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10 MCQ from the session

- Which region is emerging as a new spice-producing hub in India?
- भारत में कौन सा क्षेत्र एक नया मसाला उत्पादक केंद्र के रूप में उभर रहा है?
- A. Western Ghats / पश्चिमी घाट
- B. Northeast India (Odisha, Jharkhand) / पूर्वोत्तर भारत (ओडिशा, झारखंड)
- C. Rajasthan and Gujarat / राजस्थान और गुजरात
- D. Andaman and Nicobar Islands / अंडमान और निकोबार द्वीप

- **What is the target set by the Spices Board of India for spice exports by 2030?**
- **भारतीय मसाला बोर्ड ने 2030 तक मसाला निर्यात के लिए क्या लक्ष्य निर्धारित किया है?**
- **A. \$5 billion / \$5 अरब**
- **B. \$7.5 billion / \$7.5 अरब**
- **C. \$10 billion / \$10 अरब**
- **D. \$15 billion / \$15 अरब**

- **Which international treaty focuses on eliminating all forms of discrimination against women?**
- **कौन सी अंतरराष्ट्रीय संधि महिलाओं के खिलाफ सभी प्रकार के भेदभाव को समाप्त करने पर केंद्रित है?**
- **A. Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948)**  
**B. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979)**  
**C. Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)**  
**D. United Nations Convention Against Corruption (2003)**



- What is the rank of India in the world's biofuel production?
- जैव ईंधन उत्पादन में भारत की वैश्विक रैंक क्या है?
- A. 1st / प्रथम
- B. 2nd / द्वितीय
- C. 3rd / तृतीय
- D. 4th / चतुर्थ

- **What is the significance of the "Golden Dome" project announced by the U.S.?**
- **अमेरिका द्वारा घोषित "गोल्डन डोम" परियोजना का क्या महत्व है?**
- **A. A new trade agreement between the U.S. and Middle Eastern countries**
- **B. An advanced missile defense system inspired by Israel's Iron Dome**
- **C. A satellite surveillance system for space exploration**
- **D. A global initiative for cyber security protection**

- Why has Vanuatu's "Golden Passport" program attracted global attention?
- वानुआतु के "गोल्डन पासपोर्ट" कार्यक्रम ने वैश्विक ध्यान क्यों आकर्षित किया है?
- A. It provides citizenship without residency requirements / यह बिना निवास की आवश्यकता के नागरिकता प्रदान करता है
- B. It grants visa-free travel to 200+ countries / यह 200+ देशों में वीजा-मुक्त यात्रा की अनुमति देता है
- C. It offers dual citizenship with India / यह भारत के साथ दोहरी नागरिकता प्रदान करता है
- D. It allows tax-free investments worldwide / यह वैश्विक स्तर पर कर-मुक्त निवेश की अनुमति देता है

- What is the primary use of CAMPA funds in India?
- भारत में CAMPA निधियों का मुख्य उपयोग क्या है?
- A. Compensating farmers for crop damage / फसल क्षति के लिए किसानों को मुआवजा देना
- B. Forest conservation and afforestation / वन संरक्षण और वनीकरण
- C. Disaster relief and rehabilitation / आपदा राहत और पुनर्वास
- D. Promoting tourism in protected forest areas / संरक्षित वन क्षेत्रों में पर्यटन को बढ़ावा देना

- **What percentage of India's spice exports currently consists of value-added products?**
- **भारत के मसाला निर्यात में वर्तमान में मूल्य संवर्धित उत्पादों का कितना प्रतिशत शामिल है?**
- **A. 30%**
- **B. 48%**
- **C. 60%**
- **D. 72%**

- Which country has one of the fastest police forces, featuring supercars like Lamborghinis, Ferraris, and Bugattis?
- किस देश के पास सबसे तेज पुलिस बलों में से एक है, जिसमें लैम्बॉर्गिनी, फेरारी और बुगाटी जैसी सुपरकारें शामिल हैं?
- A. United States / संयुक्त राज्य अमेरिका  
B. Germany / जर्मनी  
C. United Arab Emirates (UAE) / संयुक्त अरब अमीरात (UAE)  
D. Japan / जापान

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A scenic landscape featuring a calm lake in the foreground, with dark, rocky islands and mountains in the background. The sky is filled with dramatic, dark clouds, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

**Quality is not an  
act, it is a habit.**

**Aristotle**

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**TECH INVASION**

## Being human in an age of thinking machines

There is more to AI than ChatGPT but as users sign up for neurotech devices and genetic models, are we reckoning with the risks?

MAGAZINE » PAGE 1



How is a census of river dolphins carried out?

FAQ » PAGE 8



Abdullah Ocalan, a rebel without arms in Turkey

PROFILES » PAGE 9

New Zealand stands between India and Champions Trophy

SPORT » PAGE 13

**INSIDE**



**NTPC official shot dead in Hazaribagh**

A National Thermal Power Corporation official was shot dead in Hazaribagh, Jharkhand, on Saturday. Kumar Gaurav, Deputy General Manager (Dispatch), NTPC, deputed to the Keredadi coal mine, was on his way to work when two unidentified persons opened fire on him. » PAGE 3



**Congress seeks clarity on tariff claims by Trump**

NEW DELHI Prime Minister Narendra Modi should take Parliament into confidence on U.S. President Donald Trump's claims that India has agreed to cut tariffs, Congress communications chief Jasraj Tharwal said in a post on social media platform X on Saturday. » PAGE 4

# One killed, 43 injured as protests rock Manipur

Kuki-Zo community members clash with security forces as they protest movement of vehicles on highways; they say the resumption of public bus service will stoke tension; Kangpokpi administration imposes public curfew along national highway; apex body for Kuki-Zo calls for indefinite shutdown; 27 security personnel injured in violence

**Vijata Singh**  
KANGPOKPI

A 19-year-old man was killed and 43 people were injured in the hill district of Kangpokpi in Manipur on Saturday, as Kuki-Zo people clashed with the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) in protest against the enforcement of free movement of vehicles on the National Highways, which have been blocked since an ethnic violence erupted in the State on May 3, 2023.

The injured included 27 security personnel, a police statement said. They were injured "due to heavy pelting of stones, use of caps and other missiles" and by armed miscreants from amongst the protesters", it said. One of the security

personnel had a narrow escape when a bullet hit the magazine of his rifle, another was injured in the eye, and a third jawan lost a tooth due to heavy stone throwing, a police official said.

The police said the protesters included women and children.

Protesters clashed with security forces at multiple points along NH-2 in Kangpokpi as "angry" Manipur State Transport (MST) buses originating from Imphal ran on the designated Imphal-Kangpokpi-Senapati route through the hill districts under heavy security cover, in a symbolic move to mark the freeing of the highways. The bus could not cross Kangpokpi and has been kept at an undisclosed location.

The other empty MST



Peace bid: Security personnel trying to convince local people in Kangpokpi district to allow free movement of vehicles, via a bus that ran on the Bishnupur-Churachandpur-Imphal route under security cover could complete the journey without problems. In a security review meeting on March 1, Home Minister Amit Shah directed free movement on the highways from March 8. Manipur has been affected by ethnic violence between the tribal Kuki-Zo people in the hills and the Meitei people from the valley since May 2023. Over 250 people have been killed in the violence so far.

The Kuki-Zo protesters said the government was forcing the public buses to run in the area and this could only stir up tension. The buses were attacked with stones.

**'Forced movement'**

"There was no passenger in the bus. We do not want to go to Meitei areas, neither do they want to come here. What is being achieved by the forced movement of vehicles? Commercial vehicles are already running on the NH," said Vahboi Haokip, a medical professional, as he tended to people injured in a tear-gas shelling by security forces.

The police official said that since the start of the extra security deployment was done along the highway. "The mob indulged in

heavy stone pelting and broke the cordons. The security forces first used tear gas shells. However, armed miscreants fired at the personnel taking cover of women and other protesters. Security forces fired in the air to disperse the mob," said the official.

Following the violence, a public curfew was imposed by the Kangpokpi administration in areas along the national highway. The Kuki-Zo Council (KZC), the apex body of the Kuki-Zo people, called for an indefinite shutdown.

The deceased was identified as Lalgun Singit of Keithelmaibul. Police said the cause of death will be known after a postmortem. The KZC said over 50 women suffered serious injuries, and strongly condemned the decision to im-

pose "free movement", as the government was fully aware of the potential for violence if such a decision was put into action.

National Highways-2 and 37 are critical for supplying essentials to the Imphal valley, where the Meitei live. While NH-37 highway connects Silchar in Assam with Imphal, the other axis, Dimapur (Nagaland)-Imphal National Highway-2 passes through Kangpokpi in Manipur and has seen frequent blockades.

Through the day, protesters kept gathering on the highway only to be dispersed by the security forces. The protesters tried to block the road by placing a charred bus in the middle, which was removed by the police. A private vehicle was set on fire.

## Celebration push



Officers are out: Cadets of the Royal Bhutan Army doing push-ups after the Passing-Out Parade, a tradition to mark the completion of their training, at the Officers Training Academy in Chennai on Saturday. BY VEENAKANESHI

## Arab nations offer counter to Trump's Gaza proposal

**Agence France-Presse**  
JEDDAH

The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation early on Saturday formally adopted an Arab League counter-proposal to U.S. President Donald Trump's plan to take over Gaza and displace its residents, calling on the international community to support the regional initiative.

The decision by the 57-member bloc came at a meeting in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, three days after the Arab League ratified the plan at a summit in Egypt.

**FULL REPORT ON**  
» PAGE 12

## Number of women in workforce should rise rapidly: Murmu



The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

When India is moving towards becoming the third largest economy in the world, the participation of women in the country's workforce should increase rapidly, President Droupadi Murmu said on Saturday, on the occasion of International Women's Day.

She was speaking at the inauguration of a national conference on the theme "Nari Shakti Se Viksit Bharat (Developed India through the development of women)" organised by the Union Ministry of Women and Child Development.

Stating that there was no doubt that women had made unprecedented progress over the last 50 years, the President offered the example of her own life.

"I am a single family being in a backward area of Odisha, her journey to the Rashtrapati Bhavan is the story of equal opportunities and social justice for women in Indian society," the President said.

Ms. Murmu pointed out that not only in India but

also in other countries, one of the reasons for the low participation of women in the workforce is the belief that women will have to take leave to look after their children or they will pay less attention to work. "But this thinking is not correct. We have to ask ourselves whether society has no responsibility towards children. We all know that the first teacher in the family is the mother. If a mother takes leave to look after children... it is also for the betterment of society. A mother can make her child an ideal citizen through her efforts," she said.

**Independent decisions**

A better environment for girls to move forward is necessary to realise the dream of a developed India. In such an environment, they can make independent decisions about their lives without pressure or fear, she said.

The President said that a developed India could be built only on the strength of self-esteem, independent and empowered women.

# Zelensky seeks more sanctions against Russia as strikes kill 14

**Agence France-Presse**  
DOBROPOLIA

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Saturday called for more sanctions against Russia as overnight strikes killed at least 14 persons and wounded dozens more, days ahead of talks between U.S. and Ukrainian negotiators aimed at securing a truce.

A Russian assault hit the centre of Dobropolia in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region late on Friday, killing 11 persons and wounding 30, according to the emergency services.

Separately, three persons were killed and seven others wounded in a drone attack early on Saturday in the city of Bogodukhiv, the

military head of the eastern Kharkiv region, Oleg Synehubov, said.

