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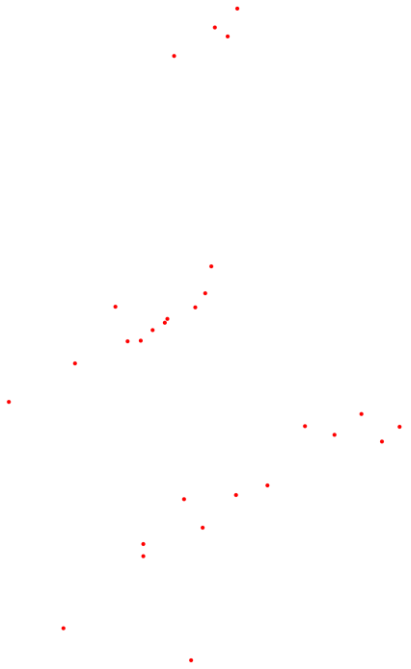


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B5 | History Introduction

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B5 | Partnership Part-3

2025-04-02 at 12:00 PM

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The weak can never forgive.
Forgiveness is the attribute of the **strong**.

—— *Mahatma Gandhi* ——

AZQUOTES

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A Telangana model is coming up: Deputy CM
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Modi praises RSS at its headquarters
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Three 'Cs' that haunt the sector in India
'Consequences of government's agenda'
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THRILLING WIN
Nitish and Hasaranga shine as RR pips CSK
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INSIDE

Strike a nuke deal or face bombings, says Trump

ISTANBUL
U.S. President Donald Trump on Sunday threatened Iran with bombings and secondary tariffs if Tehran did not come to an agreement with Washington over its nuclear programme. » PAGE 14

Netanyahu tells Hamas leaders to disarm and leave

JERUSALEM
Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday offered to let Hamas leaders leave Gaza but demanded the group abandon its arms, as Israel kept up its bombardment of the Palestinian territory. Hamas is open to relinquishing control but has warned its weapons are a "red line". » PAGE 14

'11 billion cubic metres of water saved in 8 years'

NEW DELHI
Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the Mann Ki Baat, on Sunday pitched for rainwater harvesting and recycling of waste for a sustainable future, noting 11 billion cubic metres of water conserved in eight years through recharge structures. » PAGE 6

THE HINDU
grows its readers on the occasion of
ID-UL-FITR

One dead, three injured as train derails in Odisha

11 coaches of Bangalore-Kamakhyia Express go off track; one woman passenger seriously injured; impact was minimal as train slowed down after crossing a bridge; Railways announces inquiry

The Hindu Bureau
BURLINGAME, CALIF.

One person was killed and three sustained injuries when the Bangalore-Kamakhyia AC Superfast Express (train no. 12553) derailed near the Neragandi railway station, 10 km from Cuttack, in Odisha on Sunday.

Eleven coaches of the train bound for Kamakhyia in Guwahati went off the track at 11.54 a.m. As the train had slowed down after crossing a bridge over the Mahanadi, the impact on passengers was minimal, officials said.

East Coast Railway said the deceased had been identified as Suvendu Kumar. One woman passenger suffered grievous injury,



In shock: Passengers being helped out of the Bangalore-Kamakhyia Express in Cuttack, Odisha on Sunday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

while two men were being treated for simple injuries, the Railway said in a statement.

Ex gratia announced
The Indian Railways announced that the Commissioner of Railway Safety would hold a detailed inquiry into the accident.

transport to reach their destinations. The intense heat and sweltering conditions worsened their ordeal.

To manage the crisis, personnel from the Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force and the National Disaster Response Force were swiftly deployed. Ashok Kumar Mishra, Chief Public Relations Officer of the Railway, stated that a special train, identical in composition to the derailed train, was arranged to ensure the safe journey of affected passengers.

"Efforts are under way to restore normalcy to the affected routes as soon as possible. Safety protocols have been strictly followed during the rescue operation," the railway said. In wake of the accident, more than 20 trains were diverted.

'Gudi Padwa' revelry



Revelers at a procession on the occasion of Gudi Padwa, marking the Marathi New Year, in Girgaon, Mumbai, on Sunday. BHASKAR KOGHE

Fifty Maoists surrender in Bijapur; CM hails State policy

Shubhomoy Sikdar
RAIPUR

Fifty alleged Maoists — 14 of whom carried a cumulative bounty of ₹68 lakh on their heads — surrendered before the security forces in Bijapur district of Chhattisgarh on Sunday, the police said.

Inspector-General of Police (Bastar Range) P. Sundaraj said that this was the highest number in terms of surrenders in large numbers, adding that 26 Maoists surrendered on an occasion last month, also in Bijapur.

Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai credited the State government's recently announced surrender-cum-rehabilitation policy for

Fourteen of those surrendered carried a cumulative bounty of ₹68 lakh on their heads, say police

the surrenders. "Chief Minister Shri Vishnu Deo Sai has congratulated the security forces on the surrender of 50 Naxalites simultaneously in Bijapur district. He said that the positive results of the new Surrender and Rehabilitation Policy-2025 of the Chhattisgarh government are now clearly visible on the ground," said an official statement.

The policy includes financial incentives in addition to provision for housing and healthcare for

surrendering Maoists.

Mr. Sai said that people trapped in the vicious cycle of Naxalim were now leaving the gun and returning to the mainstream of society. "Our government is ready for the revival of every person who leaves the red terror and chooses the path of peace," he said.

Among the 50 who surrendered in the latest instance, a majority are not armed cadres, Mr. Sundaraj said. They include those living in the interior villages providing support to the underground Maoists. He said the surrenders were also an outcome of the operations and opening of camps in the dense Maoist-affected areas.

S.R. Praveen
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

With a right-wing backlash over what appears to be references to the 2002 Gujarat pogrom in the Malayalam film *Empuraan*, actor Mohanlal on Sunday expressed "regret for the distress caused," and confirmed that "voluntary cuts" were being made to the film.

The actor and the rest of the crew backtracked even as the issue transformed into a full-blown political controversy with Kerala (Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan) and Leader of the Opposition V.D. Satheesan expressing solidarity with the makers and Bharatiya Janata Party State presi-



Caught in a storm: The cast and crew of the film at a promotional event ahead of its release. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

dent Rajeev Chandrasekhar vowing never to watch the film.

"It is my duty as an artist to ensure that none of my film harbours hatred towards any political movement, ideology, or religious sect... The *Empu-*

Rebel NUG in Myanmar accuses junta of attacks in earthquake-hit region

Kallol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

Myanmar's resistance forces on Sunday accused the military junta of launching attacks on rebel targets in the earthquake-hit areas in the Sagaying region and Shan State.

According to sources in the rebel National Unity Government (NUG), which had called for a "pause" in fighting, the junta's aircraft carried out bombing raids in various locations on Sunday close to the epicentre of Friday's earthquake. Among the areas that were bombed included parts that are controlled by the Ta'ang National Liberation Army, one of the several armed groups that have been fighting the junta since the coup in 2021.

The announcement of the "pause" in fighting made on Saturday was unilateral and the Myanmar's junta has not acknowledged it officially. The call for the "pause" however is unlikely to be relevant for the Rakhine State where the Arakan Army is fighting the junta's forces.

On Saturday, in a major development, the NUG had called for a "pause" in fighting against the military junta citing the widespread destruction caused by Friday's earthquake. Announcing the suspension of attacks in nearly four-year-old conflict, NUG's "acting president" Duwa Laik urged the international community to send relief material to the group's control. The junta, in turn, said the People's Defence Force (PDF), the armed wing of the NUG, will maintain ceasefire for two weeks starting from Sunday.

Two-weeks pause
"To facilitate rescue operations for people trapped in the debris of collapsed buildings structures, and



Rescue tasks: Rescuers on Sunday work at the site of a building that collapsed in Friday's earthquake in Mandalay, Myanmar. AP

Indian Army's first relief team reaches Mandalay

Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

The first relief and rescue detachment of 10 personnel who are part of the Indian Army's High-Pressure Unit hospital team under

workplaces, the Ministry of Defence of the National Unity Government (NUG) announced that the People's Defence Force (PDF) will implement a two-week pause in offensive military operations, except for defensive actions, in earthquake-affected areas starting March 30," the NUG announced on Saturday.

"We thank our friends for their solidarity. Please - ASEAN, neighbours, UN, international community - urgently deploy cross-border assistance and equipment to the NUG and our ethnic and CSO partners to ensure it reaches all in need. Worst hit areas must be prioritised," said the "acting president".

Though armed resistance by Ethnic Armed Organisations (EAOs) is a decades-old problem, the resistance turned into an intractable conflict after the junta took power in a coup on 1 February 2021.

The NUG which controls large parts of the Sagaying region of Myanmar announced that during the ceasefire period, the PDF and the People's Defence Teams (PDT) will carry out "rescue and relief operations" in the areas affected by the earthquake.

In a message, the NUG announced that at least 369 people have died in the earthquake in the area under its control and around 223 persons are missing in the aftermath of the earthquake. The number of the injured is around 1,822.

The NUG has further informed that it has started carrying out urgent relief and repair operations in Sagaying region. "Our commitment to helping our people remains unwavering through every possible means. Every helping hand, every voice, and every action matters," said NUG's Prime Minister Mahn Winn Khaing Thamm.

India is among the first responders to send relief material to Myanmar.

Actor Mohanlal apologises over *Empuraan* row; CM, Opposition leader express support to artists

S.R. Praveen

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

With a right-wing backlash over what appears to be references to the 2002 Gujarat pogrom in the Malayalam film *Empuraan*, actor Mohanlal on Sunday expressed “regret for the distress caused”, and confirmed that “voluntary cuts” were being made to the film.

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Caught in a storm: The cast and crew of the film at a promotional event ahead of its release. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

dent Rajeev Chandrasekhar vowing never to watch the film.

“It is my duty as an artist to ensure that none of my films harbours hatred towards any political movement, ideology, or religious sect... The *Empu-*

raan team and I sincerely regret the distress caused to my loved ones, and with the realisation that the responsibility for it lies with all of us who worked behind the film, we have decided together to remove such themes from the

film,” Mohanlal said in a Facebook post.

Mr. Vijayan, who said he had gone to watch the film on Saturday, called for a united stand to protect the right to make films, to watch them, and to agree or disagree with them.

“It does not augur well for democracy for communal elements to destroy a work of art,” Mr. Vijayan said in a Facebook post.

Mr. Satheesan accused the Sangh Parivar of cowardice for unleashing threats and insults to forcibly change the content of a work of art. “Do not forget that no matter how much you try to cover it up, historical truths can never be erased,” he said.

Leaders of the BJP’s Ker-

ala unit said on Saturday that the party had not initiated any campaign against the film.

The RSS mouthpiece *Organiser* published two articles against the film, accusing the makers of “exploiting post-Godhra riots to push an anti-Hindu political agenda” and calling *Empuraan* a “disturbing, divisive tale disguised as cinema.”

