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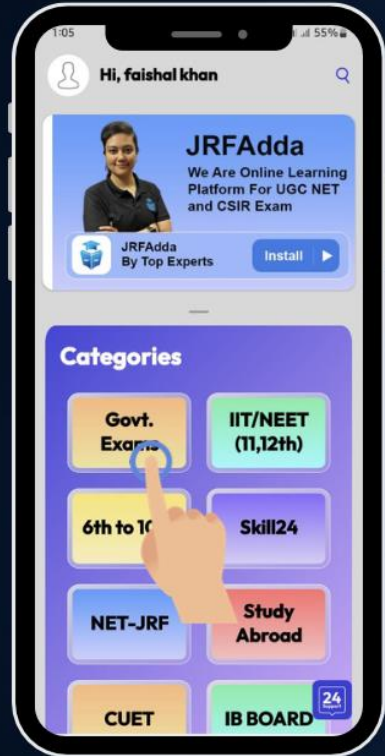
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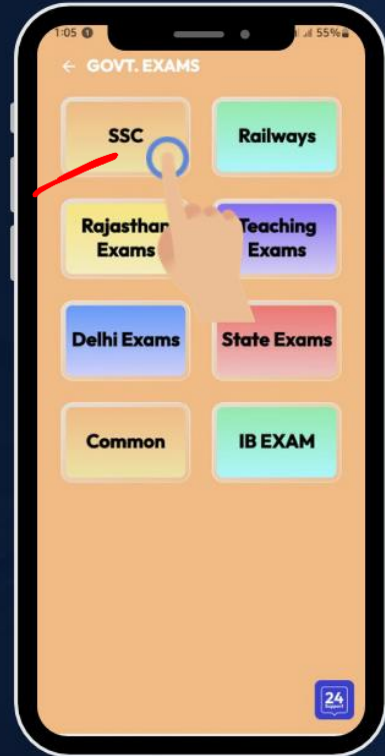
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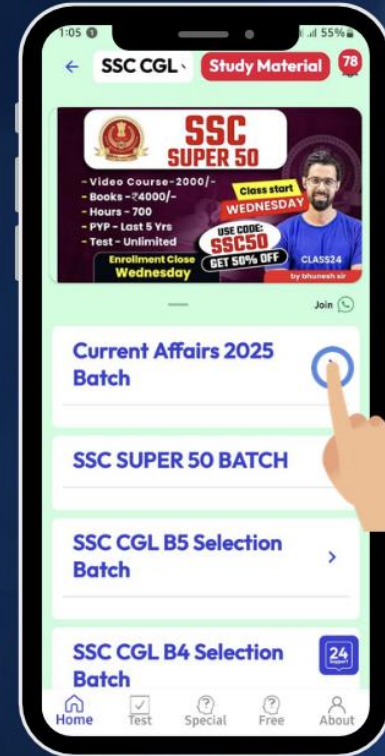
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कोई इतना गरीब नहीं की अपना
आने वाला वक़्त न बदल सके।

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INSIDE



Mamata focuses
on State's stability
to draw investors

KOLKATA
Mamata Banerjee highlighted Bengal's political stability and stress-free environment as key factors for investment during the 8th Bengal Global Business Summit in Kolkata on Wednesday. » PAGE 2

Awaiting the time
Dalits ascend to
leadership: Rahul

PATNA
Ahead of Bihar's Assembly elections, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday expressed hope for a future where Dalits and marginalised communities hold leadership positions across India at Jaijait Choudhary's birth anniversary event in Patna. » PAGE 2

Narcotics network
is backing J&K
infiltrators: Shah

NEW DELHI
Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday said that narcotics networks are aiding infiltrators and terrorists in J&K. He urged swift action against terror funding through drug trade and directed security agencies to target "zero infiltration". » PAGE 4

Fort William in
Kolkata renamed
as Vijay Durg

DURAI
Fort William, headquarters of the Eastern Army Command in Kolkata, has been renamed Vijay Durg as part of efforts to remove colonial influences. Additionally, Kitchener House is now Marekshah House, and St. George's Gate is Shivaji Gate. » PAGE 6

60% polling recorded in Delhi election

Parties complain about Model Code of Conduct violations; police say issues have been resolved | AAP is fighting for a consecutive third term, while BJP is looking to form govt. in Delhi after 28 years | Former CM Kejriwal faces the sons of two former CMs: Parvesh Sahib Singh and Sandeep Dikshit

Satyika Mahajan
NEW DELHI

Delhi recorded a turnout of 60.44% as the polling percentage in the Assembly election was updated at 11:50 p.m. on Wednesday. The voter turnout figure for the high-stakes election is likely to rise as updates continue to come in from polling booths. In the 2020 Assembly election, the turnout was 62.59%, while in 2015, it was even higher at 67.47%.

Political parties complained about violations of the Model Code of Conduct in Chirag Delhi, Jangpura, Farsh, Bazaar, and Seelampur.

However, the Delhi Police did not register any case on the basis of these allegations, saying that they had been resolved. There are close contests



Kejriwal returns: AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal with his family members after casting their vote on Wednesday, Susheel, KUMAR VERMA

the BJP's Delhi chief Virendra Sachdeva also cast their votes.

Polling began at 7 a.m. and officially ended at 6 p.m., with an electorate of more than 1.56 crore voters deciding the fate of 659 candidates across 70 constituencies. Voting was conducted in a single phase, with 13,766 polling

Exit polls predict
victory for BJP in
national capital

NEW DELHI
Most of the exit polls on Wednesday predicted the return of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its allies to power in Delhi after 27 years, while projecting that the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) would stand second and the Congress a distant third. » PAGE 5

Delhi after 28 years. The Congress, which has won zero seats in the last decade, is hoping for a re-entry into the State Assembly. Leaders from all three parties claimed that their messages had resonated with voters and would assure them the victory.

High-profile contests
Other key constituencies are former Deputy CM Manish Sisodia's Jangpura seat, where the BJP has fielded Tarvinder Singh Marwah and the Congress nominee is Farhad Surt. Current Chief Minister Atishi is also in the fray from Kalkaji, defending it from former BJP MP Ramesh Bidwai and the Congress's Alka Lamba.

Several candidates started their day before the polls opened, paying their respects at religious places. Ahead of the election,

Prime Minister Narendra Modi also encouraged voters to encourage their franchise, in a post on X. "I urge the voters here to participate in this festival of democracy with full enthusiasm and cast their valuable vote. On this occasion, my special wishes to all the young friends who are going to vote for the first time. Remember - first vote, then refreshment" he said.

The Delhi CEO had made arrangements for voters, including the provision of refreshments in polling stations. As voters trickled into booths, party workers and resident welfare associations encouraged people to participate by going door-to-door and sending messages on WhatsApp groups.

NO MAJOR COMPLAINTS
» PAGE 5

100 Indians deported from U.S. for illegal entry on military transport plane

arrive in Amritsar on military transport plane

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI
A C-17 wide-bodied aircraft from the U.S. Air Force landed in the Guru Rana Dass Ice International Airport of Amritsar on Wednesday carrying around 100 Indian nationals who were suspected by the U.S. authorities of using illegal means to enter the country. Sources here contradicted the previous assessment of over 200 passengers, saying that the flight carried a little more than 100 passengers as a "large-scale deportation flight" usually do.

According to sources privy to the nature of the discussion regarding the passengers on the special flight, the individuals on board the aircraft were



A U.S. Air Force plane carrying Indians lands in Amritsar on Wednesday. REUTERS

handed over to the Punjab Police soon after they landed. The deportation through a military aircraft drew attention as this was the first time the U.S. had carried out such a deportation with one of its biggest

taxi and airlines were being used to send them back to their home towns. The Punjab Police took charge of the passengers soon after they landed in Amritsar. The passengers

were being sent home by special aircraft to the National Capital Region as well as Gujarat as several citizens from the group hailed from Haryana, Gujarat and Punjab.

As per a list shared by sources, bulk of the passengers who hailed from Punjab were from Ferozpur, Gurdaspur, Amritsar, Jalandhar, Kapurthala, Patiala, Sangrur, Fatehgarh Sahib, and Tarn Taran. The Indian officials however declined to comment on how the allegedly illegal immigrants were sent back before Prime Minister Narendra Modi travelled to the U.S. on February 12. Mr. Modi held a telephone conversation with Mr. Trump last week while he was in New York. Mr. Trump to discuss the welfare of both sides.

Trump vows to take over Gaza Strip and resettle Palestinians

WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump vowed on Tuesday that the U.S. would take over the war-ravaged Gaza Strip after Palestinians are resettled elsewhere and develop it economically, a move that would shatter decades of U.S. policy towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Mr. Trump unveiled his surprise plan, without providing specifics, at a joint press conference with visiting Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The announcement followed Mr. Trump's shock proposal earlier on Tuesday for the permanent resettlement of Palestinians from Gaza to neighbouring countries, calling the enclave - where the first phase of a fragile ceasefire is in effect - a "demolition site".

"The U.S. will take over the Gaza Strip, and we will do a job with it too," Mr. Trump told presspersons. "We will own it and be responsible for dismantling all of the dangerous unexploded bombs and other weapons on the site."

Mr. Trump earlier repeated his call for Jordan, Egypt and other Arab states to take in Gazans, saying Palestinians there had no alternative but to abandon the coastal strip, which must be rebuilt after nearly 16 months of a devastating war. But this time Mr. Trump said he would support resettling Palestinians "permanently", going beyond his previous suggestions that Arab leaders had already steadfastly rejected.

Forced displacement of Gaza's population would likely be a violation of international law and would be fiercely opposed by Washington's Western allies. Just two weeks into its second term, Mr. Trump is becoming a home to the world's people. Mr. Netanyahu said Mr. Trump was "thinking out" the box with fresh ideas and was "showing willingness to puncture conventional thinking."



We will own it (Gaza Strip) and be responsible for dismantling all of the dangerous unexploded bombs and other weapons on the site. DONALD TRUMP, U.S. President

Six States resolve against UGC's new draft regulation

The Hindu Bureau BENGALURU

On Wednesday, Ministers for Higher Education and their representatives from six States passed a joint resolution opposing the draft of the University Grants Commission Regulations, 2025, and grading of higher education institutions based on the New Education Policy, 2020.

This was the outcome of the conclave of State Higher Education Ministers, 2025, hosted by Karnataka. Representatives from Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Karnataka participated and came out with a 15-point resolution urging the Centre to withdraw the new draft regulations. In their resolution, the States said that the BJP-led Union government is trying to push its ideology through the new regulations. The Maharashtra representative, who was to virtually attend the conclave, was unable to continue due to technical glitches. The Jammu & Kashmir minister communicated that they could not take part due to emergency meetings. Karnataka's Higher Education Minister M.C. Sudhakar. He claimed that even some parties which are in alliance with the BJP have expressed their objection to the UGC draft regulations. The Union government is trying to withdraw them and



and it cannot override the State. "In this regulation, the States have no power in the appointment of Vice-Chancellors and the Governor has been given complete powers and social justice, all the functions including development of infrastructure of the universities, recruitment, salary and other rules are carried out by the State governments. We are confident that UGC and the Union Education Ministry will reconsider and invite all the States for a 'detailed deliberation,'" the Minister added. "Govt Chezhiaan, Minister for Higher Education, Tamil Nadu, pointed out that that was the first time that a resolution in the Assembly against the new regulations, followed

Kerala. "This is the Centre's move to undermine elected state governments. Tamil Nadu has always prioritised education and social justice, but these rules go against development of infrastructure of the universities, recruitment, salary and other rules are carried out by the State governments. We are confident that UGC and the Union Education Ministry will reconsider and invite all the States for a 'detailed deliberation,'" the Minister added. "Govt Chezhiaan, Minister for Higher Education, Tamil Nadu, pointed out that that was the first time that a resolution in the Assembly against the new regulations, followed

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He claimed that even some parties which are in alliance with the BJP have expressed their objection to the UGC draft regulations, including Telugu Desam Party in Andhra Pradesh, Janata Dal United



Power play: The States say that the BJP-led Centre is trying to push its ideology through the new regulations.

(JDU) and Lok Janshakti Party (LJP-Ram Vilas) of Bihar. West Bengal has constituted an expert committee to look into it.

“We have urged the Union government to immediately withdraw them and

hold a collective consultation with states. We will wait for UGC's decision and take a call on the next course of action,” said Mr. Sudhakar.

He said that the UGC is only the regulatory body

and it cannot override the State. “In this regulation, the States have no power in the appointment of Vice-Chancellors and the Governor has been given complete power. However, all the functions including development of infrastructure of the universities, recruitment, salary and other rules are carried out by the State governments. We are confident that UGC and the Union Education Ministry will reconsider and invite all the States for a detailed deliberation,” the Minister added.