Russia fired two missiles and 145 drones at Bogodukhiv, Ukraine's air force said.

**'Inhumane tactic'**

Mr. Zelensky said that Russia had struck Dobropolia, waited until rescuers arrived and then "deliberately" targeted them as well.

"This is a despicable and inhumane tactic of intimidation that the Russians often use," he said.

The overnight air raids came after U.S. President Donald Trump threatened new sanctions and tariffs on Russia over its bombardments of Ukraine.

"To Russia and Ukraine, get to the table right now, before it is too late," he added.

Mr. Zelensky is due to



Charred remains: People carry their belongings as they leave Dobropolia in Donetsk, following a strike on Saturday. AFP

land in Saudi Arabia on Monday for talks with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. The meeting is a day before Ukrainian officials are expected to hold fresh talks with their U.S. counterparts there, on Tuesday with bilateral relations frayed.

Mr. Trump had publicly berated Mr. Zelensky during a White House meeting and suspended U.S. military aid to Kyiv in a stated bid to encourage diplomacy.

**Territories recaptured**

On Saturday, Russia said it had retaken three villages in its Kursk region previously captured by Ukraine. The Russian Defence Ministry announced the recapture of Viktorovka, Ni-

kolayevka and Staraya Sorochina.

Ukrainian soldiers had taken an offensive in Kursk last summer but Russia has now regained back control of more than two-thirds of the territory captured by Kyiv.

The Russian Defence Ministry also said on Saturday that its air defence systems destroyed 31 Ukrainian drones over the past night. A Ukrainian drone attack targeted Russia's Kursk region on Friday with air defence forces capturing it.

The Russian Defence Ministry also said on Saturday that its air defence systems destroyed 31 Ukrainian drones over the past night. A Ukrainian drone attack targeted Russia's Kursk region on Friday with air defence forces capturing it.



**New players, strict rules challenging established banks: FM**

**Lalitendu Mishra**  
MUMBAI

Strict regulatory compliance and entry of new banks and non-bank entities present both challenges and opportunities to established players, who should evolve to rise up to the occasion, Union Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Saturday.

She was attending platinum jubilee celebration of State Bank of India (SBI), the largest commercial bank in the country.

During the event, she virtually inaugurated 70 branches of the bank across India and 17 CSR initiatives at the SBI headquarters here. Ms. Sitharaman also unveiled 501 women customer service points of the bank on Saturday, which was also International Women's Day.

"With an unmatched 28 years legacy, the SBI is an important pillar of India's financial ecosystem, symbolising resilience, trust and relentless digital first approach," the Finance Minister said.

**India's cotton imports shoot up as farmers battle low yields, prices**

Indian farmers are urging the government to introduce measures to improve cotton productivity in the country, in the hopes of making local markets internationally competitive, amid the falling price of the produce in the global market

**M. Soundarya Preetha**  
CHIMBATORE

Increasing import of raw and waste cotton in the last seven months has brought to fore the urgent need for measures to improve cotton productivity in India.

Cotton imports were to the tune of \$104 million in August 2024, \$134.2 million in September 2024, \$127.71 million in October, \$170.73 million in November, and \$142.89 million in December, 2024. In January this year, it stood at \$184.64 million.

Comparably, the imports were \$74.4 million in August 2023, \$39.91 million in September 2023, \$36.68 million in October 2023, \$30.61 million in No-

vember 2023, and \$29.47 million in December 2023. In January 2024, the imports were \$19.62 million.

Meanwhile, the Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) has procured close to 100 lakh bales of Indian cotton that has come into the market since the beginning of the new season on October 1, 2024. In the peak cotton arrival season in December 2024, the CCI bought at most 60% of the daily arrivals at the minimum support price (MSP). The price of the Shankar 6 variety of cotton on Saturday was ₹52,500 a quintal.

Jaipal, a cotton farmer in Telangana, said at the beginning of the season that farmers are not happy because yield is less. "International prices are weak

**Import woes**

An increase in the import of cotton in the last two years has brought to fore the urgent need for measures to improve cotton productivity in India.



and mills are able to buy from there," he said.

Karibur Shanthakumar, president of Karnataka State Federation of Farmer Associations, said the cost of production per quintal is ₹3,000 and the MSP is ₹7,235. But, brokers were buying in the open market

**Cotton and raw cotton imports (in \$ million)**

Month	2023	2024
January	29.99	19.62
February	26.29	31.43
March	55.01	49.8
April	46.3	37.91
May	58.09	43.68
June	95.1	70.22
July	88.72	86.29
August	74.9	104.89
September	39.21	134.2
October	36.68	127.71

at only ₹5,000 to ₹5,500 per quintal.

The Union Budget announced in February has a Cotton Mission aimed at improving productivity.

For the Indian textile industry, international cotton prices are weak and with export demand look-

ing up for garments and home textiles, there is a need for the textile industry to be internationally competitive. Over 60% of garments exported are cotton-based. Extra Long Staple cotton can be imported duty free and exporters can import cotton without duty under Advance Authorisation. The mills seem to have imported cotton as international cotton prices were lower than Indian prices and the imports have not disturbed the local market, sources said.

"Cotton productivity in India is about 450 kg per hectare as against 1,800-2,000 kg/ha in Brazil. Indian yarn exports should increase," Pankaj Sharda, director, Indian Cotton Association, said.

**Reduce tariff with U.S., suggest textile exporters**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
CHIMBATORE

Most textile and apparel export associations have suggested to the government to go in for reduction of tariff or zero-for-zero trade agreement with the U.S.

The Apparel Export Promotion Council said the tariff levied by the U.S. on textiles and apparel ranges from 2% to 32%. Reduction in tariff will not affect Indian exporters, said

AEPCC's secretary general Mithuleswar Thakur.

According to the Confederation of Indian Textile Industry (CITI), the U.S. is the single largest export destination for Indian textile and apparel sector, contributing to 28.5% of the total T&A exports between January and November last year.

For the U.S., China remains the dominant supplier with a 25.6% share and India is the third largest supplier with 10.8%



growing at a CAGR of 9.1% during the same period. In 2024, the U.S. T&A imports from India stood at about \$10.8 billion, whereas exports by the U.S. to India were worth \$0.41 billion.

India should explore a zero-for-zero trade agreement with the U.S. for T&A products with necessary safeguards for sensitive products. This will create a level playing field for Indian exporters against Vietnam, which benefits from duty concessions.

With reduced tariffs, India's T&A exports to the U.S. could surge to \$16 billion from India's exports to the U.S. in the last three years, the CITI said.

The trade balance is in India's favour. Indian textiles can gain a lot from reduction in the tariff under agreement. India is also exploring free trade agreements with the U.S. So, we need to wait and see," said

Cotton Textiles Export Promotion Council Executive Director Siddhartha Rajagopal.

**U.S. tariff fear induces 'deep discounts'**

**Suresh P. Iyengar**  
MUMBAI

The tariff tantrums of U.S. President Donald Trump has set off a Great Clearance Sale in India's equity market and thrown open the door for conservative investors to create long-term wealth.

The Top 100 companies by market capitalisation across sectors are available at a deep discount of up to 61% from their 52-week high. The average fall in value of these top companies was about 25% as of Friday.

Interestingly, the market capitalisation of Top 10 companies in the beaten down stock list is ₹15,53-lakh crore and includes three Adani Group companies, which are waiting to mend their strained relations in the U.S.

Adani Green Energy has

plunged 61% to ₹38 a share from its 52-week high while Adani Energy Solutions and Adani Power have dipped 45% and 44%, respectively, as on Friday.

**Tesla entry**  
The worry on possible duty-free entry of Elon Musk-owned Tesla in India had crashed automobile stocks with 45% Motors (45%) and Bajaj Auto (41%) being the brunt.

Sending strong signals to pave the way for Tesla's entry into India, Mr. Trump has criticised India's high import tariffs on cars.

Swarnil Aggarwal, Director, VSRK Capital, said 150 large-caps usually provide superior protection on the downside in turbulent times.

(The writer is with The Hindu businessline)

**Miles to go**



Ready to roll: Excavators to be exported to Africa are seen waiting to be loaded on a cargo ship at a port in Yantai, in eastern China's Shandong province on Friday. AP

**11% import duty on masoor; yellow pea levy-free till May end**

**Vishwanath Kulkarni**  
BENGALURU

The government has imposed an import duty of 11% on lentils (masoor) and extended the duty-free import regime on yellow peas till May end.

However, a section of traders said there is no clarity yet on yellow peas — whether the duty-free period has been extended, or the Centre has facilitated shipments of consignments for which bills of lading were entered on or before February 28, 2025.

Bimal Kothari, Chair-

man, India Pulses and Grains Association (IPGA), said the extension of the duty-free regime on yellow peas imports will not only impact the prices of masoor, but also all other pulses.

**Chana farming**  
He further said that the chana crop appeared good this year. Farmers have planted chana on 98.55 lakh hectares this season, up from 95.87 lakh hectares in the previous year. The masoor area was flat at 17.43 lakh hectares.

With the land, he said, farmers are in line with all approvals to the customers, who are end users as well as investors. He said there is a huge

**INBRIEF**

**SpiceJet in soup as 3 lessors, ex-pilot file insolvency pleas**

SpiceJet is facing fresh round of troubles as three Ireland-based aircraft lessors — NCF Alpha, NCF Genesis and NCF Charlie — and a former pilot have filed petitions under Section 9 of the IBC, seeking initiation of insolvency proceedings against SpiceJet claiming dues totalling \$12.68 million (about ₹10 crore). SpiceJet, during the proceedings of the National Company Law Tribunal, earlier this week, sought some time to resolve the matter as settlement talks were on.

**Maruti Suzuki, Hero FinCorp tie up to offer vehicle loans**

Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) on Saturday said it has joined hands with Hero FinCorp for vehicle finance. As per the MoU, the partnership will leverage the automaker's wide-reaching network and Hero FinCorp's tailored financial solutions for new and pre-owned car loans. "Collaborating with Hero FinCorp builds on our ability to offer innovative, transparent, and attractive financing solutions," MSI senior executive officer (Marketing & Sales) Partho Banerjee said.

**Shiv Nadar gifts 47% of his stake in 2 firms to daughter**

Shiv Nadar, founder of HCL, has gifted 47% of his stakes in HCL Corp and Vama Delhi to his daughter Roshni Nadar Malhotra as part of a strategic succession plan. After the transfer, Ms. Malhotra will acquire control and become a majority shareholder of Vama Delhi and HCL Corp. HCL Tech said in a filing by virtue of her stakes in Vama Delhi and HCL Corp, she will become the largest shareholder of HCL Infosystems Ltd. and HCL Tech.

**The House of Abhinandan Lodha eyes ₹10,000 crore pre-sales in FY29**

**Press Trust of India**  
NASHIK

The House of Abhinandan Lodha, which sells housing plots, aims 4.5 times jump in sale bookings to ₹10,000 crore in 2028-29 on rising demand for plotted development projects, a top company official said.

Addressing a CREDAI conference here, the company's founder Abhinandan Lodha said it is set to clock sale bookings of ₹2,200 crore during this fiscal, up by over 30% from the preceding year.

The Mumbai-based company formed in 2021, has already launched many plotted development projects covering around 1,000 acres at 10 cities in Maharashtra, Goa and Uttar Pradesh. "We are targeting 35% growth in sale bookings next financial year," Mr. Lodha said.

