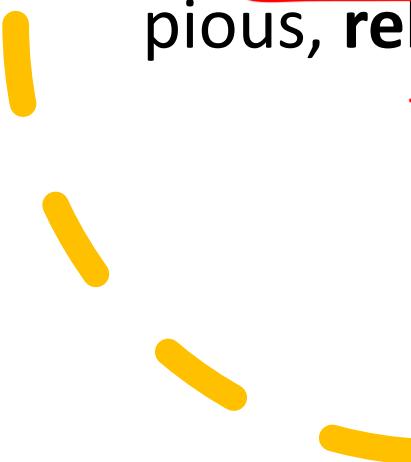
Composition of Tribunals: Removes the requirement for an expert in Muslim law from Waqf Tribunals.


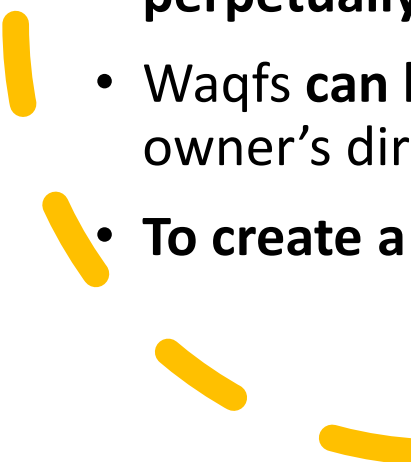



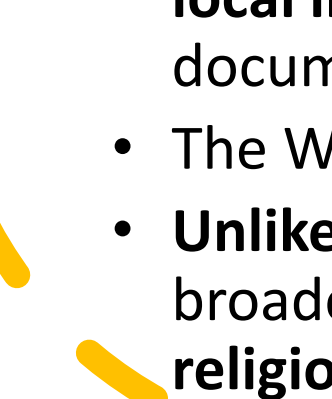
Appeals Process: Allows direct appeals to High Courts against Tribunal decisions, removing the finality of Tribunal rulings.





- **About Waqf:**

- Under the Waqf Act of 1954, a Waqf refers to a **property dedicated in the name of God for religious and charitable purposes.**
  - **Legally, it is the permanent dedication by a Muslim of any movable or immovable property for purposes recognised by Muslim law as pious, religious, or charitable.**
- 

- 
- A Waqf can be **established through a deed** or instrument, or a **property** can be **considered a Waqf** if it **has been used for religious or charitable purposes** over a **long period**.
  - The proceeds from a Waqf typically fund educational institutions, graveyards, mosques, and shelter homes.
  - **Once a property is designated as a Waqf, it becomes non-transferable** and is **detained perpetually** as a **charitable act toward God**, essentially transferring ownership to God.
  - Waqfs **can be either public**, serving charitable ends, **or private**, benefiting the property owner's direct descendants.
  - **To create a Waqf, one must be of sound mind and hold valid ownership** of the property.
- 

- 
- The **creator of a Waqf**, known as the Waqif, **does not have to be a Muslim**, as long as they profess belief in Islamic principles.
  - **How is a Waqf governed?**
    - Waqfs in India are regulated by the **Waqf Act, 1995**.
    - A survey commissioner lists all properties declared as Waqf by conducting **local investigations**, summoning witnesses, and requisitioning public documents.
    - The Waqf is **managed by a mutawali**, who acts as a **supervisor**.
    - **Unlike trusts** established under the Indian Trusts Act, 1882, which can serve broader purposes and be dissolved by the board, **Waqfs are specifically for religious and charitable uses** and are **intended to be perpetual**.
- 

Team Initiative

- 
- The Ministry of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) has launched the Trade Enablement and Marketing (TEAM) initiative to boost digital commerce for MSMEs.
- 





What is the TEAM Initiative?



The Trade Enablement and Marketing (TEAM) initiative is a government scheme designed to help MSMEs adopt digital commerce by leveraging the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC).