Govi Chezhiaan, Minister for Higher Education, Tamil Nadu, pointed out that theirs was the first State to pass a resolution in the Assembly against the new regulations, followed

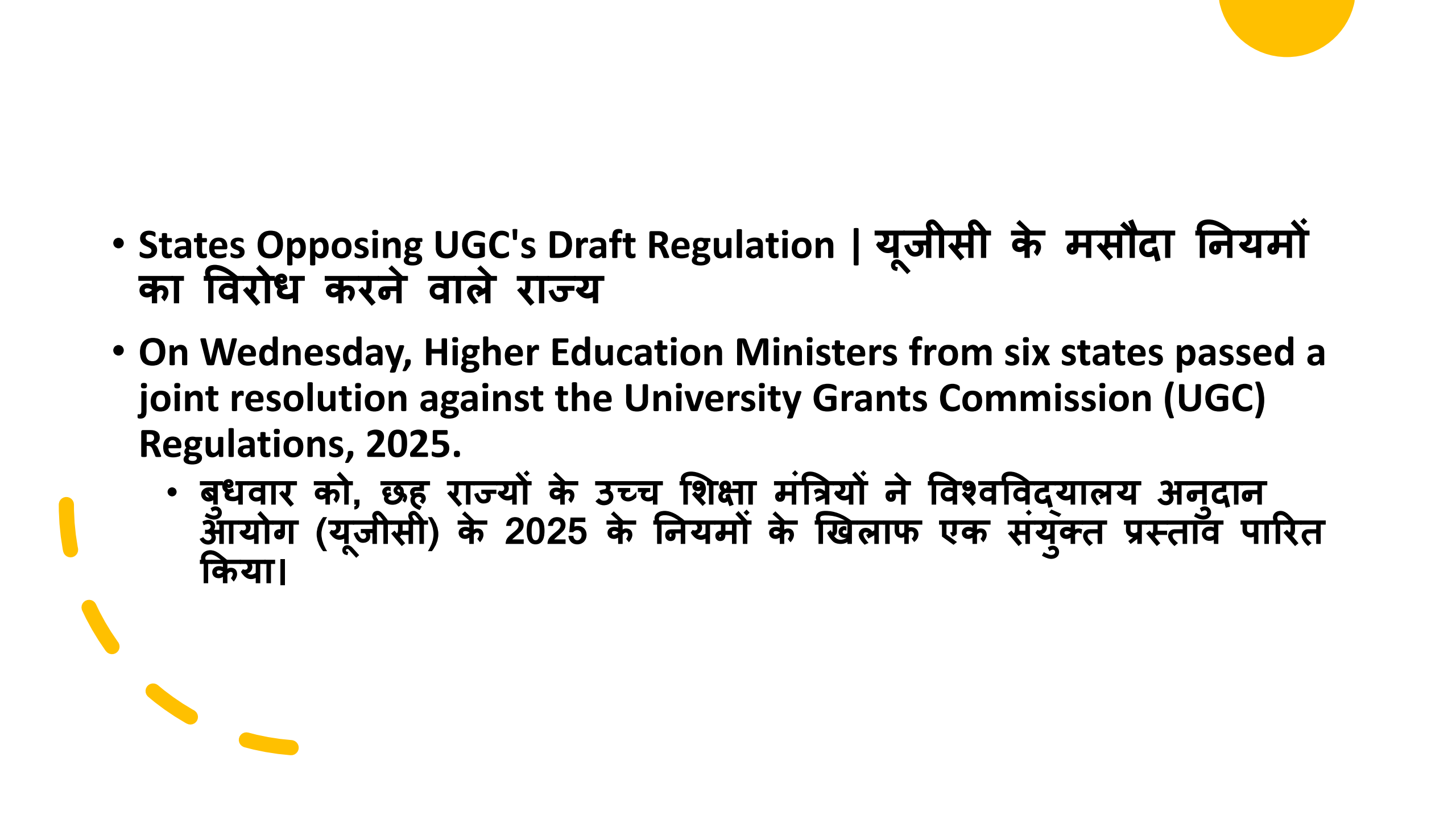
Kerala. “This is the Centre's move to undermine elected state governments and take over state universities. Tamil Nadu has always prioritised education and social justice, but these rules go against the interests of students.”



UGC chairman reply



Meanwhile, UGC Chairman M. Jagadesh Kumar, said the regulations “aim to ensure the highest standards by introducing a more inclusive and transparent selection process”.


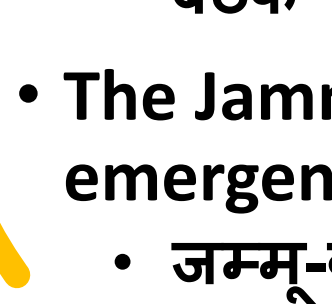
He said they “seek to uphold the autonomy and accountability of higher education institutions.”

Mr. Kumar added that they welcome constructive feedback and would work collaboratively.

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- **States Opposing UGC's Draft Regulation | यूजीसी के मसौदा नियमों का विरोध करने वाले राज्य**
 - **On Wednesday, Higher Education Ministers from six states passed a joint resolution against the University Grants Commission (UGC) Regulations, 2025.**
 - **बुधवार को, छह राज्यों के उच्च शिक्षा मंत्रियों ने विश्वविद्यालय अनुदान आयोग (यूजीसी) के 2025 के नियमों के खिलाफ एक संयुक्त प्रस्ताव पारित किया।**

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- The states include Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, and Jharkhand.
 - इन राज्यों में कर्नाटक, तमिलनाडु, तेलंगाना, केरल, हिमाचल प्रदेश और झारखंड शामिल हैं।
 - The ministers demanded that the Centre withdraw the new regulations, calling them an attempt to centralize higher education.
 - मंत्रियों ने केंद्र से नए नियमों को वापस लेने की मांग की और इसे उच्च शिक्षा के केंद्रीकरण का प्रयास बताया।
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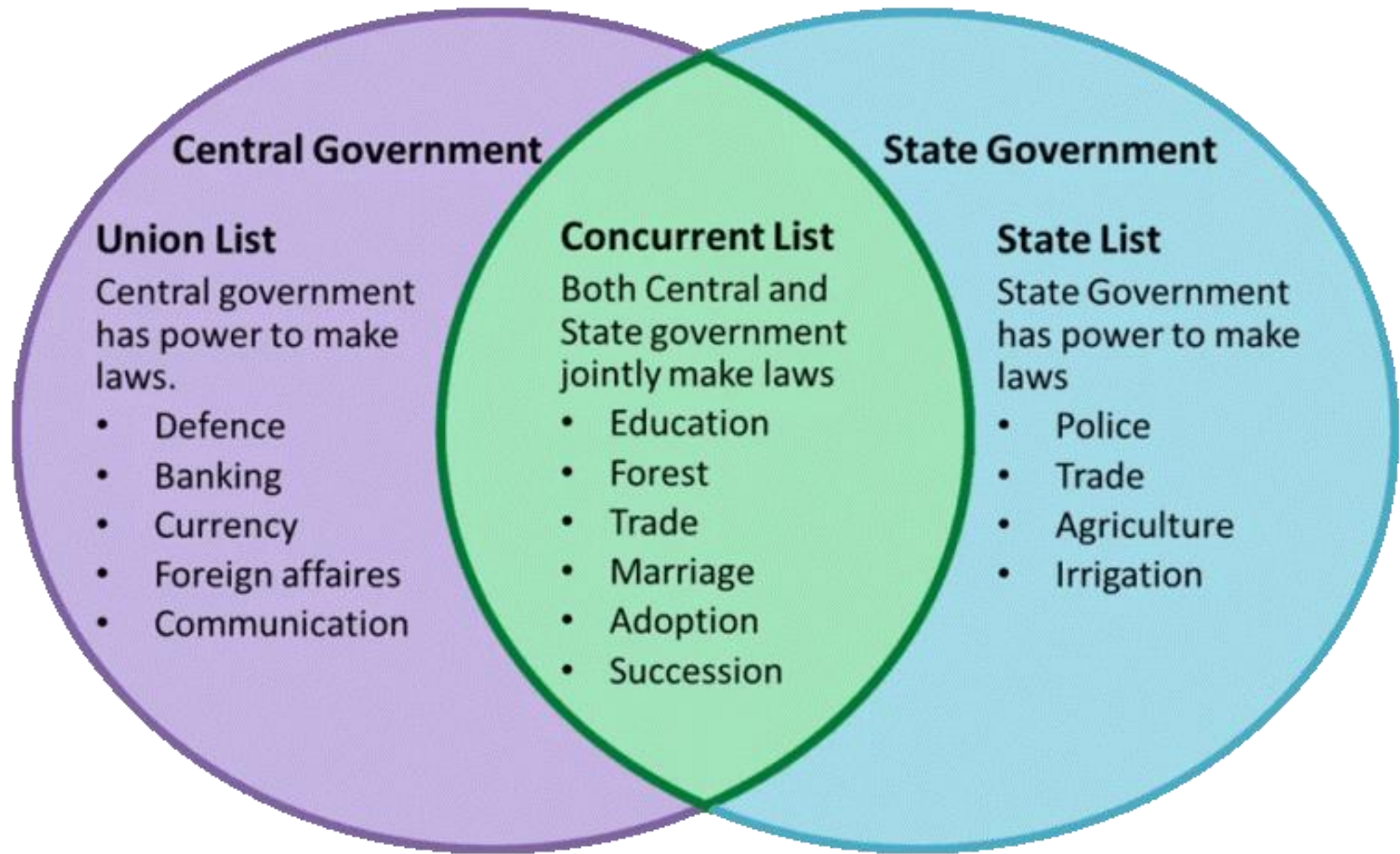
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- States argue that education is a state subject and the Centre should not interfere in university administration.
 - राज्यों का तर्क है कि शिक्षा एक राज्य का विषय है और केंद्र को विश्वविद्यालय प्रशासन में हस्तक्षेप नहीं करना चाहिए।
 - Tamil Nadu Minister Gopi Chandrababu Naidu stated that these rules undermine elected state governments.
 - तमिलनाडु के मंत्री गोपी चंद्राबाबु नायडु ने कहा कि ये नियम निर्वाचित राज्य सरकारों को कमजोर करते हैं।
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- Maharashtra and Jammu & Kashmir Could Not Participate | महाराष्ट्र और जम्मू-कश्मीर की भागीदारी नहीं
 - The Maharashtra representative faced technical issues and could not attend the conclave.
 - महाराष्ट्र के प्रतिनिधि को तकनीकी समस्याओं का सामना करना पड़ा और वे बैठक में शामिल नहीं हो सके।
 - The Jammu & Kashmir Minister could not participate due to emergency meetings.
 - जम्मू-कश्मीर के मंत्री आपातकालीन बैठकों के कारण भाग नहीं ले सके।
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- **Political Opposition Beyond Non-BJP States | बीजेपी सहयोगी दलों का भी विरोध**
 - **Interestingly, even some BJP allies opposed the UGC draft regulations, including the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) in Andhra Pradesh and the Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) in Bihar.**
 - **दिलचस्प बात यह है कि भाजपा के कुछ सहयोगी दलों ने भी यजीसी मसौदा नियमों का विरोध किया, जिनमें आंध्र प्रदेश की तेलुगु देशम पार्टी (टीडीपी) और बिहार की लोक जनशक्ति पार्टी (एलजेपी) शामिल हैं।**
 - **West Bengal has formed an expert committee to examine the issue.**
 - **पश्चिम बंगाल ने इस मुद्दे की जांच के लिए एक विशेषज्ञ समिति बनाई है।**

-
- UGC Chairman's Response | यूजीसी अध्यक्ष की प्रतिक्रिया
 - UGC Chairman M. Jagadesh Kumar stated that the regulations aim to ensure higher standards and transparency.
 - यूजीसी अध्यक्ष एम. जगदीश कुमार ने कहा कि ये नियम उच्च मानकों और पारदर्शिता सुनिश्चित करने के लिए बनाए गए हैं।
 - He claimed that these rules uphold the autonomy and accountability of higher education institutions.
 - उन्होंने दावा किया कि ये नियम उच्च शिक्षा संस्थानों की स्वायत्तता और जवाबदेही को बनाए रखते हैं।
 - The UGC is open to constructive feedback and collaborative discussions.
 - यूजीसी रचनात्मक सुझावों और सहयोगी चर्चाओं के लिए तैयार है।

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- . Future Course of Action | भविष्य की योजना
 - ♦ States will wait for UGC's final decision before deciding their next course of action.
 - राज्य यूजीसी के अंतिम निर्णय का इंतजार करेंगे और उसके बाद अपनी अगली रणनीति तय करेंगे।
 - ♦ A collective consultation with all states may be held to review the new regulations.
 - सभी राज्यों के साथ एक सामूहिक परामर्श किया जा सकता है ताकि नए नियमों की समीक्षा की जा सके।
 - ♦ If the Centre does not reconsider, states may explore legal or legislative measures.
 - अगर केंद्र पुनर्विचार नहीं करता, तो राज्य कानूनी या विधायी कदम उठाने पर विचार कर सकते हैं।



International Practices to Govern Education System

- **United States:** State and local governments set educational standards, while the federal department focuses on financial aid and equal access.
- **Canada:** Education is managed by the provinces.
- **Germany:** Legislative powers for education rest with the Länder (states).
- **South Africa:** Two national departments govern education, with provincial departments handling local implementation.
- **Finland's Model of Governance:** Unlike many countries, Finland doesn't rely on standardized tests. The system emphasises collaboration among schools, teachers, and students, fostering a supportive learning environment.

DMK govt. will crush BJP attempt to divide people: T.N. Minister

The Hindu Bureau CHENNAI

Minister for Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments (HR&CE) P.K. Sankarababu on Wednesday accused the BJP of attempting to start communal riots in the State.

He said that the national party's aim was to create law and order problems, and bring down the DMK government by dividing people on the basis of caste, religion, and language.

Addressing mediapersons after inspecting ongoing works at the Aadhi Padavaram temple in Chennai, Mr. Sankarababu said that Chief Minister M.K. Stalin would crush any such attempt with an iron fist. "This is the land of Parivar, Dravidan, and the Dravidian model of government. The people of Tiruppurankundram are living in total harmony," he added.

He further said that there were seven cases pertaining to the hill so far — including one from 1920 which a court in Madurai gave a Lok, and the Privy Council order of 1931. "Even now, there are cases pending in courts. This government will follow the rule of law, and implement court orders in letter and spirit. The department will ensure that centuries-old customs, rituals, and festivals will continue to be followed in the [Sivanthimani Swamy] temple," the Minister said, adding that the Sikkandar

Badsha Dargah had been atop the hill for nearly 600 years. "The BJP will lose votes because of its unnecessary attempts to create a religious divide in the State," the Minister said, adding: "Those who staged protests at Tiruppurankundram cannot be termed as Hindu outfits. They belonged to the BJP...."

Govt. too soft: TNCC Meanwhile, TNCC president K. Selvaparanthamil has said that leaders and cadre of his party would offer prayers at the Sivanthimani Swamy Temple and the Sikkandar Badsha Dargah at Tiruppurankundram, where the Hindu-Muslims had mobilised supporters, alleging attempts to rename the hill-lock as 'Sikkandar Mahal'.

Mr. Selvaparanthamil told journalists that the State government had been too soft on religious and caste outfits that had been trying to create disturbances in society. "After causing riots in Ayodhya and losing support in Ayodhya in the previous [2024] Lok Sabha election, the groups are now creating trouble in Tiruppurankundram. In north India, religious politics propagated by [Sangh Parivar] is losing its sheen. Now attacks are being made to destroy religious harmony and create a riotous atmosphere by bringing people from outside to act in the interests of the people living in Tiruppurankundram," he added.

Narcotics network backing infiltrators in J&K, says Shah

Union Home Minister directs all security agencies to step up fight against terrorism by aiming for the 'zero infiltration' goal; he adds that it should be a goal to uproot the existence of terrorists

Vidalia Singh NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday said that the narcotics network was providing support to infiltrators and terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir. He said that there was a need to initiate prompt action with alacrity and rigour against terror funding from the proceeds of narcotics trade.

Mr. Shah, who reviewed the security situation in the Union Territory on Wednesday, directed all security agencies to step up the fight against terrorism by aiming for the "zero infiltration" goal. He asked



Routine security: Amit Shah chairs a high-level review meeting in New Delhi on Wednesday on the security situation in J&K. (PI)

all security agencies to take more stringent action on infiltration and acts of terrorism with a ruthless approach. He said that it should be a goal to uproot the existence of terrorists.