Although the re-edited version of the film was supposed to release only by Wednesday, the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) is learnt to have directed the regional office to speed up the process. The revised version is expected in theatres by Tuesday.



L2 Empuraan Box Office Collection Day 6: Mohanlal, Prithviraj Sukumaran's Film Crosses Rs 250 Crore Worldwide

Curated By : [Grace Cyril](#)

Last Updated: April 02, 2025, 14:23 IST

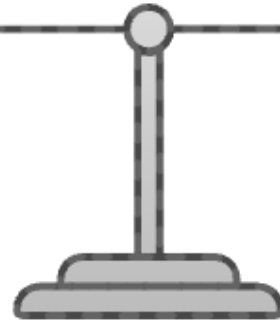
संवेदनशीलता के लिए
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मोहनलाल का बयान



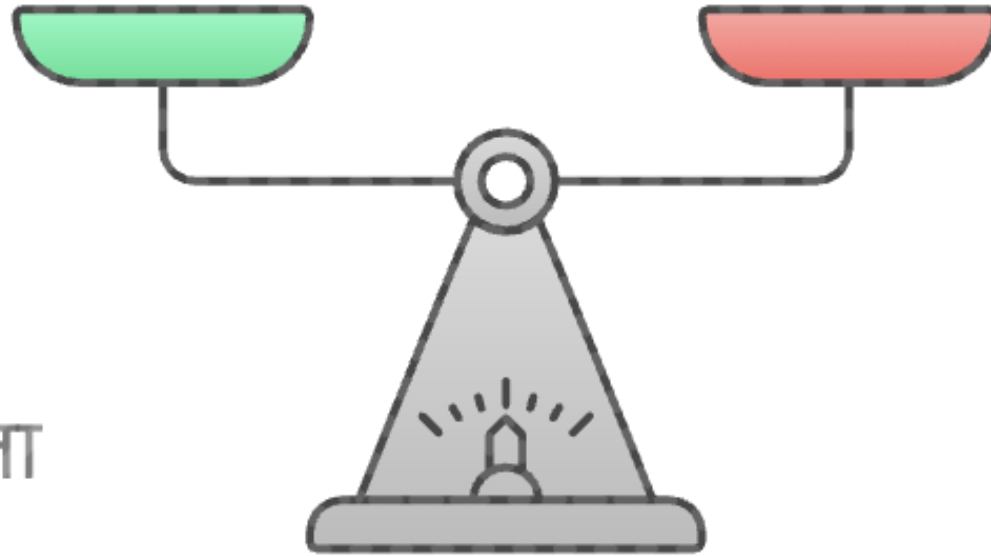
फिल्म में कटौती

फिल्म विवादों को प्रबंधित करने के लिए संवेदनशीलता बनाम कार्रवाई।

समर्थन में
रचनात्मकता



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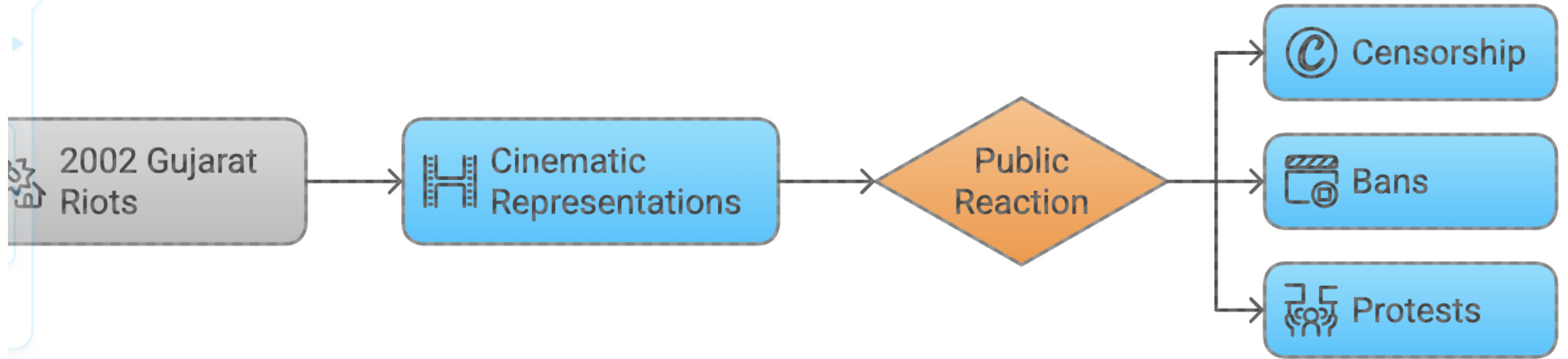


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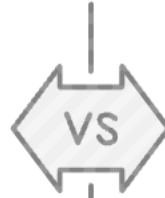
राजनीतिक समर्थन और आलोचना के बीच संतुलन

Representation and Controversy of Gujarat Riots



Cinematic Depictions of Gujarat Riots

Pros



Cons



Historical
Awareness



Censorship



Artistic
Expression



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Social
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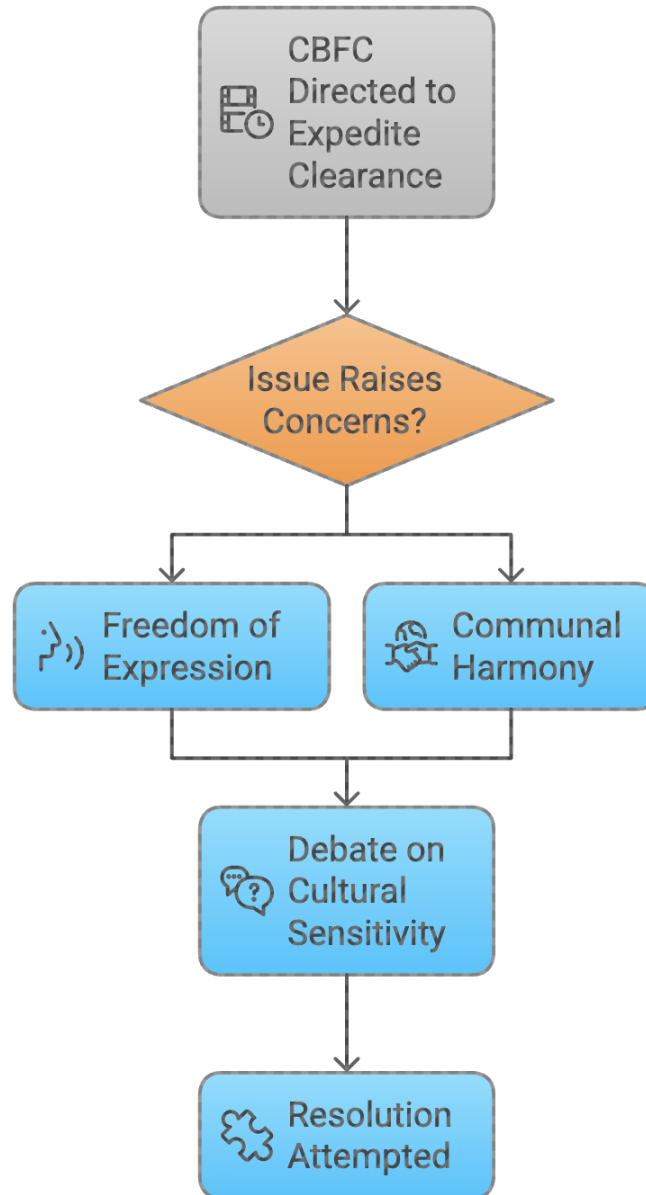


Political
Controversy



Emotional
Distress

Balancing Freedom of Expression and Communal Harmony



Next & Comment

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

The emergency appeal by the IFRC for the Myanmar quake

115 In 5 million. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the world's largest humanitarian network, said the country suffered extensive destruction due to the 7.7 magnitude quake near Mandalay, and that needs were growing by the hour.

Number of terrorists killed in drone strikes by Pakistani forces

12 Nine civilians also lost their lives when security forces conducted drone attacks on militant hideouts in the restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan. The "counter-terrorism operation" targeted terrorist hideouts in the remote hilly area of Katlang, in the Mardan district.

Magnitude of offshore quake near the Pacific island nation of Tonga

7.1 The shallow quake hit 90 kilometres (56 miles) southeast of the village of Pangai, with warnings also extending to the island nation of Niue. The Tonga national disaster agency issued a warning to residents to stay away from beaches and shorelines.

The increase in India's coal imports in the month of January

1.23 In per cent. The country's coal import rose marginally to 21.37 million tonnes (MT) in January. The coal import was 21.11 MT in the corresponding month of the previous fiscal. Of the total in January 2025, more than coal imports stood at 12.33 MT.

The number of coaches derailed in Odisha's Cuttack

11 An express train derailed in Odisha's Cuttack district. Eleven SMVT Bengaluru-Kamakhyā AC Express coaches derailed at Nirgundi near Manguli at 11.54 am. Chief Public Relations Officer (CPRO) of the East Coast Railway Ashok Kumar Mishra said.

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What is status of the SpaceX Mars mission?

When will the uncrewed Mars landing mission take place, according to SpaceX CEO Elon Musk? Will refuelling be possible in space? Is there a conflict of interest between Mr. Musk's role in government and his position as CEO? Why are scientists at NASA worried?

EXPLAINER

Franciszek Smarski

In March 15, Elon Musk, the CEO of SpaceX, announced that an uncrewed Mars landing mission will take place by the end of next year. The operation is expected to feature Optimus, a robot developed by Tesla — another company owned by Mr. Musk — as its passenger. "If those landings go well, then human landings may start as soon as 2029, although 2031 is more likely," Mr. Musk stated on X. The billionaire entrepreneur appears determined to achieve this milestone using SpaceX's reusable super heavy-lift launch vehicle, Starship.

Is it possible? The project has faced multiple setbacks in recent months, including two critical Starship test flight failures, or as Mr. Musk refers to them, "rapid unscheduled disassemblies". Despite this, he has not postponed the planned date for SpaceX's Mars mission. Originally announced in September 2024, the plan faces technical and logistical challenges, leading experts to question its feasibility.

What are some of the challenges? One of the main concerns is whether SpaceX will be able to develop and produce an auxiliary tanker spacecraft in time and successfully refuel Starship in orbit. To reach Mars, Starship's second stage must traverse approximately 5.5 crore kilometres in space. Timing is crucial, as every 26 months, Earth and Mars reach a "launch window" — a period when the two planets are closest, allowing for the most efficient space travel. If SpaceX fails to launch within this window, the mission could be delayed by more than two years.