Ministry: Ministry of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME). Scheme Under:



It has been launched under the “Raising and Accelerating MSME Productivity (RAMP)” Programme.



- **Aim:**

- To empower MSMEs by integrating them into the **digital commerce ecosystem**.
- To promote **inclusivity** by ensuring **50% participation** of women-led businesses.
- To provide MSMEs with access to **digital storefronts, payment solutions, and logistics support**.

- 



### Targets:

- Onboard **5 lakh MSMEs** onto the ONDC network.
- Conduct **150+ workshops** in **tier 2 and 3 cities**, focusing on MSME clusters, women-led, and SC/ST-led businesses.

Implementation Partner: National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC).

### Budget and Duration:

- **Budget:** ₹277.35 crore.
- **Duration:** Three years (2025-2028).

A large satellite dish antenna is positioned on a dark, flat landscape under a starry night sky. The dish is white and mounted on a complex metal structure. The sky is a deep blue and black, filled with numerous stars and the faint, glowing band of the Milky Way galaxy. The overall scene is dark and atmospheric, suggesting a remote or high-altitude location.

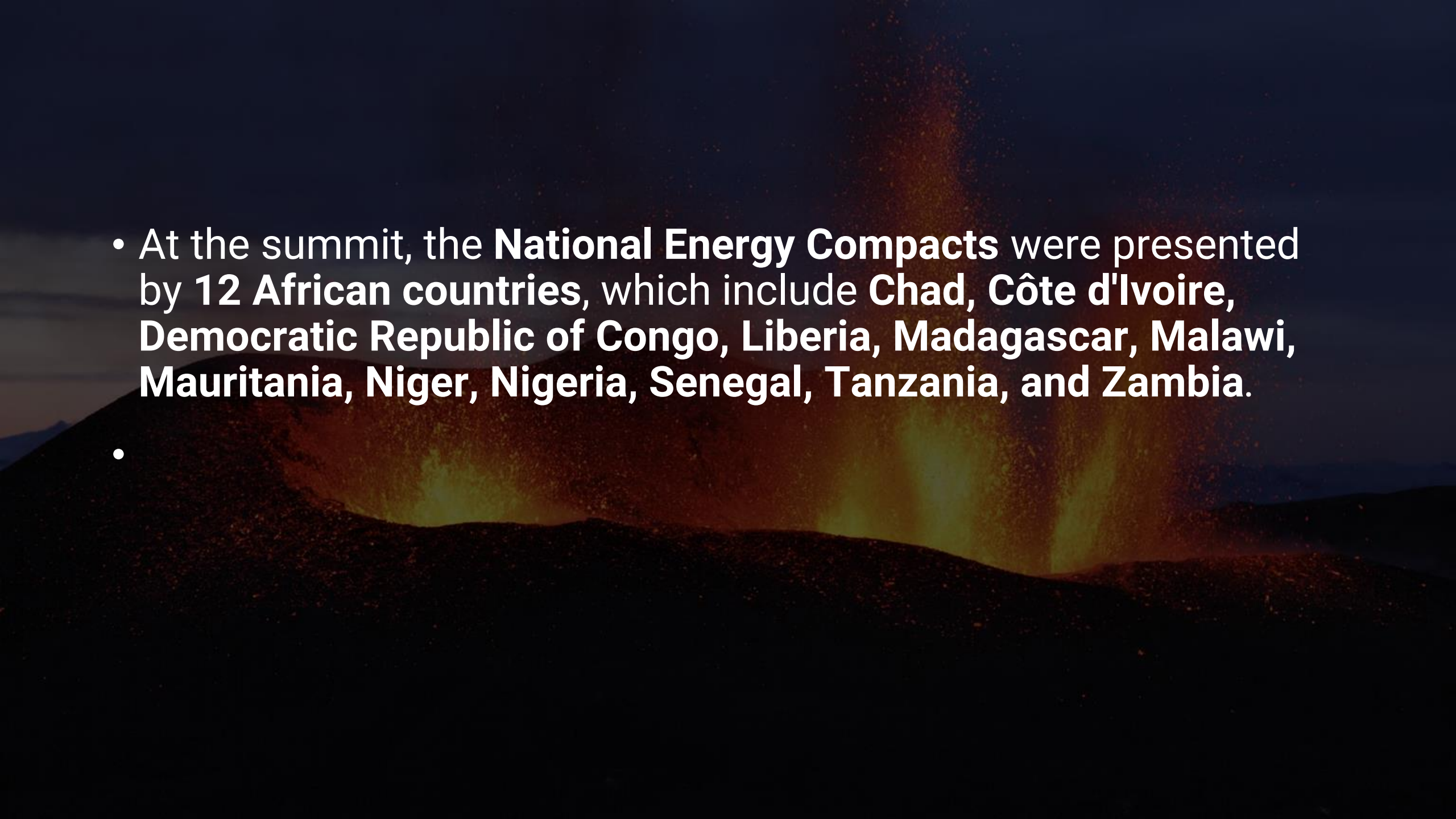
# Mission 300 Africa Energy Summit

SDG 7

The Mission 300 Africa Energy Summit, held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania aiming to accelerate energy access across Africa.

Africa Energy Summit hosted by the Government of Tanzania, African Union, African Development Bank, and the World Bank.

The summit focuses on the Mission 300 initiative, which aims to provide electricity access to 300 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa by 2030.

- 
- At the summit, the **National Energy Compacts** were presented by **12 African countries**, which include **Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, and Zambia.**

-

# Mahatma Gandhi Martyr Day

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50 Feb  
15 Feb  
3  
23<sup>rd</sup> Mar Bilkal Jov  
19 May  
34  
1952  
4  
15 May

Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid homage to Mahatma Gandhi on his 77th death anniversary.

7  
21 Oct

Martyr Day Mahatma Gandhi is revered as the Father of the Nation and he was the architect of India's freedom struggle.