Mr. Shah directed the agencies to make fresh appointments to the posts at the Forensic Science Laboratory in view of the timely implementation of the new criminal laws.

Emphasising the government's "policy of zero tolerance" against terrorism, the Minister directed all security agencies to renew vigilance and continue to work in synergy to eliminate terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by the Lieutenant-Governor of Jammu and Kashmir and other senior officials. A day ago, Mr. Shah held a review meeting with the Chief of the Armed Forces Staff, General Upendra Dwivedi.

Mr. Shah directed the agencies to make fresh appointments to the posts at the Forensic Science Laboratory in view of the timely implementation of the new criminal laws. Emphasising the government's "policy of zero tolerance" against terrorism, the Minister directed all security agencies to renew vigilance and continue to work in synergy to eliminate terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir.

Row over actor Rahul Solapurkar's remarks on Shivaji's escape from Agra

The Hindu Bureau MUMBAI

A recent claim by actor Rahul Solapurkar regarding the historic escape of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj from Agra has ignited a widespread debate. Mr. Solapurkar, a trustee of the Bhanuwarkar Oriental Research Institute in Pune, suggested that Shivaji Maharaj's famed escape was not achieved us-



Rahul Solapurkar, a trustee of the Bhanuwarkar Oriental Research Institute in Pune, suggested that Shivaji Maharaj's famed escape was not achieved us-

ing sweet containers, as is popularly believed, but rather by bribing several Mughal emperor Aurangzeb's commanders. This assertion has sparked outrage among historians, activists, and admirers of the Maratha king. The controversy escalated when members of the Akhand Maratha Samaj staged a protest, demanding Mr. Solapurkar's removal from the trustee post.

In response to the backlash, the actor issued a video apology, expressing regret if his remarks had hurt the sentiments of Shivaji Maharaj's admirers. Following the protest, the Pune police have heightened security measures outside his residence. Reacting to the actor's remarks, BJP MP Udayanraje Bhosale, the Union Minister of Chhatrapati Shivaji, said, "How dare you insult the legacy of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj!"

Govt. warns officials against using AI tools due to security risks

Vidalia Singh NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Finance has advised government officials to "strictly avoid" artificial intelligence (AI) tools, including ChatGPT and DeepSeek, on official devices as they "pose risks to the confidentiality of government data and documents".

Sam Altman, the CEO of OpenAI, which operates ChatGPT, is currently in India to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi. DeepSeek, developed by China, was launched in January. The circular, issued by the DoF, was issued by the Department of Expenditure (DoE) on January 29.

Risks to confidentiality "It has been determined that AI tools such as ChatGPT, DeepSeek etc.) on office computers and devices pose risks to the confidentiality of government data and documents. It is, therefore, advised that the use of AI tools/AI applications on office devices be strictly avoided. This may be brought to the notice of all employees. This issue has been approved by the DoE. The circular to DoPT officials was sent on October 10, 2024, and the training was held from October 14 to 16 of the same year in seven batches. It remains unclear whether other Ministries or Central government departments received similar orders restricting the use of AI tools.



The DoE issued a circular on January 29, outlining the risks associated with AI tools. (AP)

Indian servers. "DeepSeek is an open source model and we are very soon going to host DeepSeek on Indian servers, the way we have hosted Llama, so that the data privacy parameters can be addressed. That we will do soon. Already team ChatGPT, is currently in India to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi. DeepSeek, developed by China, was launched in January. The circular, issued by the DoF, was issued by the Department of Expenditure (DoE) on January 29.

Risks to confidentiality "It has been determined that AI tools such as ChatGPT, DeepSeek etc.) on office computers and devices pose risks to the confidentiality of government data and documents. It is, therefore, advised that the use of AI tools/AI applications on office devices be strictly avoided. This may be brought to the notice of all employees. This issue has been approved by the DoE. The circular to DoPT officials was sent on October 10, 2024, and the training was held from October 14 to 16 of the same year in seven batches. It remains unclear whether other Ministries or Central government departments received similar orders restricting the use of AI tools.

On January 30, Aalwini Vaidyanathan, Union Minister for Information Technology, said in a television interview that DeepSeek would soon be hosted on

+ Pakistan wants to resolve all issues with India including Kashmir, through talks: Sharif

Press Trust of India ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday said the country wants to resolve all issues, including Kashmir, with India through talks as he reiterated his "unwavering" support for the Kashmiri people.

Mr. Sharif made the remarks while addressing a special session of the Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) Legislative Assembly in Muzaffarabad on the occasion of Kashmir Solidarity Day, an annual Pakistani event to show support for the Kashmiris.

"India should come out of the thinking of August 5, 2019, and fulfil promises made to the UN and launch



Shehbaz Sharif

visited Pakistan. India has repeatedly said it desires normal neighbourhood relations with Pakistan in an environment free of terror, hostility and violence. It has repeatedly told Pakistan that the "Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir are Ladakh" "was, is and shall forever" remain an integral part of the country. The ties between the two countries resumed after India abrogated Article 370.

Mr. Sharif also accused India of "annexing" weapons, saying that accumulation of arms would not bring peace or change the fate of people of this region. He urged India to be wise, saying the way to progress was peace.

Stryker infantry vehicle deal with the U.S. progresses; Javelin to be re-demonstrated

Dinakar Perri NEW DELHI

Against the backdrop of U.S. President Donald Trump's remarks to Prime Minister Narendra Modi that India should buy more military equipment from them and amid the upcoming visit of Mr. Modi to Washington DC next week, several defence deals in the pipeline are in focus, among them the deal for co-production of Stryker infantry combat vehicles.

The performance of Stryker in high-altitude conditions was demonstrated for the Indian Army, and negotiations are making progress, according to sources in the know. The Stryker, manufactured by General Dynamics, has been evaluated in high-altitude conditions of

Ladakh last September-October and the report has subsequently been shared with the Army Headquarters for further action, according to the sources.

The performance of the vehicles was demonstrated in high-altitude conditions between 13,000 and 18,000 feet which also saw the testing of the Javelin anti-Tank Guided Missile (ATGM), two sources said. And given some shortcoming in the communication was sent and results are now awaited anytime, the sources stated.

The Stryker with its dual-wheel performance, mainly, one of the sources said, adding that the Javelin's performance was not at the optimum level, which was due to the age of the system that being used and repeat trials are ex-



Infantry carrier: A Stryker armoured vehicle used by the U.S. Army during their final days in Iraq. FILE PHOTO

pected to validate that. However, the Stryker variant in communication to the U.S. side asking for repeat demonstration of the Javelin, another source said, and the schedule is being worked out.

The Army has identified a potential deal for ATGMs mounted on infantry combat vehicles, sever-



A Javelin anti-tank missile

al defence officials stated. In addition, the Stryker variant in communication to the U.S. side asking for repeat demonstration of the Javelin, another source said, and the schedule is being worked out.

The Army has identified a potential deal for ATGMs mounted on infantry combat vehicles, sever-

hundred vehicles in two stages. Direct import of small number of Strykers in the first stage and license manufacture of a bulk of them, with some customisations, in India would pick up at a faster pace if the long delays in the contract are avoided. The Stryker deal is expected to figure in the contract discussions during Mr. Modi's U.S. visit along with the deal for license manufacture of General Electric F-414 jet engines in India and the long delays in deliveries of the F-404 engines for the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Mk16 which has delayed the delivery and induction schedule.

The U.S. has in the past demonstrated both the Stryker as well as Javelin ATGM to the Indian Army during bilateral exercises.

West Asia crisis must not be allowed to undermine IMEC: Greek Minister

Suhassini Haldar NEW DELHI

Greece fully supports the India-Middle East-European Economic Corridor (IMEC) as a "project for peace". Minister of Foreign Affairs George Gerapetritis said, admitting that the project's planning has been delayed since its launch in September 2023 due to the conflict in West Asia and the Israel-Gaza war in particular.

In an exclusive interview to *The Hindu*, Mr. Gerapetritis, who has been in Delhi for Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Thursday, said his visit to India follows a series of meetings in Qatar, Israel, Ramallah,

and Jordan, which will be discussed during the talks. He said Greece is working towards doubling trade and investment initiatives with India and plans to open two new consulates in Mumbai and Bengaluru. It also wants direct flights to begin and more visas to be issued to Greece.

"The ongoing crisis in the Middle East has delayed the project's planning, but it must not be allowed to undermine the IMEC. It is our resolve to have Greece and our partners in between — that we will bring this project of peace and prosperity to pass," Mr. Gerapetritis said in written responses to questions from *The Hindu* about the viability of

the IMEC that was launched on the sidelines of the G-20 Summit in Delhi by India, the U.S., the European Union, France, Germany, Italy, Mauritius, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia, for a trade route from the Red Sea, Jordan, and Israel.

No meeting yet Despite the memorandum of understanding stipulating that the stateside behind IMEC. It is our resolve to have Greece and our partners in between — that we will bring this project of peace and prosperity to pass," Mr. Gerapetritis said in written responses to questions from *The Hindu* about the viability of



George Gerapetritis

Rafah, combined with the new conditions in Syria, represent a significant turning point and leave room for hope that the conflicts will have been settled. Mr. Gerapetritis said, adding that Greece would pursue "peaceful activities" during its current visit to India. "The ceasefire in Gaza and Lebanon and the opening of the crossing in

During a visit to India in February 2024, Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis had praised Greece as the "gateway to Europe" for Indian trade over the IMEC.

Initial IMEC project proposals had invited Greece's Piraeus port, along with the ports of France's Marseilles as possible ports on the IMEC route. More recent reports have also suggested that the Adani Group, which runs other ports on the west coast of India, including Mundra port in Gujarat and the Hala port in Karachi, was seeking terminals in Greek ports like Kavala and Volos.

Mr. Gerapetritis sidestepped a specific question

on whether a deal for those ports was in the works. "Greece welcomes potential interest from Indian companies in investing in Europe" for Indian trade, this to lead to the modernization and expansion of our country's port infrastructure. This aligns with Italy's Messina port to be Greece's gateway of the ground-breaking IMEC Corridor in Europe. We welcome plans from Indian and Greek Airlines to connect Indian and Greek cities, with direct flights, and we look forward to their commencement," the Greek Foreign Minister said, adding that the Greek Embassy in Delhi had issued more than 1,000 visas to Indian visitors in 2024, and that opening the new consu-

lative in Mumbai and Bengaluru would be a "gamechanger".

Migration policy Asked about the issue of illegal immigration, with thousands of undocumented Indian migrants using the sea route to reach Greece each year, Mr. Gerapetritis said that Greece and India are negotiating a memorandum of understanding on migration and mobility. "Overall, we apply a strict but fair migration policy. What we are trying to do is to turn irregular migration into legal and orderly pathways of human mobility," Mr. Gerapetritis said. (Interview is available at newsthehindu.com)

Stryker infantry vehicle deal with the U.S. progresses; Javelin to be re-demonstrated

Dinakar Peri

NEW DELHI

Against the backdrop of U.S. President Donald Trump's remarks to Prime Minister Narendra Modi that India should buy more military equipment from them and amid the upcoming visit of Mr. Modi to Washington DC next week, several defence deals in the pipeline are in focus, among them the deal for co-production of Stryker infantry combat vehicles.

The performance of Stryker in high-altitude conditions was demonstrated for the Indian Army and negotiations are making progress, according to sources in the know.

The Stryker, manufactured by General Dynamics, has been evaluated in high-altitude conditions of

Ladakh last September-October and the report has subsequently been shared with the Army Headquarters for further action, according to the sources.

The performance of the vehicles was demonstrated in high-altitude conditions between 13,000 and 18,000 feet which also saw the testing of the Javelin Anti-Tank Guided Missile (ATGM), two sources said. And given some shortcomings, last month a communication was sent and re-trials are now awaited anytime, the sources stated.

The Stryker with its double-V hull performed optimally, one of the sources said, adding that the Javelin's performance was not at the optimum level, which was due to the age of the system that being used and repeat trials are ex-



Infantry carrier: A Stryker armoured vehicle used by the U.S. Army during their final days in Iraq. FILE PHOTO

pected to validate that. India has already sent a communication to the U.S. side asking for repeat demonstration of the Javelin, another source said, and the schedule is being worked out.

The Army has identified a key requirement for ATGMs mounted on infantry combat vehicles, sever-

al defence officials stated. However, the Stryker variant with the Javelin ATGM is under development and is expected to be demonstrated to India in the near future, it has been learnt.

Assembling in India

The envisaged plan, according to sources, is the procurement of few

hundred vehicles in two stages. Direct import of small number of Strykers in the first stage and license manufacture of a bulk of them, with some customisations, in India likely by defence public sector undertaking Bharat Earth Movers Limited.

The Stryker deal is expected to figure in the conversations during Mr. Modi's U.S. visit along with the deal for license manufacture of General Electric F-414 jet engines in India and the long delays in deliveries of the F-404 engines for the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA)-Mk1A which has delayed the delivery and induction schedule.

The U.S. has in the past demonstrated both the Stryker as well as Javelin ATGM to the Indian Army during bilateral exercises.

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- **Defence Deal Progress | रक्षा सौदे की प्रगति**
 - **India and the U.S. are progressing on a deal for the co-production of Stryker infantry combat vehicles.**
 - **भारत और अमेरिका स्ट्राइकर पैदल सेना लड़ाकू वाहनों के सह-उत्पादन के सौदे पर प्रगति कर रहे हैं।**
 - **This deal is expected to be discussed during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's upcoming visit to Washington, D.C.**
 - **यह सौदा प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी की आगामी वाशिंगटन डी.सी. यात्रा के दौरान चर्चा का विषय बनने की उम्मीद है।**

F. MADE IN USA: All about the Stryker armoured vehicles



Range:
483KM



Speed:
100 KMPH

Remote Weapon System:
Machine gun
or grenade
launcher

HULL: High, hard
steel, spall liner,
RPG protection and
bolt-on ceramic
armour



Crew & Squad:
A crew of two and
nine-man infantry
squad



Weight:
17,236 Kg

Engine:
Caterpillar
C7, 350 hp.



Stryker is a family of eight-wheel-drive combat vehicles built for the US Army by GDLS – Canada and the General Dynamics Land Systems Division, US.