Currently, Starship has only demonstrated its ability to reach Low Earth Orbit (LEO). Its fuel storage



Beyond the skies: SpaceX Starship lifts off from Starbase in Boca Chica, Texas, for its sixth flight test on November 19, 2024. AFP

capacity of 4,200 tonnes of propellant is insufficient for a Mars journey. To address this, SpaceX announced in April 2024 that it would use LEO tanker spacecraft to refuel Starship mid-flight. However, this plan has yet to be demonstrated, and there is no clear evidence that development is underway. With only 20 months until the next launch window, it is doubtful whether anyone can design, construct, test, and deploy these tankers in time, said Daniel Dumbacher, former Deputy Associate Administrator of NASA's Human Exploration and Operations Mission Directorate, during a U.S. Congressional hearing in February. Beyond the issue of refuelling, there is also uncertainty over whether SpaceX can manufacture and launch enough tanker spacecraft in a short time frame, given the complexity of in-orbit refuelling. This type of refuelling involves the

transfer of super-cooled liquid oxygen and methane from a full tank to an empty one, operating under extreme pressure between machinery and the vacuum of space; a feat which has never been attempted before. SpaceX would need to launch and dock Starship's multiple tankers in quick succession to offset fuel evaporation, adding another layer of difficulty to the mission.

How has SpaceX fared so far? SpaceX has repeatedly demonstrated its ability to accomplish seemingly impossible feats. The successful deployment of reusable Falcon 9 rocket boosters and the development of the Dragon capsule have proven its capacity to design spacecraft that can withstand the harsh conditions of space. SpaceX's Starbase facility in Texas gives it a competitive edge, with the company

reportedly manufacturing one Raptor engine per day and assembling the second stage of Starship within weeks. These production capabilities could prove essential in developing the required tanker spacecraft.

How will SpaceX land on Mars? Given that Mr. Musk envisions Starship as a vessel for human settlement, and that the 2026 mission will carry Tesla's Optimus robot, it appears likely that the spacecraft will attempt a surface landing. However, the current version of Starship lacks features necessary for landing, such as retractable landing gear similar to Falcon. While Starship has successfully landed on Earth, this was only possible with the "Chopsticks" vertical catching system, which does not exist on Mars.

Additionally, Starship's high failure rate in test flights suggests that further refinements are needed before it is considered reliable enough for such a critical mission.

What has NASA said? The Guardian reports that senior NASA officials are worried about potential conflicts of interest between SpaceX and the Department of Governmental Efficiency (DOGE), an advisory body to U.S. President Donald Trump, which Mr. Musk heads. DOGE has been pushing for extensive federal budget cuts, leading to the shutdown of NASA's Office of Technology, Policy, and Strategy, as well as the Office of the Chief Scientist. With these cuts, speculation has grown that more funding could be directed towards SpaceX's contracts with NASA, raising concerns about Mr. Musk's dual role as a government adviser and private contractor. While Mr. Musk is known for making bold claims, a successful Mars landing would solidify SpaceX's dominance in space industry. However, whether the billionaire can overcome the technical, logistical, and political challenges ahead remains to be seen. Franciszek Smarski is an intern at The Hindu.

THE GIST

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What is the controversy over the Bodhi Gaya temple?

Why are Buddhist monks protesting near the Bodhi Gaya Mahabodhi Mahavihara? What does the Bodhi Gaya Temple Act (BTA), 1949 entail? When was a Hindu temple established?

Ziva Us Salam

Beginning February, nearly 100 Buddhist monks under the All India Buddhist Forum (AIBF) have been protesting, first at the Bodhi Gaya's Mahabodhi Temple or Mahavihara, and later a little down the road, demanding a repeal of the Bodhi Gaya Temple Act (BTA), 1949. The AIBF has support from prominent Buddhist bodies, and has submitted a memorandum to the Bihar government. The Bodhi Gaya is one of the four sacred sites of Buddhism; the other three being Buddha's birthplace Lumbini, Sarnath where he gave his first sermon and Kushinagar where he attained parinirvana.

Have there been protests before? In November 2023, Buddhist monks held a rally in Gaya and submitted a

memorandum to the Central and State governments. As it failed to have the desired effect, the monks scaled up the protest and held a rally in Patna last year to press for repealing the Act. Back in 2012, monks had filed a writ petition before the Supreme Court to repeal the Act. The petition is yet to be heard.

What is the Act? The BTA established an eight-member management committee having equal number of Buddhists and Hindus. The Act made the local district magistrate an ex-officio chairperson of the committee. As the district magistrate hailed from the majority community, it translated to a Hindu majority on the committee. The district magistrate hailed from the Buddhist bodies. Ever since then, various Buddhist bodies have been raising their voice intermittently for gaining autonomy over the Bodhi Gaya temple, which they

call the Bodhi Gaya Mahavihara.

What do the annals say? Noted poet Edwin Arnold in his well-known poem, "The Light of Asia" talks about Gautama Siddhartha's enlightenment under the Bodhi tree. Bodhi Gaya was then described as the Mecca of Buddhism, and in many ways popularised Buddhism in the West. However, both Gaya's claim to fame goes much further back in time. In the third century, Mauryan Emperor Ashoka worshipped the Bodhi tree and built the temple there. From the time of Ashoka to the Palas, the Bodhi temple continued to be a Buddhist place of worship and a site of pilgrimage. Chinese traveller Hsuen Tsang visited it in 629 AD during the reign of Harshavardhana. Incidentally, Hsuen Tsang called it a Buddhist site, and it is said to have found only Buddhist relics here save for a statue of Avalokitesvara.

Things changed with the invasion of Bakhtiyar Khalji in the 13th century. The invasion ended the Pala rule, and this began the decline of Buddhism. During Akbar's reign, in 1590, a Hindu monk established the Bodhi Gaya trust. With this the temple lapsed into the hands of the Hindu community. Following Independence, the Bihar Assembly passed the BTA in 1949 and control of the temple was transferred from the Hindu head to the new management committee.

How has the government intervened? The BTA was passed by the Bihar government to resolve a festering dispute between the Buddhist and Hindu heads of the Mahabodhi temple for control over its name. The Buddha statue was unhappy at the stipulation that the district magistrate, who was then described as the chairman, could only assume leadership if he was from the Hindu community. It changed in 2013 so for the State government amended the rule and inserted provisions for the ex-officio chairman to be of any faith. In the early 1990s, then Chief Minister of Bihar, the Yashov, drafted the Bodhi Gaya Mahavihara Bill to replace the BTA. It was supposed to hand over the management of the temple to the Buddhist community. The Bill prohibited Hindu marriages near the temple and Hindu marriages inside the temple. However, the Bill went into cold storage.

THE GIST

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What is the Act?

The BTA established an eight-member management committee having equal number of Buddhists and Hindus. The Act made the local district magistrate an ex-officio chairperson of the committee. As the district magistrate hailed from the majority community, it translated to a Hindu majority on the committee, something which was resented by Buddhist bodies. Ever since then, various Buddhist bodies have been raising their voice intermittently for gaining autonomy over the Bodh Gaya temple, which they

call the Bodh Gaya Mahavihara.

What do the annals say?

Noted poet Edwin Arnold in his well-known poem, 'The Light of Asia' talks about Gautam Siddharth's enlightenment under the Bodhi tree. Bodh Gaya was then described as the Mecca of Buddhism, and in many ways popularised Buddhism in the West. However, Bodh Gaya's claim to fame goes much further back in time. In the third century, Mauryan Emperor Ashoka worshipped the Bodhi tree and built the temple there. From the time of Ashoka to the Palas, the Bodhi temple continued to be a Buddhist place of worship and a site of pilgrimage. Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang visited it in 629 AD during the reign of Harshavardhana. Incidentally, Hiuen Tsang called it a Buddhist site, and is said to have found only Buddhist relics here save for a statue of Avaloktishvara.

Things changed with the invasion of Bakhtiyar Khilji in the 13th century. The invasion ended the Pala rule, and thus began the decline of Buddhism. During Akbar's reign, in 1590, a Hindu monk established the Bodh Gaya mutt. With this the temple lapsed into the hands of the Hindu community. Following Independence, the Bihar Assembly passed the BTA in 1949 and control of the temple was transferred from the Hindu head to the new management committee.

How has the government intervened?

The BTA was passed by the Bihar government to resolve a festering dispute between the Buddhist and Hindu heads of the Mahabodhi temple for control over the same. The Buddhist side was unhappy at the stipulation that the district magistrate, who was the ex-officio chairman, could only assume leadership if he was from the Hindu community. It changed in 2013 after the State government amended the rule and inserted a provision for the ex-officio chairman to be of any faith.

In the early 1990s, then Chief Minister of Bihar Lalu Prasad Yadav, drafted the Bodh Gaya Mahavihara Bill to replace the BTA. It was supposed to hand over the management of the temple to the Buddhist community. The Bill prohibited idol immersions near the temple and Hindu marriages inside the temple. However, the Bill went into cold storage.

Bodh Gaya Temple Act Control

Pros



Cons



Full Buddhist control



Shared heritage



Cultural preservation



Potential conflict



Religious autonomy



Legal complexities



Community unity



Political implications



Historical significance



Economic impact

The Historical Journey of Bodh Gaya

3rd century BCE

Emperor Ashoka builds the original temple



13th century

Bakhtiyar Khilji's invasion leads to Buddhism's decline

1590

Hindu monk reestablishes the site as a Hindu mutt



Temple Management Committee

Members Composition

The committee consists of 4 Hindus and 4 Buddhists.

Chairperson Role

The district magistrate chairs the committee, often being Hindu.

Reason for Protest

The composition has led to protests among Buddhist communities.

Struggle for Control of Bodh Gaya Temple

1990s



Lalu Prasad Yadav proposes a Bill for Buddhist control

2013



Bihar government allows ex-officio chairman from any religion



Bodh Gaya's Role as a Global Buddhist Center

1

Key Buddhist site located in Bihar, India.

Geographical Importance

2

UNESCO site with strong international Buddhist ties.