When asked about the long-term goal, he said the aim is to touch an annual ₹10,000 crore sale bookings in 2028-29 fiscal year.



Abhinandan Lodha

potential in senior living projects and leased residential assets and hoped that these two segments will attract lot of institutional investment in coming years.

Mr. Lodha was speaking at 6th edition of the New India Summit organised by CREDAI during March 7-8.

In November last year, The House of Abhinandan Lodha had announced ₹3,000 crore investment to expand its business in six new cities, including Amritsar, Varanasi and Vrindavan.

It acquired 352 acres of land across six cities — Amritsar, Vrindavan, Varanasi, Shimla, Nagpur and Khamli near Mumbai. "We are entering into six new locations. We are committing ₹3,000 crore investment in these new cities," Mr. Lodha had said.

He said the demand for housing plots has been very strong post-COVID pandemic.

Many celebrities, including Amitabh Bachchan, have bought plots in its projects.

The House of Abhinandan Lodha is part of Lodha Ventures, which was established by Abhinandan Lodha.

**'Mental health issues affecting productivity in women corporate sector employees'**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
MUMBAI

About 90% of 1,400 women working in the corporate sector feel mental health issues are impacting productivity, while 80% of them face workplace stereotypes on maternity leave and career growth, according to a survey.

Among those surveyed, 42% reported symptoms of depression and anxiety, the findings by Mpower, an initiative of Aditya Birla Education Trust, led by Neeraj Birla, revealed.

"Mumbai is navigating a complex landscape of challenges—ranging from rela-



Hitting hard: Issues of autonomy in decision-making and financial independence, add to their mental health burden. CITTY IMAGES

tionship concerns, separation and emotional dysregulation to parenting struggles, including child-rearing with emotional difficulties, special needs, or non-suicidal self-harm," said Dr. Harshida Bhanisal, a senior psychiatrist.

"Issues of autonomy in decision-making, financial struggles, including parenting, fertility, and hormonal concerns further add to their mental health burden," she said.



Accelerate Action for Gender Equality

# India's cotton imports shoot up as farmers battle low yields, prices

Indian farmers are urging the government to introduce measures to improve cotton productivity in the country, in the hopes of making local markets internationally competitive, amid the falling price of the produce in the global market

**M. Soundariya Preetha**  
COIMBATORE

**I**ncreasing import of raw and waste cotton in the last seven months has brought to fore the urgent need for measures to improve cotton productivity in India.

Cotton imports were to the tune of \$104 million in August 2024, \$134.2 million in September 2024, \$127.71 million in October, \$170.73 million in November, and \$142.89 million in December, 2024. In January this year, it stood at \$184.64 million.

Comparably, the imports were \$74.4 million in August 2023, \$39.91 million in September 2023, \$36.68 million in October 2023, \$30.61 million in No-

vember 2023, and \$29.47 million in December 2023. In January 2024, the imports were \$19.62 million.

Meanwhile, the Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) has procured close to 100 lakh bales of Indian cotton that has come into the market since the beginning of the new season on October 1, 2024. In the peak cotton arrival season in December 2024, the CCI bought almost 60% of the daily arrivals at the minimum support price (MSP). The price of the Shankar 6 variety of cotton on Saturday was ₹52,500 a quintal.

Jaipal, a cotton farmer in Telangana, said at the beginning of the season that farmers are not happy because yield is less. "International prices are weak

## Import woes

An increase in the import of cotton in the last two years has brought to fore the urgent need for measures to improve cotton productivity in India



and mills are able to buy from there," he said.

Kurbur Shanthakumar, president of Karnataka State Federation of Farmer Associations, said the cost of production per quintal is ₹9,000 and the MSP is ₹7,235. But, brokers were buying in the open market

*Cotton and raw cotton imports (in \$ million)*

Month	2023	2024
January	28.99	19.62
February	34.69	31.43
March	55.01	48.8
April	45.3	37.91
May	58.09	43.88
June	95.1	70.22
July	88.72	86.29
August	74.9	104.89
September	39.91	134.2
October	36.68	127.71



at only ₹5,000 to ₹5,500 per quintal.

The Union Budget announced in February has a Cotton Mission aimed at improving productivity.

For the Indian textile industry, international cotton prices are weak and with export demand look-

ing up for garments and home textiles, there is a need for the textile industry to be internationally competitive. Over 60% of garments exported are cotton-based. Extra Long Staple cotton can be imported duty free and exporters can import cotton without duty under Advance Authorisation. The mills seem to have imported cotton as international cotton prices were lower than Indian prices and the imports have not disturbed the local market, sources said.

"Cotton productivity in India is about 450 kg per hectare as against 1,800-2,000 kg/ha in Brazil. Indian yarn exports should increase," Pankaj Sharda, director, Indian Cotton Association, said.

- 
- **India's Cotton Imports Shoot Up as Farmers Battle Low Yields, Prices**
  - **India's cotton imports have significantly increased due to declining domestic yields and lower international prices.**
  - **Cotton imports in August 2024 reached \$104 million, rising to \$142.89 million in December 2024, and \$184.64 million in January 2025.**
- 

- **Farmers are facing difficulties as international cotton is cheaper than domestic produce, making local cotton uncompetitive.**
- **The Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) procured close to 100 lakh bales since October 2024, purchasing almost 60% of daily arrivals at the Minimum Support Price (MSP).**
- **The cost of production per quintal for farmers is ₹9,000, but MSP is only ₹7,235, forcing farmers to sell at ₹5,000-₹5,500 per quintal.**

**The Union Budget 2025 introduced a Cotton Mission to improve productivity.**

**Cotton productivity in India is only 450 kg per hectare, whereas in Brazil and China, it is between 1,800-2,000 kg per hectare.**

(भारत में कपास का आयात घरेलू उत्पादन में गिरावट और अंतरराष्ट्रीय कीमतों में कमी के कारण काफी बढ़ गया है।

अगस्त 2024 में कपास का आयात \$104 मिलियन था, जो दिसंबर 2024 में \$142.89 मिलियन और जनवरी 2025 में \$184.64 मिलियन तक बढ़ गया।

भारतीय कपास अंतरराष्ट्रीय बाजार में प्रतिस्पर्धी नहीं रह गया है, जिससे किसानों को नुकसान हो रहा है।

भारतीय कपास निगम (CCI) ने अक्टूबर 2024 से 100 लाख गांठें खरीदीं, जिसमें 60% न्यूनतम समर्थन मूल्य (MSP) पर खरीदी गई।



किसानों की उत्पादन लागत ₹9,000 प्रति क्विंटल है, जबकि MSP ₹7,235 ही है, जिससे उन्हें केवल ₹5,000-₹5,500 प्रति क्विंटल पर कपास बेचना पड़ रहा है।

केंद्रीय बजट 2025 में कपास उत्पादन सुधारने के लिए 'कॉटन मिशन' शुरू किया गया।

भारत में कपास उत्पादकता केवल 450 किलोग्राम प्रति हेक्टेयर है, जबकि ब्राजील और चीन में यह 1,800-2,000 किलोग्राम प्रति हेक्टेयर है।)

- **Economic Aspects (आर्थिक पहलू)**
- **India's cotton imports surged due to lower global prices, making domestic cotton uncompetitive.**
- **The high cost of production in India makes it difficult for farmers to compete with international cotton prices.**
- **Farmers selling below MSP suffer losses, impacting rural income and agricultural sustainability.**
- **If productivity is improved through the 'Cotton Mission,' India could reduce dependency on imports and enhance textile exports.**

# North Korea unveils nuclear-powered submarine in a first

**Associated Press**

SEOUL

North Korea unveiled for the first time a nuclear-powered submarine under construction, a weapons system that can pose a major security threat to South Korea and the U.S.

State media released photos showing what it called “a nuclear-powered strategic guided missile submarine,” as it reported leader Kim Jong-un’s visits to major shipyards where warships are built.

The naval vessel appears to be a 6,000-tonne-class or 7,000-tonne-class one which can carry about 10 missiles, said Moon Keun-sik, a South Korean submarine expert who teaches at Seoul’s Hanyang University. He said the use of the term “the strategic guided missiles” meant it would carry nuclear-capable weapons.

“It would be absolutely threatening to us and the U.S.,” Mr. Moon said.

A nuclear-powered submarine was among a long wishlist of sophisticated weaponry that Mr. Kim vowed to introduce during a major political conference in 2021 to cope with what he called escalating

U.S.-led military threats.

Other weapons were solid-fuelled intercontinental ballistic missiles, hypersonic weapons, spy satellites and multi-warhead missiles. North Korea has since performed a run of testing activities to acquire them.


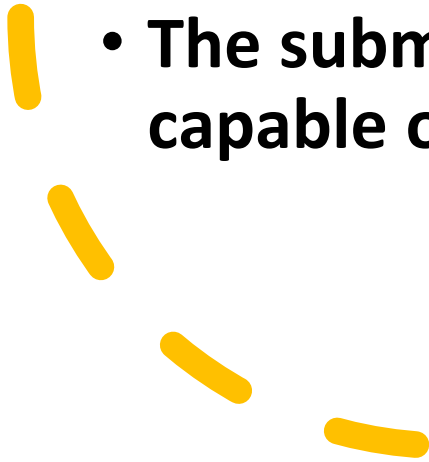
## **Worrying development**


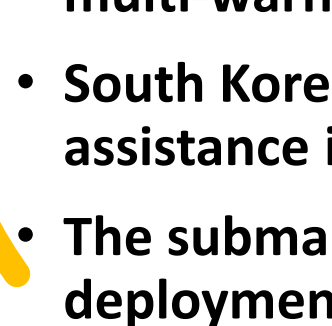
North Korea obtaining a greater ability to fire missiles from underwater is a worrying development because it’s difficult for its rivals to detect such launches in advance.

Questions about how North Korea, a heavily sanctioned and impoverished country, could get resources and technology to build nuclear-powered submarines have surfaced.