TANK KILLERS

- Anti-tank guided missiles (ATGMs) are meant to **destroy advancing enemy armoured units**

- Range from shoulder-launched to larger tripod-mounted systems for infantry soldiers

- Army has a shocking **60% shortage** in its 'authorised holding' of ATGMs

- **Big operational gap**, especially on the western front with Pakistan

- Army demanding **3rd-generation ATGMs** with

night-fighting capabilities & higher range for a decade

- Defence Acquisitions Council in June 2009 gave nod for 8,356 ATGMs, 321 launchers & 15 simulators for ₹3,200 crore

- This included transfer of

technology to Bharat Dynamics for mass production

- Israeli company Rafael's **Spike ATGM** underwent trials in a single-vendor situation. Tender scrapped in late-2017

- Separate process to acquire **Javelin ATGMs** from US also didn't materialise



Infantry battalions making do with 2nd-Generation Milan (2 km) & Konkurs (4 km) ATGMs



-
- Performance Testing in High-Altitude Conditions | ऊँचाई पर प्रदर्शन परीक्षण
 - The Stryker, manufactured by General Dynamics, was tested by the Indian Army in high-altitude conditions in Ladakh between 13,000 and 18,000 feet.
 - जनरल डायनेमिक्स द्वारा निर्मित स्ट्राइकर को भारतीय सेना द्वारा लद्दाख में 13,000 से 18,000 फीट की ऊँचाई पर परीक्षण किया गया।
 - The vehicle performed optimally, but the Javelin Anti-Tank Guided Missile (ATGM) did not perform at its best due to the system's age.
 - वाहन ने उत्कृष्ट प्रदर्शन किया, लेकिन जेवेलिन एंटी-टैंक गाइडेड मिसाइल (ATGM) सिस्टम की पुरानी तकनीक के कारण अपनी पूरी क्षमता से प्रदर्शन नहीं कर पाई।

-
- **Re-Demonstration of Javelin ATGM | जेवलिन ATGM का पुनः प्रदर्शन**
 - **India has requested the U.S. for a repeat demonstration of the Javelin ATGM to validate its effectiveness.**
 - **भारत ने जेवलिन ATGM की प्रभावशीलता को प्रमाणित करने के लिए अमेरिका से इसके पुनः प्रदर्शन का अनुरोध किया है।**
 - **The U.S. is expected to demonstrate a more advanced variant of the Javelin to India.**
 - **संयुक्त राज्य अमेरिका भारत को जेवलिन का एक अधिक उन्नत संस्करण दिखाने की योजना बना रहा है।**

Procurement & Assembly in India | भारत में खरीद और असेंबली

The plan includes importing a small number of Strykers in the first stage, followed by licensed manufacturing in India.

- योजना के तहत पहले चरण में कुछ स्ट्राइकर वाहनों का प्रत्यक्ष आयात और उसके बाद भारत में लाइसेंस प्राप्त निर्माण किया जाएगा।

Bharat Earth Movers Limited (BEML), a defence public sector enterprise, may lead the production in India.

- भारत अर्थ मूवर्स लिमिटेड (BEML), एक रक्षा सार्वजनिक उपक्रम, भारत में उत्पादन का नेतृत्व कर सकता है।

The deal aligns with India's 'Make in India' and defence modernization initiatives.

- यह सौदा भारत की 'मेक इन इंडिया' और रक्षा आधुनिकीकरण पहलों के अनुरूप है।

- **Broader Defence Cooperation | व्यापक रक्षा सहयोग**
- **This deal is expected to be discussed along with the license manufacturing of General Electric F-414 jet engines in India.**
 - इस सौदे के साथ भारत में जनरल इलेक्ट्रिक एफ-414 जेट इंजनों के लाइसेंस निर्माण पर भी चर्चा होने की उम्मीद है।
- **The delay in F-404 jet engines for India's Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Mk1A is also a concern.**
 - भारत के हल्के लड़ाकू विमान (LCA) Mk1A के लिए एफ-404 जेट इंजनों में देरी भी एक चिंता का विषय है।

- Conclusion | निष्कर्ष

- 🌍 The Stryker deal is a step towards strengthening India-U.S. defence cooperation and enhancing India's infantry capabilities.
- स्टाइकर सौदा भारत-अमेरिका रक्षा सहयोग को मजबूत करने और भारत की पैदल सेना की क्षमताओं को बढ़ाने की दिशा में एक कदम है।
 - 🌍 India seeks self-reliance in defence production, and this deal contributes to domestic manufacturing.
- भारत रक्षा उत्पादन में आत्मनिर्भरता चाहता है, और यह सौदा घरेलू निर्माण में योगदान देगा।
 - 🌍 The upcoming discussions will shape future military collaborations between the two nations.
- आगामी चर्चाएं दोनों देशों के बीच भविष्य के सैन्य सहयोग को आकार देंगी।

IN BRIEF



Modi takes a dip, says feeling blessed to be at Maha Kumbh

Prime Minister Narendra Modi took a dip at the Sangam on Wednesday, and he felt "blessed to be at the Maha Kumbh" where he was "filled with a spirit of devotion".

M.P. CM releases five more cheetahs into the wild in Kuno

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Wednesday released five cheetahs, including the female Veera who gave birth to two cubs on Tuesday, into the wild from their enclosures at the Kuno National Park in Sheopur district.

House panel seeks SOPs for timely completion of spiritual tourism projects

Sreerapana Chakrabarty NEW DELHI

Expressing disappointment over the slow progress of important projects in the spiritual tourism circuits and under the Pilgrimage Revivification and Spiritual Augmentation Drive (PRASHAD) scheme, a parliamentary committee has asked the government to develop a "check-cut Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)" and obtain prior clearance and approvals from relevant authorities for timely completion of projects.

The PRASHAD scheme focuses on developing and identifying pilgrimage sites across India for enriching the religious tourism experience.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on



Long treks Pilgrims trekking through the Sathram-Sabirimala forest path. ILLUSTRATION

Transport, Tourism and Culture noted that of the 23 spiritual circuits, five are yet to be completed out of which two circuits in Kerala - Sabirimala-Tirumal - Pampayam-Saundhanam circuit and Sivagiri Sri Narayana Guru Ashram circuit - are yet to be completed.

In a report tabled in the Lok Sabha on Monday, the

Congress, Sikkim BJP oppose plan to rebuild Teesta dam

Threat of disaster persists at the dam site, says Jairam Ramesh; approval granted despite concerns related to environmental safety, structural integrity, and public consultation, says Sikkim BJP chief

Jacob Koshy NEW DELHI

The Congress on Wednesday said it disapproved of a recent decision by an expert committee of the Environment Ministry to allow the reconstruction of the Teesta-3 hydropower project in Sikkim that was destroyed in October 2023.

"The Indian National Congress also opposes this thoughtless clearance. The PM travelled from the Prayagraj airport to Sangam by helicopter and later used a motorboat to and from the Arun Ghat. He was accompanied by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

M.P. CM releases five more cheetahs into the wild in Kuno

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Wednesday released five cheetahs, including the female Veera who gave birth to two cubs on Tuesday, into the wild from their enclosures at the Kuno National Park in Sheopur district.



BJP chief D.R. Thapa in his letter to the Centre said that the Teesta river is the lifeline of Sikkim. ANU RAJ KHOWAR

granted on January 10, 2025, despite unresolved concerns related to environmental safety, structural integrity, public consultation," the letter read.

The BJP leader demanded that the clearance accorded by the Environment Appraisal Committee (EAC) be put on hold until all pending scientific studies and a revised Probable Maximum Flood (PMF) assessment were completed and independently verified. He also demanded a fresh environmental impact assessment incorporating updated climate data,

Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF) risks, and evolving hydrological conditions in the region. He also called for a fresh public hearing on the issue.

Lifeline of Sikkim "The Sikkim BJP believed that while development and infrastructure are essential, they must be pursued with scientific integrity, environmental responsibility, and public participation. The Teesta river is the lifeline of Sikkim, and any decision regarding its future must prioritize the safety, sustainability, and ecological

well-being of the region," the letter read.

"We urge the Government of India to act immediately to prevent any further environmental and human disasters in the state," the letter underlined. The devastating glacier lake outburst flood in Sikkim washed away the Chungthang dam, which powered the Teesta 3, the State's biggest hydropower project, and killed at least 100 people in the process.

In its report approving the rebuilding, the EAC said that the new dam would be entirely concrete - reportedly to increase its strength - and its spillway will be capable of managing a peak flow of 19,946 cubic metres a second (cumec), three times the capacity of the former dam, which was 7,000 cumec. The older dam had a part rock and part concrete structure.

As part of their appraisal to relook the projects, the EAC assessed studies by the government where the risk from 119 glacial lakes were identified in the catchment. Of these, 50 glacial lakes were shortlisted with area of 10 ha or more for further evaluation.

Army's Fort William in Kolkata set to be known as Vijay Durg

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

In the latest step toward eliminating colonial practices and mindsets within the armed forces, Fort William in Kolkata, the headquarters of the Eastern Army Command, has been renamed Vijay Durg. Additionally, Kitchener House inside Fort William has been renamed Manekshaw House, and South Gate, formerly known as St. George's Gate, is now Shivaji Gate.

Wing Commander Himanshu Tiwari, the Defence Public Relations Officer in Kolkata, has said the decision was made in mid-December and all internal communications have since ceased using "Fort William", adopting the new name instead. However, the official announcement is still pending.

Fort William, named after King William III of England, was constructed by the British in 1781.

The new name, Vijay Durg, is derived from the oldest fort along the Sindur coast in Maharashtra. It served as a naval base for the Marathas under Chhatrapati Shivaji.

In recent years, there have been a series of measures aimed at removing



Army officers gather at Fort William in Kolkata during the Army Day celebrations. AP

"vestiges of the colonial era" and "Indianising" military traditions and customs - an initiative Prime Minister Narendra Modi has described as freedom from the mentality of slavery.

In March 2022, while addressing the top military leadership at Kevadhi in Gujarat, Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasised the importance of enhancing indigenousity in national defence - not just in terms of sourcing of equipment and weapons but also in the doctrines, procedures and customs practised by the armed forces.

He urged the three services to "rid themselves of legacy systems and practices that have outlived utility and relevance".

Webinar on heavy menstrual bleeding to be held on Feb. 9

The Hindu Bureau CHENNAI

Naravi Hospitals, Vellore, in collaboration with The Hindu, is hosting a webinar on "Management of heavy menstrual bleeding" from 11.30 a.m. on February 9. This is the fourth webinar in the 15-part series organised as part of the "Healthy India, Happy India" initiative aimed to "prevent illness, promote wellness".

Various topics During the webinar, eminent speakers from Naravi Hospitals, Vellore, will speak on "Heavy bleeding in the reproductive age".

While Abraham Pendi-cayil, senior consultant gynaecologist, will speak on "Introduction to menstrual disorders and post-menopausal bleeding",



P.B. Akilaser, senior consultant, obstetrics and gynaecology, will discuss "Pubertal menstrual disorders", and Jayasheela Kamrath, consultant, obstetrics and gynaecology, will speak on "Heavy bleeding in the reproductive age".

The session will be moderated by Hiba Mariyam. To register, visit <https://www.hindunews.in> or scan the QR code.

AIIMS across India facing faculty shortage; 34% posts vacant in New Delhi facility

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

The All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) across India are facing a shortage of faculty members.

As much as 34% of the posts are vacant in the institute in New Delhi, 24% in Bhopal, 25% in Bhubaneswar, 28% in Jodhpur, 38% in Raipur, 27% in Patna, and 39% in Rishikesh.

The Union Health Ministry revealed this earlier this week in the Rajya Sabha, while the health services by Sanjeev Arora, MP, on the shortage of faculty and health services in the AIIMS.

The Minister said his statement was factually correct, and he was operational institutes, in-

J.P. Nadla says creation of posts and recruitment is a continuous process

cluding 41% in Mangalagiri, 23% in Anaparthi and 39% in Kalyani.

The Minister said the Centre had approved the setting up of 22 new AIIMS under the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana.

"Creation of posts and recruitment is a continuous process. In order to expeditiously fill vacant sanctioned positions in various AIIMS, steps have been taken by the government," his statement noted.

The Minister said that the centralised Nursing Officer Recruitment Commission eligibility test is conducted by the AIIMS, Delhi

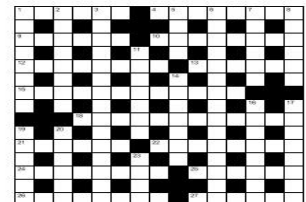
for the recruitment of nursing officers in these institutes, while the Common Recruitment Examination is conducted by it for appointments to Group B and C non-faculty vacancies.

The Institute of National Importance Combined Entrance Test and the Institute of National Importance Super-Specialty examination is conducted by it to select junior residents (academic) and senior residents (academic) for these institutions.

"The government does not want to recruit persons for the sake of filling the posts," the Minister said at a press conference recently.

"The quality of people taken in matters, and we scan the eligibility test is conducted by the AIIMS, Delhi that," the Minister said.

THE CROSSWORD 14401 (set by Arden)



- Across 1. Partly it is a new concoction (6) 4. Cocktail writers get inadequate tip, so to speak (2,2,4) 6. Finally found it in USA - random checks? (6) 10. Money stolen might bring down a game (8) 12. Empty threat - I look around and do nothing (3,5)

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

- 13. Abandoned childcare, had to go round (6) 15. A song in celebration of marriage composed by Tom and Phil Aaron (12) 18. Evidences show place is in terrible state (12) 21. Keen to protect get in a corner (6) 22. A rare medical condition - relapses partially because of sugar (8) 24. Media director imbibing alcohol - outsiders make a song (8) 25. Pretentious in greeting (6) 26. A theatre person takes time to get a fish (8) 27. Enemy desperate to get hold of an unknown protein (6) Down 1. Patterns running across the nave, say (8) 2. Second book on insurance. (8) 3. ...even so, not accompanied by status (15) 5. Stagger in as guest, uninvited (4) 6. Last challenge, act on it: think he somehow can accept defeat stoically? (4,2,2,3,4) 7. Despicable hesitancy without any moral principles (6) 8. The final encounter goes up in value (6) 11. Tea cups besides a football team (7) 14. Fallen in love with small babies' wear (7) 16. Uplift harmony ever in Catholic kingdom (8) 17. At home in a country (8) 19. Rascals quietly involved in swindles (6) 20. Third of silver and gold in the cartilage (6) 23. Palm tree tops - some are grown outside (4)

SUDOKU

9x9 grid with numbers 1-9. Difficulty rating: ★★★★★

Solution to previous puzzle. Solution to yesterday's Sudoku. 9 2 4 8 6 1 3 7 5 6 3 7 4 2 9 5 1 2 8 6 1 3 2 7 4 5 9 8 1 4 8 3 5 7 9 6 3 2 5 7 9 6 4 2 8 1 3 1 5 2 7 9 6 3 4 4 5 2 9 1 8 1 6 3 7 3 8 1 7 2 6 5 4 9 7 9 6 5 3 4 2 8 1

FAITH

Importance of rituals

Like a parent raising a child with an eye on a prosperous future, God too has an abiding interest in the spiritual well-being of a person, right from birth. Leading a virtuous life, it is possible to reach Him: all one has to do is to surrender to Him entirely to attain moksha. To that end, God has been guiding man from time immemorial in many ways: by manifestation, by way of scriptural texts and also as resident deity in temples. Additionally, he has sent acharyas, preceptors and gurus, to guide humans, said Karunakaran Swami in a discourse. One may ask where does God dwell? He is present in Vaikuntam, but none of us can claim to have been there or recall such a darshan. God is within oneself, but we are so overwhelmed by vasanas (sensory gratifications) that we fail to engage with Him. Various gurus have shown how to connect with God in a structured, double manner. They have advocated embarking daily rituals such as chanting His name, offering simple things such as flowers and fruits to Him every day, with total faith. Satsras say it is imperative that one does three things. 'Jeevato vaakyo karavana' it says, meaning one should keep one's parents/elders happy till their last breath. It also mandates 'dharmaat pridda dharmat' (visit Gaya atleast once and offer pinda at least once to one's dear departed.) Pandits recommend that the surviving family conduct the sradham every year on the relevant tithi and not stop the practice once one has visited Gaya after the passing of one's loved ones. Mata, Pita, guru, devyam is the four-step ladder to reaching God.

