

# Daily Current Affairs



**जनसत्ता**



**The Indian EXPRESS**

**THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS**



4  
**The Hindu**



3  
**PIB, PRS & Other newspaper**



1  
**The Indian Express**



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1  
**Financial Express**

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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 "Top 10 MCQ from the session for every exam" is overlaid in the center in a white, sans-serif font.

Top 10 MCQ from the session for  
every exam

- Which river in Trinidad is a significant water source?  
त्रिनिदाद में कौन सी नदी एक महत्वपूर्ण जल स्रोत है?
- **A. Ortoire River / ऑर्टॉयर नदी**
- **B. Ganges River / गंगा नदी**
- **C. Amazon River / अमेज़न नदी**
- **D. Nile River / नील नदी**

- The **Digital Maha Kumbh** aims to enhance cybersecurity by deploying how many cyber warriors?

डिजिटल महाकंभ साइबर सुरक्षा को बढ़ाने के लिए कितने साइबर योद्धाओं की तैनाती करता है?

- **A. 40**
- B. 50**
- C. 56**
- D. 60**

- What is the name of the **quantum processor** recently unveiled by Google?

Google द्वारा हाल ही में लॉन्च किए गए **क्वांटम प्रोसेसर** का नाम क्या है?

- **A. QuantumX / क्वांटमएक्स**
- B. Willow / विलो**
- C. Phoenix / फीनिक्स**
- D. Orion / ओरियन**

- What is the main feature of the **Willow quantum processor**?  
विलो क्वांटम प्रोसेसर की मुख्य विशेषता क्या है?
- **A. 105 physical qubits / 105 भौतिक क्यूबिट्स**
- B. Solar-powered operation / सौर ऊर्जा संचालित संचालन**
- C. Satellite communication enhancement / उपग्रह संचार संवर्धन**
- D. Nuclear energy applications / परमाणु ऊर्जा अनुप्रयोग**



- Which country did not participate in the 2024 **B-READY Report**?  
2024 **बी-रेडी रिपोर्ट** में कौन सा देश भाग नहीं ले पाया?
- **A. India / भारत**
- **B. China / चीन**
- **C. USA / अमेरिका**
- **D. Australia / ऑस्ट्रेलिया**

- What is the purpose of the **Integrated Command and Control Center (ICCC)** at the Maha Kumbh?  
महाकुंभ में एकीकृत कमांड और नियंत्रण केंद्र (ICCC) का उद्देश्य क्या है?
- **A. Provide real-time navigation / वास्तविक समय नेविगेशन प्रदान करना**
- **B. Monitor underwater activities / पानी के नीचे की गतिविधियों की निगरानी करना**
- **C. Ensure public safety / सार्वजनिक सुरक्षा सुनिश्चित करना**
- **D. All of the above / उपरोक्त सभी**

- What is the historical significance of the **Statue of Wisdom**?  
स्टैच्यू ऑफ विजडम का ऐतिहासिक महत्व क्या है?
- A. Represents Tirukkural's 133 chapters / तिरुक्कुरल के 133 अध्यायों का प्रतिनिधित्व करता है
- B. Symbolizes India's technological growth / भारत की तकनीकी प्रगति का प्रतीक
- C. Honors Indian freedom fighters / भारतीय स्वतंत्रता सेनानियों को सम्मानित करता है
- D. Showcases modern art forms / आधुनिक कला रूपों को प्रदर्शित करता है

- What core technology does Google's Willow chip utilize?  
Google के विलो चिप में कौन सी मुख्य तकनीक का उपयोग किया गया है?
- **A. Artificial Intelligence / कृत्रिम बुद्धिमत्ता**
- **B. Superconducting Qubits / सुपरकंडक्टिंग क्यूबिट्स**
- **C. Blockchain Technology / ब्लॉकचेन तकनीक**
- **D. Nanochips / नैनोचिप्स**

- What is the purpose of drone surveys at the Digital Maha Kumbh?  
डिजिटल महाकुंभ में ड्रोन सर्वेक्षण का उद्देश्य क्या है?
- **A. Monitor land topography / भूमि स्थलाकृति की निगरानी करना**
- **B. Provide security during events / घटनाओं के दौरान सुरक्षा प्रदान करना**
- **C. Map public utilities in real-time / सार्वजनिक उपयोगिताओं का वास्तविक समय में मानचित्रण करना**
- **D. All of the above / उपरोक्त सभी**

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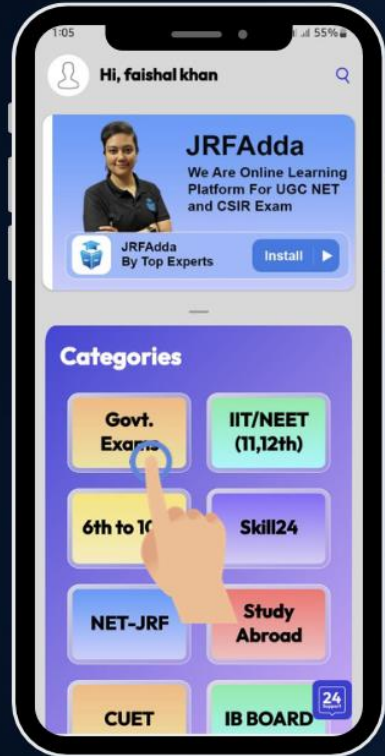
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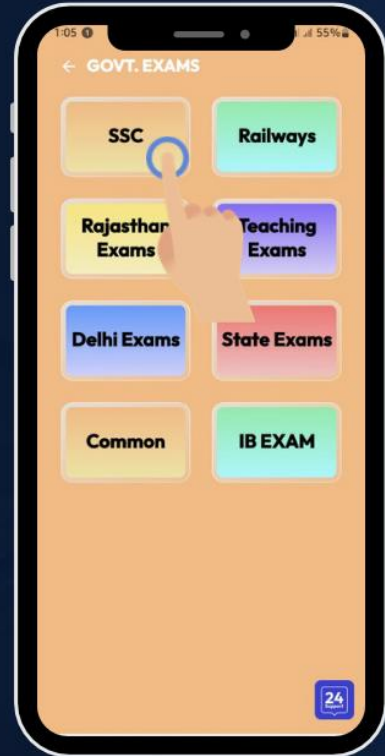
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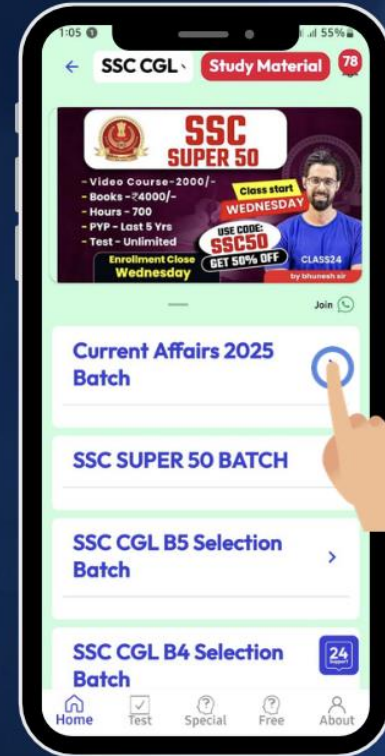
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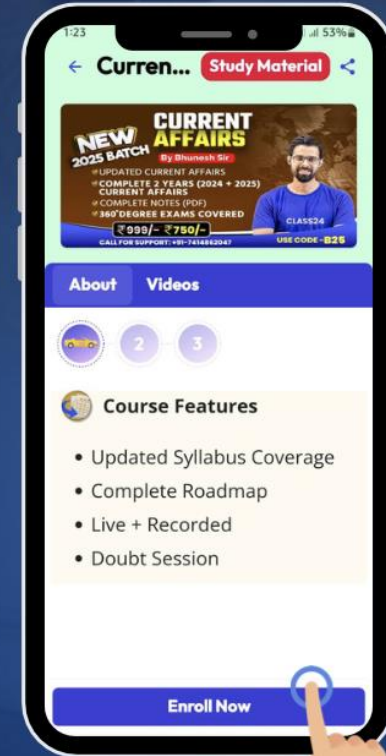
# Step 2



# Step 3



# Step 4



You miss 100% of the shots you don't take.”

Wayne Gretzky, cited in *Various works*



**UNION CARBIDE ISSUE**  
Waste disposal won't harm Pithampur: CM  
NEWS » PAGE 4



**SPORTS AWARDS**  
Manu Bhaker chosen for Khel Ratna  
SPORT » PAGE 17



**'TERRORIST ACT'**  
New Orleans attacker inspired by IS: Biden  
WORLD » PAGE 14



**PARLEY**  
Combating issue of voter fraud  
Should voter IDs be linked to Aadhaar to ensure transparency?  
OPINION » PAGE 9



**SIDNEY TEST**  
Rohit is a doubtful starter for final game  
SPORT » PAGE 16

## INSIDE



**J&K CM pitches for easier police verification**

**SREINIGAR**  
Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday pitched for the relaxation of "harsh" police verification processes put in place in the union territory post-2019, saying he "does not consider a militant's son a militant". » PAGE 4



**User friendly EPFO 3.0 by June: Minister**

**NEW DELHI**  
Union Labour Minister Mansukh Mandavaya said here on Thursday that the Employees Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) will launch its new software system EPFO 3.0 by June this year and the website will be more user friendly. » PAGE 5

**Factory activity in private sector at 12-month low**

**NEW DELHI**  
Hopes of a recovery in the manufacturing sector took a fresh hit as factory activity levels in India's private sector stumbled to a 12-month low in December from an already weak November, with output levels slipping to the lowest through 2024, as per a private survey-based index. » PAGE 12

**Panel formed to rejig Wholesale Price Index**

**NEW DELHI**  
The Centre on Thursday announced the formation of an expert panel to revise the Wholesale Price Index in light of the changes in the economy that have occurred between 2011-12, the current base year for the critical price gauge, and 2022-23 that would be the new base year. » PAGE 12



**Israeli strikes kill Hamas police chief, 24 others**

**GAZA STRIP**  
Israel's air strikes on a declared humanitarian zone in southern Gaza killed at least 24 people, including the head of Hamas's police force, Haniyeh Salah, rescuers said on Thursday. Additional strikes across Gaza resulted in at least 14 more fatalities. » PAGE 14

# Medical aid not a ruse to derail Dallewala's stir: SC

Justice Kant accuses Punjab govt., others of insinuating that efforts were on to break his fast; Justice Bhuyan questions the Centre's reluctance to issue a statement that its doors are open, he says Dallewala's fast is linked to a face-to-face with Centre; Solicitor-General Mehta assures court that Centre was 'concerned with each and every farmer'

**Krishnadas Rajagopal**  
**NEW DELHI**  
Supreme Court judge, Justice Surya Kant, made it clear on Thursday that efforts to hospitalise farmers' leader Jagjit Singh Dallewala are not a ruse to derail his hunger strike. He lashed out at the Punjab government and other leaders for deliberately creating such an impression in the media. His companion judge on the bench, Justice Ujjal Bhuyan, separately questioned the Centre's persistent reluctance to come out with a statement that its "doors are open" to consider the "genuine grievances" of the protesting farmers. Both judges on the bench seemed to be keenly

aware that Mr. Dallewala's medical condition was becoming riskier by the day. "This issue is becoming more and more sensitive, and time is passing," Justice Kant observed. "Why cannot your client make a statement that you will consider the genuine grievances of the farmers... That your doors are open... Why can't the Central government make a statement?" Justice Bhuyan asked Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, who appears for the Haryana government in the case but has also made submissions on behalf of the Centre. Mr. Mehta said there were "several factors weighing in" for the farmer. "Justice Bhuyan remarked that the issue currently before the court was the health of one individual, Mr. Dallewala. He assured that the Centre was "concerned with each and every farmer". But Justice Bhuyan said Mr. Dallewala's continuing fast, which had crossed more than 35 days, was surely linked to a face-to-face with the Centre. "That is linked to this...," Justice Bhuyan remarked. In the previous hearing, the Punjab government had told

the gentleman (Dallewala), Justice Kant accused the Punjab government, its officers and even farmer leaders of insinuating in the media that efforts were to break Mr. Dallewala's fast by "evacuating" him from the Khananuri protest site to a hospital. "Our directions do not mean that he should break his fast even in the hospital. After health is taken care of, he can continue with his peaceful protest. Shifting to the hospital does not mean he will not continue with his fast. Our concern is that he should get access to medical help and facilities," Justice Kant explained. Justice Kant said Mr. Dallewala was a "precious leader" who was not aligned to any political ideology but

devoted to the farmers' cause. The judge said the Punjab government's making irresponsible statements... even farmer leaders from their home fide as regards Mr. Dallewala needs to be looked into," Justice Kant said. Punjab Advocate-General Gurmitinder Singh assured that the State was not taking any sides and was doing its best to convince Mr. Dallewala to accept medical aid. "He (Dallewala) is of the firm opinion, as conveyed to our mediators, to the media and in his own messages, that he will take medical help subject to intervention... We (Punjab) are only for conciliation. We are handling

the situation on the ground every day, every moment. We are trying to work out a solution," Mr. Dallewala said. The court issued notice on a petition by Mr. Dallewala's friend, Gurminder Kaur Gill, who said the government could not go back on "promises" made to the farmers. The Haryana government's plea against the boundary blockages was also listed along with a contempt petition against the Punjab Chief Secretary and police chief for their inability to comply with earlier special court orders to hospitalise Mr. Dallewala. The next hearing is scheduled for January 6. **BJP, AAP LOCK HORNS** **» PAGE 5**

## Mid-air scare



**Close call:** Two naval skydivers get their parachutes entangled mid-air during rehearsals for the Eastern Naval Command's operational demonstration in Visakhapatnam on Thursday. Both of them landed in the sea and were rescued. K.R. GEDDARA

# Mamata accuses BSF of 'maligning' Trinamool by allowing infiltrators to enter through West Bengal

**Shib Sabash Singh**  
**KOLKATA**  
Amid reports of infiltration and arrests of Bangladesh nationals in different parts of the State, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday accused the Border Security Force (BSF) of allowing infiltrators from Bangladesh to enter India so that the blame on infiltration can be pinned on the State government. Participating in an administrative meeting at the Secretariat, the Chief Minister accused the BSF of trying to destabilise the State and said the "blue print of the Central government was behind this attitude of the BSF". "We have received information that the BSF is allowing infiltrators to enter India through Infantra, Sitai, Chopra, and several other bordering areas. The BSF is also torturing women. Why are we not protesting?" the Chief Minister asked officials at the meet. Observing that she wants good relations with Bangladesh, Ms. Banerjee said goons were entering India on an "understanding" with the BSF. "If anyone thinks they can intrude into Bengal and malign the Trinamool, let them be warned that the Trinamool does not do these things. Do not abuse Trinamool by supporting the wrongdoings of BSF," the Chief Minister said.