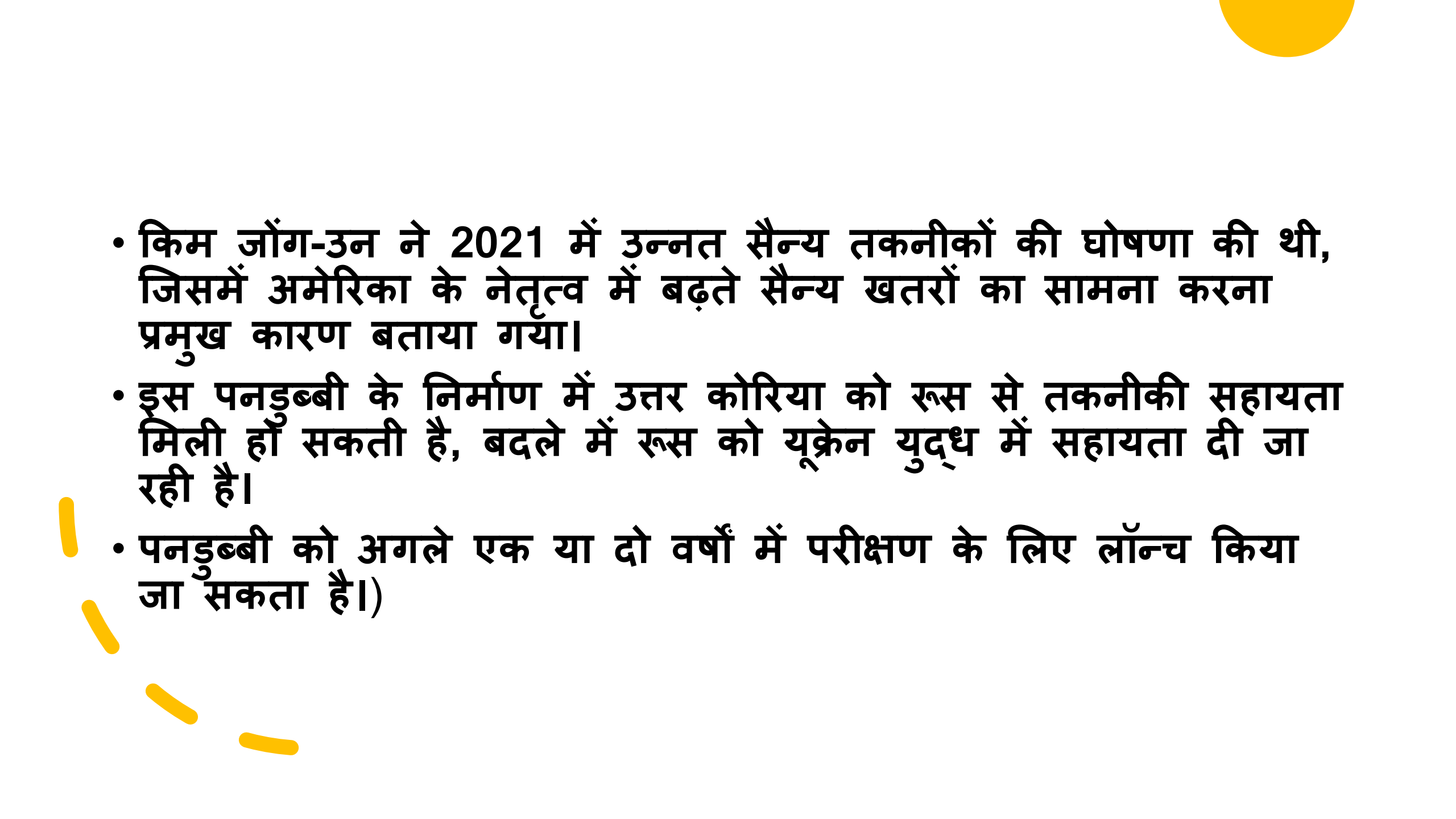
Mr. Moon, the submarine expert, said North Korea may have received Russian technological assistance to build a nuclear reactor to be used in the submarine in return for supplying conventional weapons and troops to support Russia’s war efforts against Ukraine.



He also said North Korea could launch the submarine in one or two years to test its capability before its actual deployment.

- 
- **North Korea Unveils Nuclear-Powered Submarine in a First**
  - **North Korea has unveiled its first nuclear-powered submarine under construction, a significant military advancement.**
  - **State media released images of the submarine, calling it a “nuclear-powered strategic guided missile submarine.”**
  - **The submarine is estimated to be a 6,000-7,000 tonne class vessel, capable of carrying around 10 missiles.**
- 


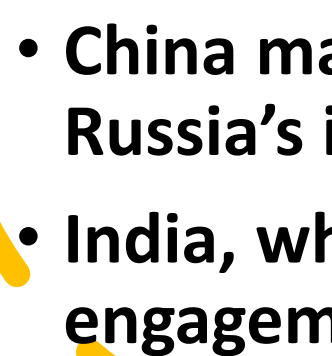
- 
- **Military experts believe the submarine will be equipped with nuclear-capable weapons.**
  - **Kim Jong-un announced plans for sophisticated military upgrades in 2021, citing U.S.-led military threats.**
  - **The submarine is part of North Korea's broader military advancements, including intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), hypersonic weapons, spy satellites, and multi-warhead missiles.**
  - **South Korean experts suggest North Korea may have received Russian technological assistance in exchange for weapons and troops to support Russia's war in Ukraine.**
  - **The submarine may be ready for testing within one or two years before full deployment.**
- 

- (उत्तर कोरिया ने अपनी पहली परमाणु-संचालित पनडुब्बी का अनावरण किया, जो एक महत्वपूर्ण सैन्य प्रगति मानी जा रही है।
- राज्य मीडिया ने इस पनडुब्बी की तस्वीरें जारी कीं और इसे "परमाणु-संचालित रणनीतिक निर्देशित मिसाइल पनडुब्बी" कहा।
- पनडुब्बी का वजन 6,000-7,000 टन हो सकता है और इसमें लगभग 10<sup>3</sup> मिसाइलें ले जाने की क्षमता हो सकती है।
- विशेषज्ञों का मानना है कि इस पनडुब्बी में परमाणु-सक्षम हथियार तैनात किए जाएंगे।

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- किम जोंग-उन ने 2021 में उन्नत सैन्य तकनीकों की घोषणा की थी, जिसमें अमेरिका के नेतृत्व में बढ़ते सैन्य खतरों का सामना करना प्रमुख कारण बताया गया।
  - इस पनडुब्बी के निर्माण में उत्तर कोरिया को रूस से तकनीकी सहायता मिली हो सकती है, बदले में रूस को यूक्रेन युद्ध में सहायता दी जा रही है।
  - पनडुब्बी को अगले एक या दो वर्षों में परीक्षण के लिए लॉन्च किया जा सकता है।)

- 
- **Social Aspects (सामाजिक पहलू)**
  - **North Korea remains a highly secretive and militarized state, and this military advancement may increase domestic propaganda efforts.**
  - **The country's resources are heavily diverted towards military projects, while its citizens face economic hardships and food shortages.**
  - **The development may trigger nationalist sentiments among North Korean citizens, consolidating support for Kim Jong-un's regime.**
- 



- 
- **Geopolitical Aspects (भू-राजनीतिक पहलू)**
  - **The development of a nuclear-powered submarine alters the strategic balance in the Indo-Pacific region.**
  - **The U.S. and its allies will likely increase military presence in the region to counter North Korea's growing capabilities.**
  - **China may remain neutral or tacitly support North Korea, while Russia's involvement is under scrutiny.**
  - **India, which maintains a neutral stance, may focus on diplomatic engagements to prevent escalation in the region.**
- 

Funny

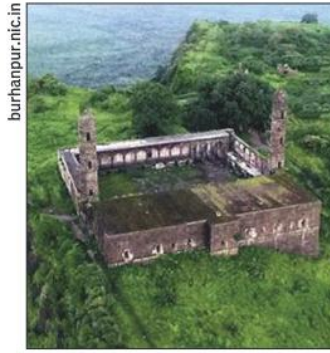
# Sambhaji film drives gold rush near fort in MP

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Indore:** Rumours of buried treasure, allegedly fuelled by the recent movie 'Chhava', have triggered a digging frenzy around the famed Asirgarh Fort in MP's Burhanpur, which has no dearth of legends associated with it.

Hundreds of villagers, armed with torchlights and some even carrying metal detectors, are digging up the fields around the fort in the hope of finding Mughal-era gold. With chaos growing, police and administration cordoned off the area Saturday and restricted entry of outsiders. The administration has sought a report on the "possibility of treasure" in the area.

Officials were alerted when videos of diggings swirled around on social media. "Unidentified men reportedly dug up a field at night a few days ago in search of the coins. The administration took cognisance of the matter after a video went viral," said collector Harsh Singh. Napanagar subdivisional magistrate Bhagirath Wakhla inspected the site, an agricultural field, and found many pits dug up by the trea-



With rumours of buried treasure spreading, hundreds of villagers are digging up the fields around Asirgarh Fort in Burhanpur in the hope of finding Mughal-era gold

sure hunters, Singh added.

Asirgarh Fort dates back to 15th century, and was the site of many battles that shaped India's history. It has long been associated with legends of buried treasure.

Nimbola police have deployed a team to secure the field. Harun Seth, the farm owner, told the SDM that the illegal excavation has made farming difficult. The SDM said they will have the archaeological department examine the site and stressed that any archaeological artefact found will be handed over to the administration.

Domestic Production Manufacturing semiconductor chips locally India aims at reducing its import dependence



**CIVILIAN DEATHS**  
JKK L-G orders probe into killings in Kathua  
NEWS » PAGE 4



**ONGOING OPERATION**  
One body recovered from tunnel in Telangana  
STATES » PAGE 3



**PASSENGER'S FLIGHT**  
DCA seeks report from Air India  
NEWS » PAGE 4



**DOMESTIC PRODUCTION**  
Manufacturing semiconductor chips locally  
India aims at reducing its import dependence  
OPINION » PAGE 9



**STAYING PUT**  
No plans to retire, says skipper Rohit  
SPORT » PAGE 16

**INSIDE**



**U.S. Hindu temple vandalised with anti-India graffiti**

**NEW YORK**  
A prominent Hindu temple in the U.S. was defaced with anti-India graffiti by unknown individuals, prompting a strong condemnation from India and a demand for "stringent action" against those involved in the incident. » PAGE 5

**Cong. calls for comprehensive changes to GST**

**NEW DELHI**  
A day after Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced that Goods and Services Tax (GST) rates would be further rationalised, the Congress on Sunday argued for "more comprehensive changes" to the indirect tax regime. » PAGE 5

**'Over 1,000 killed in communal clashes in Syria'**

**CARROVIMMAN**  
Syrian leader Muhammad al-Jolani (Ahmed Sharraf) called for peace on Sunday after hundreds were killed in the worst communal violence since the fall of Bashar al-Assad. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said more than 1,000 people had been killed in the two days of fighting. » PAGE 14

**Israeli jets bomb Gaza ahead of ceasefire talks**

**GAZA CITY**  
Israel carried out an airstrike on militants in northern Gaza, further straining the fragile ceasefire. The strike comes ahead of fresh talks in Doha on Monday about the future of the truce with Hamas. Despite the truce's initial phase ending a week ago, both sides have refrained from returning to full-scale war. » PAGE 14

# Protests continue in Manipur, highways blocked

Kangpokpi and Churachandpur districts affected as Kuki-Zo people protest against free movement plan on National Highways no. 2 and 37; these highways are vital for supply of essentials and other commodities; Union Finance Minister will table State Budget today; roads were blocked at multiple points with the help of wooden logs and huge rocks

**Vilalta Singh**  
KANGPOKPI

**W**omen protesters blocked National Highway no. 2 in Kangpokpi district of Manipur on Sunday, a day after the area witnessed clashes between security forces and the Kuki-Zo people that left one person dead. A shutdown was called by civil society groups in all Kuki-Zo areas. The developments are being closely watched with Union Home Minister Amit Shah scheduled to table the proclamation of President's Rule in Manipur in Parliament on Monday, when the House reconvenes for the second day of the Budget Session. Union Finance Minister Nirmala

Sitharaman will place Manipur's Budget.

Violence was reported for the first time since the February 13 imposition of President's Rule on Saturday over the enforcement of free movement of all vehicles through National Highways no. 2 and 37. The highways are critical for supply of essentials and other commodities. Hal Hatchingthem Kipgen, a fourth-year college student who was leading the protests at Kangpokpi bazaar on Sunday, accused the security forces of attacking the protesters. "A member of the security force told us that we are not Indians. We are a part of India and that is why we are fighting for a separate administration. We have blocked the road because we lost one brother yesterday," said Mr. Kipgen.

The anti-riot Rapid Action Force (RAF) and the



**Hurdles remain:** Protesters block NH-2 in Kangpokpi of Manipur a day after violence was reported from the area. VILALTA SINGH

Central Reserve Police Force marched on the violence-hit stretch at regular intervals. The roads were blocked at multiple points with the help of wooden logs and huge rocks.