Army's Fort William in Kolkata set to be known as Vijay Durg

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

In the latest step toward eliminating colonial practices and mindsets within the armed forces, Fort William in Kolkata, the headquarters of the Eastern Army Command, has been renamed Vijay Durg. Additionally, Kitchener House inside Fort William has been renamed Manekshaw House, and South Gate, formerly known as St. George's Gate, is now Shivaji Gate.

Wing Commander Himanshu Tiwari, the Defence Public Relations Officer in Kolkata, has said the decision was made in mid-December and all internal communications have since ceased using "Fort William", adopting the new name instead. However, the official announcement is still pending.

Fort William, named after King William III of England, was constructed by the British in 1781.

The new name, Vijay Durg, is derived from the oldest fort along the Sindhudurg coast in Maharashtra. It served as a naval base for the Marathas under Chhatrapati Shivaji.

In recent years, there have been a series of measures aimed at removing



Army officers gather at Fort Williams in Kolkata during the Army Day celebrations. AP

“vestiges of the colonial era” and “Indianising” military traditions and customs – an initiative Prime Minister Narendra Modi has described as freedom from the mentality of slavery.

In March 2022, while addressing the top military leadership at Kevadia in Gujarat, Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasised the importance of enhancing indigenisation in national defence – not just in terms of sourcing of equipment and weapons but also in the doctrines, procedures and customs practised by the armed forces.


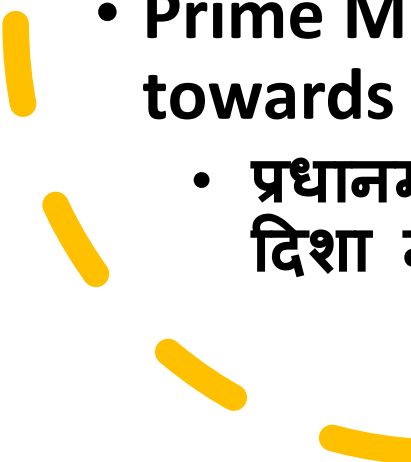
He urged the three services to “rid themselves of legacy systems and practices that have outlived utility and relevance”.



- **Name Change & Historical Significance | नाम परिवर्तन और ऐतिहासिक महत्व**
- **The Indian Army has renamed Fort William in Kolkata as "Vijay Durg".**
 - भारतीय सेना ने कोलकाता के फोर्ट विलियम का नाम बदलकर "विजय दुर्ग" कर दिया है।
- **Fort William, built by the British in 1781, was named after King William III of England.**
 - फोर्ट विलियम, जिसे 1781 में ब्रिटिशों द्वारा बनाया गया था, इंग्लैंड के राजा विलियम III के नाम पर रखा गया था।

The new name "Vijay Durg" is inspired by an ancient fort on the Sindhudurg coast in Maharashtra, which was a naval base under Chhatrapati Shivaji.

नया नाम "विजय दुर्ग" महाराष्ट्र के सिंधुदुर्ग तट पर स्थित एक प्राचीन किले से प्रेरित है, जो छत्रपति शिवाजी के तहत एक नौसैनिक अड्डा था।

- **Other Renamed Structures Inside Fort William | फोर्ट विलियम के भीतर अन्य नाम परिवर्तन**
- **Kitchener House has been renamed as Manekshaw House.**
 - **किचनर हाउस का नाम बदलकर मानेकशाँ हाउस कर दिया गया है।**
- **South Gate, previously called St. George's Gate, is now named Shivaji Gate.**
 - **साउथ गेट, जिसे पहले सेंट जॉर्ज गेट कहा जाता था, अब "शिवाजी गेट" के नाम से जाना जाएगा।**

- 
- Reason for the Renaming | नाम परिवर्तन का कारण
 - The renaming is part of the Indian Army's effort to remove colonial-era symbols and practices.
 - यह नाम परिवर्तन भारतीय सेना के औपनिवेशिक युग के प्रतीकों और परंपराओं को हटाने के प्रयास का हिस्सा है।
 - Prime Minister Narendra Modi has called this initiative a step towards "freedom from the mentality of slavery".
 - प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने इस पहल को "गुलामी की मानसिकता से मुक्ति" की दिशा में एक कदम बताया है।
- 

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- **Official Confirmation & Implementation | आधिकारिक घोषणा और क्रियान्वयन**
 - **Wing Commander Himanshu Tiwari, Defence PRO in Kolkata, stated that internal communication has stopped using "Fort William".**
 - विंग कमांडर हिमांशु तिवारी, कोलकाता में रक्षा जनसंपर्क अधिकारी, ने बताया कि आंतरिक संचार में "फोर्ट विलियम" का उपयोग बंद कर दिया गया है।
 - **The formal announcement is still pending.**
 - हालांकि, आधिकारिक घोषणा अभी बाकी है।
- 

A Budget that is mostly good but with one wrong move

Not worth the risk India must address illegal emigration with empathy and urgency

The deportation of dozens of Indians, believed to be illegal immigrants in the United States, is neither surprising nor unprecedented. Over the past few years, the U.S. government has intensified its immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) operations to identify, detain, and deport individuals without proper documentation. For instance, between June and October 2024, the Department of Homeland Security reported that 1,60,000 individuals had been deported on 495 international repatriation flights to more than 145 countries, including India. However, the manner and timing should be cause for concern for New Delhi. To begin with, these deportations coincide with a major crackdown by ICE, spurred by Donald Trump's swearing-in as the U.S. President in January. He has made illegal immigration his "number one priority". India, which has one of the largest populations of illegal immigrants in the U.S., estimated at 7.25,000 undocumented individuals, will need to prepare for a significant increase in the number of returning migrants. Second, for the first time, the use of military flights signals that the U.S. does not intend to be challenged. This move drew protests from Colombian President Gustavo Petro, particularly after reports emerged of deported migrants being shackled. The U.S. Embassy in Delhi has also made it clear that tight immigration laws and enforcement, including the message that illegal migration is not worth the risk. Further, the timing, just ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit, suggests that diplomatic efforts alone may not be enough to deter the Trump administration from pursuing such measures. This has the potential to be a bilateral flashpoint in India-U.S. relations.

Accepting its citizens, provided they are verifiably Indian and have entered other countries illegally, is undoubtedly the Indian government's responsibility. However, stricter controls must be enforced to prevent Indians from embarking on perilous journeys to cross into the U.S. via Mexico and Canada. The government must ensure that young people in States with high deportation rates (Gujarat, Punjab, and Haryana), understand that working illegally abroad is not a guaranteed path to success. Educational campaigns should highlight the dangers associated with illegal immigration. Importantly, the root causes must not be ignored. The central and State governments must address the underlying economic distress, deepening agricultural crises, social tensions, and employment opportunities that push people to take such risks. Attention must be paid to those who deliberately travel to conflict zones in search of opportunities. While altering U.S. immigration policies may be difficult, the Indian government must address the reasons behind the large-scale migration with empathy and urgency.

A tough call The rupee's slide confounds monetary policymakers

The Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) will conclude its first policy review of 2025 on Friday, in a significantly different circumstance from its December meet. For one, the key personnel have changed. The RBI has a new Governor, and former Reserve Secretary Sanjay Malhotra replacing Shaktikanta Das soon after the last review. Deputy Governor Michael Patra, an MPC member who was in charge of monetary policy, also retired last month. With the Centre yet to name his successor, navigating this review is going to be a tad tricky for the new central bank boss, with another deputy holding additional charge of monetary policy. Second, the rupee is in a free fall of sorts. After hitting 88 to the U.S. dollar on December 19, 2024, it slipped to 86 on January 13, 2025 and crossed 87 on February 3, partly due to the third factor of work. The strengthening dollar is driven by U.S. President Donald Trump's override to "Make America Great Again" with higher tariffs on major trade partners, and other disruptive economic plans such as exiting global tax accords, shutting aid flows, et al. One thing has not changed is the clamour for an interest rate cut from industry and government honchos. In December, this noise was heightened after a sharp growth blip in the July-September quarter when GDP grew just 5.4%. Now, with 2024-25 GDP growth downgraded to just 6.4%, and the no marked uptick in economic metrics in the December-ending quarter, growth worries remain entrenched. In the interim, there has been some back and forth between North Block and Minor Road. The RBI has been signalling for stumbling economic activity. The Finance Ministry sought to lay some of the blame for an urban demand slump on tight monetary policy. RBI officials, in the central bank's January bulletin, said the "none-way" to spark a growth rebound and a virtuous cycle of fresh private investments, is to boost consumption through higher disposable incomes, especially for the lower middle-class that has been pinning for relief from food-inflation. With the Budget delivering on this front with income tax cuts, the RBI is back in the conundrum. Inflation has been over 5% in the last five months, but may have eased to the RBI's 4% target in January. But a rate cut could also hurt the rupee further, and spur higher imported inflation. It is an unenviable situation for the new RBI chief to be in; he might be tempted to take a cue from Mr. Das who had surprised markets with a rate cut in the first review under his watch in 2019, reversing his predecessor's stance.

The Union Budget has got many things right. Its projection of nominal GDP growth for 2025-26, at 10.1%, is reasonable and acceptable. The Economic Survey 2024-25 had indicated a real GDP growth in the range of 6.3%-6.8% for 2025-26. This provides some buffer if growth picks up more. The increase in the capital expenditure of the government in 2025-26 over the revised estimates of 2024-25 is estimated at ₹1,03,000 crore. But the capital expenditures in 2025-26, at ₹1,24,000 crore, are nearly the same as was indicated in the Budget of 2024-25 at ₹1,11,000 crore.

The overarching aim of the Budget was to accelerate growth and push India towards a developed country status. The required rate of real growth to achieve this is estimated differently including a rate of 8% in the Economic Survey for 2024-25. In any case, the country needs a definite pickup in growth rate. The various measures indicated in the Budget are welcome. In fact, some of these could have been implemented even earlier. The concession given to the "middle-class" in terms of income-tax is welcome as a relief. But its impact on demand depends on the marginal propensity to consume of the households who are expected to largely benefit from these concessions and their consumption basket.

Gross tax revenues
Growth in the Government of India's gross tax revenues (GTR) have trended downwards in recent years. The buoyancy of GTR has fallen for three successive years from 1.4 in 2023-24 to 1.5 in 2024-25 (RE) and then to 1.07 in 2025-26 (BE). As a result, growth in the Government of India's GTR has kept falling from 13.2% in 2023-24 to 11.2% in 2024-25 (RE), and to 10.8% in 2025-26 (BE). Within the government's tax revenues, the growth rate of Goods and Services Tax (GST) has also fallen from 12.7% in 2023-24 to 10.9% in 2025-26 (BE).

In fact, the structure of the government's taxables has moved away from indirect to direct taxes. The share of direct taxes in the government's GTR has increased from 52% in



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Some of the measures indicated in the Budget could have been implemented even earlier; moving away from 'fiscal deficit' as an indicator is an incorrect step

2023-24 to 59% in 2025-26 (BE) which is a welcome development. Within direct taxes, however, it is personal income-tax which has performed better than corporate income-tax in 2025-26 (BE). The growth in personal income-tax is 10.4% in 2025-26 (BE) as against the 9.7% in 2024-25 (RE) and 20.3% in 2024-25 (RE) and 14.4% in 2025-26 (BE). This fall in growth in 2025-26 (BE) is due to the increase in direct income-tax concessions. In the case of corporate income-tax, the growth in 2024-25 (RE) is 9.7% and in 2025-26 (BE), the growth has been raised to 10.4%.

The non-tax revenues have been raised from ₹3.25 lakh crore in 2025-26 – an increase of ₹35,715 crore over the revised estimates. Thus, the non-tax revenues have been raised from ₹5.3 lakh crore (RE) to ₹5.8 lakh crore in 2025-26 (BE).

Level of government expenditure
Tax and non-tax revenues, non-debt capital expenditure and fiscal deficit together account for the size of government expenditure. As discussed, a gross tax revenue growth at a lower level of 10.8% appears to be realistic. Given the commitment to fiscal consolidation, the size of government expenditure must be reduced from 14.6% in 2024-25 (RE) to 14.2% in 2025-26 (BE). Growth in total expenditure, at 7.6% in 2025-26 (BE) is lower than the 10.1% in 2024-25 (RE). In fact, this was so even in 2024-25 (RE), when the government's total expenditure grew by 6.1% as against the nominal GDP growth of 9.7%. It is not clear how the government has managed to reduce there has been a steady improvement in the quality of government expenditure as the share of the expenditure in total expenditure has been improving. In fact, this share has improved by 10% point over the period from 2020-21 to 2025-26 (BE). Given the contemporary context, the Government of India has to build up

large-scale Artificial Intelligence (AI) infrastructure in order to facilitate the adoption of emerging technologies. In this context, China has taken a clear lead. The United States has recently announced an investment of \$500 billion for AI infrastructure. In the field of AI, India's technology companies have failed to anticipate developments. India should have done what China did. Perhaps, India should push these companies for research and development, by offering some tax concessions, if necessary.