**Taking attack:** West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee chairs the administration review meeting in Kolkata on Thursday. ANI

between West Bengal and Bangladesh is porous. Recently, the BSF protested against the acts of the BSF. She also came down heavily on the District Magistrate of Cooch Behar and the Superintendent of Police of the district, saying why they had allowed security agencies and police forces from other States to check background of migrants. The remarks by the Chief Minister came in the wake of the Bharatiya Janata Party and other Hindutva groups organising protests on the alleged atrocities on minorities in the neighbouring state of Assam. On Thursday, BJP leader Surendra Adhikari held a presser at Burdwan, where several Hindutva groups participated. A few days ago, Mr. Adhikari had said that the failure of West Bengal government to cooperate with the BSF against illegal infiltration across the State's borders and criticised the State govt. for "misconduct" in acquiring land for border fencing. Chief Minister Banerjee was also upset with the BSF's Departmental meeting over the lack of sufficient public transport during peak hours. She also said that the Ministry of Education Department had introduced a semester system in State-run schools.

## Bangladesh court rejects bail plea of Hindu leader

**Kalid Bhattacharjee**  
**NEW DELHI**  
A Bangladesh court on Thursday denied bail to Chinnoy Krishna Das, the former leader of ISKCON in Bangladesh. Mr. Das has been in police custody since November 25 when he was arrested at the Shah Jalal International Airport in Dhaka on charges of insulting the national flag during a rally of the pro-minority organisation Bangladesh Samaito Sannatan Jagaran Jote in Chittagong. This is the third time Mr. Das is being denied a bail. **FULL REPORT ON** **» PAGE 14**

## Will do whatever is possible in Nimisha Priya case, says Iran

**Kalid Bhattacharjee**  
**NEW DELHI**  
Iran will "take up" the case of Nimisha Priya, the nurse from Kerala who has been given a death sentence in Yemen, a highly placed Iranian official assured in New Delhi on Thursday. The case is being tried in Sana'a, the administrative capital of Yemen which is under the control of the Iran-aligned Houthi militants, and the declaration of assistance by the Iranian official might help India in saving the life of the nurse. "We will take up this issue regarding this nurse. We will do whatever we can," the senior Iranian official told *The Hindu* while meeting representatives of media organisations in the Iranian embassy here. The death sentence against Ms. Nimisha was approved last Monday by the President of Yemen, Rashad Al Ahmadi, and could be carried out within a month. "Serious" case The official also acknowledged the seriousness of the case and noted it pertains to "manslaughter" as Ms. Nimisha was convicted for killing her business partner Talal Abdo Mahdi in 2017. Earlier, the Ministry of External Affairs had said it was aware that the family of Ms. Nimisha was "exploring relevant options", but it was not in a position to pay for the cost of blood money. The visiting dignitary, who is leading an Iranian team to hold Foreign Office consultations with Indian diplomats, recently secured a quick briefing from an acting foreign secretary regarding the allegations against Ms. Priya before his departure. Official sources in the Ministry had earlier told *The Hindu* that the case was tricky as India did not



Nimisha Priya

have official ties with the Iran-aligned Houthi rebels and Iranian support in this regard could make a crucial difference.

**Fractured state** However, officials had been cautious about the case because of the fractured status of Yemen, which is being controlled by three entities with the Iranian embassy being effectively in charge of the administrative capital Sana'a that has all the important institutions including the judicial system of Yemen. Ms. Nimisha is reportedly being held at the Central Prison in Sana'a.

The case which dates back to at least a decade started as a difficult partnership between Ms. Nimisha and Yemeni national Mahdi after the latter supported her to set up a clinic in Sana'a. The partnership however soured subsequently and she alleged that Mahdi had become abusive and took possession of her Indian passport. In 2017, Ms. Nimisha tried to retrieve the passport by dragging Mahdi but the attempt led to Mahdi's death. Following the incident, Ms. Nimisha reportedly with local assistance dismembered the body of Mahdi. She was handed a death sentence in 2018 that was subsequently upheld in 2023.

The situation in Yemen and the security situation in West Asia is also expected to feature in the talks between the Iranian and the Indian sides.



## Delay after international flyers taken to domestic side

The Hindu Bureau  
CHENNAI

Passengers of an international flight were accidentally taken to the domestic terminal at Chennai airport on Wednesday night.

The Air India Express from Singapore reached the city around 11.45 p.m. Since the flight was parked at the remote stand, around 150 passengers were transported in five buses by the ground handling agency. Of the five buses, two carrying about 90 passengers erroneously dropped them off at the T4 domestic terminal instead of the T2 international terminal, sources said.

As soon as they realised the mistake, they ensured that the 90 passengers were transported to the international terminal in the same bus. "They were accompanied by Customs officials. They got Central Industrial Security Force clearance and subsequently went through immigration. As a result of this, they were delayed by half an hour. The mistake occurred because it was a new ground handling agency, and we believe there was a communication error," a source said.

The incident came to light when a passenger highlighted it on social media platform "X". While the passengers had exited the terminal without immigration and then, the airport authority officials had to endure, the passenger said.

Airports Authority of India officials say they are looking into it.

## Rajendra Arlekar sworn in as 23rd Kerala Governor

The Hindu Bureau  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar was sworn in as the 23rd Governor of Kerala on Thursday.

Kerala High Court Chief Justice Nitin Madhukar Jamdar administered the oath of office at Raj Bhavan in Thiruvananthapuram. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, Leader of the Opposition V.D. Satheesan, senior political leaders, government functionaries and Mr. Arlekar's family members were among those present.

Until recently Governor of Bihar, he replaces Arif Mohammed Khan. Mr. Arlekar's stint will be watched with immense interest given the tumultuous relationship his predecessor had with the Left government in the State. Mr. Khan replaced Mr. Arlekar in Bihar after a five-year stint in Kerala.

A member of the RSS from a young age and later the BJP, Mr. Arlekar is a former Minister and speaker of the Goa Assembly.



Pinarayi Vijayan greets Rajendra Arlekar after swearing in ceremony.

Speaking at the 148th Mannam Jayanti celebrations, Mr. Nair held that the faithful have the right to choose whether to wear shirts in temples while entering temples without interference. He emphasised the NSS' commitment to preserving age-old rituals and customs, questioning whether

## NSS slams Pinarayi's backing for wearing shirts in temples

Sukumar Nair says the faithful have right to choose whether to wear shirts in temples; he adds that temples which do not require wearing an upper garment should continue as such

The Hindu Bureau  
KOTTAYAM

Nair Service Society (NSS) general secretary G. Sukumar Nair on Thursday criticised Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan for endorsing Swami Sachinhananda's remarks about the practice requiring male devotees to remove their shirts before entering temples.

Speaking at the 148th Mannam Jayanti celebrations, Mr. Nair held that the faithful have the right to choose whether to wear shirts while entering temples without interference.

He emphasised the NSS' commitment to preserving age-old rituals and customs, questioning whether



Sharing views: G. Sukumar Nair with Ramesh Chennithala during Mannam Jayanti celebrations on Thursday.

the Chief Minister and the user would dare to challenge practices in other religions.

His statement comes two days after Mr. Vijayan endorsed the remarks made by Swami Sachinhananda, head of the Sivagiri

Madhom, who described the practice as a social evil and called for its abolition.

Responding to Swami Sachinhananda's statement that temples associated with Swami Narayana Guru would abolish this practice, he said, "This is the

## BJP protests against CM's remarks

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

BJP activists burnt an effigy of Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan during a protest held here on Thursday. This was in response to his remarks denouncing "organised efforts" to portray Swami Narayana Guru as Sanatana Dharma's proponent.

NSS' stance. Temples that do not require wearing an upper garment should continue as such. The perception that everything can be imposed upon Hindus or that they can be coerced is unacceptable."

## T.N. CM inaugurates flower show in Chennai

The Hindu Bureau  
CHENNAI

The fourth annual Chennai Flower Show, complete with roses, petunias, marigolds, and delphiniums, was inaugurated by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin at Semmozhi Poonga here on Thursday.

Visitors can attend the flower show between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. on all days till January 18. Entry tickets are priced at ₹200 per head for anyone aged above 12 and ₹100 per head for those aged between five and 11. Visitors will be charged ₹500 per camera and ₹5,000 per video camera. Tickets can also be obtained online at: <https://trnhorticulture.in/a/petioleky/>

Ministers Duraimurugan, M.R.K. Panneerselvam, and P.K. Sekarbabu, Mayor K. Priya, MPs Dayanidhi Maran and Thangachchi Thangapandian, legislators Dha. Velu and N. Ezhilan, Chief Secretary N. Muruganandam, and senior officials were also present at the inauguration.

The Tamil Nadu government introduced the annual flower show in Chennai in the year 2022. The three-day flower show held at Kalavanan Arangam between June 3 and 5, 2022, saw over 44,800 visitors.

The second edition of the show held at Semmozhi Poonga in June 2023 had over 25,300 visitors. Last year, the Chennai Flower Show was held for 11 days between February 10 and 20, and witnessed over 1.09 lakh visitors.

## Audience response drowns rancour against T.M. Krishna

The Hindu Bureau  
CHENNAI

The tremendous response and participation of the audience in the music concerts and morning conferences contributed to the success of the December music season of The Music Academy, said N. Murali, the President of the Academy.

He said that the discordant notes and rancour against vocalist T.M. Krishna, who came to the inauguration of the festival, the overwhelming presence of rancour for the Christmas morning concert by Mr. Krishna and a

media over several months leading up to the festival. Notwithstanding all this, the festival went off smoothly and was a big success. Ultimately, music as a force for good has prevailed and prevailed emphatically," said N. Murali, the President of the Academy.

The audience's enthusiastic participation in the inauguration of the festival, the overwhelming presence of rancour for the Christmas morning concert by Mr. Krishna and a



T.M. Krishna

similar response for the Sadasat participation in the inauguration of the festival, the overwhelming presence of rancour for the Christmas morning concert by Mr. Krishna and a

Kalanidhi-designate was special. "Presiding over the 98th Annual Conference of the Music Academy was an intellectually invigorating experience. I had the pleasure of curating this year's conference and it would not be wrong to say that this year's conference stood out for the very high standards it set in terms of the quality and rigour in the presentations and lectures," he said.

"To receive the Sangita Kalanidhi award on January 1 and to receive the love and affection that has been

pouring in from so many people from different walks of life had been overwhelming," he added.

Noted indologist David Shulman, who conferred the award on Mr. Krishna, said: "The richness and standards of excellence are utterly amazing. Carnatic music is flourishing today as never before, also expanding its range and horizons while remaining true to its long classical tradition."

He added, "Just look at the long line of awardees, mostly young and highly gifted musicians

who performed over these days. Look at the passionate audiences who attended the performances for many hours. Look at the musicologists who know every note and every text."

The Academy also paid homage to former Prime Minister of India Manmohan Singh. "It was one of India's great leaders and statesmen, who contributed tremendously to the country's progress, guided by the principles of humaneness, inclusivity and equity," Mr. Murali said during his address.

## IN BRIEF



### Bus fares in Karnataka to go up by 15% from Sunday

Karnataka State Cabinet on Thursday approved a 15% hike in fares of all types of bus services operated by the four Road Transport Corporations (RTCs). This would come into effect from January 5, said law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister H.K. Patil after a Cabinet meeting. The increase is expected to bring in an additional revenue of ₹74.85 crore a month to the RTCs. The Cabinet raised the fares following a demand from RTCs because of the increased operating cost owing to hike in diesel prices, salaries, and maintenance costs.

### A.P. team to visit Karnataka to study Shakti scheme

A delegation from Andhra Pradesh, comprising Ministers and officials, is set to visit Karnataka to examine the successful implementation of the Shakti scheme, which provides free bus travel for women on non-premium State-run buses. The Andhra Pradesh government is considering launching a similar scheme in the State. According to a senior Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) official, a 15-member delegation, including three Ministers, will arrive in Bengaluru on Friday to study the scheme in depth.