Two police vehicles that were set on fire during the protests remained on the highway to block the movement of heavy vehicles. "Since the violence be-

gan (in May 2023), we never set on fire during the protests. This is the first time that the RAF was deployed to block the movement of all vehicles. It

is a majoritarian idea," said Nengchhe Kimmeng, 54, a housewife.

Another resident Angam Leiton, 70, whose house in Imphal was torched during the May 2023 violence said that people from the hill district were not going to visit the valley areas in the future and the enforced normalcy was not acceptable.

"President's Rule should have been imposed much earlier. So many lives were lost, my house in Imphal was burnt down. The meniscus will also not come the movement of State Transport buses on the highways then?" asked Mr. Leiton.

A day after a protestor identified as Lalpoutang Singu was killed, a post-mortem was conducted and his body was handed over to the family. After Home Minister

Amit Shah's direction to enforce free movement on highways, the Manipur administration ran Manipur State Transport (MST) buses on two routes on Saturday - Imphal-Kangpokpi-Serapali and Bishnupur-Churachandpur-Imphal passing through Meitei, Kuki-Zo and Naga areas.

Kuki-Zo protesters clashed with security forces at multiple points in Kangpokpi as an "empty" MST bus that originated from Imphal reached the area. The bus could not cross Kangpokpi and has been kept at an undisclosed location.

The other MST bus which plied on the Bishnupur-Churachandpur-Imphal route under security cover could complete the journey without any violence.

The buses are scheduled to ply again on Monday.

# Gutsy India edges past New Zealand to claim ICC Champions Trophy



**Mission accomplished:** K.L. Rahul and Ravindra Jadeja celebrate after securing India's triumph in Dubai on Sunday. AFP

**S. Dipak Ragan**  
DUBAI

They came, they stayed, they conquered. India entered the ICC Champions Trophy as the firm favourite and in a nail-biting final, the Men in Blue held their nerve to edge past New Zealand by four wickets with an over to spare at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium on Sunday.

Chasing a target of 252, skipper Rohit Sharma led from the front with a sparkling 76 to get his side's favourite and in a nail-biting final, the Men in Blue held their nerve to edge past New Zealand by four wickets with an over to spare at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium on Sunday.

Two more tigers  
Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav could

The spunky Kiwis, though, staged a remarkable comeback through their spinners, keeping the batsmen off-balance and leading to a narrow defeat for India. The atmosphere inside the stadium, bathed in a sea of blue, was tense as India neared the finish line. Every run was vociferously

cheered while every dismissal was met with deadly silence. However, middle-order batters Shreyas Iyer and K.L. Rahul showed composure in the face of intense pressure to fetch India a record third Champions Trophy.

**MORE REPORTS ON » PAGE 16**

cheered while every dismissal was met with deadly silence. However, middle-order batters Shreyas Iyer and K.L. Rahul showed composure in the face of intense pressure to fetch India a record third Champions Trophy.

Modi ji, India continues to make great strides in environmental protection and wildlife conservation. I congratulate all wildlife lovers and conservationists. The development is a testament to the relentless efforts of our forest officials who are selflessly working towards the cause," the Union Minister said in his post. Applauding the move, Mr. Modi said that India was blessed with wildlife diversity and a culture that celebrates wildlife. We will always be at the forefront of protecting animals and contributing to a sustainable planet. "Heartfelt thanks to the Hon'ble Prime Minister for your visionary leadership in designating Madhav National Park as India's 58th and MP's 9th Tiger Reserve and a culture that celebrates wildlife. We will always be at the forefront of protecting animals and contributing to a sustainable planet. "He is stable and under observation," an AIIMS source said.

# Delimitation: DMK MPs, Ministers to visit seven States to muster support



Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin with DMK MPs T.R. Baalu, Kanimozhi and others at a meeting in Chennai on Sunday. ANI

**B. Kolappan**  
CHENNAI

As part of its ongoing efforts to build a momentum against a likely population-based delimitation exercise, the ruling DMK in Tamil Nadu has decided to send Ministers and MPs to seven States to muster support. In other political parties for its efforts.

**MORE REPORTS ON » PAGE 16**

Chief Minister M.K. Stalin had written to the Chief Ministers of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Telangana, Odisha, West Bengal, and Punjab and leaders of political parties that delimitation based on the census may hurt these States in safeguarding their representation in the Lok Sabha.

On Sunday, a meeting of party MPs chaired by Mr. Stalin decided to work closely not only with the MPs of the INDIA bloc but

also with all those who are committed to safeguarding democracy, to protect the rights of States in the delimitation exercise, which is likely to begin next year. The MPs will highlight the issue in the Parliament session beginning Monday. Kanimozhi, Lok Sabha Minister, will coordinate the efforts.

A resolution adopted in the meeting aligned with the BJP-led Union government, which was imposing

a three-language formula to introduce Hindi in school education while denying Tamil Nadu its share in allocation of funds, was not giving a proper answer to the question on delimitation. Chief Minister M.K. Stalin has taken up the issue as he has realised the problems faced by the southern States. We will stand by the Chief Minister in his efforts to protect the number of Lok Sabha seats in Tamil Nadu," it said.

# Madhav National Park becomes India's 58th Tiger Reserve

**The Hindu Bureau**  
BHOPAL

The Centre declared the Madhav National Park in Madhya Pradesh as the country's 58th tiger reserve on Sunday, with Union Environment Minister Bhupendra Yadav making the announcement. The newly added Tiger Reserve is also the ninth from the State to get the recognition. Mr. Yadav posted on X, "58th roar and counting. Thrilled to announce that the country has added the 58th Tiger Reserve to its tally with the latest entrant

being Madhya Pradesh's Madhav Tiger Reserve. This is Madhya Pradesh's 9th Tiger Reserve. Located in Shivpuri district in the Chambal region of Madhya Pradesh, the reserve has a population of five tigers at present, including two cubs born recently. Three tigers, including two females, were introduced to the Madhav National Park in 2023 as part of the tiger reintroduction project in the State. Two more tigers Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav could

soon release two more tigers to the reserve. "With historic emphasis

laid on restoring the ecological diversity on planet Earth by PM Shri Narendra

Modi ji, India continues to make great strides in environmental protection and wildlife conservation. I congratulate all wildlife lovers and conservationists. The development is a testament to the relentless efforts of our forest officials who are selflessly working towards the cause," the Union Minister said in his post. Applauding the move, Mr. Modi said that India was blessed with wildlife diversity and a culture that celebrates wildlife. We will always be at the forefront of protecting animals and contributing to a sustainable planet. "He is stable and under observation," an AIIMS source said.

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# Dhankhar 'stable' at AIIMS after chest pain

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar has been admitted to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences here after he complained of chest pain and dizziness on Sunday morning. "He is stable and under observation," an AIIMS source said. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, after visiting Mr. Dhankhar, said he is praying for the "good health and speedy recovery" of the Vice-President. Mr. Dhankhar has been admitted to the critical care unit under the care of Rajiv Narang, Head of the Department of Cardiology.



Jagdeep Dhankhar

# Madhav National Park becomes India's 58th Tiger Reserve

## The Hindu Bureau

BHOPAL

The Centre declared the Madhav National Park in Madhya Pradesh as the country's 58th tiger reserve on Sunday, with Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav making the announcement. The newly added Tiger Reserve is also the ninth from the State to get the recognition.

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### **Two more tigers**

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav could



**Conservation counts:** The reserve has five tigers at present, including two cubs that were born recently. ANI

soon release two more tigers into the reserve.

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Modi ji, India continues to make great strides in environmental protection and wildlife conservation. I congratulate all wildlife lovers and conservationists. The development is a testament to the relentless efforts of our forest officials who are selflessly working towards the cause," the Union Minister said in his post.

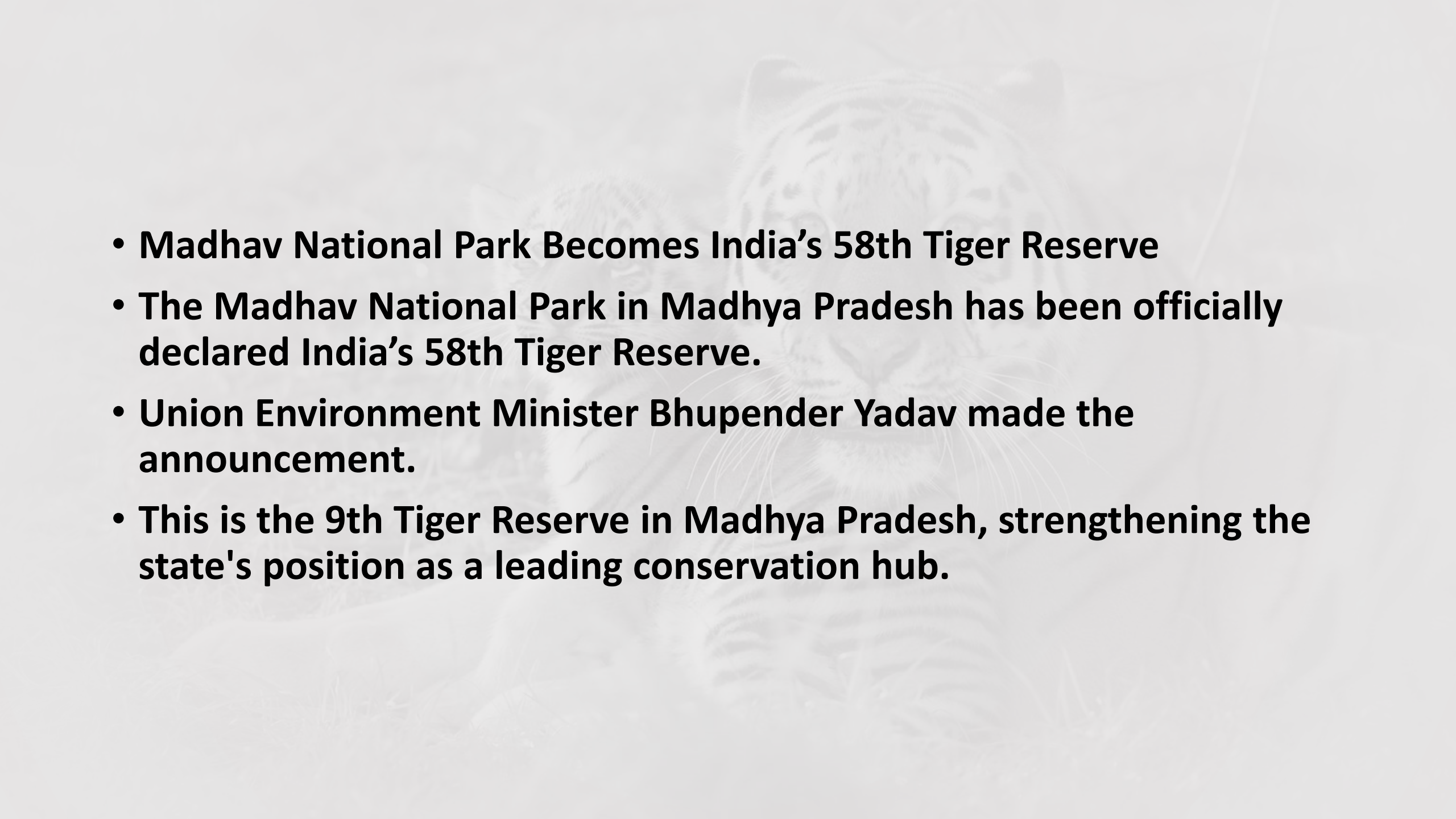
Applauding the move, Mr. Modi said that India was blessed with wildlife diversity and a culture that celebrated wildlife.