Cultural Dimension

**Bodh Gaya's
Global
Significance**



'PEACE ALONG LOC'
Army asks Pakistan to honour 2021 pact
NEWS » PAGE 4

STAR BIDS ADIEU
Val Kilmer, known for Top Gun, Batman, dies aged 65
WORLD » PAGE 14

'GREAT OPPORTUNITY'
Sri Lankan Minister speaks on India ties
WORLD » PAGE 14

DATA POINT
Choosing a third language
Data show that Hindi and Sanskrit are preferred by default
OPINION » PAGE 9

RULING THE DAY
Siraj and Buttler star in GT's win over RCB
SPORT » PAGE 16

INSIDE

Stop work near UoH campus, HC tells Telangana
HYDERABAD
Telangana High Court on Wednesday instructed the State government to stop the ground levelling works and cutting of trees until Thursday on the 400 acres of land adjoining University of Hyderabad allotted to Telangana Industrial Infrastructure Corporation at Kancha Gachibowli. » PAGE 3

Doubts persist over Modi-Yunus meet in Bangkok
NEW DELHI
Ahead of the 6th summit of the BIMSTEC in Bangkok, all eyes are on whether PM Narendra Modi and Bangladesh's Chief Adviser Prof. Mohammed Yunus will meet in Bangkok on the sidelines of the BIMSTEC summit. Bangladesh's Foreign Secretary Jasim Uddin said on Wednesday that a meeting has been slated. » PAGE 4

Navy seizes 2,500 kg of narcotics in Indian Ocean
NEW DELHI
The Indian Navy frigate INS Turkush, deployed in the western Indian Ocean for maritime security, has seized over 2,500 kg of narcotics, the Navy said on Wednesday. On March 31, it received inputs from the Navy's P8I aircraft regarding suspicious vessels, the Navy said. » PAGE 4

Ensure hygiene, education in rural areas: SC
NEW DELHI
The SC remarked on Wednesday that ensuring education, hygiene, and healthcare was the most important path towards a robust rural India. A Bench headed by Justice Surya Kant made the observation while hearing a petition to set up at least one public library in every village. » PAGE 4

'Indian steel to be prioritised for govt. contracts'
NEW DELHI
India has revamped its procurement policy to curb surging steel imports that threaten domestic market stability. The new policy's rules prioritise indigenous produced steel for government contracts. » PAGE 12

LS passes Waqf Bill after a long debate

The Bill was passed after several amendments moved by the Opposition were negated through division of votes; Home Minister accuses Opposition of 'fear-mongering' for vote bank politics; Rijju asserts that the Bill was about 'property' and not 'religion'; Opposition calls the Bill 'unconstitutional', with AIMIM chief symbolically 'tearing' a copy

Sandeep Phukan
NEW DELHI
The Lok Sabha passed the Waqf (Amendment) Bill well past midnight on Wednesday after a marathon debate, with Home Minister Amit Shah categorically assuring the Muslim community that the new Bill does not interfere with their religious practices. The Home Minister also accused the Opposition of 'fear-mongering' for the sake of 'vote bank' politics. The debate, which started on Wednesday afternoon, went past midnight. The first clause of the Bill was passed with 288 MPs voting in favour and 222 against. The Bill was

passed after several key amendments moved by the Opposition were negated through division of votes. Making an intervention during the debate, Mr. Shah made it clear that a *mutawalli* or the manager/administrator of a Waqf and the *waqf* (donor) can only be from the Muslim community. Non-Muslims have been included in a Waqf Board or Council for administrative purposes and that too to ensure that any donation is being used for the purpose it is meant for, he added. "There is an attempt to spread confusion that this law will interfere with [Muslim] religious practices and the nature of donation. Such fear-mongering

is being done to create a vote bank," he said, adding, "Waqf or charitable endowment is religious, not the Waqf Board or Council." The Narendra Modi government runs on a very clear principle that we will not bring any law for vote bank," Mr. Shah said. The stage for a fierce exchange in the House was set after Minority Affairs Minister, Kiren Rijju moved the revised version of the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, the Unified Waqf Man-

agement Empowerment, Efficiency and Development Bill (UMEEED). Asserting that the Bill was about "property and not religion," Mr. Rijju said, "I myself and I can say there is no country which is safer for minorities than India". Opposition members, however, called the Bill "unconstitutional", with All India Majlis-e-Itehadul Ulama (AIMIM) chief Asaduddin Owaisi symbolically "tearing" a copy of the Bill in the House. During his speech, the Home Minister said the word 'donation' has special importance because donation can be done only of that thing which is one's own property and one can donate government

property. He further added that a designated official has been authorised to ascertain the genuineness of waqf property in case of disputes. In a change from the 2013 Waqf law, the new law states that only a person, who has been practicing Islam for over five years, is allowed to donate to Waqf. "This is Parliament law," he said, "This is Parliament's law, it is binding on everyone". Taking on the Opposition, Mr. Shah claimed that they had resorted to similar fear-mongering during the passage of other laws such as CAA, abrogation of special status for J&K under Article 370 and abolition of triple talaq. "Has even one Muslim person lost his citizenship because of CAA?" he asked. Asserting that even Rashtriya Janata Dal patriarch Lalu Prasad Yadav wanted reform in the Waqf law, the Home Minister said the Modi government is fulfilling Mr. Yadav's wish. Stating that the Narendra Modi government believes in the "politics of performance," Mr. Shah said, "People blessed Modi Ji with three terms as Prime Minister and the BJP will get another three more terms".

Colourful journey



A jacaranda tree in full bloom on the roadside near Coonoor in the Nilgiris district of Tamil Nadu on Wednesday. **K. SATHISHMOORTHY**

India braces for tariffs on 'liberation day in America'

Suhasini Haldar
NEW DELHI
Ahead of an expected announcement on "reciprocal tariffs" by U.S. President Donald Trump, the government is braced for harsh tariffs against India. However, it also hoped for some leniency down the road due to the concessions on import duties. "It's liberation day in America!" Mr. Trump wrote on the Truth Social platform on Wednesday, referring to implementation of tariffs against countries that he claims have treated the U.S. "unfairly".

Speaker cannot be 'indecisive' on pleas over defection: SC

Krishnasdas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI
The Supreme Court on Wednesday said it was not "powerless" if a Speaker chose to remain "indecisive" on petitions seeking disqualification of legislators who defect. Hearing petitions filed by Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) leaders seeking timely action by the Telangana Speaker on disqualification proceedings pending against 10 MLAs who shifted allegiance to the ruling Congress party in the State, the Bench headed by Justice B.R. Gavai said a Speaker could not use his indecision to defeat the worthy objective of the Tenth Schedule (anti-defection law) of the Constitution. The court cannot, certainly tell a Speaker to decide in a particular manner, but can it not tell a Speaker to decide within a specified and reasonable period, Justice Gavai asked.

On a recovery



'Only Left can counter Hindutva neo-fascism'

The Hindu Bureau
MADRURAI
Only the Left has the wherewithal and conviction to fight and counter Hindutva neo-fascism, senior Communist Party of India (Marxist) leader and convener Prakash Karat said on Wednesday. "It is only Left which can lead the fight against imperialist designs on the country," Mr. Karat said in his inaugural address to the 24th congress of the party that is under way in Madurai, Tamil Nadu. Mr. Karat said the U.S. imperialism, under President Donald Trump, would launch new attacks through economic and trade wars and military interventions on countries around the world. "This is the time for the CPI(M) and the Left to actively develop anti-imperialist struggles and expose

Manufacturing activity at an 8-month high in March

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI
Manufacturing activity, as measured by the seasonally adjusted Purchasing Managers Index (PMI), climbed to an eight-month high of 58.1 in March 2025, according to an S&P Global statement. This figure stood at 56.3 in February 2025. A PMI value above 50 is considered an expansion and the metric has been showing expansion for 45 months straight. The improvement in PMI in March was attributed to an increase in new orders. "Although international orders slightly slowed, overall demand momentum remained robust, and the new orders index recorded an eight-month high of 61.5. Business expansion remained fairly optimistic, with around 30% of survey

Only Left can counter Hindutva neo-fascism

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Colourful journey



A jacaranda tree in full bloom on the roadside near Coonoor in the Nilgiris district of Tamil Nadu on Wednesday. M. SATHYAMOORTHY

| Provision | Earlier (Before Amendment) | Now (After Amendment - 2024) |
|----------------------------------|--|---|
| Composition of Waqf Board | Only Muslims could be members of the Waqf Boards. | At least two non-Muslim members must be included in the Central and State Waqf Boards. |
| Nomination Criteria | Members had to be Muslims, and were nominated from Muslim MPs, MLAs, MLCs, Bar Council, etc. | MPs, MLAs, MLCs, and Bar Council members can now be from any religion . |
| Muslim Representation | No specific mention of diverse Muslim representation. | Must include one member each from Shia, Sunni, and Backward Class Muslims . |
| Survey Authority | Survey Commissioner was responsible for surveying Waqf properties. | Responsibility now lies with the District Collector . |

'Waqf by User'

Properties could be declared Waqf based on long-standing **use by Muslim community**, even without formal dedication.

This **provision removed**; now only formally declared or donated properties will be considered Waqf.

Eligibility of Donor

Anyone could donate property to Waqf.

Donor must be a **Muslim for at least 5 years** before making a Waqf endowment.

Dispute Resolution

Disputes were resolved by **Waqf Tribunals**.

District Collector will now act as final authority, using **state revenue laws**.

Women's Rights

No specific mention.

Ensures **inheritance rights of women are not violated** in Waqf property matters.

Soaring spirits



Celebrating togetherness: Tethered hot air balloons, mostly made from recycled paper, during the annual hot air balloon festival held since 1950 to celebrate Id-ul-Fitr in Wonosobo, Indonesia, on Wednesday. AFP

Surging gold prices

The question is what really accounts for India's growing appetite for this precious metal?

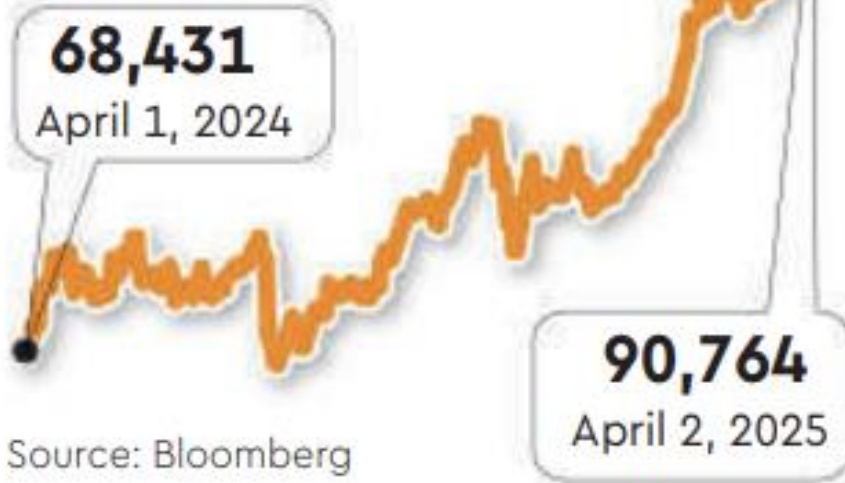
Gold is back in the spotlight as a hedge against heightened geopolitical uncertainties, with its price hitting all-time highs. Through the ages, gold has traditionally been a safe haven in times of trouble. But with the world economy being currently buffeted by adverse headwinds due to prospects of a trade war — thanks to US President Donald Trump's weaponisation of tariffs — stock markets are on the edge. In this milieu, the allure of this precious metal is growing also as an avenue for profitable investments as its returns outpace equities and other asset classes. Gold's milestones include crossing \$1,000 per troy ounce in March 2008 during the global financial crisis and hitting \$2,000 in August 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic. There has been a near tenfold rise in its price since 2000 that has clearly outperformed global stock indices. Besides the safe haven aspect, Indians are also investing in gold exchange traded funds — which recorded positive flows for 10 consecutive months till February — as domestic equities have been floundering.