### One crore TDP members to get accident insurance

TDP leader Nara Lokesh signed agreements with the representatives of the United India Insurance Company Limited and Pragmatic Insurance Broking Services Private Limited on Thursday for providing accident insurance coverage to one crore party members. A press release said the TDP was approaching a historic milestone in its membership drive, and the insurance coverage was in tune with the party's commitment to take care of its cadres. It was the first time in the TDP's history that such a large-scale insurance facility was being provided to members, it added.

## A step forward



New ritual: After much clamour from activists demanding to stop use of animals for temple parades, Cochin Carnival paraded a 'robot elephant' for its annual New Year's festivities on Thursday. (Hindu Reporter)

## PSLV C-60 mission: space start-up firm gets desired results

The Hindu Bureau  
BENGALURU

Bellatrix Aerospace has announced that it has achieved the desired results from the Rudra High-Performance Green Propulsion System, which was onboard the POEM-4 in the recently launched PSLV C-60 mission.

The Bengaluru-based space start-up said the Rudra High-Performance Green Propulsion system has fired flawlessly aboard POEM-4 in PSLV C-60.

2024's space qualification, reaffirming its dependable and repeatable performance. This is a proud milestone as propulsion systems are complex systems owing to challenging sub-systems. All sub-systems are 100% made at Bellatrix," it said.

"Disturbance imparted on POEM body in yaw axis was 1.4 deg/s for a 60 second firing. 80 degrees angular rotation of the POEM platform was observed. This sets a new benchmark. We have planned more firings during the coming days," it added.

## RTO official's Mongolia trip to click Pallas's cat find its way into textbook

M.P. Praveen  
KOCHI

During his 15-day trip to Mongolia in the harsh winter of March 2017, Shefik Basheer Ahmed, now serving as Malappuram Regional Transport Officer, had little inkling that his little adventure would become part of a school textbook years later.

Mr. Ahmed had no clue that his trip to photograph the hard-to-spot Pallas's cat, one of the smallest wildcats of the world, was included as a chapter in the *Gid Mohar Language For Life English CBSE Course Book for Class 7*.



Pallas's cat

Mr. Ahmed came to know about it only after one of his friends happened to accidentally overhear his daughter reading out the chapter aloud.

## Students protest over filming in Hyderabad college hostel: 6 held

The Hindu Bureau  
HYDERABAD

The warden and five mess workers at the women's hostel in CBR Engineering College were taken into custody by the Hyderabad Police on Thursday following a protest by the students.

A senior official revealed that while the college management has been booked for negligence, a separate case has been registered against men allegedly peeping inside the women's washroom.

"The men were taken into custody for questioning based on the allegations by the students. Electronic phones were seized and analysed. We have not found any obscene content in them," Medical ACP B.

Srinivas Reddy said. Tension prevailed on the college campus on Wednesday as the students sat on a protest alleging recording of inappropriate videos of girl students in the hostel washroom as well as negligence and misconduct by the hostel warden and staff.

The incident came to light after some students noticed palmprints on the bathroom ventilator and a mirror on the New Year's Eve. They were also alerted by the movement of the workers around the washroom area and suspected videos were being secretly recorded in the washroom. A student alleged that two hidden cameras were found in the washroom and over 300 videos were recorded.

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# Rajendra Arlekar sworn in as 23rd Kerala Governor

## **The Hindu Bureau**

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar was sworn in as the 23rd Governor of Kerala on Thursday.

Kerala High Court Chief Justice Nitin Madhukar Jamdar administered the oath of office at Raj Bhavan in Thiruvananthapuram. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, Leader of the Opposition V.D. Satheesan, senior political leaders, government functionaries and Mr. Arlekar's family members were among those present.

Until recently Governor of Bihar, he replaces Arif Mohammed Khan. Mr. Arlekar's stint will be watched with immense interest given the tumultuous relationship his prede-



Pinarayi Vijayan greets Rajendra Arlekar after swearing-in ceremony.

cessor had with the Left government in the State. Mr. Khan replaces Mr. Arlekar in Bihar after a five-year stint in Kerala.

A member of the RSS from a young age and later the BJP, Mr. Arlekar is a former Minister and Speaker of the Goa Assembly.



# RTO official's Mongolia trip to click Pallas's cat find its way into textbook

**M.P. Praveen**

KOCHI

During his 15-day trip to Mongolia in the harsh winter of March 2017, Shefiq Basheer Ahammed, now serving as Malappuram Regional Transport Officer, had little inkling that his little adventure would become part of a school textbook years later.

Mr. Ahammed had no clue that his trip to photograph the hard-to-spot Pallas's cat, one of the smallest wildcats of the world, was included as a chapter in the *Gul Mohar Language For Life English CBSE Course Book for Class 7*.



Pallas's cat

Mr. Ahammed came to know about it only after one of his friends happened to accidentally overhear his daughter reading out the chapter aloud.

"I was pleasantly surprised to hear that my passion has been found worthy of being included in a textbook," says Mr. Ahammed.

Incidentally, the story about the trip to Mongolia written by G. Shaheed, a senior journalist, along with Mr. Ahammed's photographs was carried by the *Frontline* magazine in the issue dated June 4, 2021. The chapter is named after the title of that story, *The Small Ghost of the Mountain*.

The Pallas's cat is named thus since it is nocturnal and with its white complexion blends seam-

lessly with its snowy habitat. "Pallas's cat was the primary focus of that trip, along with Bactrian or double-humped camel and Przewalski's horse, named after the Russian geographer Nikolay Przewalski," says Mr. Ahammed.

He first spent four days trekking and camping in the Hustai National Park and the next 11 days in the Altai Mountain areas to get a sighting of the cat, braving inclement weather when temperature dropped to as low as -20 degrees. Mr. Ahammed's passion for wildlife photography has taken him to 26 countries so far.



**Adventure to Mongolia / मंगोलिया की यात्रा:** Shefiq Basheer Ahammed, a Regional Transport Officer from Malappuram, took a 15-day trip to Mongolia in March 2017 to photograph wildlife, including the elusive **Pallas's cat**.

मलप्पुरम के क्षेत्रीय परिवहन अधिकारी शेफिक बशीर अहमद ने मार्च 2017 में मंगोलिया की 15-दिन की यात्रा की, जिसमें उन्होंने दुर्लभ पैलस कैट की तस्वीर खींची।

- **Surprising Outcome / चौंकाने वाला परिणाम:**

- His adventure was later included as a chapter in the CBSE Class 7 English textbook, *Gul Mohar Language for Life*, titled "**The Small Ghost of the Mountain**".
- उनकी यात्रा को बाद में CBSE कक्षा 7 की अंग्रेजी पाठ्यपुस्तक *गुलमोहर लैंग्वेज फॉर लाइफ* में "द स्मॉल घोस्ट ऑफ़ द माउंटेन" नामक अध्याय के रूप में शामिल किया गया।

- **Pallas's Cat:** A small, nocturnal wildcat with a white complexion that blends into snowy habitats.
- एक छोटी, निशाचर जंगली बिल्ली जिसका सफेद रंग इसे बर्फीले वातावरण में छिपने में मदद करता है।
- **Other Animals Photographed / अन्य जानवर:** Bactrian camels and Przewalski's horse, named after Russian geographer Nikolay Przewalski.
- बैक्ट्रीअन ऊंट और प्रेज़वाल्स्की का घोड़ा, जिसका नाम रूसी भूगोलवेत्ता निकोलाई प्रेज़वाल्स्की के नाम पर रखा गया है।

- **Locations / स्थान:**Four days trekking and camping in Hustai National Park.
- हुसताई नेशनल पार्क में चार दिन का ट्रेकिंग और कैंपिंग।
- Next 11 days spent in the Altai Mountain areas despite harsh weather.
- अगले 11 दिन खराब मौसम के बावजूद अल्ताई पर्वतीय क्षेत्र में बिताए।
- **Challenges / चुनौतियाँ:**Faced temperatures as low as -20 degrees Celsius.
- -20 डिग्री सेल्सियस तक के तापमान का सामना किया।

## 4. Recognition and Reaction / मान्यता और प्रतिक्रिया

### Inclusion in Textbook / पाठ्यपुस्तक में शामिल:

- The story was initially published in *Frontline* magazine in June 2021.
- कहानी को पहली बार जून 2021 में *फ्रंटलाइन* पत्रिका में प्रकाशित किया गया।

### Mr. Ahammed's Reaction / श्री अहमद की प्रतिक्रिया:

- He was pleasantly surprised when his daughter read the chapter aloud.
- वह pleasantly surprised हुए जब उनकी बेटी ने अध्याय जोर से पढ़ा।

### Wildlife Passion / वन्यजीव के प्रति जुनून:

- His passion for wildlife photography has taken him to 26 countries so far.
- वन्यजीव फोटोग्राफी के प्रति उनका जुनून उन्हें अब तक 26 देशों में ले गया है।

# Musk-Trump links leave questions over probes into billionaire's empire

Musk-related cases and regulatory actions could languish under the new administration, current and former U.S. officials say; since the election, the billionaire has called himself President-elect Trump's "first buddy," frequented his Mar-a-Lago club, and has weighed in publicly on his Cabinet picks

Reuters  
NEW YORK/WASHINGTON

Last month, in the Biden administration in the U.S., the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) set a tight deadline demanding that billionaire Elon Musk pay a settlement or face civil charges relating to alleged securities violations during his \$44 billion takeover of Twitter in 2022.

Mr. Musk broke the news himself in a social-media post: "Oh gary, how could you do this to me?" he wrote, referring to SEC Chairperson Gary Gensler.

He added a smiley-face emoji but attached a legal letter condemning the "improperly motivated" settlement. "We demand to know who directed these actions whether it was you or the White House."

SEC spokesperson declined to comment on the incident. The White House did not respond to a request for comment.

The SEC is not the only investigative agency Mr. Musk has defied and accused of political harassment. The owner of Tesla and SpaceX has long railed against government oversight, portraying himself as a victim of bureaucratic zealots stifling his companies' potentially life-saving innovations.

The White House will soon be occupied by Donald Trump — whom Mr.



Elite company: Elon Musk, centre, with U.S. President-elect Donald Trump, left, and Vice President-elect J.D. Vance, right, at an event in Maryland in December. AP

Musk spent more than a quarter-billion dollars to help elect — replacing Joe Biden, who appointed Mr. Gensler. Mr. Trump has already named a new SEC chair to replace Mr. Gensler, who plans to resign when Mr. Trump is inaugurated.

Ongoing cases Mr. Musk's potential to have extraordinary clout with the new administration raises questions about the fate of federal investigations and regulatory actions affecting his business empire, of which at least 20 are ongoing, according to three sources familiar with SpaceX and Tesla operations and the companies' interaction with the U.S. government, as well as five current and former of-

ficials who have direct knowledge of individual probes into Mr. Musk's companies.

The inquiries include examinations of the alleged securities violations; questions over the safety of Tesla's Autopilot and Full Self-Driving systems; potential animal-welfare violations in Neuralink's brain-chip experiments; and alleged pollution, hiring-discrimination, and licensing problems at SpaceX.

Mr. Musk, Tesla, SpaceX, and Neuralink did not respond to comment requests.

A Trump-transition spokesperson called Mr. Musk a "brilliant" entrepreneur and said that Mr. Trump's administration would ensure law and order. "Treat-

ing all Americans equally."

Since the election, Mr. Musk has called himself Mr. Trump's "first buddy," frequented Mr. Trump's Florida Mar-a-Lago club, shared Thanksgiving with the President-elect's family, and weighed in publicly on his Cabinet appointments.

Mr. Trump has appointed Mr. Musk to co-lead a new "Department of Government Efficiency," a private entity advising on slashing budgets and regulations. It remains unclear what authority the role will carry.

Mr. Musk has touted his newfound influence and given specific examples of how he might use it. Before the election, Mr. Musk said he would seek to use his efficiency-sear post to ad-

vance national driverless-vehicle regulations that would almost certainly benefit Tesla and eliminate "irrational" rules such as one resulting in a pollution fine against SpaceX.

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) officials have repeatedly scrutinized Tesla for nearly a decade, at times enraging Mr. Musk. During one 2016 call, he screamed profanities at regulators launching the first of several investigations into Tesla's Autopilot driver-assistance system after a fatal crash, according to two people familiar with the matter. There are currently five ongoing and open NHTSA probes covering driver-assistance technology and other operations in Tesla vehicles.

The Musk-related cases could languish or be dropped by Trump-appointed agencies and department heads, current and former U.S. officials say.

Mr. Trump's Department of Justice (DOJ) picks, for example, include lawyers who defended him in inquiries into his impeachment trials and a nominee for FBI chief whom Mr. Musk vocally supported and who has repeatedly attacked the justice system.

Lower-level DOJ officials could also exercise prosecutorial discretion to avoid

aggressively pursuing Musk companies in light of his relationship with Mr. Trump, said Barbara McQuade, a former U.S. attorney in Detroit during the Obama administration who also worked as a federal prosecutor during the George W. Bush and Clinton administrations. "To the extent they want to please the boss, I think they know how to do that."

Some legal experts downplayed the risk of political interference from Mr. Musk, noting that an investigator's lack of progress could signal insufficient

It is also possible that prosecutors who believe they have strong cases will push forward regardless of Mr. Musk's role, some legal experts say.