"Amazing news for wildlife lovers! India is blessed with wildlife diversity and

a culture that celebrates wildlife. We will always be at the forefront of protecting animals and contributing to a sustainable planet," he said on social media platform X.

The Chief Minister also thanked the Prime Minister for the development.

"Heartfelt thanks to the Hon'ble Prime Minister for your visionary leadership in designating Madhav National Park as India's 58th and MP's 9th Tiger Reserve! Madhya Pradesh is proud to lead wildlife conservation and protect our biodiversity," the Union Minister wrote.

- 
- **Madhav National Park Becomes India's 58th Tiger Reserve**
  - **The Madhav National Park in Madhya Pradesh has been officially declared India's 58th Tiger Reserve.**
  - **Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav made the announcement.**
  - **This is the 9th Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh, strengthening the state's position as a leading conservation hub.**

Located in Shivpuri district, in the Chambal region of Madhya Pradesh, the reserve currently has five tigers, including two cubs.

Three tigers, including two females, were introduced into the park in 2023 as part of the state's tiger reintroduction project.

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav announced plans to release two more tigers into the reserve.

**The initiative is seen as part of India's ongoing efforts toward wildlife conservation and ecological diversity.**

**PM Narendra Modi praised the move, stating that India continues to make great strides in environmental protection.**

**Madhya Pradesh is now recognized as a leader in biodiversity conservation.**

- (माधव राष्ट्रीय उद्यान को भारत का 58वां टाइगर रिजर्व घोषित किया गया।
- केंद्रीय पर्यावरण मंत्री भूपेंद्र यादव ने इसकी आधिकारिक घोषणा की।
- यह मध्य प्रदेश का 9वां टाइगर रिजर्व है, जिससे यह राज्य वन्यजीव संरक्षण में अग्रणी बन गया है।
- शिवपुरी जिले के चंबल क्षेत्र में स्थित इस रिजर्व में वर्तमान में पाँच बाघ हैं, जिनमें दो शावक शामिल हैं।
- 2023 में टाइगर पुनर्स्थापना परियोजना के तहत तीन बाघ, जिनमें दो मादाएँ शामिल थीं, इस पार्क में छोड़े गए।



# TIGER

Royal Bengal Tiger (*Panthera Tigris*) is the National animal of India.

## Subspecies of Tiger

- \* The continental (*Panthera tigris tigris*)
- \* The Sunda (*Panthera tigris sondaica*)

## Habitat

Tropical rainforests, evergreen forests, temperate forests, mangrove swamps, grasslands, and savannas



## Countries Where Tiger Population Is Found

- » Found only in **13 Tiger Range countries**- India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Russia, China, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam
- ◆ As per the latest report by IUCN, tiger has gone extinct in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam

## Protection Status

- » **IUCN Red List:** Endangered
- » **CITES:** Appendix I

## Threats

- » Habitat loss
- » Poaching and illegal trade
- » Human-Wildlife conflict

# Tiger population soars

An analysis by the Wildlife Institute of India puts the average number of tigers in India at 3,682. A look at how the tiger population has increased over the years



# PROJECT TIGER



## Funding

Project Tiger operates as a centrally Sponsored Scheme under the Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change (MoEFCC).



## Established

Its execution falls under the responsibility of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), established as a statutory body in 2005 under the Wildlife Protection Act (WPA) of 1972.

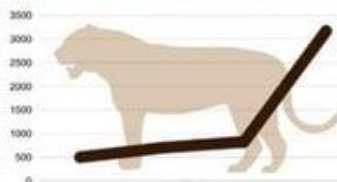


## Controlled by

NTCA is overseen by the Union Minister of MoEFCC (serving as Chairperson), the Minister of State in the MoEFCC (acting as Vice-Chairperson), 3 Members of Parliament, and the Secretary of MoEFCC.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### Tiger Population



The tiger population in India has surged from 827 in the 1970s to approximately 3167 by 2022, marking a growth of over 30% in the last eight years.

### Tiger Reserves in India



Initially covering 9 tiger reserves across 18,278 sq km in 9 states during the 1970s, there are now 55 tiger reserves spanning over 75,000 sq km in 18 states.

## IBCA

### International Big Cat Alliance:

Initiated by India, the IBCA aims at conserving seven major big cat species, including Tiger, Lion, Leopard, Snow Leopard, Cheetah, Jaguar, and Puma.



### Regarding Tigers (Panthera Tigris):

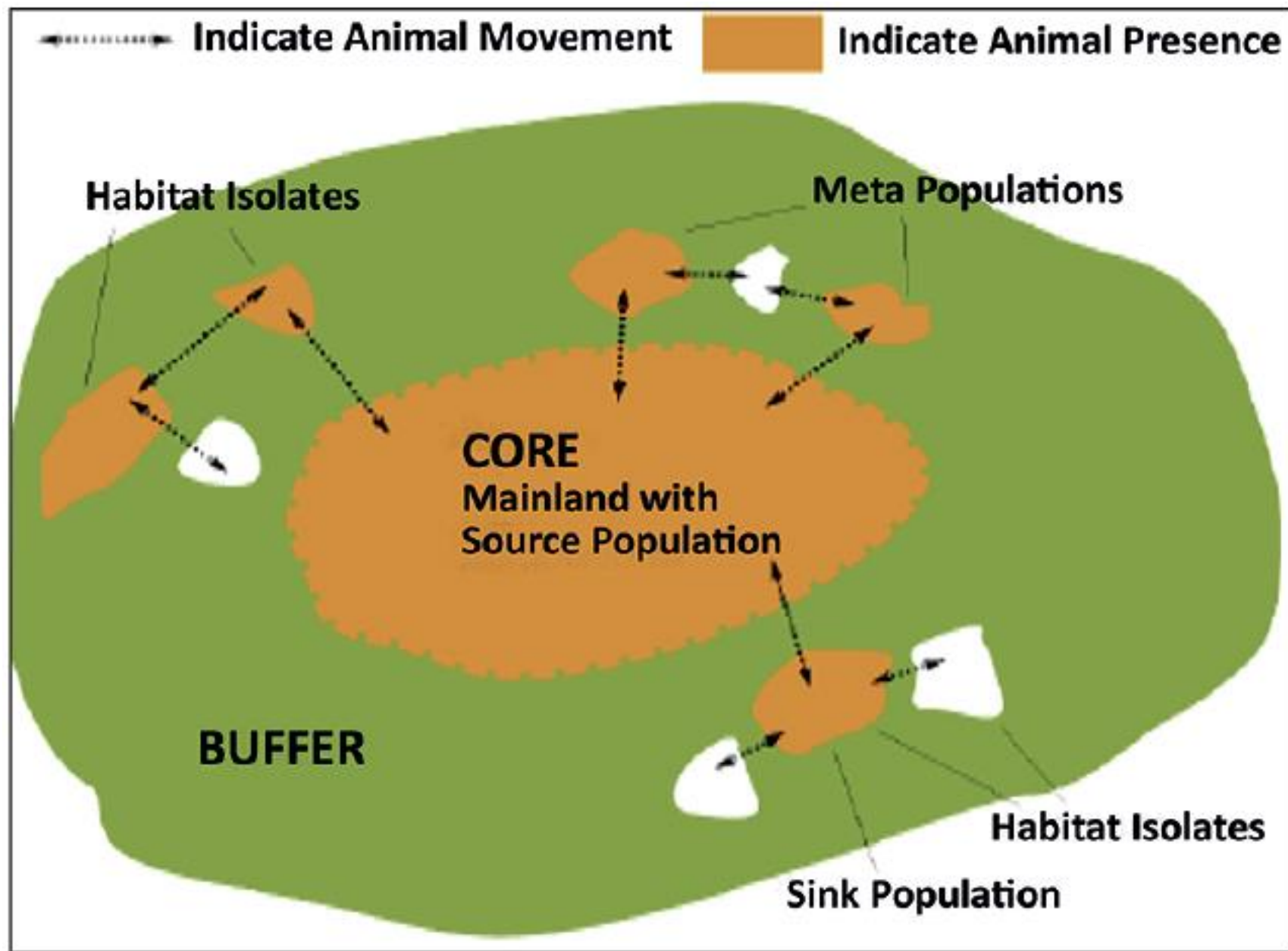
- IUCN Red List status: Endangered
- Wildlife Protection Act, 1972: Listed under Schedule 1
- CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species): Listed under Appendix I

## Growth Rate in Tiger Population:

- The first tiger census, in **1972**, used the unreliable pug-mark method to count **1,827** tigers.
- As of **2022**, the tiger population is estimated at **3,167-3,925**, showcasing a growth rate of **6.1%** per year.
- India is now home to **three-quarters** of the **world's tigers**.

## Tiger Reserve:

- In 1973, **Project Tiger** began with **nine reserves** covering **9,115 sq. km**. By **2018**, it had grown to **58 reserves** in different states.





Bor tiger reserve in Maharashtra is the smallest tiger reserve in India with size of 138 sq km.

Nagarjunsagar-Srisaïlam Tiger Reserve (NSTR) with size of 3,728 km<sup>2</sup>. In state of Andhra Pradesh is the Largest Tiger reserve in India.

International Tiger Day Since 2010, the 29th of July is celebrated as Global Tiger Day.

At the Saint Petersburg Tiger Summit in Russia in 2010, the first International Tiger Day was established.



- 
- **Consider the following protected areas: (2012)**



1. Bandipur

2. Bhitarkanika

3. Manas

4. Sunderbans

- 
- **Which of the above are declared Tiger Reserves?**

- 
- (a) 1 and 2 only
  - (b) 1, 3 and 4 only
  - (c) 2, 3 and 4 only
  - (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4
- 

# Gutsy India edges past New Zealand to claim ICC Champions Trophy



**Mission accomplished:** K.L. Rahul and Ravindra Jadeja celebrate after securing India's triumph in Dubai on Sunday. AFP

## **S. Dipak Ragav**

DUBAI

They came, they stayed, they conquered!

India entered the ICC Champions Trophy as firm favourite and in a nail-biting final, the Men in Blue held their nerve to edge past New Zealand by four wickets with an over to

spare at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium on Sunday.

Chasing a target of 252, skipper Rohit Sharma led from the front with a sparkling 76 to get his side off to a blazing start. Rohit and his deputy Shubman Gill stitched a 105-run opening partnership to put India in cruise control.

The spunky Kiwis, though, staged a remarkable comeback through their spinners, chipping away with wickets at regular intervals and keeping the contest alive.

The atmosphere inside the stadium, bathed in a sea of blue, was tense as India neared the finish line. Every run was vociferously

cheered while every dismissal was met with deadly silence. However, middle-order batters Shreyas Iyer and K.L. Rahul showed composure in the face of intense pressure to fetch India a record third Champions Trophy.