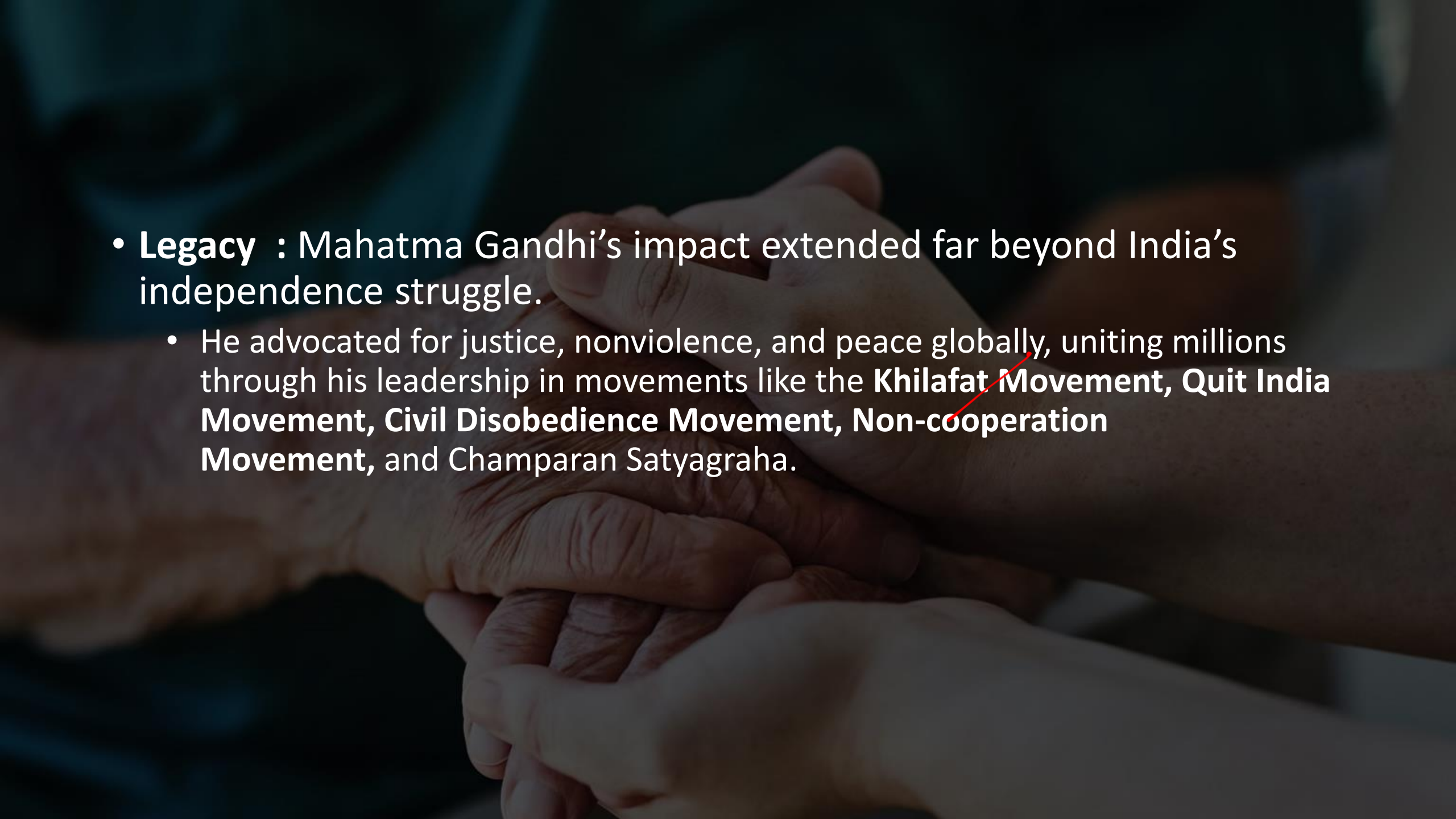


Bal Gangadhar Tilak  
1904

He was the most prominent face of India's freedom movement.


He was assassinated on January 30, 1908 by Nathuram Godse.

The day has been observed as **Martyrs' Day**, also known as '**Shaheed Diwas**' or '**Sarvodaya Day**,' to honour him and countless others who sacrificed their lives for India's freedom.

- 
- **Legacy** : Mahatma Gandhi's impact extended far beyond India's independence struggle.
    - He advocated for justice, nonviolence, and peace globally, uniting millions through his leadership in movements like the **Khilafat Movement, Quit India Movement, Civil Disobedience Movement, Non-cooperation Movement**, and Champaran Satyagraha.



# SEBI's "When-Listed" Platform

- 
- The “**when-listed**” platform proposed by **SEBI** is a significant **regulatory initiative** aimed at **curbing grey market trading** and ensuring a transparent and structured mechanism for trading IPO shares before their official listing.
  - **What is the Grey Market?**
  - The grey market refers to the **unofficial trading of securities**, particularly shares, before they are officially listed on stock exchanges.

## Key Aspects of the “When-Listed” Platform

**Regulated Pre-Listing Trading:** This platform will allow investors to trade IPO shares after allotment but before official listing, bridging the **gap between T+1 (allotment day) and T+3 (listing day)**.

**Price Discovery Before Listing:** The “when-listed” price may serve as a pre-listing indicator of how the stock might perform on the listing day.

- Helps in better investment decisions for both retail and institutional investors.

**Shorter Settlement Periods (T+0, T+1):** This aligns with SEBI’s broader push toward faster trade settlements, such as the recent introduction of the T+0 settlement cycle for select stocks.