"I do not think there is as much risk of Musk infiltrating to influence cases," said Robert Franchman, a defence lawyer at Dymally in New York. "Most prosecutors bring cases they think they can win."

Representatives of the DOJ and all departments and agencies with pending inquiries into Musk companies did not comment on the probes or their ability to enforce regulations against Trump allies during his second term. The Environmental Protection Agency and NHTSA have said they would continue fulfilling their legal and regulatory responsibilities in 2025.

## 2024 sets record for warmest year in several countries

Agence France-Presse  
BEIJING

Last year was China's hottest on record and the past four years were its warmest ever, its weather agency said this week.

China is the leading emitter, in total volume, of the greenhouse gases driving global heating. It aims at ensuring carbon dioxide emissions peak by 2030 and be brought to net zero by 2060. The average national temperature for 2024 was 10.92C — 1.03 degrees higher than average. It was "the warmest year since the start of full records in 1951", the China Meteorological Administration said on its news site late on Wednesday.

"The top four warmest years ever were the past four years, with all top 10 warmest years since 1951 occurring in the 21st century," it added.

In 2024, China logged its hottest month in the history of observation in July, as well as the hottest August and the warmest autumn on record.

The UN said in a year-end message on Monday that 2024 was set to be the hottest year ever recorded worldwide.

Other countries also recorded temperature records in 2024. Australia's Bureau of Meteorology said on Thursday that the past year marked its second-warmest year since records began in 1910. Germany's weather agency said in December that 2024 was the hottest year since records began 143 years ago. The Czech weather service CHM said on Thursday that 2024 was "by far the hottest" in Prague since records started in 1775, beating the previous records from 2018 and 2023 by 0.5 degrees. "It is worth noting that of the 15 warmest years since 1775, 13 were in this century and all 15 after 1990," the CHM said.

## Pro-Kurdish Turkiye leaders continue efforts for dialogue

Agence France-Presse  
ISTANBUL

A delegation from Turkey's pro-Kurdish Opposition People's Equality and Democracy party (DEM) on Thursday met with the parliamentary Speaker and far-right Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) leader amid tentative efforts to resume dialogue between Ankara and the banned Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

DEM's three-person delegation met with Speaker Numan Kurtulmus and the banned MHP leader Devlet Bahceli.

The aim was at briefing them on a rare weekend meeting with Abdullah Ocalan, the jailed founder of the PKK who is serving life without parole on Inarali prison island near Istanbul.

It was the first political visit to Mr. Ocalan in al-

most a decade and follows an easing of tension between Ankara and the PKK, which has waged a decades-long insurgency on Turkish soil and is proscribed by Washington and Brussels as a terrorist group.

The visit took place two months after Mr. Bahceli ended a surprise closure branch to Mr. Ocalan, inviting him to parliament to disband the PKK and saying he should be given the "right to hope" in remarks understood to moot a possible early release.

Mr. Onder and Mr. Buldan then "began a round of meetings with the parliamentary parties" and were joined on Thursday by Ahmet Turk, a veteran Kurdish politician with a long history of involvement in efforts to resolve the Kurdish issue.

"The meeting was positive. We are hopeful," Mr. Onder said after meeting the Speaker in remarks quoted by Turkey's private TV broadcaster.

In a weekend posting on X, DEM party co-chair Tuncser Bakirhan hailed what he described as a "historic opportunity to build a common future."

"We are on the eve of a potential democratic transformation across Turkey and the region. Now is the time for courage and foresight for an honourable peace," he said.

## Harsh existence



Frozen streets: A burqa-clad woman seeks alms along a street on Thursday, during the first heavy snowfall this winter in Kabul. AFP

was working on a second book "on the sexual assaults and harassment committed against women detained in Iran."

Ms. Mohammadi said there were 70 prisoners in the women's ward at Evin from all walks of life, of all ages, and of all political persuasions — including journalists, writers, women's rights activists, and people persecuted for their religion.

One of the most commonly used "instruments of torture" is isolation, said Ms. Mohammadi, who shares a cell with 13 other prisoners.

Despite the harsh consequences, there are still acts of resistance by prisoners. "Recently, 45 out of 70 prisoners gathered to form a political prisoners' union to fight against the death sentence," she said.

of Pakshshan Azizi and Varisheh Moradi, two Kurdish women's rights activists who are in prison, she said.

Possible reprisals Small acts of defiance — from all walks of life, of all ages, and of all political persuasions — can get them reprisals like being barred from visiting hours or telephone access.

She also said that speaking to prisoners would likely get her "new accusations" and that she was the target of additional prosecutions and convictions "approximately every month."

"It is a challenge for us political prisoners to fight to maintain a semblance of

## U.K. plans to impose curbs on 'people smugglers'

Agence France-Presse  
LONDON

Suspected U.K. people smugglers could face travel bans and swifter social media and mobile phone curbs under government plans announced on Thursday to reduce cross-channel migrant arrivals by boat.

The Interior Ministry announced the plan to impose new interim Serious Crime Prevention Orders (SCPOs) on smugglers before they have been criminally charged, the day after figures showed soaring arrivals in 2024.

Around 36,816 people were detected crossing the channel last year, a 25% increase from the 29,437 who arrived in 2023, according to provisional figures from the Ministry.

Currently, imposing SCPOs on criminals, including people smugglers, involves "a complex and lengthy process" that the government said was "restricting the use of this powerful tool".

The planned interim orders — set to be included in draft legislation introduced in Parliament in the coming weeks — would allow law enforcement agencies to ask court to impose immediate restrictions while a full order is considered. Breaching an interim order could lead to up to five years in prison, the Interior Ministry said. SCPOs have been used since 2008 typically to disrupt various types of serious criminals.

Interior minister Yvette Cooper said people smugglers "are profiting from undermining our border security and putting lives at risk" and "cannot be allowed to get away with it."

## Nobel laureate Mohammadi remains defiant despite imprisonment in Iran

Agence France-Presse  
PARIS

Narges Mohammadi, the Iranian 2023 Nobel Peace Prize laureate, says her body may be weakened from her long imprisonment but she still has a mind of "steel", according to an interview published on Thursday.

The 52-year-old has been jailed repeatedly over the past 25 years, most recently since November 2021, for convictions relating to her advocacy against the obligatory hijab for women and capital punishment in Iran.

Released from prison on December 4 for three

weeks on medical grounds after undergoing bone surgery. Ms. Mohammadi spoke with the French magazine *Elle* about the conditions at the Evin prison in Tehran, where she is incarcerated.

"Mind of steel" "My body is weakened, it is true, after three years of intermittent detention... and repeated refusals of care that have seriously tested me, but my mind is of steel," Ms. Mohammadi said, responding in Farsi to repeated refusals of care messages and written text.

She said she intended to publish her autobiography, which she has completed,



Face of resistance: Narges Mohammadi has been jailed repeatedly over the past 25 years, most recently since November 2021. AFP

personally documented cases of torture and serious sexual violence against my fellow prisoners.



# 2024 sets record for warmest year in several countries

**Agence France-Presse**

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Germany's weather agency said in December that 2024 was the hottest year since records began 143 years ago. The Czech weather service CHMI said on Thursday that 2024 was “by far the hottest” in Prague since records started in 1775, beating the previous records from 2018 and 2023 by 0.5 degrees. “It is worth noting that of the 15 warmest years since 1775, 13 were in this century and all 15 after 1990,” the CHMI said.

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**2024: Warmest Year on Record / 2024: अब तक का सबसे गर्म वर्ष** Globally, 2024 set a record as the hottest year ever recorded.

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वैश्विक स्तर पर, 2024 अब तक का सबसे गर्म वर्ष दर्ज किया गया।

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China recorded its hottest year since records began in 1961.

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चीन ने 1961 के बाद से अब तक का सबसे गर्म वर्ष दर्ज किया।

## China's Climate Record / चीन का जलवायु रिकॉर्ड

### Average Temperature / औसत तापमान:

- 2024's average temperature was **10.92°C**, 1.03°C higher than normal.
- 2024 का औसत तापमान **10.92°C** था, जो सामान्य से 1.03°C अधिक था।

### Extreme Months / चरम महीनों:

- Hottest July, hottest August, and warmest autumn ever recorded.
- अब तक का सबसे गर्म जुलाई, अगस्त, और शरद ऋतु दर्ज किया गया।

### Climate Goals / जलवायु लक्ष्य:

- Aim to peak carbon emissions by 2030 and achieve net-zero emissions by 2060.
- 2030 तक कार्बन उत्सर्जन चरम पर पहुंचाने और 2060 तक शून्य उत्सर्जन का लक्ष्य।

### Other Countries / अन्य

**देश: Australia:** 2024 was the second-warmest year since records began in 1910.

- **ऑस्ट्रेलिया:** 1910 से रिकॉर्ड शुरू होने के बाद 2024 दूसरा सबसे गर्म वर्ष रहा।

**Germany:** Hottest year since records began 143 years ago.

- **जर्मनी:** 143 साल पहले रिकॉर्ड शुरू होने के बाद से 2024 सबसे गर्म वर्ष रहा।

**Czech Republic (Prague):** Warmest year since records began in 1775, surpassing 2018 and 2023 by 0.5°C.

- **चेक गणराज्य (प्राग):** 1775 के बाद से सबसे गर्म वर्ष, 2018 और 2023 से 0.5°C अधिक गर्म।

## Broader Implications / व्यापक प्रभाव

## Climate Change Evidence / जलवायु परिवर्तन का प्रमाण:

- The top 10 warmest years since 1961 occurred in the 21st century.
- 1961 के बाद से सबसे गर्म 10 वर्ष 21वीं सदी में दर्ज हुए।


## UN's Statement / संयुक्त राष्ट्र का बयान:

- The UN declared 2024 as the warmest year worldwide in its year-end report.
- संयुक्त राष्ट्र ने अपनी वर्षांत रिपोर्ट में 2024 को वैश्विक स्तर पर सबसे गर्म वर्ष घोषित किया।

## Historical Perspective / ऐतिहासिक दृष्टिकोण



The CHMI noted that 15 of the warmest years since 1775 occurred in the 21st century.



CHMI ने बताया कि 1775 के बाद से 15 सबसे गर्म वर्ष 21वीं सदी में दर्ज हुए।



## IN BRIEF



### Arif Mohammed Khan sworn in as Governor of Bihar

Arif Mohammed Khan was sworn in as the 42<sup>nd</sup> Governor of Bihar on Thursday, succeeding Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar who has been appointed Kerala Governor in his place. Patna High Court Chief Justice K. Vinod Chandran administered the oath at the Raj Bhawan in the presence of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and his deputies, and Leader of the Opposition in the State Assembly Tejashwi Yadav, among others. "Bihar has immense potential and I have come to serve the State," Mr. Khan said. Earlier, he told journalists, "I know the glorious history of Bihar. I will try to discharge my duty in accordance with the heritage and tradition of the State."

### Man killed by thieves in brawl on Dakshin Express train

A 25-year-old man was killed by some persons on the moving Hyderabad-Delhi Dakshin Express train when he confronted them after they allegedly stole his money on Thursday, police said. The incident took place in Telangana early on Thursday and the Government Railway Police (GRP) later detained four persons after the train arrived at Nagpur in Maharashtra. The victim, identified as Shashank Ram Singh Raj, resident of Rajapur Kaimbara in Uttar Pradesh, was travelling to Jhansi, they said. Raj realised that the money he was carrying was missing and confronted the thieves, the official said. A brawl then broke out, in which he was killed.

### Policeman dies after being pushed in front of train

A policeman was murdered by two unidentified persons who attacked him and then pushed him in front of a train between Rabale and Ghansoli stations in Navi Mumbai, an official said on Thursday. The victim has been identified as 42-year-old Vijay Ramesh Chavan, a resident of Ghansoli, the Vashi railway police station official said. "The incident took place between 5.25 a.m. and 5.35 a.m. on Wednesday. The accused, who were wearing white shirts, attacked Chavan with some unidentified object and pushed him in front of a train. The motive behind the murder is not known. No arrests have been made so far. Further probe is under way," the official said.

### Army looking to procure anti-drone ammunition

The Army has issued a Request for Information (RFI) for 20mm anti-drone and 20mm and Schlika air defence weapon systems in service. These anti-aircraft guns use 20mm armour piercing incendiary tracer and high explosive incendiary tracer ammunition. The hit probability of both these ammunition are low as the guns are manually controlled and the ammunition gets activated (causes damage/destruction) on impact which means a direct hit, the RFI said on the need for new ammunition to increase the hit probability. The Army is also looking to procure air burst rounds for its 30mm cannons on infantry combat vehicles.

## Experts on GM crop panels to declare conflict of interest

Ministry of Environment amends rules governing selection of experts to the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee; it calls for details of professional affiliations in past 10 years to be declared

Jacob Koshy  
NEW DELHI

The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has amended the rules governing the selection of experts to the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC), the apex technical body regulating genetically modified (GM) seeds in India. Under the new rules, an "expert member" ought to disclose their "interest" that could conflict with their duties. The expert is also expected to take all steps necessary to ensure that any conflict of interest does not affect any decision of the GEAC.

An expert member with any direct or indirect association with a matter being discussed in a meeting of the committee is obliged to disclose this prior to the meeting. Unless specifically requested by the com-



Two judges had ruled differently on whether the Centre was right in according approval to genetically modified mustard. AFP

mittee, the expert is expected to recuse themselves from the meeting. All selected members would also have to file out a form detailing their professional affiliations to a decade prior to joining the committee.