**MORE REPORTS ON**

» PAGE 16

Magnificent  
seven

### INDIA'S ICC TITLES






<b>1983</b>	ODI World Cup
<b>2002</b>	Champions Trophy (joint winner)
<b>2007</b>	World T20
<b>2011</b>	ODI World Cup
<b>2013</b>	Champions Trophy
<b>2024</b>	T20 World Cup
<b>2025</b>	Champions Trophy

## ICC Men's Champions Trophy

# CHAMPIONS Trophy

<b>Administrator</b>	International Cricket Council
<b>Format</b>	One-Day International
<b>First edition</b>	1998 Bangladesh
<b>Latest edition</b>	2025 Pakistan
<b>Next edition</b>	2029 India
<b>Tournament format</b>	Group stage, round-robin and knockout
<b>Current champion</b>	 <a href="#">India</a> (3rd title)
<b>Most successful</b>	 <a href="#">India</a> (3 titles)
<b>Most runs</b>	 <a href="#">Chris Gayle</a> (791) <sup>[1]</sup>
<b>Most wickets</b>	 <a href="#">Kyle Mills</a> (28) <sup>[2]</sup>

## Men's Champions Trophy winners

Year	Champions
1998	 South Africa
2000	 New Zealand
2002	 India &  Sri Lanka
2004	 West Indies
2006	 Australia
2009	 Australia (2)
2013	 India (2)
2017	 Pakistan
2025	 India (3)

# From capacity addition to transmission control, the sector is getting ready to meet increasing demand

## How India is powering up for a 270-GW summer

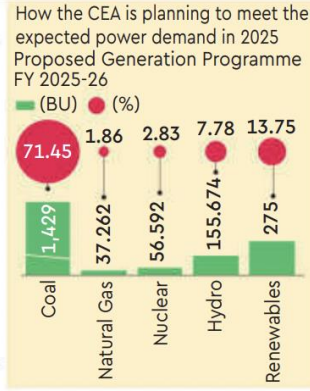
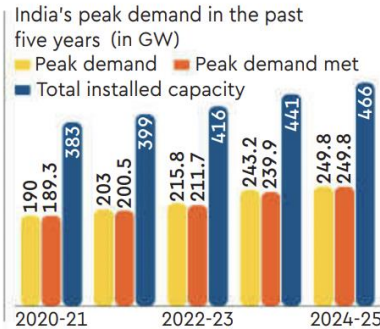
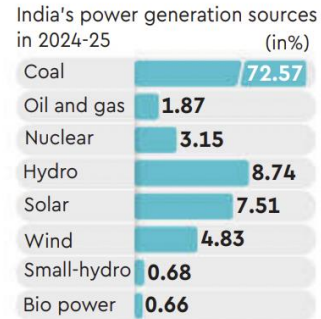
**GARIMA SADHWANI**  
New Delhi, March 9

**THE YEAR 2024** was the hottest on record, with global average temperatures 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. As India braces for another heatwave, the power sector is preparing to meet record-high electricity demand. Last year, the country handled an unprecedented peak demand of over 250 gigawatts (GW)—far exceeding expectations. This year, the peak power demand is projected to hit 270 GW, according to Central Electricity Authority (CEA) chairperson Ghanshyam Prasad told *FE*.

While India's power demand has been growing at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 6%, it is now expected to accelerate to 7% annually, reaching 446 GW by 2030, driven by rising economic activity and the emergence of new industries.

In response to queries from *FE*, the CEA's office stated that the ongoing power projects are being actively monitored to ensure timely capacity additions. "A robust national grid has

### TO BEAT THE HEAT



Source: India Climate Energy Dashboard, NITI Aayog, Office of the member (grid operation and distribution), CEA, advised by the chairperson

been established to facilitate the transfer of power from power-surplus regions to power-deficit regions. The inter-regional transmission capacity has increased from 75,050 MW in 2016-17 to 1,18,740 MW as of December 2024. The capacity of the national grid is being continuously expanded in line with electricity generation and demand growth," an official said.

Currently, 71% of India's electricity is generated from coal, 2% from natural gas, 3% from nuclear energy, 8% from hydro, and 14% from renewable sources. Given the unexpectedly high demand, India is increasing coal-based capacity in the medium term, delaying the anticipated peak in fossil fuel dependency.

While renewable energy capacities are being created at a relatively

brisk pace, the ability of the sector to meet peak demand is constrained by the intermittent nature of such energy. Developing cost-effective energy storage solutions is crucial for India to balance its growing electricity needs while reducing the carbon intensity of its economy.

Private power companies are also working to enhance grid resilience. Tata Power-Delhi Distri-

bution (DDL) has implemented extensive infrastructure maintenance and upgrades to ensure a reliable power supply this summer. Its spokesperson told *FE*: "Key measures include commissioning new and upgrading existing distribution transformers, conducting thermo-scanning and physical audits of feeder lines, replacing faulty units, and performing preventive maintenance of grid switchgear to minimise outages and disruptions." The company also emphasised its commitment to renewable energy, stating that a significant portion of its power supply will come from renewable energy sources.

Vaishali Nigam Sinha, co-founder and chair-sustainability at ReNew, believes that rising electricity consumption is "testing the resilience of our grid like never before." She added, "While capacity additions have helped, we must accelerate the deployment of renewables, enhance storage solutions, and modernize the grid to meet this challenge. ReNew is ramping up its efforts, targeting 20 GW of operational capacity by 2027-

28, reinforcing its commitment to a sustainable energy future."

On June 19, 2024, Delhi recorded its highest-ever electricity demand at 8,656 MW. A Tata Power-DDL spokesperson told *FE*, "In Tata Power-DDL's area of operations, the peak demand reached 2,481 MW during the same period in 2024. We anticipate this summer's peak demand to reach 2,562 MW." The company has secured power supply arrangements of up to 2,850 MW through long-, medium-, and short-term contracts, along with contingency planning to prevent shortages.

However, BSES Rajdhani Power (BRPL), a joint venture between Reliance and the Delhi government, has projected a 1,900 MW shortfall in June 2025, according to a petition submitted to the Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission.


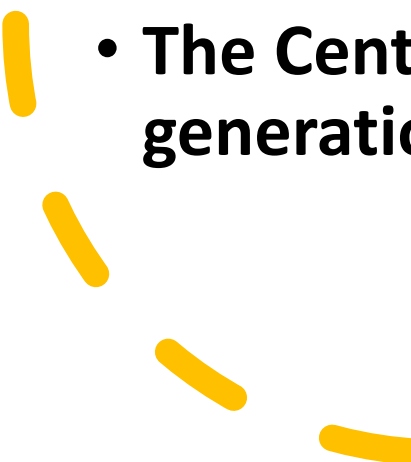
Disha Aggarwal, senior program lead at the Council on Energy, Environment, and Water (CEEW), explained: "This is about 21% of Delhi's expected peak demand. To fill this gap, BRPL is making efforts to buy costlier power through short-

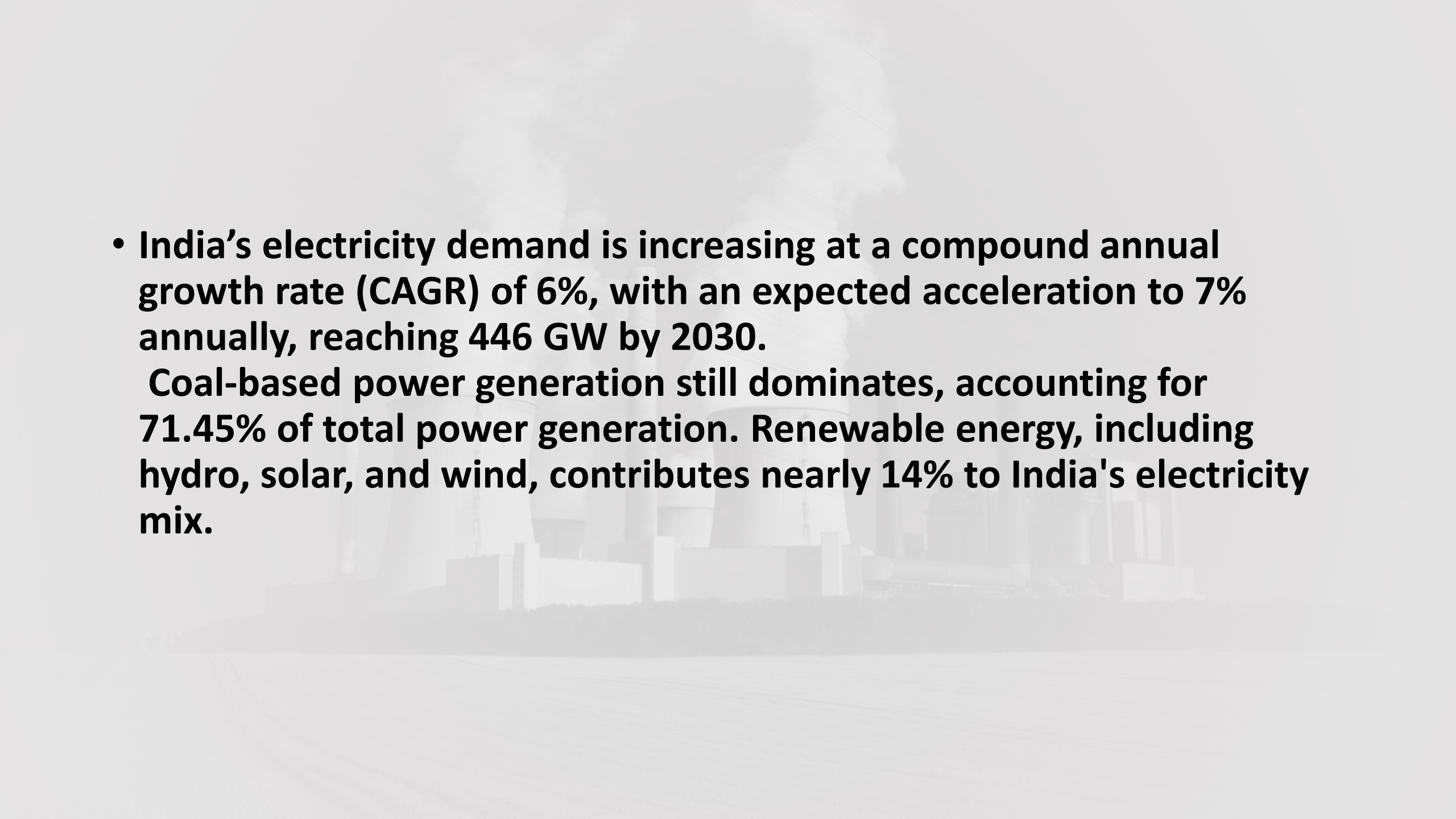
term avenues. For many discoms, meeting such surges through affordable options and existing network capacity is challenging, resulting in power outages."

With rising temperatures and increasing electricity demand, what lies ahead for India's power sector?