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# Word of the day

## **Calumnious:**

harmful and often untrue; tending to discredit or malign

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**Synonyms:** defamatory, denigrating, slanderous

---

**Usage:** *Those vile accusations against him proved to be false and calumnious.*

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**Pronunciation:** newsth.live/  
calumniouspro

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**International Phonetic Alphabet:** /ka.lum.ni'o:.sus/

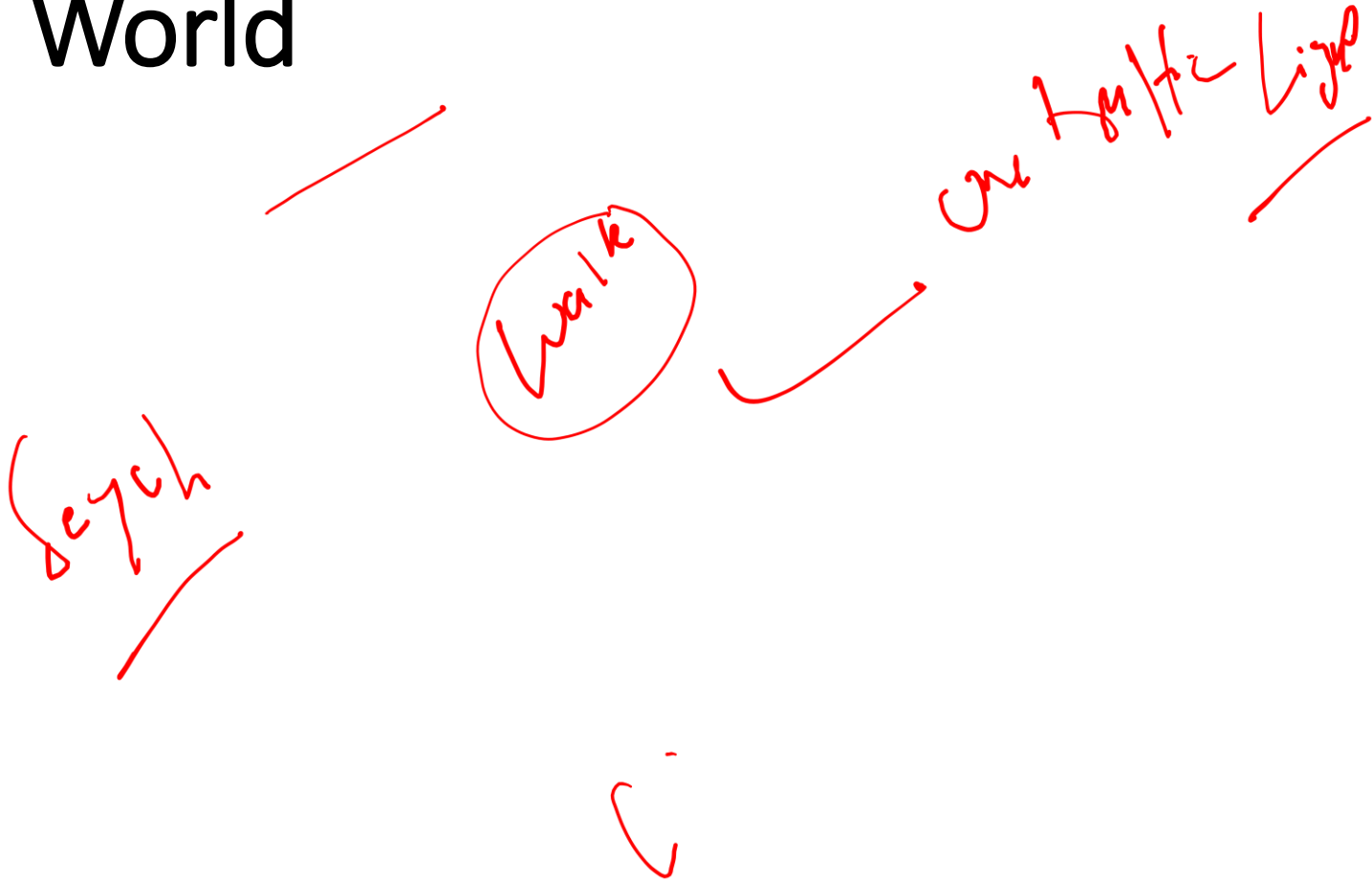
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Fun fact