The surging prices of gold are also due to demand from central banks, especially of emerging economies, that have purchased more than 1,000 tonnes annually for the past three years. As is the case with individuals, central banks purchase gold as a hedge against uncertain times. The allure of this precious metal has been compelling for the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) due to the challenges of forex reserve management when yields on securities are low and interest rates are on a declining trend in the advanced countries. The other motivation is to diversify its reserves away from dollar-denominated investments. The RBI added 72.6 tonnes to its stocks last year and a further three tonnes in January while holding off purchases in February. This marks its second pause in three months with gold stocks remaining steady at 879 tonnes. With soaring prices, the share of gold in total forex reserves rose to 11.7% as on March 21, the highest on record and 8% higher than a year ago, highlighting the RBI's continued diversification of its forex reserves, according to the World Gold Council.

India is no ordinary country as far as gold is concerned, as it is the world's second largest consumer of this commodity after China. The elevated prices may have taken the shine off jewellery purchases but there is rising investment demand. Indian households' gold reserves stand at 25,000 tonnes, which is much larger than the holdings of the world's leading central banks! As gold hits record highs, Indians are also taking out loans with this precious metal as collateral. The proximate factors behind our affinity for gold are imperfectly understood although research — done by the late eminent economist, A Vaidyanathan, for instance — outlined several explanatory factors.

This includes real GDP as a proxy for rising agricultural and non-agricultural incomes and household savings in financial assets. For any given level of GDP, higher the household savings in financial assets, higher will be the demand for gold. Demand also depends on the relative price of gold and other financial assets, which can be proxied by the index of share prices like the BSE index. This is indeed a crucial variable as depressed stock market sentiment enhances gold's growing appeal as an avenue for investments.

MCX spot gold prices (₹ per 10 gm)

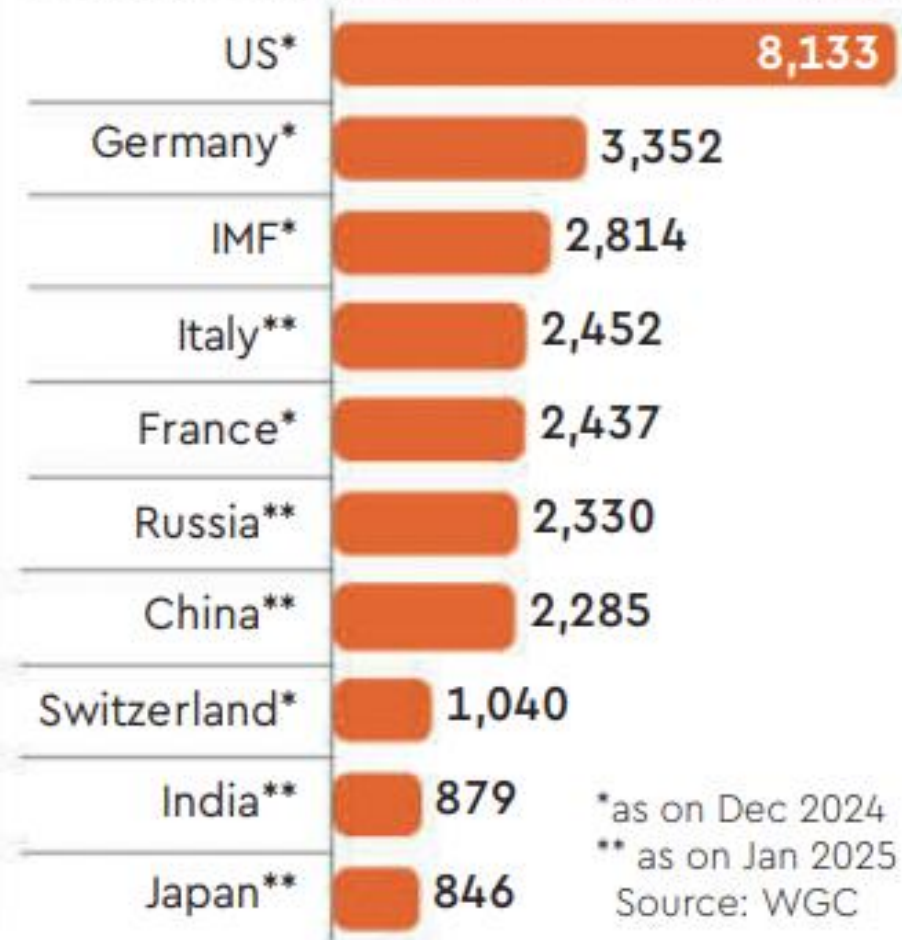


Source: Bloomberg

Returns (in %)

| | |
|----------|-------|
| YTD2025 | 19.2 |
| 1-year | 31.5 |
| 5-years | 17.2 |
| 6 months | 20.30 |

Central bank gold holdings (in tonne)



*as on Dec 2024

** as on Jan 2025

Source: WGC

Gold's Ascendancy in Global Markets

2000



Gold begins tenfold rise

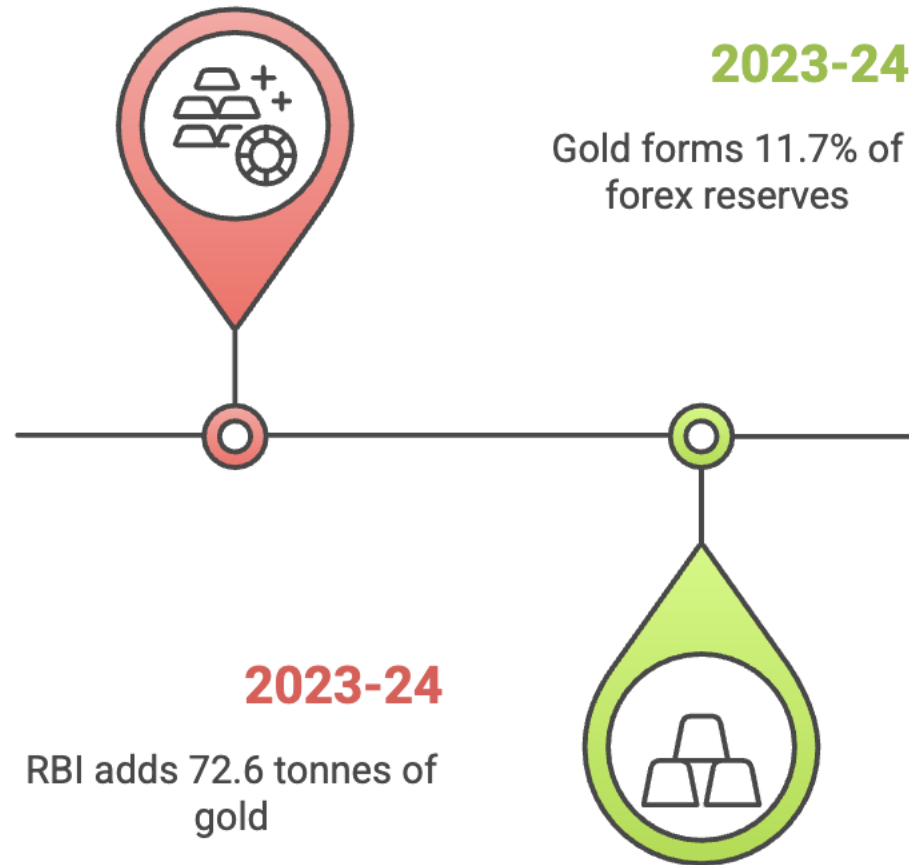
2023



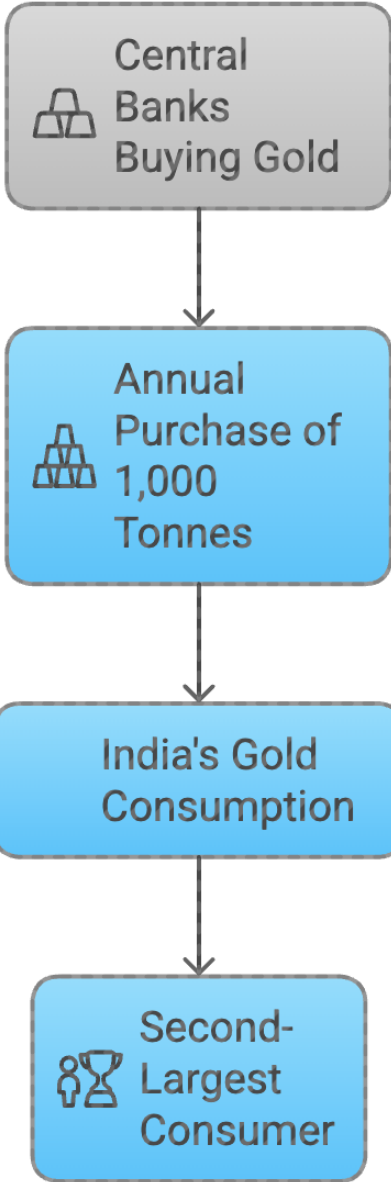
Central banks boost gold demand



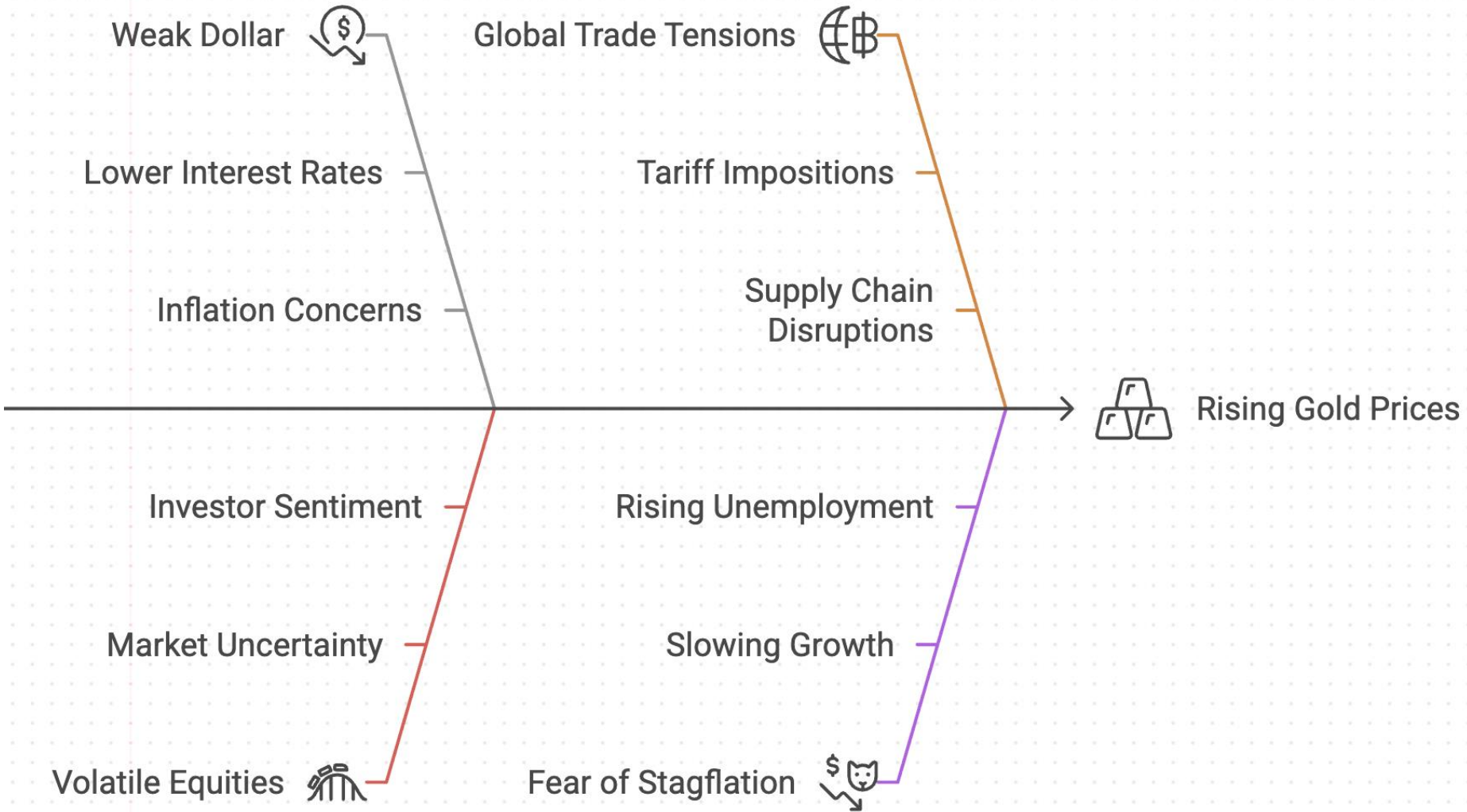
RBI's Gold Strategy: A Record-Breaking Move