A less transparent fiscal health indicator
One wrong measure introduced in the Budget is to move away from fiscal deficit as an indicator of fiscal prudence. Contrary to what is stated in the Budget document, we are moving from a transparent to a less transparent indicator. As per the glide path given in the Medium-Term Fiscal Policy Cum Fiscal Policy Strategy Statement of the 2024-25 Budget, the fiscal deficit was to be brought down to below 4.5% by 2025-26. However, in the 2025-26 Budget, the practice of giving a glide path in terms of fiscal deficit is being discontinued. It has been stated that from now on, the focus will be on reducing the debt-GDP ratio annually. In the annexure statement titled 'Statements of Fiscal Policy as required under the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act, 2003', alternative paths of the debt-GDP ratio with nominal GDP growth assumptions of 10.0%, 10.5% and 11.0% are given.

The glide paths are indicated in terms of alternative growth assumptions and alternative assumptions regarding mild, moderate, and high degrees of fiscal consolidation. This makes the whole exercise vague and non-transparent. It is better for fiscal discipline to indicate specific fiscal deficit target for different years and the corresponding debt-GDP ratios for those years. It should clearly be shown by what year the FRBM Act targets are to be achieved. A larger claim on the available investible resources by the government will make it difficult for private investment to pick up.

The views expressed are personal

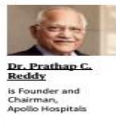
A green signal for India to assert its health leadership

The Union Budget 2025-26 lays a robust foundation for India to assert its leadership in global health care and innovation, with strategic announcements that bolster medical infrastructure, expand educational opportunities, and promote global collaboration.

With a ₹90,958 crore health-care allocation, the addition of 75,000 medical seats over the next few years, and investments in day care cancer centres, India is poised to enhance both accessibility and quality of care. The country will add 10,000 medical seats in FY26 alone, underscoring its commitment to health-care excellence.

India's health-care transformation
This Budget underscores India's remarkable journey of progress, from the 1980s when it grappled with limited medical infrastructure, to its current status as a global health-care leader. The transformation has been nothing short of extraordinary.

Recently, the writer had the privilege of presenting two key recommendations to Prime Minister Narendra Modi: first, establishing India as the global health-care destination, and second, addressing the global shortfall of health-care professionals. It has been a delight to see both these ideas in action through the 'Heal in India' and 'Heal by India' initiatives. With streamlined visa processes, enhanced hospital infrastructure,



Dr. Prathap C. Reddy is Founder and Chairman, Apollo Hospitals

The Budget has recognised the role of health care as a pillar of national growth and development

and robust public-private partnerships, India is poised to become a preferred medical destination for international patients.

Simultaneously, the country is addressing the global shortfall of health-care professionals by training and deploying more doctors, nurses, and allied health professionals. The Budget also introduces expert support health-care systems worldwide while creating new opportunities for our health professionals.

Customs duty exemptions, tech outlook
Moreover, it is commendable that the growing burden of non-communicable diseases such as cancer has been acknowledged in this Budget. The establishment of 200 day-care cancer centres in district hospitals will bring specialised treatment closer to people, improving early diagnosis and better patient outcomes.

The Budget also introduces life-saving drugs, including those for cancer, rare diseases, and chronic conditions will lower the cost of treatment, in turn, benefiting those millions of patients across the country. Also, the addition of 13 new patient assistance programmes would also improve access to critical medications for patients, particularly those with chronic conditions.

The emphasis on Artificial Intelligence and digital health marks a pivotal moment for the future of India's health care. The new National Centres of Excellence will spearhead innovation

in diagnostics, treatment, and research, enabling India to become a cutting-edge solutions for the enter patient care.

The writer believes that the introduction of curbs for fiscal discipline to deliver quality health care has strengthened India's position as a global health-care player. Both private and public hospitals have played an integral role in this progress. Apollo was the first hospital to launch Proton therapy for advanced cancer care as part of the world and continues to attract patients from countries such as Australia and the United Kingdom to name a few.

Build on the momentum
This Budget clearly recognises the government's vision for – and demonstration of bold leadership in recognising – health care as a pillar of national growth and development. From a country that once struggled to provide basic medical care, we have evolved into a nation offering world-class treatment to millions. Through the synergy of where India's health-care system sets new global benchmarks.

It is our collective responsibility now to build on this momentum – by embracing technology, strengthening medical education, and ensuring that health care reaches every individual in need. India is not just healing its own people; it is healing the world.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Deportation begins
It is clear that U.S. President Donald Trump means business when it comes to the subject of immigration (Page 1). U.S. departs Indians as Trump tightens immigration rules (February 5). The "bronzes" that India's leader has tried to portray with the American President and his use of other terms of familiarity such as "Trump, my old friend" have made no difference. The choice of using an American military aircraft to transport him in terms of Mr. Trump's description of undocumented immigrants as "aliens", "criminals" and "invaders". The deportation of Indians should strengthen our resolve to make India a land of opportunity.
G. David Milton, Hyderabad

Manohar Alembath, Kannur, Kerala
In the midst of this, imagine the plight of Indian migrants in the U.S. "Brain (re)gain" would result in a transformative leap for India. Armed with global expertise in technology, health care, and finance, these professionals could fueling innovation, entrepreneurship and job creation. Their return would boost sectors such as artificial intelligence, biotech, and sustainable energy.
Gopalswamy J., Chennai
Interestingly, there are media reports that an estimated 7,25,000 illegal Indian immigrants in the U.S. are allowed to be bracketed with countries such as Guatemala, Peru, Honduras and Ecuador without demand. What happened to India's much-touted 'national pride' under a new birth certificate?
Manohar Alembath, Kannur, Kerala
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politically and administratively divided into large and small numbers of individual entrepreneurs and job bound to take care of its citizens. Moving to other countries while artificial intelligence procedures naturally.
P.R.V. Raja, Pandam, Kerala
The optics
As a friend when a large number of relatives are at the Kumbh looking for their personal to be the top leader of the land to have a holy dip there is no alternative. It is not to say that the leader has sent a message of peace and health and his continuing strategy to consolidate the party. Such a mix of politics and religion to influence voters' preference anathema to our constitutional values.
S.K. Choudhury, Bengaluru
Nursing, dress allowance
I write this letter to the State President (Jammu and Kashmir) of the All

Chennai and safety
The incidents of women and girls being assaulted and molested in Chennai must be one whether the reputation of Chennai being a haven of peace, and earning an indelible name for safety, where women can commute without any lurking fear, is under threat. When the political opposition was harping on the subject of nursing, one was led to believe that it was stalling the DMK-led Tamil Nadu government. But the problem does seem serious.
Mani Manojaran, Chennai
The other chess star
Pragmanandhaa's title win against compatriot and tournament 2025 signals India's ascending trajectory in global chess. It is an example to show that age is not a barrier to excellence.
R. Sivaraman, Chennai
Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the postal address.

A Budget that is mostly good but with one wrong move

The Union Budget has got many things right. Its projection of nominal GDP growth for 2025-26, at 10.1%, is reasonable and acceptable. The Economic Survey 2024-25 had indicated a real GDP growth in the range of 6.3%-6.8% for 2025-26. This provides some buffer if growth picks up more. The increase in the capital expenditure of the government in 2025-26 over the revised estimates of 2024-25 is estimated at ₹1.03 lakh crore. But the capital expenditures in 2025-26, at ₹11.2 lakh crore, are nearly the same as was indicated in the Budget of 2024-25 at ₹11.1 lakh crore.

The overarching aim of the Budget was to accelerate growth and push India towards a developed country status. The required rate of real growth to achieve this is estimated differently including a rate of 8% in the Economic Survey for 2024-25. In any case, the country needs a definite pickup in growth rate. The various measures indicated in the Budget are welcome. In fact, some of these could have been implemented even earlier. The concession given to the 'middle-class' in terms of income-tax is welcome as a relief. But its impact on demand depends on the marginal propensity to consume of the households who are expected to largely benefit from these concessions and their consumption basket.

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2021-22 to 59% in 2025-26 (BE) which is a welcome development. Within direct taxes, however, it is personal income-tax which has performed better than corporate income-tax in terms of growth and buoyancy.

However, even in the case of personal income-tax there has been a fall in growth from 25.4% in 2023-24 to 20.3% in 2024-25 (RE) and 14.4% in 2025-26 (BE). This fall in growth in 2025-26 (BE) is partly due to the announced income-tax concessions. In the case of corporate income-tax, the growth in 2024-25 (RE) is quite low at 7.6%. This growth has been raised to 10.4% in 2025-26 (BE). On the whole, assumptions regarding the government's tax revenue growth in 2025-26 (BE) appear to be realistic.

In the case of non-tax revenues, the main contribution has been in the form of dividends from the Reserve Bank of India and public sector companies, which together accounted for about ₹3.25 lakh crore in 2025-26 – an increase of ₹35,715 crore over the revised estimates. Thus, the non-tax revenues have been raised from ₹5.3 lakh crore (RE) to ₹5.8 lakh crore in 2025-26 (BE).

Level of government expenditure

Tax and non-tax revenues, non-debt capital receipts and fiscal deficit together determine the size of government expenditure. As discussed, a gross tax revenue growth at a lower level of 10.8% appears to be realistic. Given the commitment to fiscal consolidation, the size of government expenditure as a percentage of GDP had to be reduced from 14.6% in 2024-25 (RE) to 14.2% in 2025-26 (BE). Growth in total expenditure, at 7.6% in 2025-26 (BE), is lower than the budgeted nominal GDP growth at 10.1%.

In fact, this was so even in 2024-25 (RE), when the government's total expenditure growth was 6.1% as against the nominal GDP growth of 9.7% as per the first advanced estimates. However, there has been a steady improvement in the quality of government expenditure as the share of capital expenditure in total expenditure has been improving. In fact, this share has improved by 10% points over the period from 2020-21 to 2025-26 (BE). Given the contemporary context, the Government of India has to build up

large-scale Artificial Intelligence (AI) infrastructure in order to facilitate the adoption of emerging technologies. In this context, China has taken a clear lead. The United States has recently announced an investment of \$500 billion for AI infrastructure. In the field of AI, India's technology companies have failed to anticipate developments. India should have done what China did. Perhaps, India should push these companies for research and development, by offering some tax concessions, if necessary.

A less transparent fiscal health indicator

One wrong measure introduced in the Budget is to move away from fiscal deficit as an indicator of fiscal prudence. Contrary to what is stated in the Budget document, we are moving from a transparent to a less transparent indicator. As per the glide path given in the Medium-Term Fiscal Policy Cum Fiscal Policy Strategy Statement of the 2024-25 Budget, the fiscal deficit was to be brought down to below 4.5% by 2025-26.

However, in the 2025-26 Budget, the practice of giving a glide path in terms of fiscal deficit is being discontinued. It has been stated that from now on, the focus will be on reducing the debt-GDP ratio annually. In the annexure statement titled 'Statements of Fiscal Policy as required under the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act, 2003', alternative paths of the debt-GDP ratio with nominal GDP growth assumptions of 10.0%, 10.5% and 11.0% are given.



The glide paths are indicated in terms of alternative growth assumptions and alternative assumptions regarding mild, moderate, and high degrees of fiscal consolidation. This makes the whole exercise vague and non-transparent. It is better for fiscal discipline to indicate specific fiscal deficit target for different years and the corresponding debt-GDP ratios for those years. It should clearly be shown by what year the FRBM Act targets are to be achieved. A larger claim on the available investible resources by the government will make it difficult for private investment to pick up.

-
- **GDP Growth Projections | जीडीपी वृद्धि का अनुमान**
 - **The Union Budget projects nominal GDP growth at 10.1% for 2025-26, which is in line with the Economic Survey's real GDP estimate of 6.3%-6.8%.**
 - **केंद्रीय बजट 2025-26 के लिए 10.1% की नाममात्र जीडीपी वृद्धि का अनुमान लगाता है, जो आर्थिक सर्वेक्षण के 6.3%-6.8% वास्तविक जीडीपी अनुमान के अनुरूप है।**
 - **Capital expenditure is estimated to increase by ₹1.03 lakh crore in 2025-26, offering a boost to infrastructure growth.**
 - **पंजीगत व्यय 2025-26 में ₹1.03 लाख करोड़ बढ़ने का अनुमान है, जिससे बुनियादी ढाँचे की वृद्धि को बढ़ावा मिलेगा।**

Taxation & Fiscal Management | करधान और वित्तीय प्रबंधन

Gross Tax Revenue (GTR) growth has slowed for three consecutive years, falling from 13.5% in 2023-24 to 10.8% in 2025-26.

- सकल कर राजस्व (GTR) की वृद्धि लगातार तीन वर्षों से धीमी हो रही है, जो 2023-24 में 13.5% से घटकर 2025-26 में 10.8% हो गई है।

- 
- GST growth has also fallen from 12.7% in 2023-24 to 10.9% in 2025-26. जीएसटी वृद्धि भी 2023-24 में 12.7% से घटकर 2025-26 में 10.9% हो गई है।
 - A shift in taxation from direct to indirect taxes indicates a move towards consumption-based revenue generation. प्रत्यक्ष करों से अप्रत्यक्ष करों की ओर कराधान में बदलाव उपभोग-आधारित राजस्व उत्पन्न करने की ओर संकेत करता है।
- 

- **. Government Expenditure Trends | सरकारी व्यय के रुझान**
- **Non-tax revenues, including dividends from RBI and public sector companies, have increased significantly from ₹5.3 lakh crore to ₹5.8 lakh crore in 2025-26.**
 - गैर-कर राजस्व, जिसमें आरबीआई और सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र की कंपनियों के लाभांश शामिल हैं, 2025-26 में ₹5.3 लाख करोड़ से बढ़कर ₹5.8 लाख करोड़ हो गया है।
- **Fiscal deficit reduction aims to bring down the deficit to below 4.5% by 2025-26.**
 - वित्तीय घाटे को 2025-26 तक 4.5% से नीचे लाने का लक्ष्य रखा गया है।

- Positive Moves in the Budget | बजट में सकारात्मक पहल
- Increased capital expenditure to boost infrastructure and economic growth.
- बुनियादी ढांचे और आर्थिक विकास को बढ़ावा देने के लिए पूंजीगत व्यय में वृद्धि।
 - Direct tax cuts aim to benefit the middle class, increasing disposable income.
- प्रत्यक्ष कर कटौती से मध्यम वर्ग को लाभ होगा और उनके पास अधिक खर्च योग्य आय होगी।
 - Steady investment in AI infrastructure to boost technology adoption.
- तकनीक अपनाने को बढ़ावा देने के लिए एआई अवसंरचना में स्थिर निवेश।

Major Concern - Less Transparency in Fiscal Management | प्रमुख चिंता - वित्तीय प्रबंधन में पारदर्शिता की कमी



✗ The budget discontinues the practice of giving a specific "fiscal deficit target", moving towards a broader debt-GDP ratio approach.