**Split verdict**  
These rules come on the back of a Supreme Court

order in July 2023 requiring that the Centre form a national policy on GM crops.

In that order of July 2023, the SC delivered a split verdict on the validity of the Centre's 2022 decision granting conditional approval for cultivation of GM mustard crops, thus leaving a final resolution on the release of

the crop to a future Bench. Two judges ruled differently on whether the Centre was right in according approval to GM mustard. Among the directives that they concurred on was establishing a process for resolving issues around conflict of interest.

As far as the GM case is concerned, the question of such conflict arose following an allegation by an activist group, the Coalition for GM-Free India, in 2013, that one of the members of a Technical Expert Committee appointed by the Centre, ran an organisation that was funded by Monsanto, a multinational bio-

pesticides company, and affiliated Indian organisations.

Monsanto has since been bought by Bayer CropScience Limited, a company with similar interests.

### WB research scholar feted for artwork on rural life

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

Labani Jangi, a research scholar from Centre for Societies in Social Sciences in Kolkata, became the first recipient of the TM Krishna-PARI award for her work in art that "reflects the resilience and complexities of rural India, combining artistic expression with critical social commentary", said a statement from People's Art of Rural India. The award honours individuals whose works bridge the worlds of art and journalism and includes a cash prize of ₹1 lakh.

"My work with PARI focuses on capturing stories that bring attention to both the systemic challenges and the human spirit of rural life. By integrating these narratives into my art, I aim at creating visual expressions that resonate with the complexities of these experiences. My illustrations become a medium through which I contribute to preserving and sharing the cultural and social realities of rural India," said Ms. Jangi.

### Govt. report reveals stark infrastructure gap in Indian schools

Maitri Porecha  
NEW DELHI

Of the over 14.71 lakh schools in India, up to 1.52 lakh schools have no functional electricity, according to the latest data released by the United District Information System for Education (UDISE-) maintained by the Ministry of Education. Of the 14.71 lakh schools, 10.17 lakh schools are government-run, of which 9.12 lakh schools have functional electricity, while 1.52 lakh schools do not.

Apart from the government-run schools, there are 4.54 lakh schools that are government-aided, private and unaided, and only 14.47 lakh schools have functional electricity. Of the total schools, 14.47 lakh schools have functional drinking water facilities, but in only 14.11 lakh schools is the drinking water facility functional.

Of the 10.17 lakh government schools, functional drinking water facility is available in 9.78 lakh schools. Of the 4.46 lakh

The Hindu Bureau  
GUWAHATI

Researchers from the Indian Institute of Technology-Guwahati (IIT-G) and the Bose Institute, Kolkata, have developed an advanced injectable hydrogel for localised cancer treatment.

A statement issued by the IIT-G said this hydrogel serves as a stable reservoir for anti-cancer drugs, releasing it in a controlled manner while sparing healthy cells from harm.

The findings of the research, expected to be revolutionary for breast cancer therapy, have been published in *Materials Horizons*, a journal of the Royal Society of Chemistry.

The paper is co-authored by Debapratim Das, along with his research scholar, Anushree Das and Ritvika Kashyap from IIT-G's Department of Chemistry, and Kuldip Jaina, Satyajit Halder, and Anup Kumar Mukherjee from Bose Institute, Kolkata. "Current treatments,

## Trinamool Congress councillor shot dead in Malda; 2 arrested

Moyric Som  
KOLKATA

Trinamool Congress councillor and vice-president of the party's district unit in West Bengal's Malda, Dulal Sarkar, was shot dead in broad daylight on Thursday.

Two persons have been arrested in connection with the incident. According to police sources, four armed persons riding two motorbikes chased Mr. Sarkar after he came to his factory in the morning.

He was shot from behind when he ran into a nearby shop to hide from them, they added. The attack took place around 10.30 a.m. at the Jhaljhala More area, a locality close to Mr. Sarkar's house. Local TV channels aired the CCTV footage of the attack. The CCTV footage from the shop, aired by two television channels, shows two unidentified shooters chasing and gunning down Mr. Sarkar from

behind as he ran inside the shop for safety. The councillor sustained injuries in the head and back. He was declared dead at a hospital.

Mr. Sarkar, popularly known as Babla, was a six-time councillor of Ward 22 of the Englishbazar municipality in Malda.

"My close associate, my fellow warrior Babla Sarkar, who has worked with me for many years, has been murdered today. Of course, that was because of negligence by the police," West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said at a secretariat meeting on Thursday morning. "He had security before, which was then withdrawn. He was attacked earlier as well," the Chief Minister said.

## Indian researchers develop injectable hydrogel for targeted cancer treatment

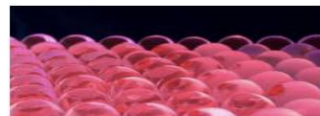
The Hindu Bureau  
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The hydrogel triggers a controlled drug release directly into the tumour, thus reducing systemic side effects. SETTY IMAGES

such as chemotherapy and surgical interventions, often have severe limitations. Chemotherapy's systemic delivery often results in harmful side effects by affecting both cancerous and healthy cells," the researchers said in the statement.

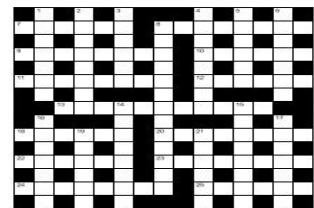
**Localised treatment**  
The team addressed these challenges by designing a hydrogel that delivers drugs precisely to the tumour site, ensuring localised action. Hydrogels are water-based, polymer networks capable of absorbing and retaining fluids. Their unique structure

mimics living tissues, making them suitable for biomedical applications.

The hydrogel, composed of ultra-short peptides is designed to remain insoluble in biological fluids, ensuring it stays localised at the injection site. It responds to elevated levels of glutathione (GSH), a molecule abundant in tumour cells.

"This work exemplifies how scientific innovation can address the pressing needs of cancer treatment. The hydrogel's properties allow it to work harmoniously with the biological environment, offering precision," Prof. Das said.

### TH CROSSWORD + 14373



#### Across

- Material stuff a bricklayer conceals (6)
- Stubborn, he will live... Nut case! (4-4)
- Wary fear about a traveller (8)
- Jump in well! (6)
- Indore's chief detective cracks domestic's murder (8)
- Annual party's ending too soon (6)

To solve this puzzle online, get access to our crossword site at <https://crzn.puzzle.funk.jp/tr>



- According to the Reverend, Norse God defied providence (13)
- Settle father near town (part of the city of Dakar, in Senegal) (6)
- Fondness for Achilles' heel? (4-4)
- Consistently pick up leaders from aggressive, loyal, wise and young senators (6)
- Public letters from Gopal, a No.1 tantrist from the east (8)
- Reject worth? (5-3)
- Ouphe and Lyr ignored regularly for all to see (6)

#### Down

- Register about time and goal mismanagement (7)
- Say, Steffi's able to love a drawing on the wall? (8)
- Duty doctor surprisingly missed date with chief internist (6)
- Broadcast so bluesy! Thank you very much! (5-3)
- Peninsula misses small region in Russia (6)
- Foebly independent, a Spaniard is swallowed by city (7)
- Eccentric hot nurse hugs trunk of a flowering tree (5-8)
- Issue from leaders of European Football Union (8)
- That man's notes about simple proteins (8)
- Record beginnings of harsh, odious cry from a huntsman (5-2)
- Baby poo? One hundred percent? (7)
- Letters from Mayori A Tory spokesperson? (6)
- See, fellow bit wrapped piece of hamburger! (6)

### SUDOKU

7			1					
	2		6		7			
5		8			4			
9	8		4					
		4	8	2	5	7		
			1			8	5	
9			7				2	
2		1			5			
		3						8

Solution to previous puzzle

1	7	8	9	3	6	2	4	5
3	9	4	5	8	7	2	6	1
6	2	5	7	1	4	8	3	9
7	3	5	8	2	4	1	9	6
4	2	1	6	9	5	8	3	7
8	6	9	2	4	7	5	1	3
5	1	2	4	6	8	9	7	3
6	8	3	2	7	9	5	1	4
9	4	7	3	5	1	6	2	8

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

1	7	8	9	3	6	2	4	5
3	9	4	5	8	7	2	6	1
6	2	5	7	1	4	8	3	9
7	3	5	8	2	4	1	9	6
4	2	1	6	9	5	8	3	7
8	6	9	2	4	7	5	1	3
5	1	2	4	6	8	9	7	3
6	8	3	2	7	9	5	1	4
9	4	7	3	5	1	6	2	8

### FAITH

#### Andal's wake-up call

Andal, the youngest of the 12 vaishnavite Azhvars, has composed Tiruppavai in fresh, exquisite, refined and pure Tamil. Acharya Sri Manavala Mamunigal says Andal's devotional songs surpass the works of other apostles. Tiruppavai is the seed of all the Vedas.

Vehukudi Sri Krishnan Swamy said in a discourse that Andal, the manifestation of Lord Vishnu's divine consort Bhadrakali, has transmigrated down from Sri Vaikuntam to show the path of self-realisation and the ways and means to realise God.

In Hindu dharma, the term *Mamo, Vak, Kaya*, which refers to mind, speech, and body, is used. Andal says we have to chant and conquer the mind to think of God and offer service to God with our physical faculties. Those who fail to understand this are in the sleep of ignorance. Andal devotes poems 6 to 15 to wake people up to achieve realisation.

There are various types of sleep. In addition to normal sleep, unwanted or irregular sleep at odd times is influenced by "Thamo Guha", which is provoked by grief, illness, pain, and mental darkness. Mistaking the body and soul as the same and thinking that the soul is independent are also considered the sleep of ignorance. Andal says the soul is a subject of God and is meant to serve Him.

Brahman, the Supreme Being, is the source of all energy. A person exhausted from working all day retires to sleep during the night and wakes up fresh the next morning (like a cellphone recharged). How is this possible? It is because of God's help that he recharges energy. This is called enthralling with God (*Brahmanubhava*).



# Indian researchers develop injectable hydrogel for targeted cancer treatment

**The Hindu Bureau**

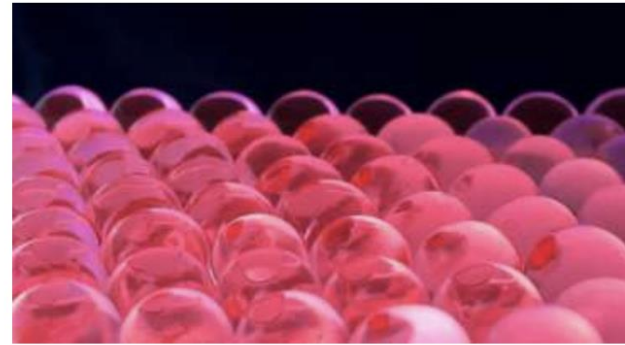
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"Current treatments,



The hydrogel triggers a controlled drug release directly into the tumour, thus reducing systemic side effects. GETTY IMAGES

such as chemotherapy and surgical interventions, often have severe limitations. Chemotherapy's systemic delivery often results in harmful side effects by affecting both cancerous and healthy cells," the researchers said in the statement.

## Localised treatment

The team addressed these challenges by designing a hydrogel that delivers drugs precisely to the tumour site, ensuring localised action. Hydrogels are water-based, polymer networks capable of absorbing and retaining fluids. Their unique structure

mimics living tissues, making them suitable for biomedical applications.

The hydrogel, composed of ultra-short peptides is designed to remain insoluble in biological fluids, ensuring it stays localised at the injection site. It responds to elevated levels of glutathione (GSH), a molecule abundant in tumour cells.

"This work exemplifies how scientific innovation can address the pressing needs of cancer treatment. The hydrogel's properties allow it to work harmoniously with the biological environment, offering precision," Prof. Das said.

## . Key Development / मुख्य खोज

### Advanced Injectable Hydrogel / उन्नत इंजेक्टेबल हाइड्रोजेल:

- Researchers from **IIT-Guwahati** and **Bose Institute, Kolkata** have developed a hydrogel for localized cancer treatment.
- IIT-गुवाहाटी और बोस संस्थान, कोलकाता के शोधकर्ताओं ने स्थानीयकृत कैंसर उपचार के लिए एक हाइड्रोजेल विकसित किया है।

- **Purpose / उद्देश्य:**

- Acts as a stable reservoir for anti-cancer drugs, releasing them in a controlled manner to avoid harming healthy cells.
- यह कैंसर-रोधी दवाओं के लिए एक स्थिर भंडार के रूप में कार्य करता है और स्वस्थ कोशिकाओं को नुकसान पहुंचाए बिना नियंत्रित रूप से दवा छोड़ता है।

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**Localized Treatment / स्थानीयकृत उपचार:**Hydrogel delivers drugs directly to the tumor site, ensuring precise action.

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हाइड्रोजेल दवा को सीधे ट्यूमर के स्थान पर पहुंचाता है और सटीक कार्रवाई सुनिश्चित करता है।

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**Material Composition / सामग्री संरचना:**Made of water-based polymer networks that mimic living tissues, making it ideal for biomedical applications.

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जल-आधारित पॉलिमर नेटवर्क से बना है जो जीवित ऊतकों की नकल करता है और इसे जैव चिकित्सा अनुप्रयोगों के लिए आदर्श बनाता है।

**Stability and Functionality /  
स्थिरता और कार्यक्षमता:** Designed  
to remain insoluble in biological  
fluids and respond to elevated  
glutathione levels in tumor cells.