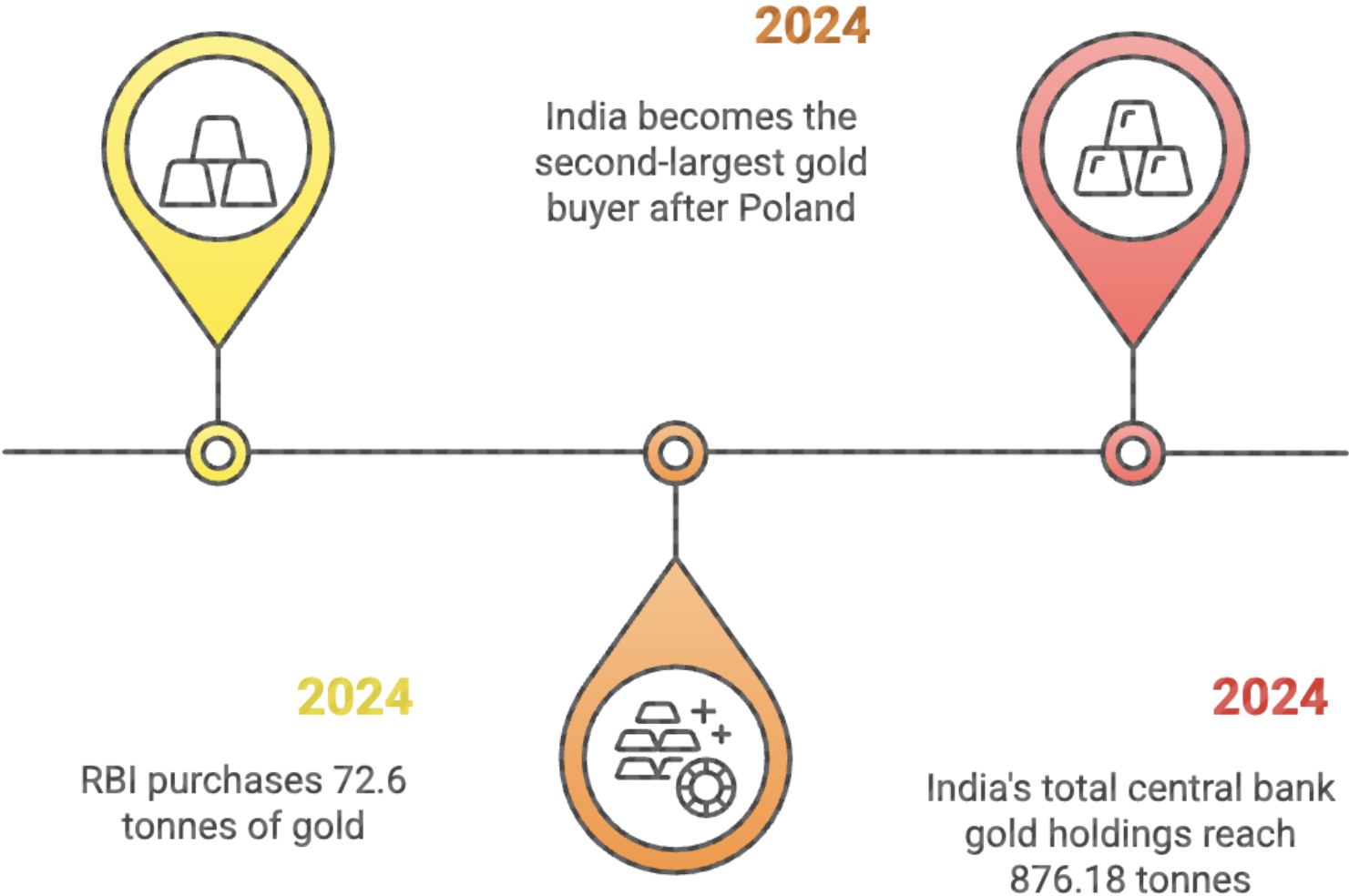
Global Gold Demand and India's Role



Factors Driving Gold Prices to Record Highs

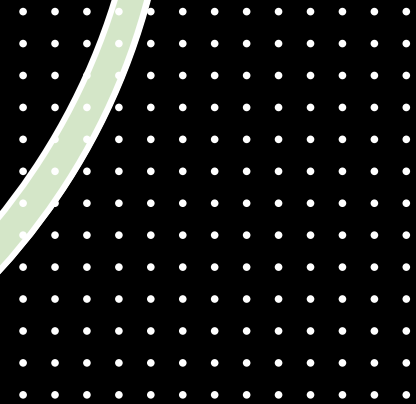
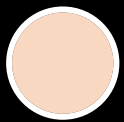