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# Victoria – One of the Smallest Capitals in the World







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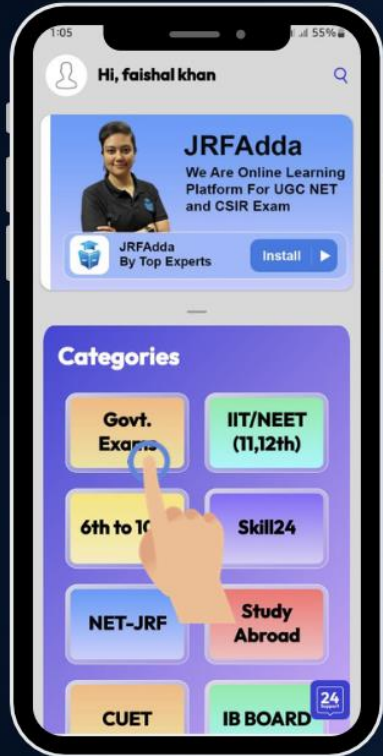
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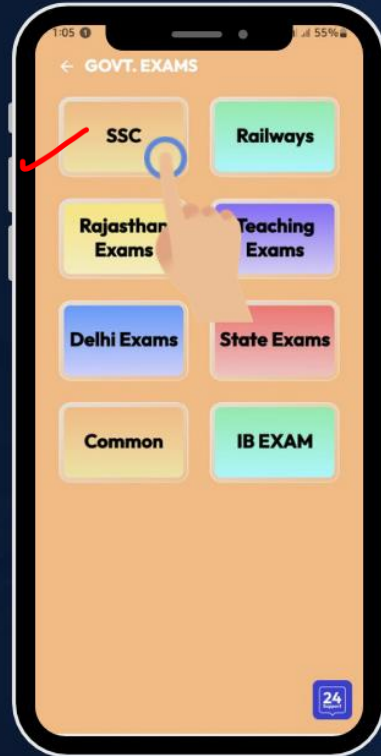
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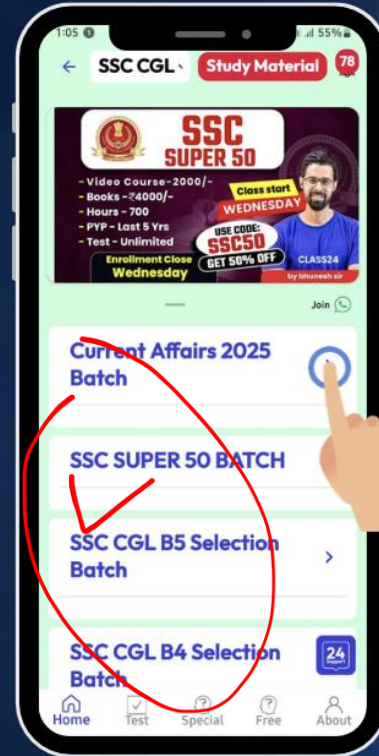
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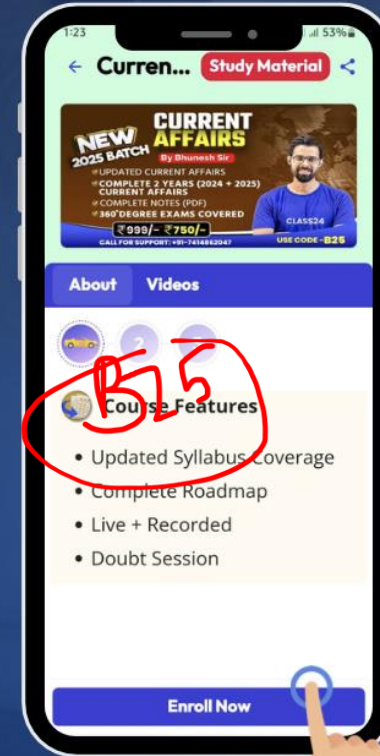
# Step 2




# Step 3



# Step 4





Thank you  
guys.

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