जैविक तरल पदार्थों में  
अघुलनशील रहने और ट्यूमर  
कोशिकाओं में बढ़े हुए ग्लूटाथियोन  
स्तर पर प्रतिक्रिया करने के लिए  
डिज़ाइन किया गया है।

## Limitations of Current Treatments / वर्तमान उपचार की सीमाएँ:

- Chemotherapy and surgical interventions often harm both cancerous and healthy cells.
- कीमोथेरेपी और सर्जरी अक्सर कैंसरग्रस्त और स्वस्थ कोशिकाओं को नुकसान पहुंचाती हैं।

## Solution Provided / प्रस्तुत समाधान:

- This hydrogel ensures targeted action, reducing systemic side effects.
- यह हाइड्रोजेल लक्षित कार्रवाई सुनिश्चित करता है और प्रणालीगत साइड इफेक्ट को कम करता है।



## Research Significance / शोध का महत्व

### Publication / प्रकाशन:

- Findings published in **Materials Horizons**, a journal of the Royal Society of Chemistry.
- शोध निष्कर्ष **मटेरियल्स होराइजन** में प्रकाशित हुए, जो रॉयल सोसाइटी ऑफ केमिस्ट्री की पत्रिका है।

### Team Contribution / टीम का योगदान:

- Led by **Debapratim Das** (IIT-G) and supported by researchers from the Bose Institute.
- नेतृत्व **देबप्रतीम दास (IIT-जी)** ने किया और बोस संस्थान के शोधकर्ताओं ने सहयोग दिया।

## Revolutionizing Cancer Treatment / कैंसर उपचार में क्रांति:

- Expected to be revolutionary for breast cancer therapy.
- स्तन कैंसर के उपचार के लिए क्रांतिकारी माना जा रहा है।

## Future Prospects / भविष्य की संभावनाएँ:

- Demonstrates how scientific innovation can address pressing medical needs.
- दिखाता है कि वैज्ञानिक नवाचार कैसे चिकित्सा की तत्काल जरूरतों को पूरा कर सकता है।

# Govt. report reveals stark infrastructure gap in Indian schools

**Maitri Porecha**

NEW DELHI

Of the over 14.71 lakh schools in India, up to 1.52 lakh schools have no functional electricity, according to the latest data released by the Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE+) maintained by the Ministry of Education. Of the 14.71 lakh schools, 10.17 lakh schools are government-run, of which 9.12 lakh schools have functional electricity, while 1.52 lakh schools do not.

Apart from the government-run schools, there are 4.54 lakh schools that are government-aided, private and unaided, and others, of which 4.07 lakh have functional electricity.

Of the total schools, 14.47 lakh schools have drinking water facilities, but in only 14.11 lakh schools is the drinking water facility functional.

Of the 10.17 lakh government schools, functional drinking water facility is available in 9.78 lakh schools. Of the 4.46 lakh








67,000 schools operate without functional toilets, of which a majority are government-run.

government-aided, private and other schools, 4.33 lakh have functional drinking water.

With regard to toilets, of the 14.71 lakh schools, 14.50 lakh schools have toilet facilities, but only 14.04 lakh toilets are functional.

The report says 67,000 schools operate without functional toilets, of which a majority (46,000) are government schools.

The condition is much worse when it comes to providing disabled-friendly facilities. Of the 10.17 lakh government schools, only 3.37 lakh schools have disabled-friendly toilets.

- 
- **Total Schools / कुल स्कूल:** 14.71 lakh schools in India as per UDISE+ data by the Ministry of Education.
  - शिक्षा मंत्रालय द्वारा UDISE+ डेटा के अनुसार भारत में कुल 14.71 लाख स्कूल।
  - **Government Schools / सरकारी स्कूल:** 10.17 lakh schools are government-run.
  - 10.17 लाख स्कूल सरकारी द्वारा संचालित।
  - Of these, 9.12 lakh have functional electricity; 1.52 lakh lack it.
  - इनमें से 9.12 लाख स्कूलों में बिजली है; 1.52 लाख में नहीं।
- 
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## Drinking Water Facilities / पीने के पानी की सुविधाएँ

### Availability / उपलब्धता:

- Total schools with drinking water: 14.47 lakh.
- पीने के पानी की सुविधा वाले कुल स्कूल: 14.47 लाख।
- Functional facilities: 14.11 lakh schools.
- कार्यशील सुविधा: 14.11 लाख स्कूल।

### Government Schools:

- Functional drinking water available in 9.78 lakh schools out of 10.17 lakh.
- 10.17 लाख में से 9.78 लाख स्कूलों में कार्यशील पीने के पानी की सुविधा।

## Electricity and Toilets / बिजली और शौचालय

### Electricity:

- 4.54 lakh private, aided, and unaided schools; 4.07 lakh have functional electricity.
- 4.54 लाख निजी, सहायता प्राप्त और गैर-सहायता प्राप्त स्कूल; 4.07 लाख में बिजली उपलब्ध।

### Toilet Facilities / शौचालय सुविधाएँ:

- Total toilets available: 14.50 lakh.
- कुल शौचालय: 14.50 लाख।
- Functional toilets: 14.04 lakh.
- कार्यशील शौचालय: 14.04 लाख।
- 67,000 schools lack functional toilets; 46,000 of these are government schools.
- 67,000 स्कूलों में कार्यशील शौचालय नहीं हैं; इनमें से 46,000 सरकारी स्कूल हैं।

#### 4. Disabled-Friendly Facilities / दिव्यांग-अनुकूल सुविधाएँ

Only 3.37 lakh government schools have disabled-friendly toilets.

केवल 3.37 लाख सरकारी स्कूलों में दिव्यांग-अनुकूल शौचालय हैं।

#### 5. Key Challenges / मुख्य चुनौतियाँ

Lack of functional basic infrastructure in many schools.

कई स्कूलों में बुनियादी सुविधाओं की कमी।

Need for improvements in electricity, water, and sanitation facilities.

बिजली, पानी और स्वच्छता सुविधाओं में सुधार की आवश्यकता।

A landscape of large, rounded boulders under a clear sky at dusk or dawn. The boulders are smooth and rounded, with a warm, golden-brown hue. The sky is a clear, pale blue. The overall scene is serene and natural.

# Environment Summits of 2024

- 
- In 2024, global environmental efforts faced a series of setbacks as key UN climate summits failed to deliver impactful resolutions.
  - 2024 Climate Summits: Biodiversity (Colombia): Failed to finalize financing mechanisms for sustainable land-use practices, falling short of the \$700 billion annual goal.
  - Climate Change (Azerbaijan): Divisions over fossil fuel transition and inadequate funding pledges for developing nations. Land Degradation (Saudi Arabia):
  - Lack of consensus on a legally binding drought protocol.
  - Plastic Pollution (South Korea): No agreement due to opposition from nations reliant on plastic-based economies, favouring recycling over reduction.



## Role of Youth in Environmental Pacts:

Youth-led Litigation: Cases like *Held v. Montana* in the U.S. and Ridhima Pandey's petition in India showcase youth challenging inadequate climate policies.

Advocating Human Rights: Emphasizing climate inaction as a violation of rights, demanding systemic, science-based reforms.

Global Movements: Young activists highlight intergenerational equity, inspiring governments and communities to prioritize sustainable policies.

Courtroom Success: Landmark rulings in Canada, the Netherlands, and Germany highlight the potential of youth advocacy to shape policies

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## **Reasons for Summit Failures:**

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**Divergent Priorities:** Developing nations demand greater financial and technological support, while developed nations cite domestic constraints.

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**Economic Pressures:** Global crises like inflation, geopolitical conflicts, and post-pandemic recovery divert attention and resources.

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**Lack of Consensus:** Disagreements on accountability frameworks and operational mechanisms stalled progress.

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**Inequitable Commitments:** Wealthier nations failed to meet financial and emission reduction targets.

# Fighter Jet Generations

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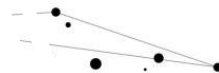
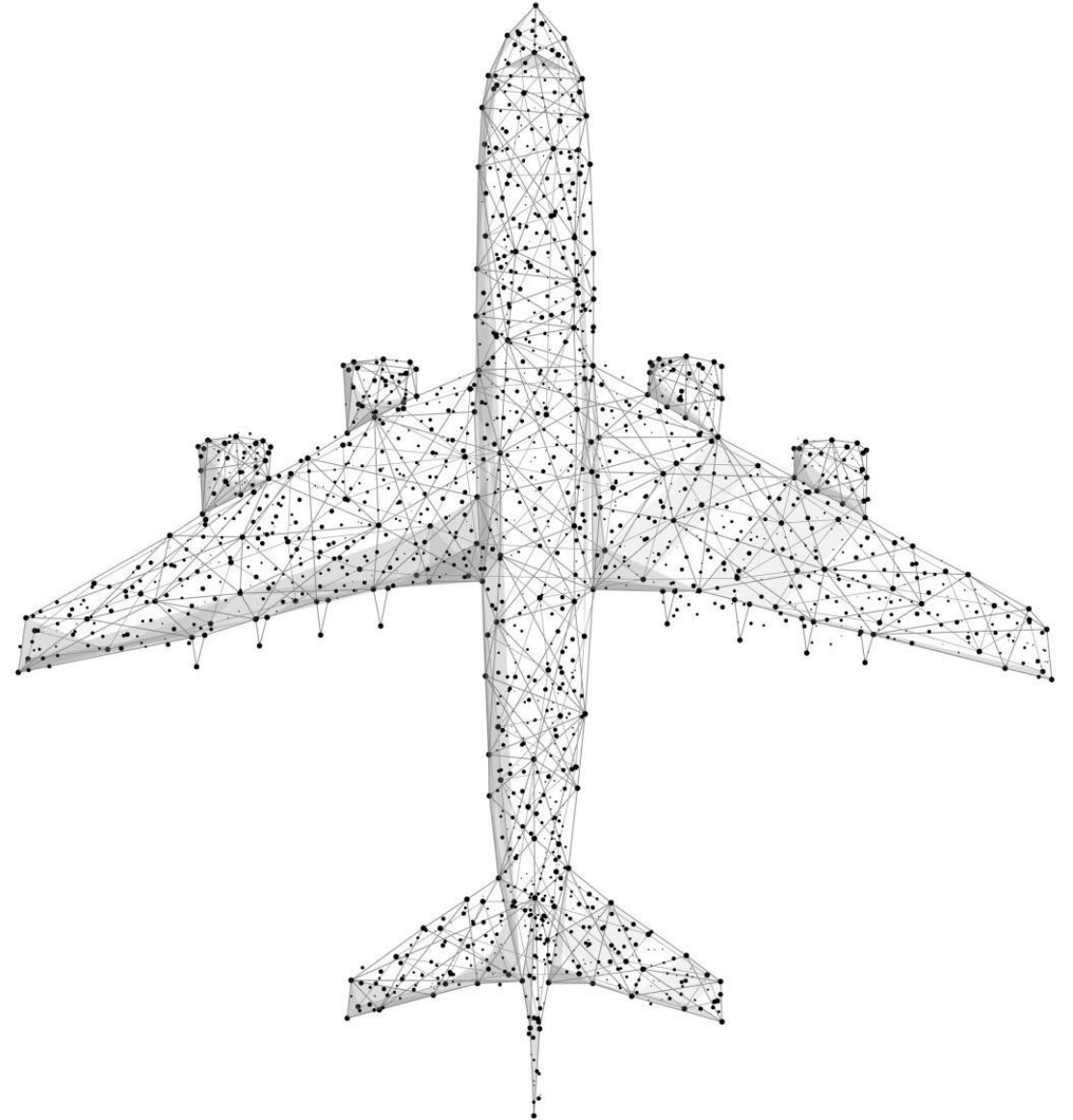


- Unverified images of what is being termed as a Chinese sixth-generation fighter aircraft have gone viral on social media.

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- About Generation in Fighter Jet:

- The concept of “generations” in fighter jets classifies them **based on technological advancements and the era of development**. Each generation reflects significant innovations in speed, stealth, avionics, and weaponry, shaping the future of aerial warfare.





## Generations of Fighter Jets:

<u>Generation</u>	<u>Era</u>	<u>Key Features</u>	<u>Examples</u>
1st Gen	1943-1955	Subsonic speeds, basic avionics, unguided weapons, straight or swept wings.	Messerschmitt Me 262, MiG-15, Hawker Hunter.
2nd Gen	1955-1970	Supersonic speeds, afterburners, radar systems, and semi-active guided missiles.	<a href="#">MiG-21</a> , F-104 Starfighter, Sukhoi Su-9.
3rd Gen	1960-1970	Multi-role capabilities, beyond-visual-range combat, integrated airframes, advanced radars.	MiG-23, F-4 Phantom, Harrier.
4th Gen	1970-2000s	Multi-role fighters, fly-by-wire control systems, heads-up displays, initial stealth features.	F-16, Su-30, Dassault Rafale, Eurofighter Typhoon.
5th Gen	2000 onwards	Stealth design, advanced avionics, network-centric warfare, data fusion, supersonic sustained speeds.	F-22 Raptor, F-35 Lightning, Su-57, Chengdu J-20.
6th Gen	In Development	Hypersonic capabilities, AI integration, optionally manned systems, directed-energy weapons.	Tempest (UK-Italy-Japan), NGAD (USA), Baidi (China).

---

- **Nations with 5th Generation Fighters:**

- **United States:** F-22 Raptor, F-35 Lightning II.