India's Strategic Gold Acquisition Timeline

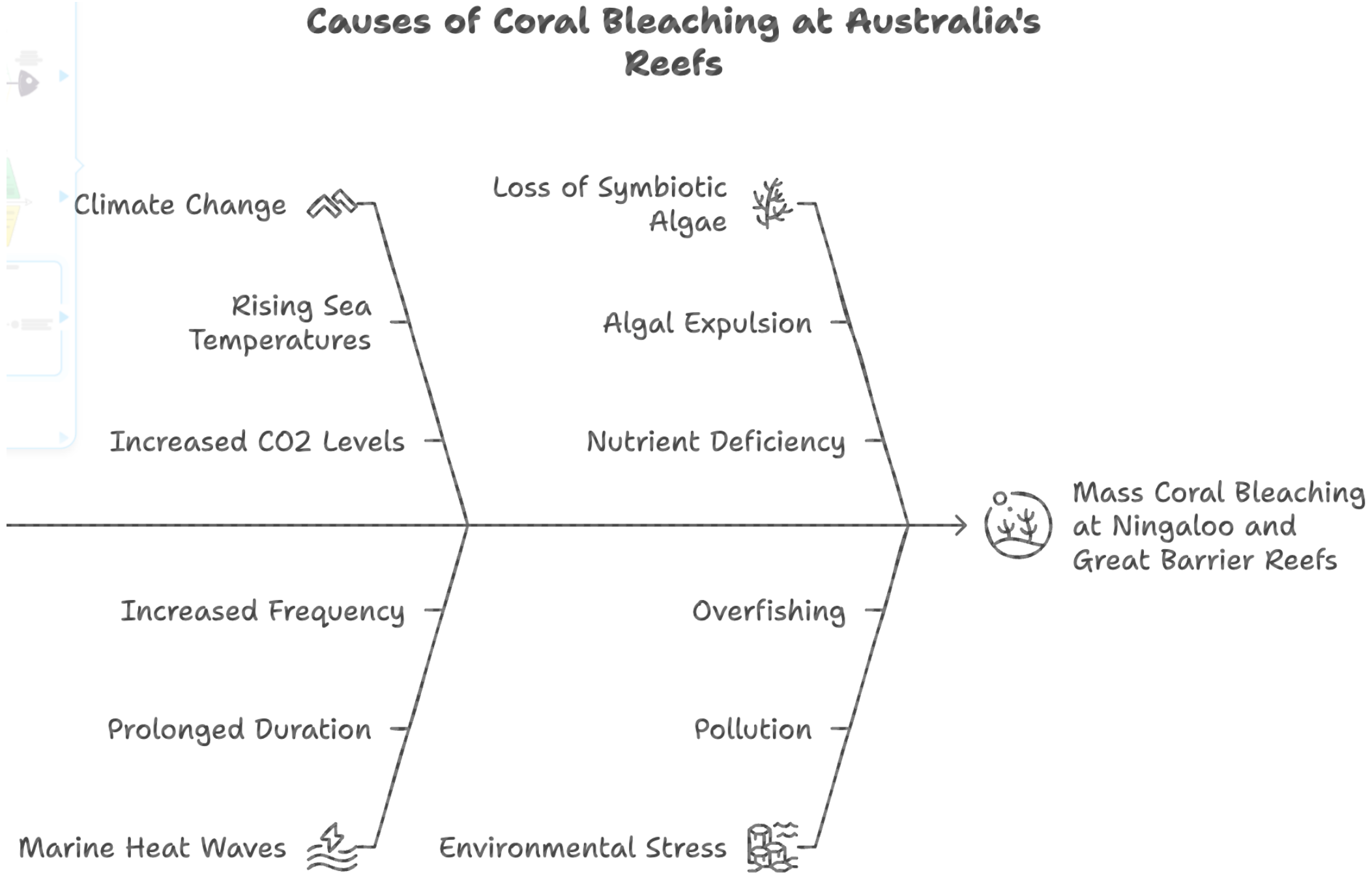




Coral Bleaching in Australian Coral Reefs



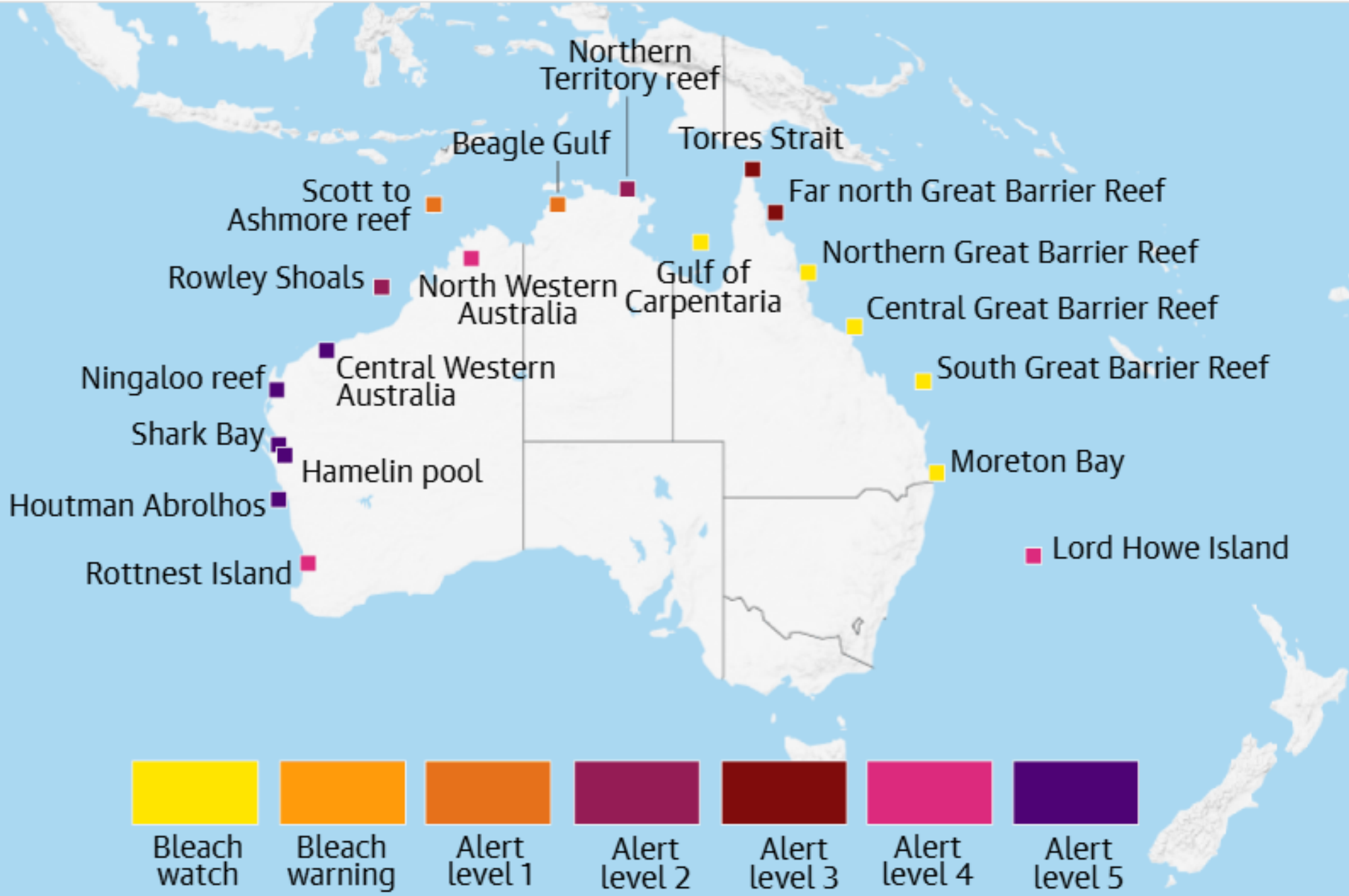
Causes of Coral Bleaching at Australia's Reefs



- **Bleaching-level heat stress** affected **83.6% of global reefs** since 2023, with coral bleaching reported in **81 countries**.

Great Barrier Reef:

- **It is the world's largest coral reef system, spanning 2,300 km off Queensland, Australia.**
 - A **UNESCO World Heritage site** since **1981**, it is home to endangered species like the **dugong** and **green turtle**.



-
- **Ningaloo Reef** (a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** since **2011**) is a **300-km fringing reef** along **Australia's west coast**.
 - **Fringing reefs** are coral reefs that form **along coastlines** or islands, with little to no separation from the shore.

- 
- **Ningaloo Coast harbors rich biodiversity, deep-sea habitats, karst caves, and Cape Range landscapes.**
 - It hosts **300-500 whale sharks annually** and unique **endemic species** like the **Exmouth Spiny-tailed Gecko**, **Western Netted Dragon**, and **West Coast Banded Snake**.
- 

About

- ⌘ **Large underwater structures** – made of skeletons of **colonial marine invertebrates**
- 'coral'** – individually called **polyp**
- ⌘ **Symbiotic Relationship with algae**
- 'zooxanthellae'** (responsible for beautiful colours of corals)
- ⌘ Support over **25%** of marine biodiversity

Hard Corals vs Soft Corals

- ⌘ **Hard Corals** - Rigid skeleton **made of CaCO_3** - **reef-building** corals
- ⌘ **Soft Corals** - Non reef-building

Great Barrier Reef (Australia)

- ⌘ **Largest Coral Reef in the World**
- ⌘ **World Heritage Site (1981)**
- ⌘ **Endures Mass Coral Bleaching**



Corals in India

- ⌘ Present in the areas of Gulf of Kutch, Gulf of Mannar, Andaman & Nicobar, Lakshadweep Islands and Malvan



Significance

- ⌘ Coral reefs **protect coastlines from storms/erosion**, provide jobs, offer opportunities for recreation
- ⌘ Source of **food/medicines**

Threats

- ⌘ **Natural:** Temperature, Sediment Deposition, Salinity, pH, etc.
- ⌘ **Anthropogenic:** Mining, Bottom Fishing, Tourism, pollution, etc.

Coral Bleaching

- ⌘ Corals under stress - expel algae – thus turning white (bleached)
- ⌘ Bleached corals - not dead – but, more risk of starvation/disease



Initiatives to Protect Corals

Technology

- ⌘ Cyromesh: Storage of the coral larvae at (-196°C) - Can be later reintroduced to the wild
- ⌘ Biorock: Creating artificial reefs on which coral can grow rapidly



Global

- ⌘ International Coral Reef Initiative
- ⌘ The Global Coral Reef R&D Accelerator Platform

Indian

National Coastal Mission Programme

Saturn Gained 128 New Official Moons



Saturn has “gained” 128 new moons in a groundbreaking discovery by astronomers in Taiwan.

About

Saturn’s New Title:

- Saturn now holds the **title of “moon champion” with 274 moons**, the most of any planet in the solar system.
- This **surpasses the total number of moons of all other planets combined.**

Great Barrier Reef Facts



Size

The Great Barrier Reef spans 2,300 km off Queensland, Australia.



Heritage Status

It has been a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1981.



Endangered Species

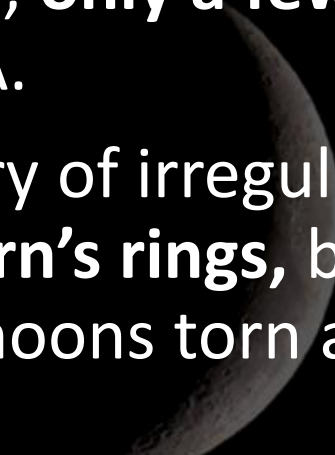
The reef is home to endangered species like the dugong and green turtle.

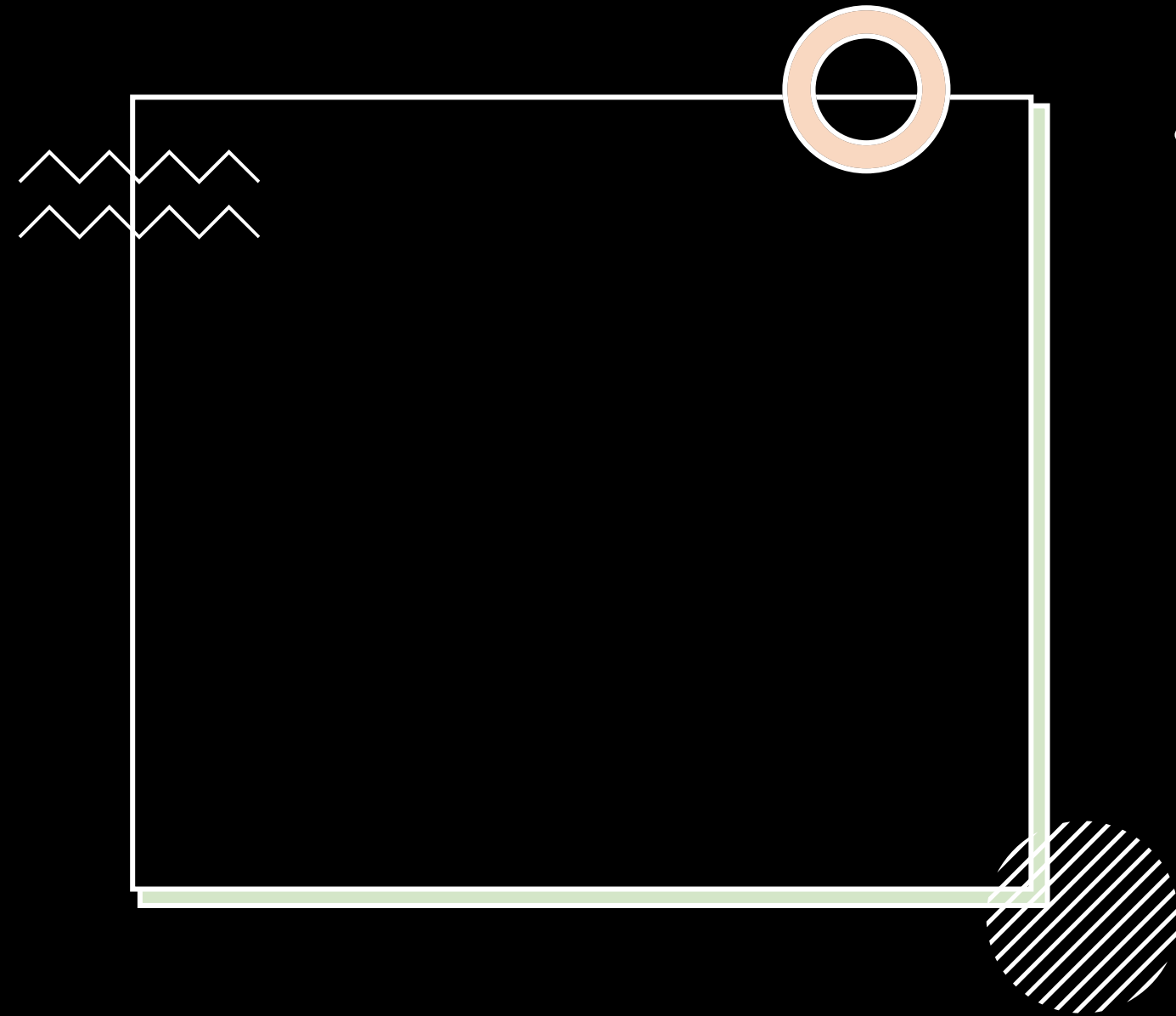


Discovery Details: Some moons were found during space missions like Voyager 1 and others during “ring-plane crossings.”