बजट में "वित्तीय घाटे का विशिष्ट लक्ष्य" देने की परंपरा को समाप्त कर दिया गया है और इसे व्यापक ऋण-जीडीपी अनुपात दृष्टिकोण की ओर स्थानांतरित किया गया है।

✗ The new system makes fiscal discipline more ambiguous and harder to track.

नई प्रणाली वित्तीय अनुशासन को अधिक अस्पष्ट बनाती है और इसे ट्रैक करना कठिन बना देती है।

Dhimsa Dance


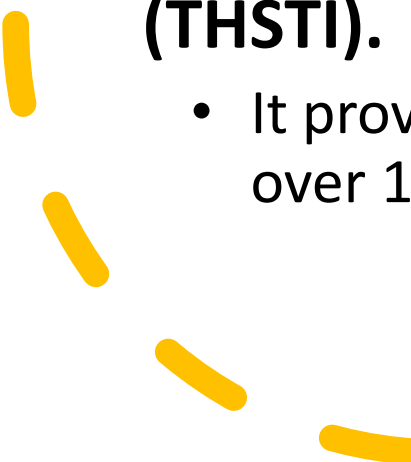
- 
- Tribal families in Neelabandha celebrated their first electricity supply since Independence with the 'Dhimsa' dance.
 - **Dhimsa Dance**
 - Dimsa is a popular dance performed by tribes, including Bagata, Valmiki, Poraja, Khond, Gadaba, Kondadora, Mukadora, Kotia in Andhra Pradesh .
- 

- 
- It represents the unity and cultural heritage of the tribal communities.
 - **Themes:** The dance variants are based on themes like mythology, folktales, economic activities, kinship, and marital life.
 - **Music and Instruments:** Music is essential to the dance, with instruments like dappu, tudumu, mori, kidgi, gilka, and jodukommulu (now almost out of use) played by men.
- 

- **Performance** : It is performed during festivals, marriages, and religious occasions, with a strong presence during Chaitrapurab (Eetela Panduga) in the agency area of ASR District.
 - Both men and women can dance together without hesitation, and while songs are not mandatory, music plays a vital role.



GARBH-INi-DRISHTI Data Repository

- 
- The Department of Biotechnology has launched the **GARBH-INI-DRISHTI data repository**.
 - **About**
 - GARBH-INi-DRISHTI is the **Data Repository and Information Sharing Hub at Translational Health Science and Technology Institute (THSTI)**.
 - It provides access to **clinical data, images, and biospecimens** collected from over 12,000 pregnant women, newborns, and postpartum mothers.
- 



Significance: As one of South Asia's largest maternal and child health databases, GARBH-INi-DRISHTI will empower researchers worldwide to conduct transformative research aimed at improving maternal and neonatal health outcomes.

THSTI: The newly inaugurated THSTI Ferret Research Facility, is a state-of-the-art establishment adhering to the highest biosafety and research standards.

- It will serve as a crucial resource for vaccine development, therapeutic testing, and research into emerging infectious diseases.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

- The closure of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under the Trump administration has raised concerns about setbacks in health, climate, and development programmes in India.

- 
- It is an **independent US government agency** responsible for **civilian foreign aid** and development assistance.
 - It is one of the **largest aid agencies in the world**, accounting for over half of all US foreign assistance.
 - **Headquarters:** Washington, D.C., USA.
 - **Established:** 1961 via an executive order by **President John F. Kennedy** under the Foreign Assistance Act.
- 

Aim of USAID:

To **alleviate poverty**, promote education and healthcare, and strengthen democracy and governance in developing nations.

To provide **humanitarian assistance**, disaster relief, and support for climate resilience and economic development.

Key Functions of USAID:

Funding NGOs, foreign governments, and international organizations for development projects.

Supporting **economic growth, food security, and climate action**.

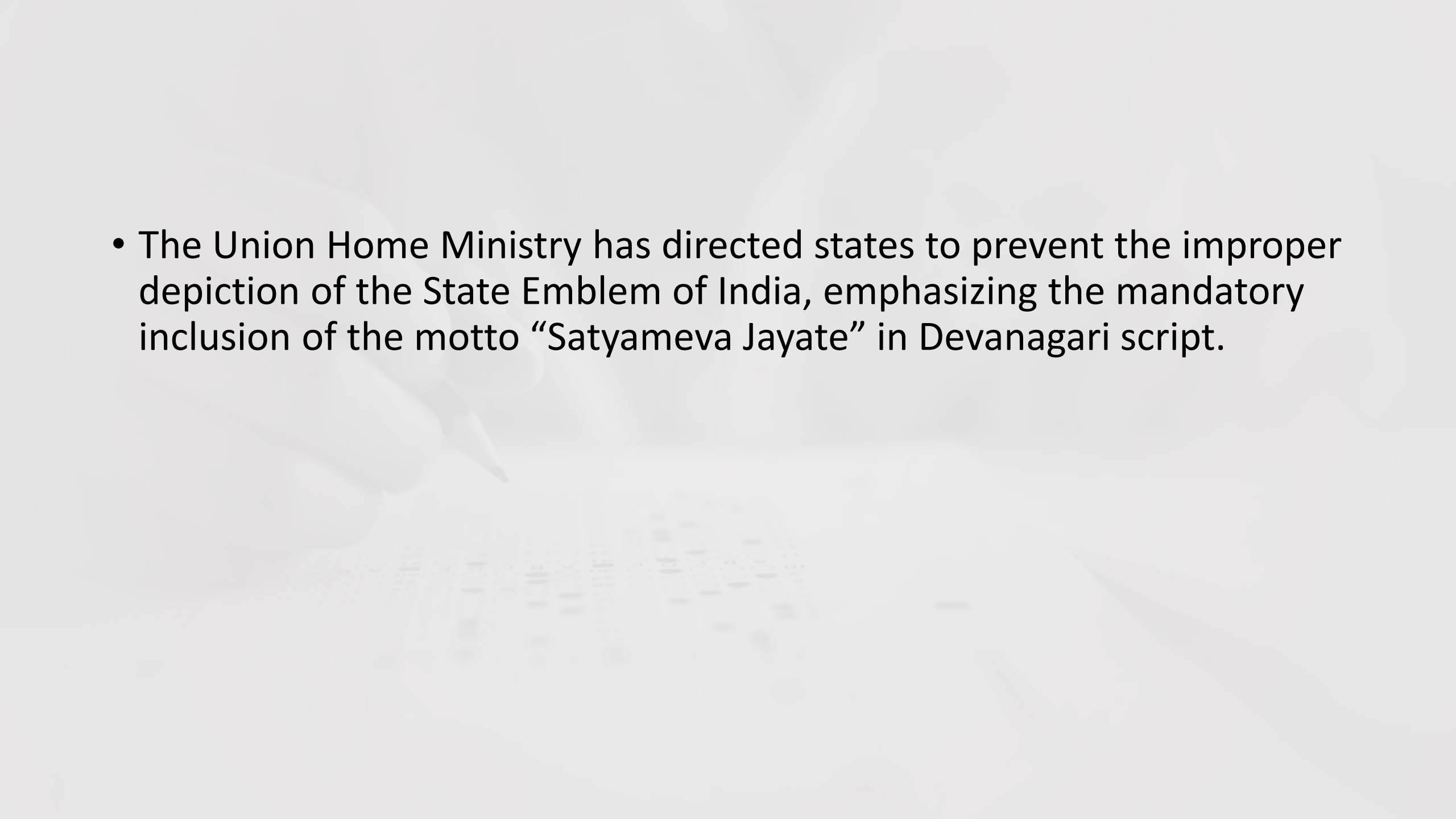
Providing **emergency humanitarian relief** in crisis-affected countries.

Promoting **human rights, democracy, and governance reforms**.

- **Contribution to India:**

- **Healthcare Initiatives:** Helped reduce maternal and child mortality, tackled tuberculosis (TB), HIV, and sanitation issues.
- **Water & Sanitation (WASH):** Played a key role in making 1,000 cities open-defecation-free and reducing diarrheal deaths.
- **Clean Energy & Climate Resilience:** Supported solar energy deployment, green bonds, and sustainable forestry projects.

State Emblem of India


- 
- A hand holding a pen is shown writing on a document. The background is a blurred image of a computer keyboard. The text is overlaid on the image.
- The Union Home Ministry has directed states to prevent the improper depiction of the State Emblem of India, emphasizing the mandatory inclusion of the motto “Satyameva Jayate” in Devanagari script.

About State Emblem of India:

Adoption: Adopted as the State Emblem of India on January 26, 1950 from the Sarnath Lion Capital of Ashoka






- **Features of the State Emblem:**

- **Three Visible Lions:** The fourth lion is hidden from view.
 - **Dharma Chakra:** Positioned at the center of the abacus.
- 



- **Animal Depictions:**

- **Bull (Right):** Represents the zodiac sign Taurus, symbolizing Buddha's birth.
 - **Horse (Left):** Symbolizes **Kanthaka**, the horse Buddha rode while renouncing princely life.
 - **Elephant (East):** Represents **Queen Maya's dream** of a white elephant entering her womb.
 - **Lion (North):** Symbolizes **Buddha's enlightenment** and Dharma propagation.
- 

- 
- **No Bell-shaped Lotus:** Omitted in the official State Emblem.
 - **Motto 'Satyameva Jayate':** Taken from the **Mundaka Upanishad**, meaning '**Truth Alone Triumphs**', inscribed below the emblem in Devanagari script.
 - **Crowned by Dharma Chakra:** Represents Buddha's first sermon (Dharmachakra Pravartana).
- 

- **Legal Provisions:**

- **State Emblem of India (Prohibition of Improper Use) Act, 2005:** Regulates authorized use of the emblem.

- **State Emblem of India (Regulation of Use) Rules, 2007:** Specifies the permitted authorities and usage rules.