- **Russia:** Sukhoi Su-57.

- **China:** Chengdu J-20.

- **India (Developing):** AMCA (Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft)

-

The logo features a central blue circle with a green gradient, surrounded by several concentric, semi-transparent layers of blue and green. The text is centered within the blue circle.

India  
Meteorological  
Department

- 
- The India Meteorological Department (IMD), established in 1875, has played a critical role in weather forecasting and climate services in India for nearly 150 years.
  - About India Meteorological Department (IMD):
  - What it is:
  - The IMD is India's national weather service agency responsible for meteorological observations, forecasting, and research.

**Established in:** 1875, following critical weather events like the 1864 Calcutta cyclone and monsoon failures in 1866 and 1871.

**Headquarters:** New Delhi, India.

**Ministry:** Under the Ministry of Earth Sciences.

## **History:**

- **Origins:** Began with provincial observatories in the 18th century (e.g., Madras Observatory, 1793).
- **Centralization:** Unified meteorological services under a central authority in 1875.





# Annual Ground Water Quality Report, 2024




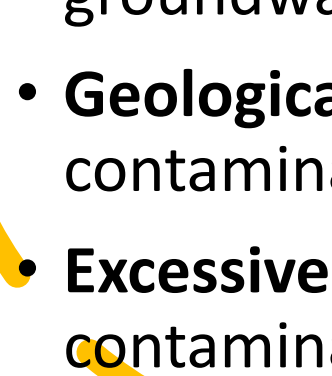
- The Annual Ground Water Quality Report, 2024, published by the **Central Groundwater Board (CGWB)** under the **Jal Shakti Ministry**, highlights significant concerns about groundwater quality in India.
- **Groundwater Extraction:** The report states that the degree of groundwater extraction across India is **60.4%**.
- **Safe Blocks:** Approximately **73%** of the analysed blocks fall within the **'safe' category**, indicating adequate replenishment of groundwater resources.



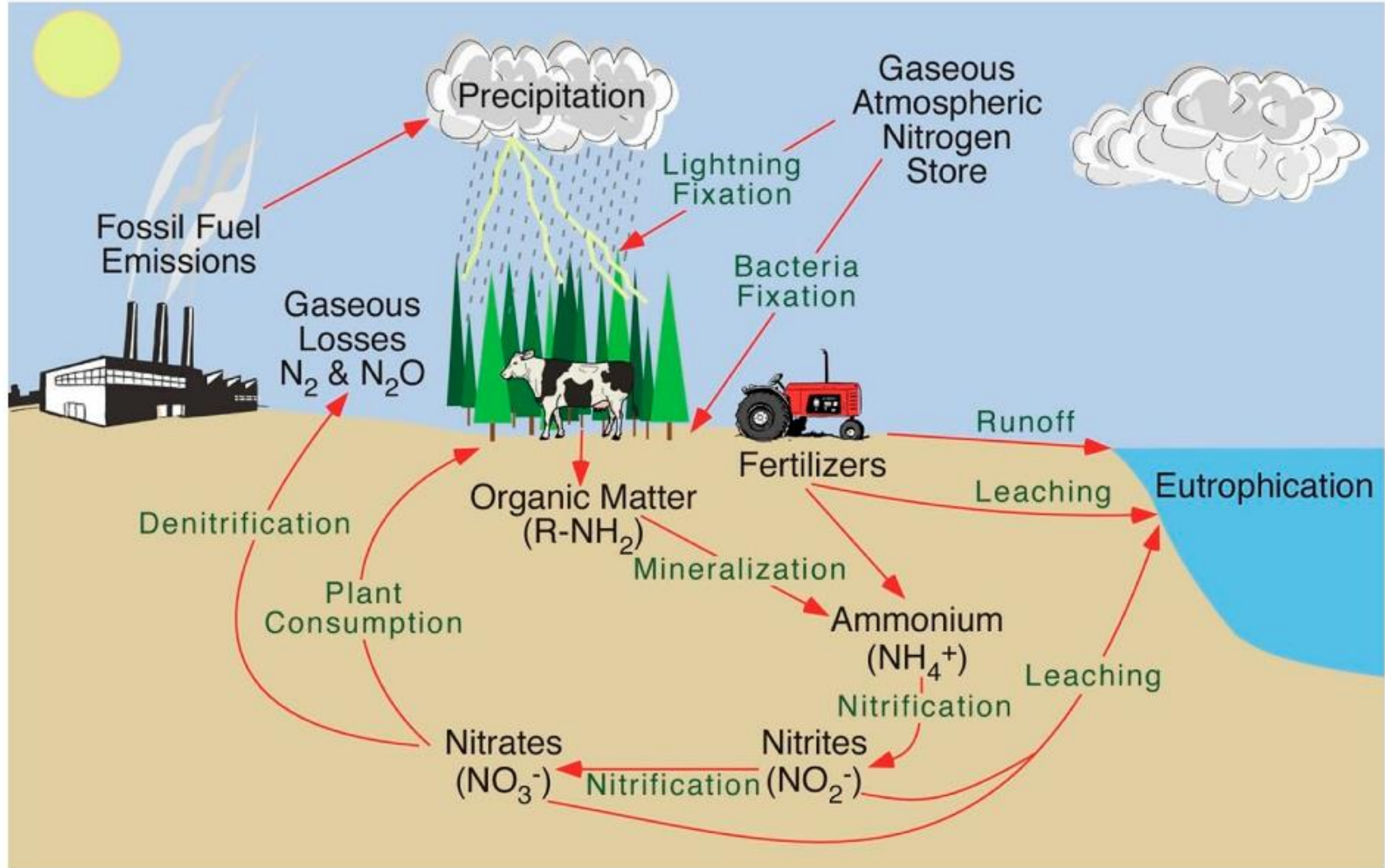
- 
- **Nitrate Pollution:** There are **440 districts** with excessive nitrates in their groundwater as of 2023.
    - **Rajasthan (49%), Karnataka (48%), and Tamil Nadu (37%)** reported the highest levels of nitrate contamination.
  - The report identifies **uranium contamination**, particularly in **Rajasthan and Punjab**, where the highest numbers of samples exceeded **100 ppb (parts per billion)**.
- 

- **Fluoride contamination** is a major concern in states such as Rajasthan, Haryana, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana.
- 



- 
- **Reasons for groundwater contamination**
  - **Excessive Use of Fertilizers:** Over-reliance on nitrogen-based synthetic fertilizers in agriculture leads to nitrate leaching into groundwater.
  - **Industrial Effluents:** Discharge of untreated or inadequately treated industrial waste introduces heavy metals and other toxic substances into groundwater.
  - **Geological formations** in some regions release naturally occurring contaminants like arsenic, fluoride, and uranium into groundwater.
  - **Excessive extraction** lowers water tables, concentrating naturally occurring contaminants like arsenic, uranium, and fluoride.
- 





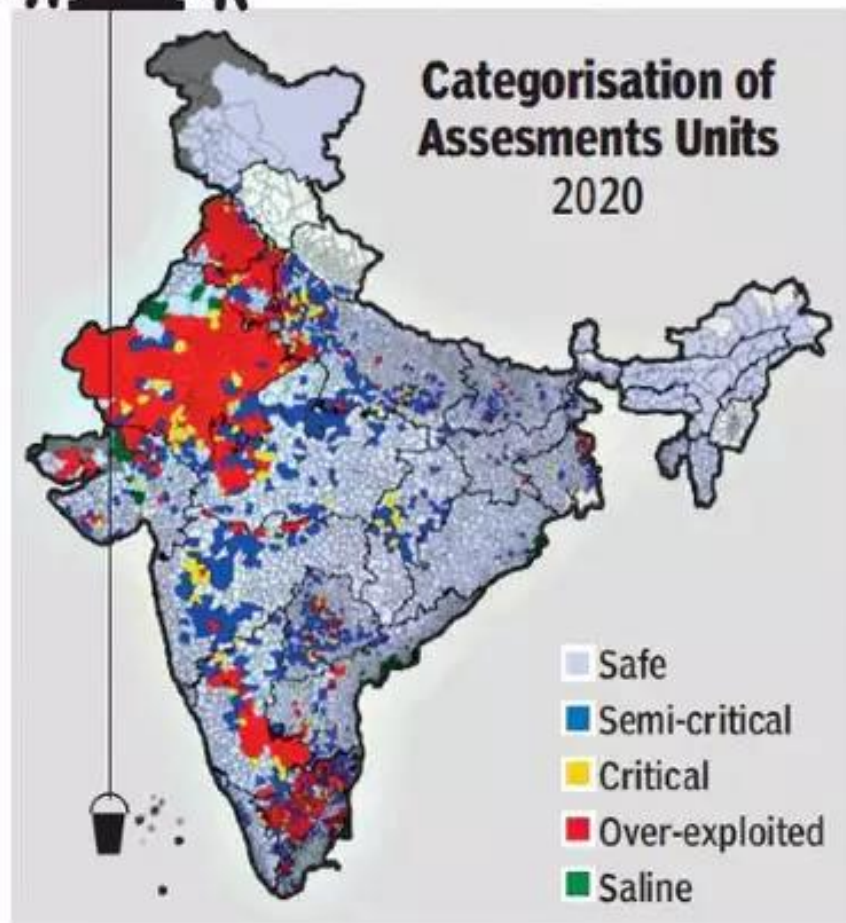
# GROUND WATER SITUATION



Total no. of assessment units

2017: **6,881**

2020: **6,965**



## 2017 vs 2020

	No. of units	% of total
<b>Safe</b>		
2017	4,310	62.6
2020	4,427	63.6
<b>Semi-critical</b>		
2017	972	14.1
2020	1,057	15.2
<b>Critical</b>		
2017	313	4.6
2020	270	3.9
<b>Over-exploited</b>		
2017	1,186	17.2
2020	1,114	16
<b>Saline</b>		
2017	100	1.5
2020	97	1.3

\*units: block/taluk/tehsil/mandal/firka; Source: Central Ground Water Board



- **Which one of the following ancient towns is well known for its elaborate system of water harvesting and management by building a series of dams and channelizing water into connected reservoirs? (2021)**

- (a) Dholavira
  - (b) Kalibangan
  - (c) Rakhigarhi
  - (d) Ropar
- 






- **With reference to 'Water Credit', consider the following statements: (2021)**

1. It puts microfinance tools to work in the water and sanitation sector.
2. It is a global initiative launched under the aegis of the World Health Organization and the World Bank.
3. It aims to enable the poor people to meet their water needs without depending on subsidies.

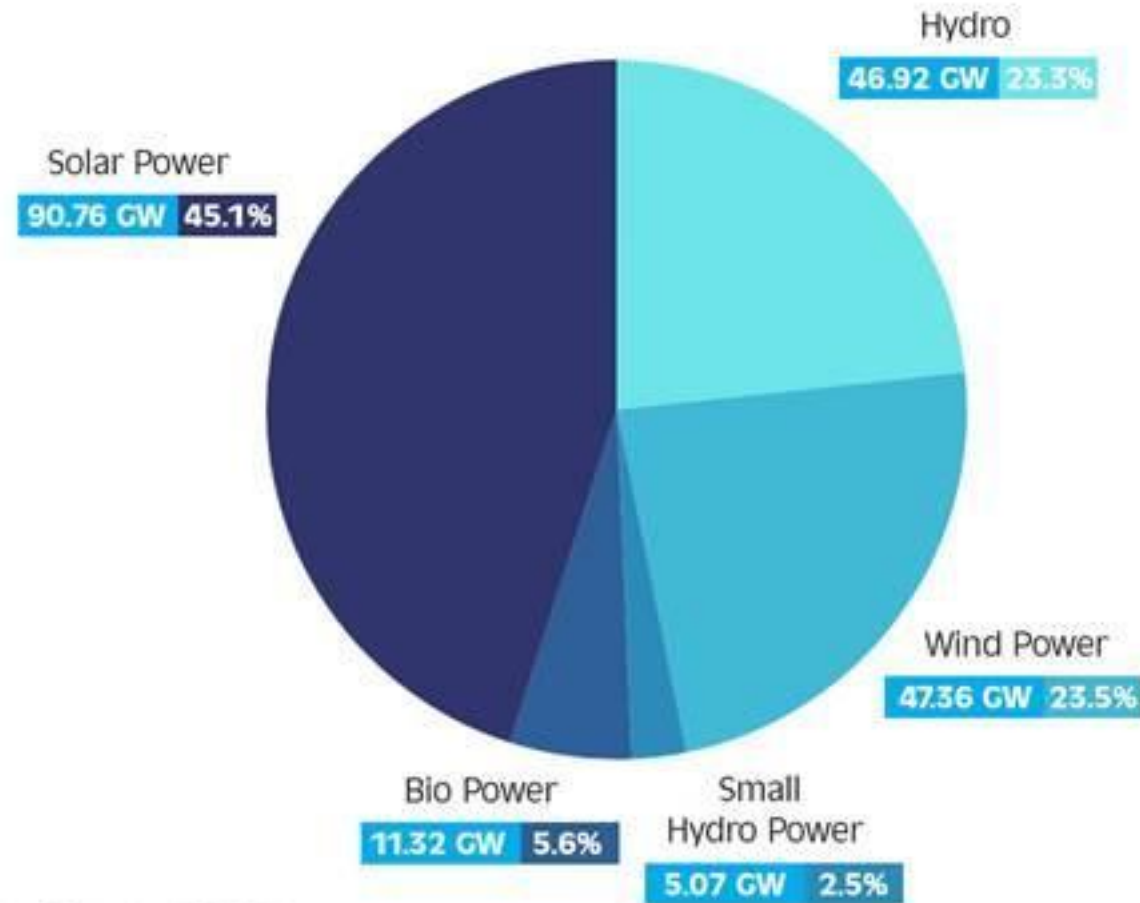


- **Which of the statements given above are correct?**

- (a) 1 and 2 only
  - (b) 2 and 3 only
  - (c) 1 and 3 only
  - (d) 1, 2 and 3
- 
- 
- 



# Renewable Energy Capacity in India





As of October 10, 2024



- Solar Energy: With over 300 sunny days annually, the National Institute of Solar Energy (NISE) estimates its potential at 748 GW, assuming 3% of wasteland is covered by Solar PV modules
- . States like Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Tamil Nadu lead in solar energy development, with massive solar parks contributing to the national grid.