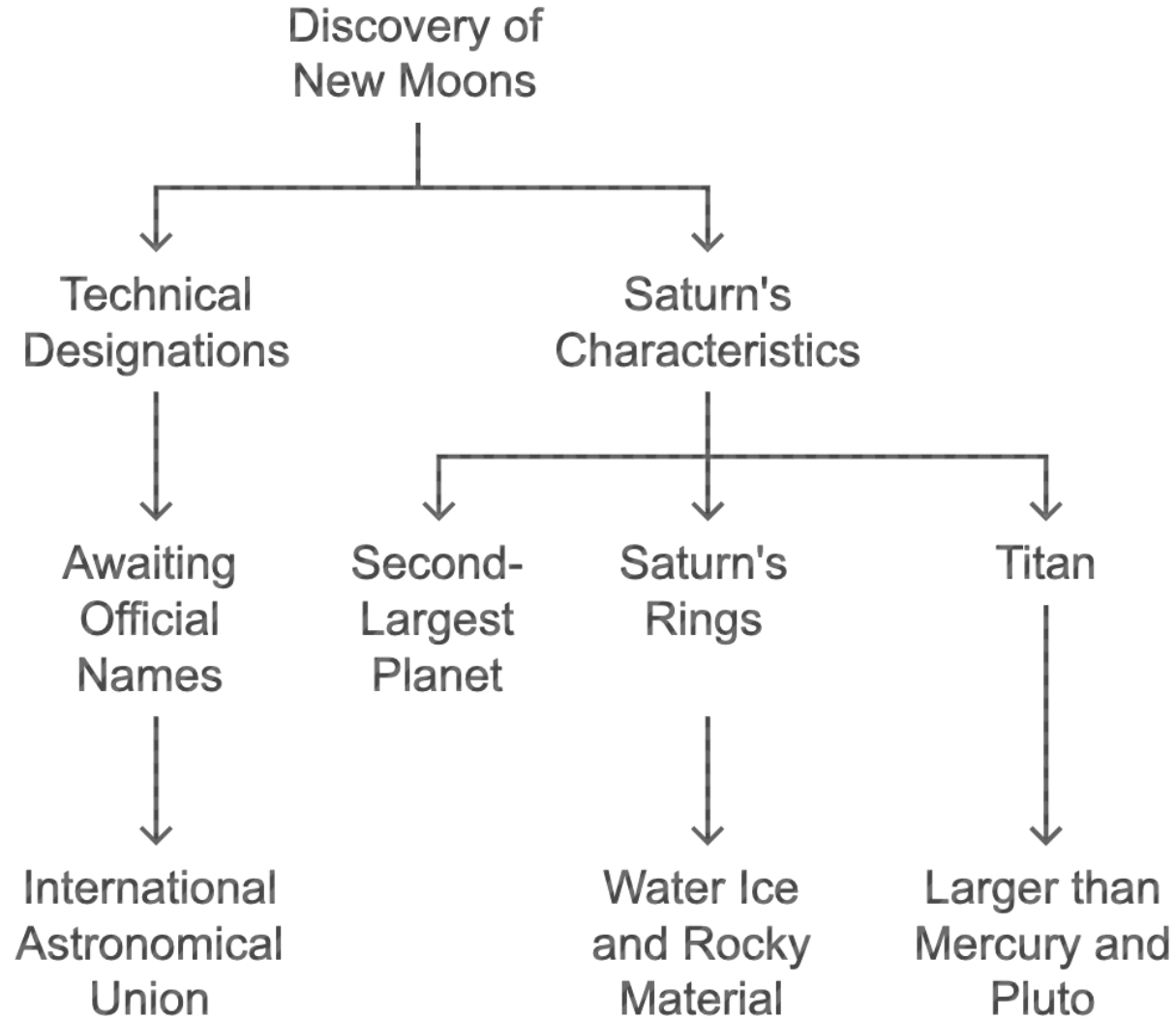
Irregular Moons: All newly discovered moons are classified as “irregular” moons, which have **elliptical orbits at various angles.**

- **Size of Moons:** The new moons are small, **only a few kilometers in size**, but still classified as moons by NASA.
 - **Insights into Saturn's Rings:** The discovery of irregular moons offers **clues about the formation of Saturn's rings**, believed to be fragments from comets, asteroids, and moons torn apart by Saturn's gravity.
- 



- **Naming of Moons:** Saturn's moons typically follow names from Greco-Roman mythology and other mythologies.
 - The 128 new moons are currently named with technical designations (e.g., "S/2020 S 27") and await official names from the International Astronomical Union (IAU).

Saturn's Moons and Characteristics





Mitathal and Tighrana Harappan Sites



- The Haryana Government has officially declared Mitathal and Tighrana, two Harappan civilisation sites in Bhiwani district, as protected archaeological sites under the Haryana Ancient and Historical Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1964.



Mitathal and Tighrana: Preserving Harappan Heritage

March 13, 2025



Government notification protects Mitathal site

March 13, 2025



10-acre area demarcated for preservation



Archaeological Findings



Dating

Yields Copper-Bronze Age material from 3rd–2nd millennium BCE.



Town Planning

Evidence of Harappan town planning with distinctive pottery.



Artefacts

Includes beads, copper tools, bangles, terracotta, and bone items.



Excavations

Conducted by Central University of Haryana from 1965–68 and ongoing since 2016.

Tighrana Site:



```
graph TD; A[Tighrana Site:] --> B[o Rich in post-Harappan and pre-Harappan layers, showing cultural continuity.]; B --> C[o Associated with Sothian culture (Chalcolithic farmers).]; C --> D[o Houses made of mud bricks, possibly fortified; early use of bichrome wheel-made pottery.]; D --> E[o Artefacts: green carnelian bangles, indicating active bead and jewellery industry.];
```

o Rich in post-Harappan and pre-Harappan layers, showing cultural continuity.

o Associated with Sothian culture (Chalcolithic farmers).

o Houses made of mud bricks, possibly fortified; early use of bichrome wheel-made pottery.

o **Artefacts:** green carnelian bangles, indicating active bead and jewellery industry.

A dark, high-contrast photograph of a wooden floor. The floor has a grid pattern of light-colored lines and circular markings. The text "10 MCQ" is overlaid in the center in a white, sans-serif font.

10 MCQ

International Support for Buddhist Claims

Q. Which countries have extended support to Buddhist claims over the Mahabodhi Temple?

1. Japan

2. Sri Lanka

3. Pakistan

4. Thailand

• **Select the correct option:**

A. 1 and 2 only

B. 1, 2 and 4 only

C. 2 and 3 only

D. 1, 3 and 4 only

Significance of Coral Reefs

Q. Coral reefs are ecologically important because they:

- 1.Support biodiversity.
- 2.Act as buffers against coastal erosion.
- 3.Are immune to temperature-related bleaching.

• **Select the correct answer:**

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

Economic Impact of Film Controversies

Q. Which of the following are economic consequences of political controversies surrounding films?

1. Increase in revenue due to viral publicity.
2. Risk of boycotts leading to financial losses.
3. Delay in international screenings.

• **Correct answer:**

- A. 2 and 3 only
- B. 1 and 2 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

Bodh Gaya Temple Act Controversy

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. The Bodh Gaya Temple Act, 1949, provides for equal representation of Hindus and Buddhists on its committee.
 2. The chairman of the managing committee is always a Buddhist monk.
 3. Japan and Sri Lanka have supported Buddhist control of Mahabodhi Temple.
- **Which of the above statements is/are correct?**
 - A. 1 and 2 only
 - B. 1 and 3 only
 - C. 2 and 3 only
 - D. 1, 2 and 3

Saturn's New Moons

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. Saturn now has the most moons in the solar system—274 in total.
2. All newly discovered moons are classified as irregular moons.
3. The largest moon of Saturn is Europa.

• **Which is/are correct?**

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 1 and 3 only
- C. 2 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

Coral Bleaching

Q. Which of the following is/are causes and consequences of coral bleaching?

1. Caused by prolonged exposure to low-salinity water.
2. Leads to the expulsion of zooxanthellae from corals.
3. Results in the corals turning completely white.

• **Choose the correct code:**

- A. 2 and 3 only
- B. 1 and 2 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

. Mahabodhi Temple – Historical Context

Q. Which of the following is true about the Mahabodhi Temple?

1. Built by Emperor Ashoka in the 3rd century BCE.
2. Destroyed during British rule.
3. Became a mutt under a Hindu monk in the 16th century.

• **Select the correct answer:**

- A. 1 only
- B. 1 and 3 only
- C. 2 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

. Ningaloo Reef

Q. Which of the following is true about the Ningaloo Reef?

- 1.It is a barrier reef located on Australia's east coast.
- 2.Hosts whale sharks and endemic reptile species.
- 3.Recognized as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.

• **Correct answer:**

- A. 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

Mitathal and Tighrana Sites

Q. Which of the following about Mitathal and Tighrana Harappan sites is/are correct?

1. Both are located in Rajasthan.
2. Mitathal belongs to the Copper-Bronze Age.
3. Tighrana contains post-Harappan and Sothian cultural layers.

• **Choose the correct option:**

- A. 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

Actor Mohanlal Controversy

Q. Which of the following statements are correct about the recent film controversy?

1. CBFC refused to certify the film in any form.
2. The controversy was linked to depictions of the 2002 Gujarat riots.
3. The film crew announced voluntary cuts.

• **Select the correct answer:**

- A. 1 and 3 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 2 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

Word of the day

Disputatious:

inclined or showing an inclination to dispute or disagree

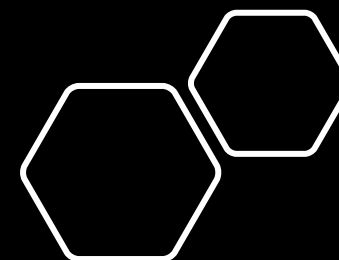
Synonyms: combative, contentious, litigious

Usage: *Due to his disputatious manner, he was not much missed when he resigned his post.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/
disputatiouspro

International Phonetic

Alphabet: /,dɪspjʊ'teɪfəs/, /,dɪspjə'teɪfəs/



CLASS 24

PROUDLY ANNOUNCE COURSES

**FOR 8TH TO 12TH , IIT / NEET &
FOUNDATION**

COMMENCEMENT DATES 

Centre

Vaishali

10 April

Mansrover

10 April

Niware Road

03 April


FOR AVAIL MAX FREE BENEFIT



CONTACT US

7240465893



A group of people are clapping in a dimly lit room. In the foreground, a hand is reaching out towards the center. The background is dark, with some light coming from a window on the right. There are some small red and blue dots scattered in the dark area on the left.

Thank you
guys.