- **Penalty for Violation:**

- **Up to 2 years imprisonment or**

- **Fine up to ₹5,000 for unauthorized use.**

-

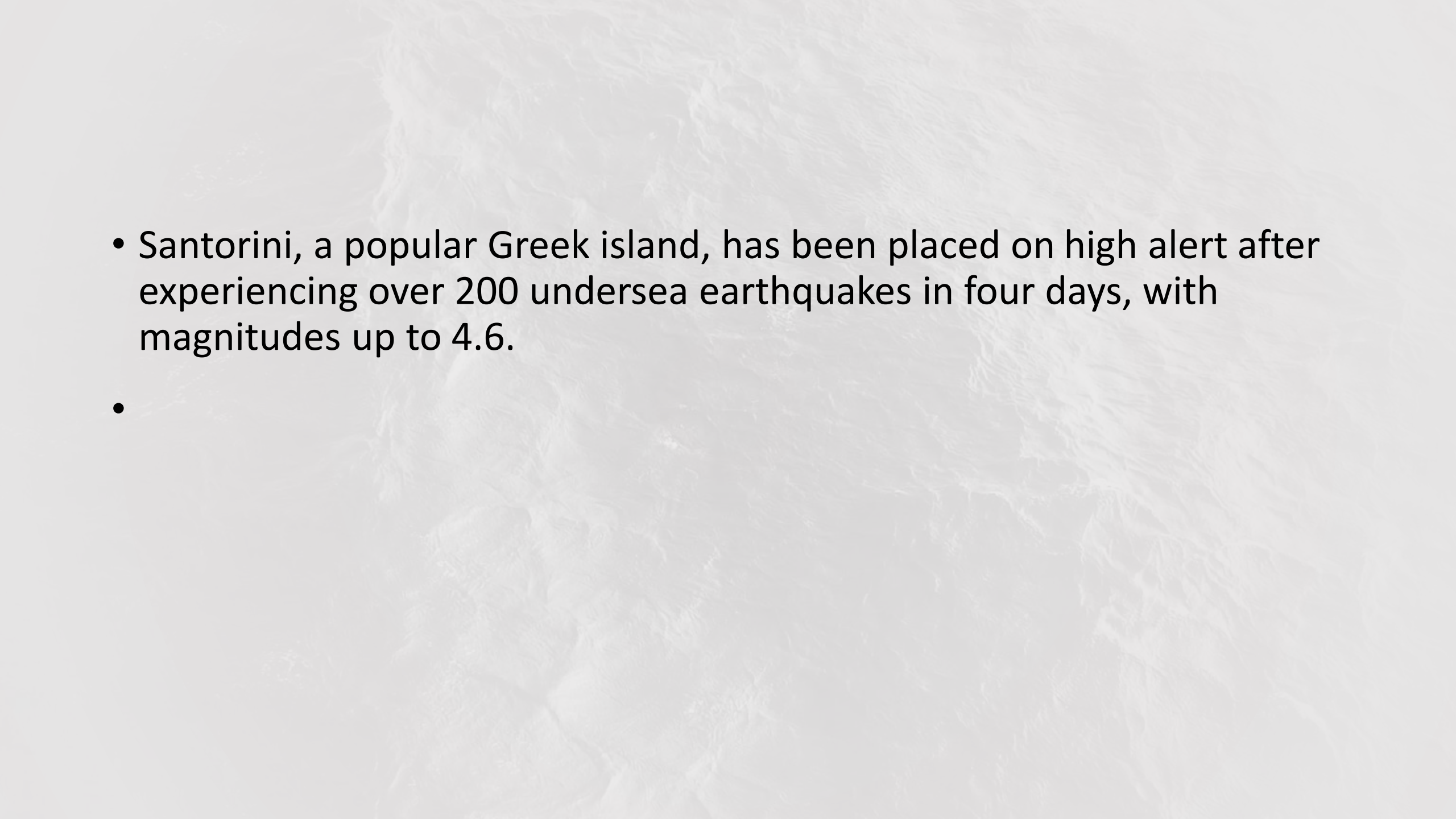


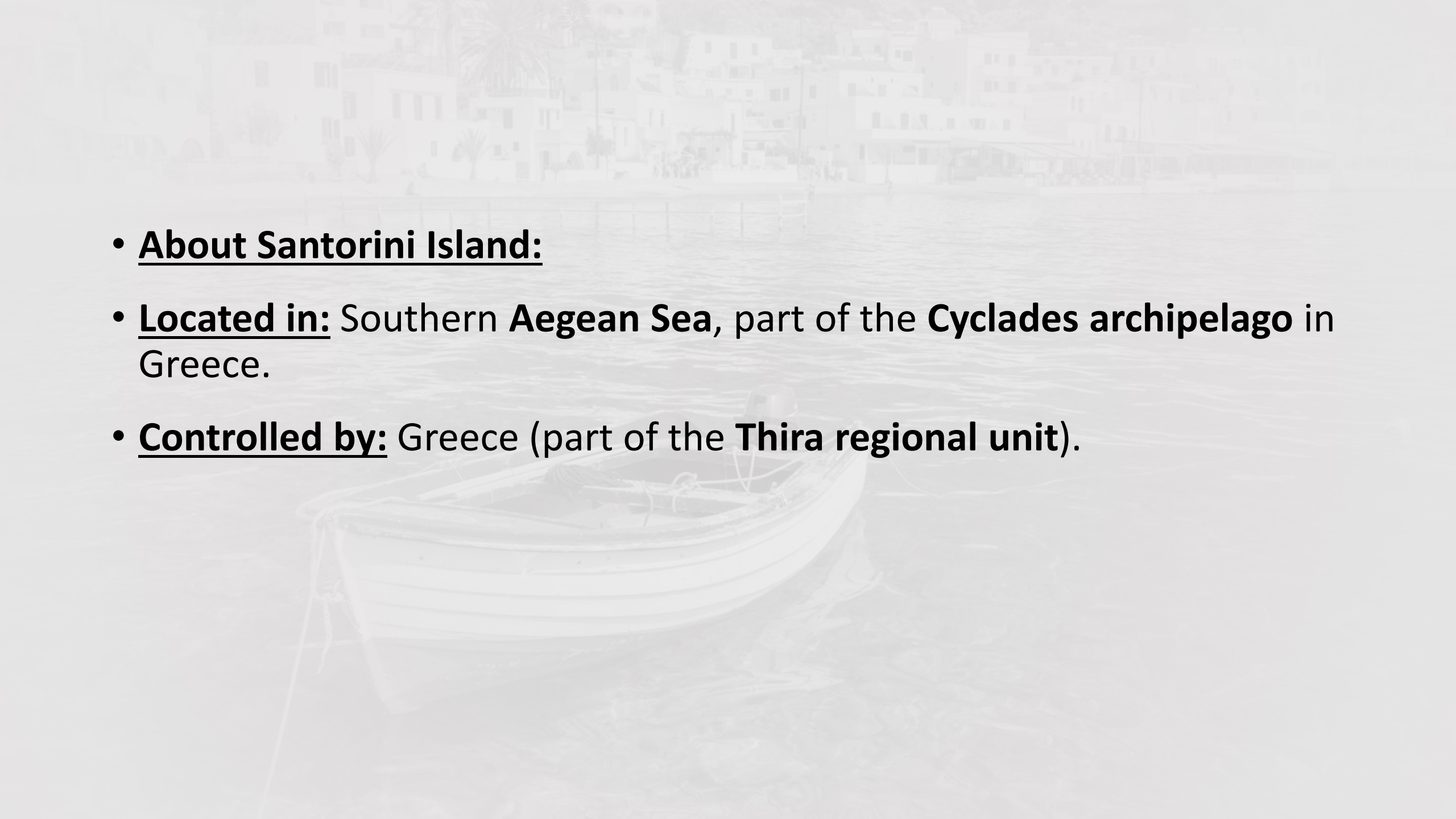
Santorini Island








- 
- Santorini, a popular Greek island, has been placed on high alert after experiencing over 200 undersea earthquakes in four days, with magnitudes up to 4.6.
 -

- 
- **About Santorini Island:**
 - **Located in:** Southern **Aegean Sea**, part of the **Cyclades archipelago** in Greece.
 - **Controlled by:** Greece (part of the **Thira regional unit**).

- 
- Historically known for the **Minoan eruption** (around 3,600 years ago), one of the largest volcanic eruptions in recorded history.

- **Tectonic Plates:**

- Situated near the convergence of the **African Plate** and the **Aegean Sea Plate**.
 - Frequent seismic activity due to subduction and tectonic movements in the region.
- 

10 MCQ

- Which six states have passed a resolution against UGC Regulations 2025?
- किन छह राज्यों ने यूजीसी 2025 नियमों के खिलाफ प्रस्ताव पारित किया है?
- A. Maharashtra, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, Assam / महाराष्ट्र, गुजरात, तमिलनाडु, केरल, हिमाचल प्रदेश, असम
B. Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand / कर्नाटक, तमिलनाडु, तेलंगाना, केरल, हिमाचल प्रदेश, झारखंड
C. Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Bihar, Odisha, Goa, Madhya Pradesh / उत्तर प्रदेश, पंजाब, बिहार, ओडिशा, गोवा, मध्य प्रदेश
D. Rajasthan, West Bengal, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Tripura / राजस्थान, पश्चिम बंगाल, सिक्किम, अरुणाचल प्रदेश, मणिपुर, त्रिपुरा

- What is the primary reason for these states opposing the UGC Regulations 2025?
- ये राज्य यूजीसी 2025 नियमों का विरोध क्यों कर रहे हैं?
- A. They believe education is a state subject / वे मानते हैं कि शिक्षा एक राज्य का विषय है
- B. They want to increase central control over universities / वे विश्वविद्यालयों पर केंद्रीय नियंत्रण बढ़ाना चाहते हैं
- C. The regulations promote privatization of universities / ये नियम विश्वविद्यालयों के निजीकरण को बढ़ावा देते हैं
- D. The rules enforce English as the mandatory medium of instruction / ये नियम अंग्रेजी को अनिवार्य शिक्षण माध्यम बनाते हैं

- Which BJP allies have also opposed the UGC Regulations 2025?
- किन बीजेपी सहयोगी दलों ने भी यूजीसी 2025 नियमों का विरोध किया है?
- A. Shiv Sena (Shinde faction) and JD(U) / शिवसेना (शिंदे गुट) और जेडीयू
- B. Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) / तेलुगु देशम पार्टी (टीडीपी) और लोक जनशक्ति पार्टी (एलजेपी)
- C. Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and Samajwadi Party (SP) / आम आदमी पार्टी (आप) और समाजवादी पार्टी (सपा)
- D. Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) / बहुजन समाज पार्टी (बसपा) और राष्ट्रीय लोक दल (आरएलडी)

- What is the Stryker vehicle, recently tested in Ladakh?
- हाल ही में लद्दाख में परीक्षण किया गया स्ट्राइकर वाहन क्या है?
- A. A high-speed battle tank / एक उच्च गति वाला युद्धक टैंक
- B. An infantry combat vehicle / एक पैदल सेना लड़ाके वाहन
- C. A long-range missile launcher / एक लंबी दूरी की मिसाइल लॉन्चर
- D. A multi-purpose drone system / एक बहुउद्देशीय ड्रोन प्रणाली

- Which U.S.-made weapon failed to perform optimally in high-altitude conditions during Indian Army tests?
- भारतीय सेना के परीक्षणों के दौरान कौन सा अमेरिकी हथियार उच्च ऊंचाई पर पूरी क्षमता से प्रदर्शन नहीं कर सका?
- A. Patriot Missile System / पैट्रियट मिसाइल सिस्टम
- B. Javelin Anti-Tank Guided Missile (ATGM) / जेवेलिन एंटी-टैंक गाइडेड मिसाइल (ATGM)
- C. MQ-9 Reaper Drone / MQ-9 रीपर ड्रोन
- D. M777 Howitzer / M777 हॉवित्जर

- **What was the historical significance of renaming Fort William in Kolkata?**
- **कोलकाता में फोर्ट विलियम का नाम बदलने का ऐतिहासिक महत्व क्या था?**
- **A. It honored India's first Field Marshal / यह भारत के पहले फील्ड मार्शल को सम्मानित करता है**
- **B. It removed a colonial-era name / इसने औपनिवेशिक युग के नाम को हटा दिया**
- **C. It was done to attract more tourism / इसे अधिक पर्यटन आकर्षित करने के लिए किया गया**
- **D. It was renamed after a freedom fighter / इसे एक स्वतंत्रता सेनानी के नाम पर रखा गया**

- What is the purpose of the newly launched 'GARBH-INi-DRISHTI' data repository?
- नवीनतम लॉन्च किए गए 'GARBH-INi-DRISHTI' डेटा रिपॉजिटरी का उद्देश्य क्या है?
- A. Collection of historical manuscripts / ऐतिहासिक पांडुलिपियों का संग्रह
- B. Health data storage for pregnant women and newborns / गर्भवती महिलाओं और नवजात शिशुओं के लिए स्वास्थ्य डेटा भंडारण
- C. Monitoring climate change data / जलवायु परिवर्तन डेटा की निगरानी
- D. Maintaining defense intelligence records / रक्षा खुफिया रिकॉर्ड बनाए रखना

- Which Indian tribal dance was recently celebrated due to the first electricity supply in Neelabandha?
- नीलबंधा में पहली बार बिजली आपूर्ति के कारण हाल ही में कौन सा भारतीय आदिवासी नृत्य मनाया गया?
- A. Bihu / बिहु
- B. Dhimsa / धीमसा
- C. Kalbelia / कालबेलिया
- D. Lavani / लावणी

- Which country recently put Santorini Island on high alert due to undersea earthquakes?
- किस देश ने हाल ही में सैंटोरिनी द्वीप को समुद्र के नीचे भूकंपों के कारण उच्च सतर्कता पर रखा?
- A. Japan / जापान
- B. Greece / ग्रीस
- C. Indonesia / इंडोनेशिया
- D. Italy / इटली

- What is the key feature of India's GDP growth projection for 2025-26?
- 2025-26 के लिए भारत की जीडीपी वृद्धि के अनुमान की मुख्य विशेषता क्या है?
- A. Projected nominal GDP growth at 10.1% / अनुमानित नाममात्र जीडीपी वृद्धि 10.1%
- B. Projected real GDP growth at 12% / अनुमानित वास्तविक जीडीपी वृद्धि 12%
- C. Predicted fiscal deficit below 2% / 2% से कम वित्तीय घाटे का अनुमान
- D. Expected decline in capital expenditure / पूंजीगत व्यय में गिरावट की उम्मीद

Word of the day

Recalcitrant:

stubbornly resistant to authority or control

Synonyms: ungovernable, insubmissive, uncooperative

Usage: *Her recalcitrant attitude towards the new rules made it difficult to work with her.*

Pronunciation: bit.ly/recalcitrantpronun

International Phonetic

Alphabet: /rəkælsɪtrənt/



Fun fact



One of the Largest Producers of
Football



Was Once a Buddhist Nation



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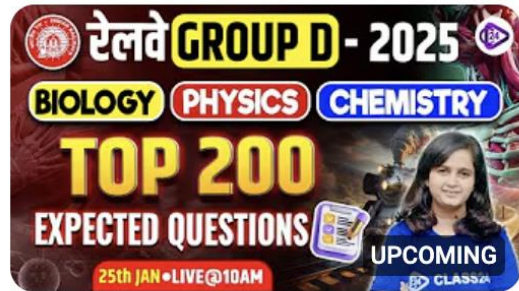


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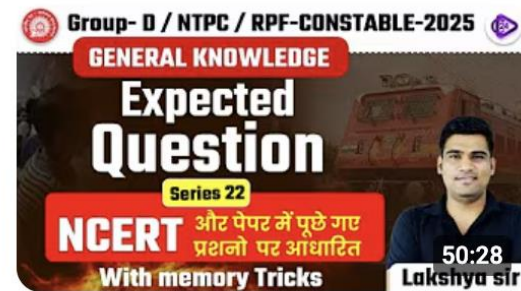


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- ✓ COMPLETE NOTES (PDF)
- ✓ 360° DEGREE EXAMS COVERED

~~₹999/-~~ **₹499/-**

Offer Date
25 & 26 Jan.

CLASS24

By Bhunesh Sir

- ✓ STATIC GK
- ✓ HISTORY
- ✓ POLITY
- ✓ GEOGRAPHY
- ✓ ECONOMICS
- ✓ SCIENCE



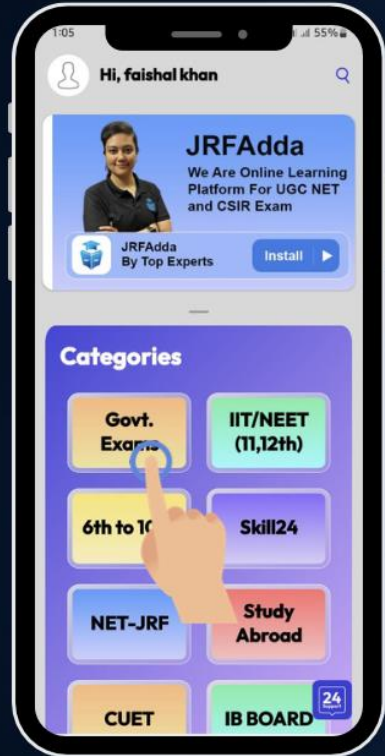
~~₹999/-~~ **₹499/-**

USE CODE - B50

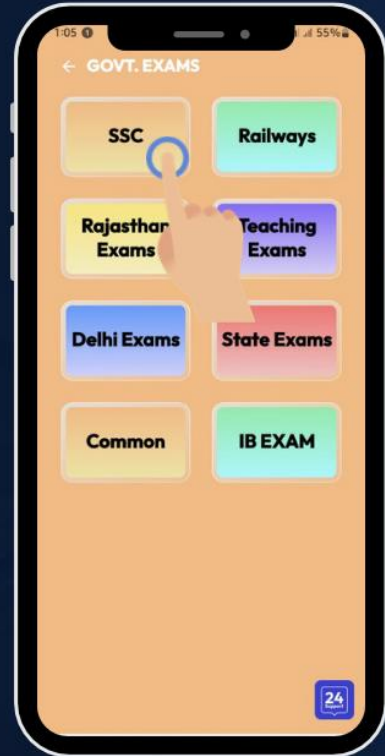
CALL FOR SUPPORT: +91-7414862047

USE CODE - B50

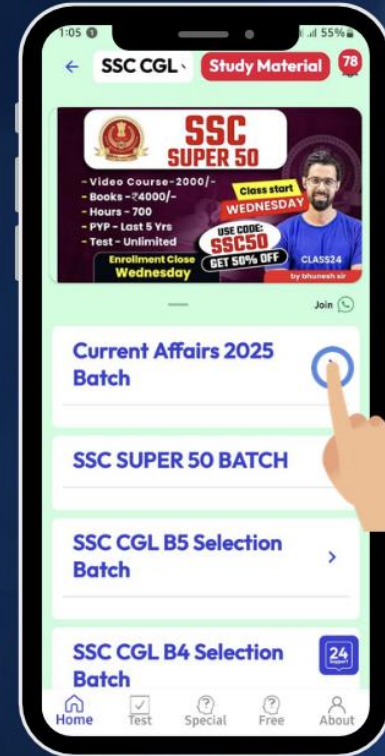
Step 1



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.