- 
- **Wind Energy:** India's wind energy potential exceeds **300 GW**, primarily concentrated in **Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, and Karnataka.**
    - Emerging offshore wind projects in coastal areas, such as Gujarat and Tamil Nadu, could significantly boost capacity.
- 



- **Geothermal Energy:** India has significant geothermal potential, with notable sites in **Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh,** and **Jharkhand**, capable of generating **10 GW**.



# World Malaria Report 2024


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- 
- The World Health Organization (WHO) highlighted India's remarkable progress in its World Malaria Report 2024. India significantly reduced malaria cases and related deaths between 2017 and 2023, marking a major milestone.
  - India aims to achieve malaria-free status by 2030, with zero indigenous cases by 2027.
- 

- 
- Malaria is a life-threatening vector-borne disease caused by the Plasmodium parasites, transmitted through the bites of infected female Anopheles mosquitoes.
  - There are 5 Plasmodium parasite species that cause malaria in humans and 2 of these species – *P. falciparum* and *P. vivax* – pose the greatest threat
- 



- **Global Findings: Disease Burden:**

- An estimated **263 million malaria cases occurred globally in 2023**, an increase of 11 million cases from 2022.
  - Malaria mortality stood at 597,000 deaths globally, showing a decline compared to 622,000 deaths in 2020.
- 





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- **Geographic Distribution:**

- The **WHO African Region** carried **94% of global malaria cases** and **95% of malaria deaths in 2023**.
- **Five countries**—Nigeria (26%), Democratic Republic of Congo (13%), Uganda (5%), Ethiopia (4%), and Mozambique (4%)—accounted for nearly 52% of global malaria cases.
- **Since 2015, nine countries**, including Egypt in 2024, have been **certified malaria-free**.

-

- 
- **Intervention Uptake:**
    - The rollout of two malaria vaccines, **RTS,S and R21**, has significantly increased vaccine coverage in endemic areas.
  - **India Specific Findings: Historical Transformation:** At independence, India faced **7.5 crore malaria cases annually with 800,000 deaths**, posing a critical public health challenge.
    - Persistent efforts have cut cases by over 97%, reducing them to 2 million annually, while deaths have plummeted to just 83 by 2023.

- 
- **Latest Achievements (2017-2024):** From 2015 to 2023, Malaria cases fell from 11,69,261 to 2,27,564, and deaths dropped from 384 to 83, representing an **80% reduction**.
  - The **Annual Blood Examination Rate** increased from 9.58 (2015) to 11.62 (2023), ensuring early detection and intervention.
- 

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- **Reduction in Disease Burden:**

- States in **high-burden** decreased from 10 to 2 (Mizoram & Tripura).
- Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Meghalaya transitioned to **medium-burden**.
- Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Madhya Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, and Dadra and Nagar Haveli moved to **low-burden**.
- Ladakh, Lakshadweep, and Puducherry achieved **Zero status**, eligible for subnational malaria elimination verification.

-

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 "Top 10 MCQ from the session for every exam" is overlaid in the center in a white, sans-serif font.

Top 10 MCQ from the session for  
every exam

- What is the estimated solar energy potential in India according to the National Institute of Solar Energy (NISE)?  
राष्ट्रीय सौर ऊर्जा संस्थान (NISE) के अनुसार भारत में सौर ऊर्जा की अनुमानित क्षमता क्या है?
- **A. 500 GW**
- **B. 648 GW**
- **C. 748 GW**
- **D. 850 GW**



- Which two states are pioneers in India's offshore wind energy projects?  
भारत के अपतटीय पवन ऊर्जा परियोजनाओं में कौन से दो राज्य अग्रणी हैं?
- **A. Maharashtra and Odisha / महाराष्ट्र और ओडिशा**
- **B. Gujarat and Tamil Nadu / गुजरात और तमिलनाडु**
- **C. Andhra Pradesh and Kerala / आंध्र प्रदेश और केरल**
- **D. Rajasthan and Karnataka / राजस्थान और कर्नाटक**

- What is the primary cause of nitrate contamination in groundwater in India?

भारत में भूजल में नाइट्रेट संदूषण का मुख्य कारण क्या है?

- **A. Overuse of fertilizers / उर्वरकों का अत्यधिक उपयोग**
- B. Industrial effluents / औद्योगिक अपशिष्ट**
- C. Excessive groundwater extraction / भूजल का अत्यधिक दोहन**
- D. All of the above / उपरोक्त सभी**

- What is the significance of the **World Malaria Report 2024** findings for India?  
**विश्व मलेरिया रिपोर्ट 2024** के निष्कर्ष भारत के लिए क्या महत्व रखते हैं?
- **A. India achieved malaria-free certification / भारत ने मलेरिया-मुक्त प्रमाणन प्राप्त किया**  
**B. Malaria cases reduced by 97% since independence / स्वतंत्रता के बाद मलेरिया के मामले 97% तक कम हुए**  
**C. No indigenous cases since 2023 / 2023 के बाद से कोई स्वदेशी मामला नहीं**  
**D. High-burden states remain unchanged / उच्च-भार वाले राज्यों में कोई बदलाव नहीं**

- Which two Plasmodium species pose the greatest threat to humans?  
कौन सी दो प्लाज्मोडियम प्रजातियां मनुष्यों के लिए सबसे बड़ा खतरा पैदा करती हैं?
- **A. P. falciparum and P. vivax / पी. फाल्सीपेरम और पी. विवैक्स**
- B. P. malariae and P. ovale / पी. मलेरिया और पी. ओवाले**
- C. P. knowlesi and P. cynomolgi / पी. नोलेसी और पी. साइनोमोलगी**
- D. P. berghei and P. reichenowi / पी. बर्गेही और पी. रीचेनोवी**

- What was the **Annual Blood Examination Rate (ABER)** for malaria in India in 2023?  
भारत में 2023 में मलेरिया के लिए वार्षिक रक्त जांच दर (ABER) क्या थी?
- **A. 9.58**
- **B. 10.85**
- **C. 11.62**
- **D. 12.45**

- Which Indian states have achieved zero malaria status as of 2024?  
2024 तक कौन से भारतीय राज्यों ने मलेरिया शून्य स्थिति प्राप्त की है?
- **A. Ladakh, Lakshadweep, and Puducherry / लद्दाख, लक्षद्वीप और पुडुचेरी**
- **B. Goa, Kerala, and Maharashtra / गोवा, केरल और महाराष्ट्र**
- **C. Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Haryana / गुजरात, राजस्थान और हरियाणा**
- **D. Mizoram, Tripura, and Meghalaya / मिज़ोरम, त्रिपुरा और मेघालय**



- Which UN climate summit failed to finalize financing mechanisms for biodiversity conservation in 2024?

2024 में किस संयुक्त राष्ट्र जलवायु शिखर सम्मेलन में जैव विविधता संरक्षण के लिए वित्त पोषण तंत्र को अंतिम रूप देने में विफलता हुई?

- **A. Biodiversity Summit, Colombia / जैव विविधता शिखर सम्मेलन, कोलंबिया**
- B. Climate Change Summit, Azerbaijan / जलवायु परिवर्तन शिखर सम्मेलन, अजरबैजान**
- C. Land Degradation Summit, Saudi Arabia / भूमि क्षरण शिखर सम्मेलन, सऊदी अरब**
- D. Plastic Pollution Summit, South Korea / प्लास्टिक प्रदूषण शिखर सम्मेलन, दक्षिण कोरिया**

- Which Indian state leads in wind energy capacity?  
पवन ऊर्जा क्षमता में कौन सा भारतीय राज्य अग्रणी है?
- **A. Gujarat / गुजरात**
- **B. Tamil Nadu / तमिलनाडु**
- **C. Maharashtra / महाराष्ट्र**
- **D. Andhra Pradesh / आंध्र प्रदेश**

- What percentage of groundwater blocks in India are categorized as safe?

भारत में भूजल ब्लॉकों का कितने प्रतिशत सुरक्षित श्रेणी में आता है?

- **A. 60%**
- B. 65%**
- C. 73%**
- D. 80%**

---

# Word of the day

## **Fad:**

an interest followed with exaggerated zeal

---

**Synonyms:** craze, cult, furor, rage

---

**Usage:** *To me, fashion is about being comfortable, not the latest craze or fad.*

---

**Pronunciation:** [newsth.live/fadpro](http://newsth.live/fadpro)

---

**International Phonetic**

**Alphabet:** /fæd/

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Fun Fact

---

Adding salt makes  
water boil faster.

- **Truth:** Adding salt actually raises the boiling point slightly, meaning water takes longer to boil when salt is added.

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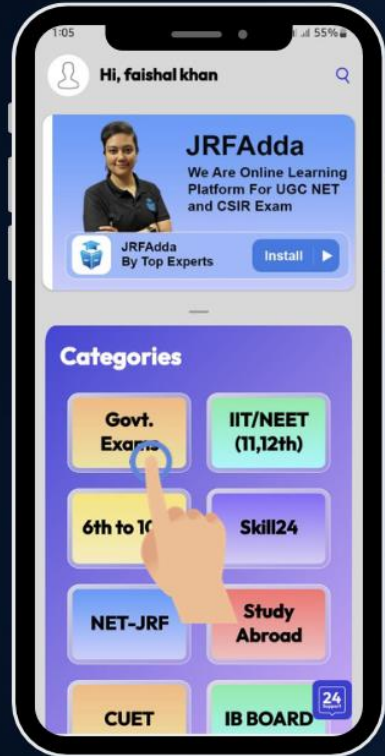
USE CODE - B50

CALL FOR SUPPORT: +91-7414862047

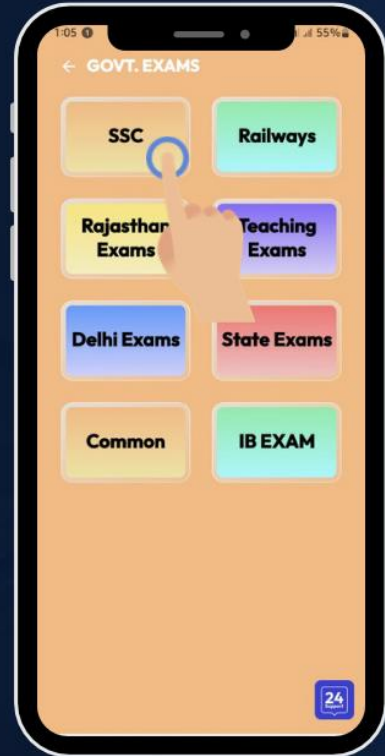
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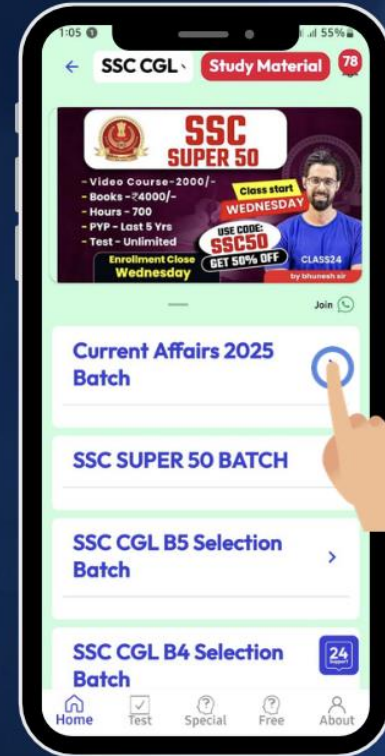
# Step 1



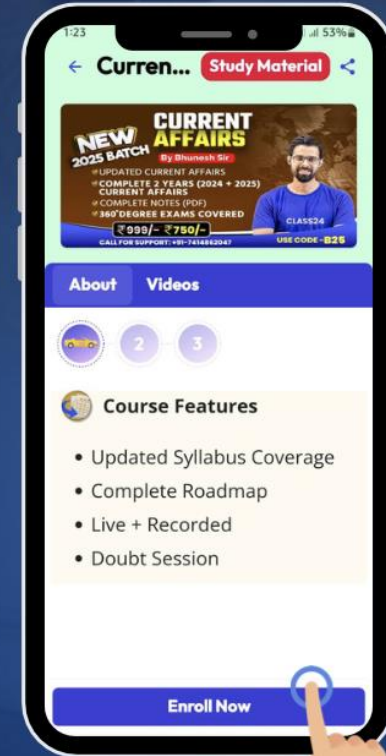
# Step 2




# Step 3



# Step 4



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

Thank you  
guys.

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