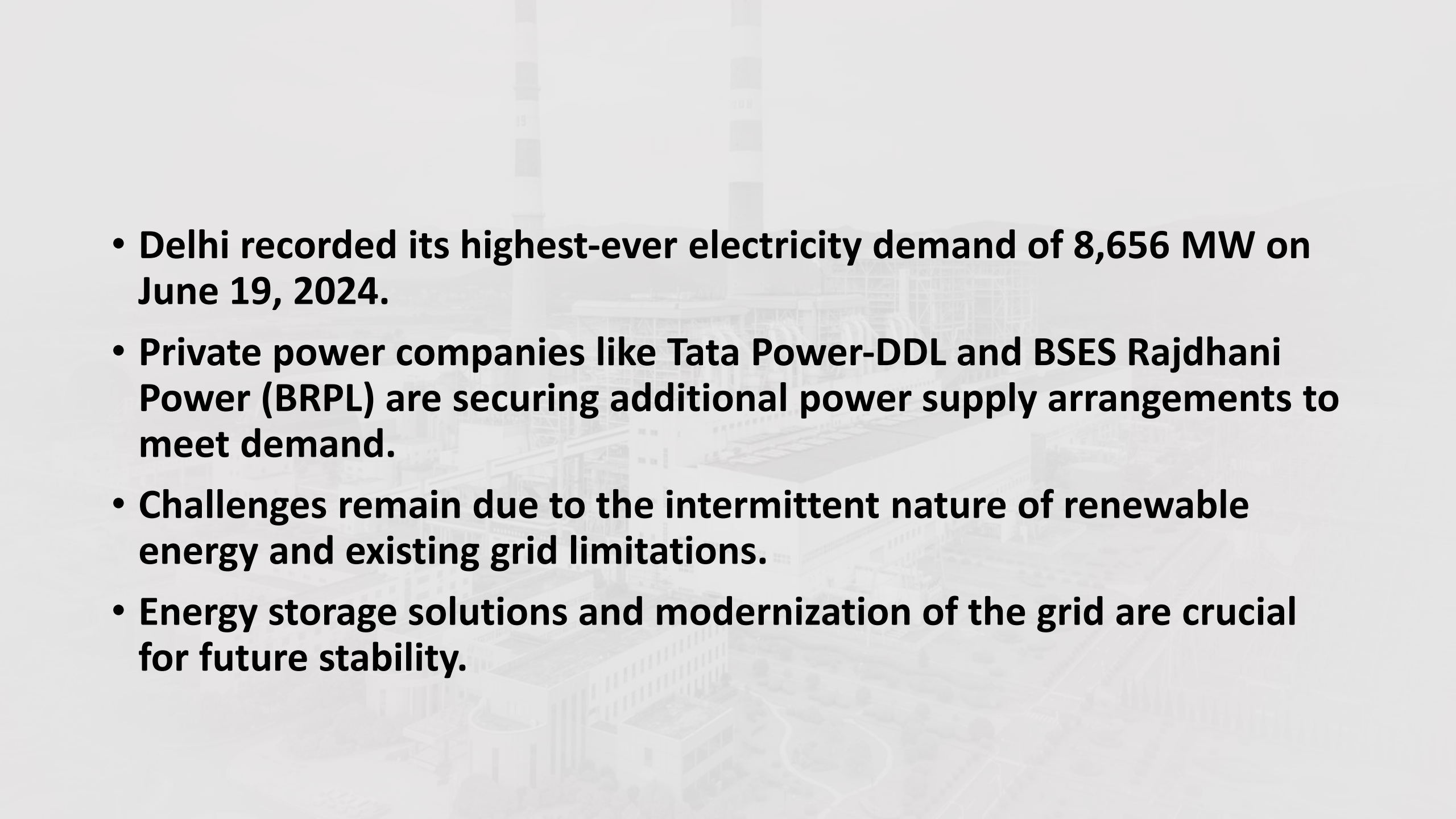
Aggarwal of CEEW said: "India must accelerate the deployment of renewable energy and storage capacities, and enable this power to be available for sale on the power exchanges. Our research finds that deploying just one-third of the total solar rooftop technical potential could support the entire electricity demand of India's residential sector," adding, "Simultaneously, distribution companies must equip themselves to conduct robust demand-supply planning to secure contracts with renewable energy projects. Further, existing generation capacity must be utilised well."

This becomes even more important since indicators suggest that 2025 "could also see extreme heat events", said Vishwas Chitale, senior programme lead at CEEW.

- 
- **How India is Preparing for a 270-GW Power Demand in Summer 2024**
  - **India recorded its highest-ever peak power demand of over 250 gigawatts (GW) in 2023.**
  - **For 2024, the peak power demand is projected to reach 270 GW.**
  - **The Central Electricity Authority (CEA) is closely monitoring power generation projects to meet this demand.**
- 

- 
- **India's electricity demand is increasing at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 6%, with an expected acceleration to 7% annually, reaching 446 GW by 2030.**

**Coal-based power generation still dominates, accounting for 71.45% of total power generation. Renewable energy, including hydro, solar, and wind, contributes nearly 14% to India's electricity mix.**

- 
- **Delhi recorded its highest-ever electricity demand of 8,656 MW on June 19, 2024.**
  - **Private power companies like Tata Power-DDL and BSES Rajdhani Power (BRPL) are securing additional power supply arrangements to meet demand.**
  - **Challenges remain due to the intermittent nature of renewable energy and existing grid limitations.**
  - **Energy storage solutions and modernization of the grid are crucial for future stability.**



- (भारत ने 2023 में अपनी अब तक की सबसे अधिक 250 गीगावाट (GW) की चरम बिजली मांग दर्ज की।
- 2024 के लिए, चरम बिजली मांग 270 GW तक पहुंचने की उम्मीद है।
- केंद्रीय विद्युत प्राधिकरण (CEA) इस मांग को पूरा करने के लिए बिजली उत्पादन परियोजनाओं की निगरानी कर रहा है।
- भारत की बिजली की मांग 6% की वार्षिक वृद्धि दर (CAGR) से बढ़ रही है, और 2030 तक 446 GW तक पहुंचने की संभावना है।
- कोयला आधारित बिजली उत्पादन अभी भी प्रमुख है, जो कुल बिजली उत्पादन का 71.45% है।
- नवीकरणीय ऊर्जा, जिसमें जलविद्युत, सौर, और पवन शामिल हैं, भारत की बिजली आपूर्ति में लगभग 14% का योगदान करती हैं।

- दिल्ली ने 19 जन, 2024 को अपनी अब तक की सबसे अधिक बिजली मांग 8,656 MW दर्ज की।
- टाटा पावर-DDL और BSES राजधानी पावर (BRPL) जैसी निजी पावर कंपनियां अतिरिक्त बिजली आपूर्ति की व्यवस्था कर रही हैं।
- नवीकरणीय ऊर्जा की अनिश्चित प्रकृति और मौजूदा ग्रिड सीमाओं के कारण चुनौतियां बनी हुई हैं।
- भविष्य में स्थिरता के लिए ऊर्जा भंडारण समाधान और ग्रिड का आधुनिकीकरण आवश्यक हैं।)

### • 3. Challenges in Meeting Power Demand (बिजली की मांग पूरी करने में चुनौतियां)

#### 1. Extreme Weather Conditions (अत्यधिक मौसम की स्थिति)

1. 2024 दुनिया का सबसे गर्म वर्ष था, जिससे बिजली की मांग बढ़ गई।
2. तापमान में वृद्धि से एयर कंडीशनिंग और कूलिंग सिस्टम की मांग बढ़ी।

#### 2. Dependence on Coal (कोयले पर निर्भरता)

1. भारत की 71% बिजली अभी भी कोयला आधारित है, जिससे जीवाश्म ईंधन पर निर्भरता बनी हुई है।
2. कोयले की कीमतों में उतार-चढ़ाव से बिजली उत्पादन लागत प्रभावित हो सकती है।

- **Intermittency of Renewable Energy (नवीकरणीय ऊर्जा की अनिश्चितता)**
- सौर और पवन ऊर्जा मौसम पर निर्भर करते हैं, जिससे ग्रिड स्थिरता एक चुनौती बनती है।
- ऊर्जा भंडारण क्षमता बढ़ाने की आवश्यकता है।
- **Transmission and Grid Limitations (संप्रेषण और ग्रिड सीमाएं)**
- भारत के पावर ट्रांसमिशन इंफ्रास्ट्रक्चर को अपग्रेड करने की आवश्यकता है।
- कुछ क्षेत्रों में बिजली ग्रिड पुराना और अक्षम है, जिससे पावर कट की समस्या होती है।
- **High Industrial Demand (उच्च औद्योगिक मांग)**
- नई फैक्ट्रियों और उद्योगों के कारण बिजली की खपत लगातार बढ़ रही है।
- ईवी चार्जिंग इंफ्रास्ट्रक्चर के विकास से अतिरिक्त बिजली की मांग बढ़ेगी।

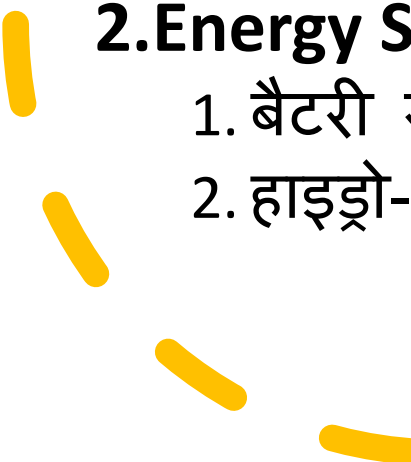


- **4. Future Strategies for Power Stability (भविष्य में बिजली स्थिरता के लिए रणनीतियाँ)**

- 1. Expansion of Renewable Energy (नवीकरणीय ऊर्जा का विस्तार)**

1. 2030 तक 500 GW नवीकरणीय ऊर्जा क्षमता का लक्ष्य।
2. पवन और सौर ऊर्जा क्षमता में वृद्धि।

- 2. Energy Storage Solutions (ऊर्जा भंडारण समाधान)**

1. बैटरी स्टोरेज सिस्टम विकसित करना।
  2. हाइड्रो-पंप स्टोरेज और अन्य बैकअप सिस्टम का विकास।
- 

## Modernization of Power Grid (बिजली ग्रिड का आधुनिकीकरण)

- स्मार्ट ग्रिड तकनीक अपनाना।
- बेहतर लोड प्रबंधन और वितरण प्रणाली।

## Investment in Nuclear and Hydro Power (नाभिकीय और जलविद्युत ऊर्जा में निवेश)

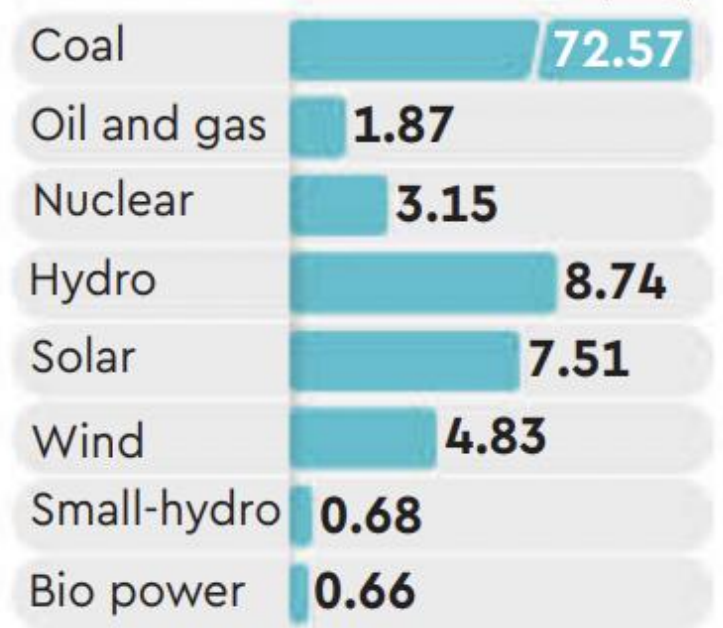
- नई परमाणु ऊर्जा परियोजनाओं को बढ़ावा देना।
- बड़े जलविद्युत बांधों का निर्माण।

## Demand-Side Management (मांग प्रबंधन रणनीति)

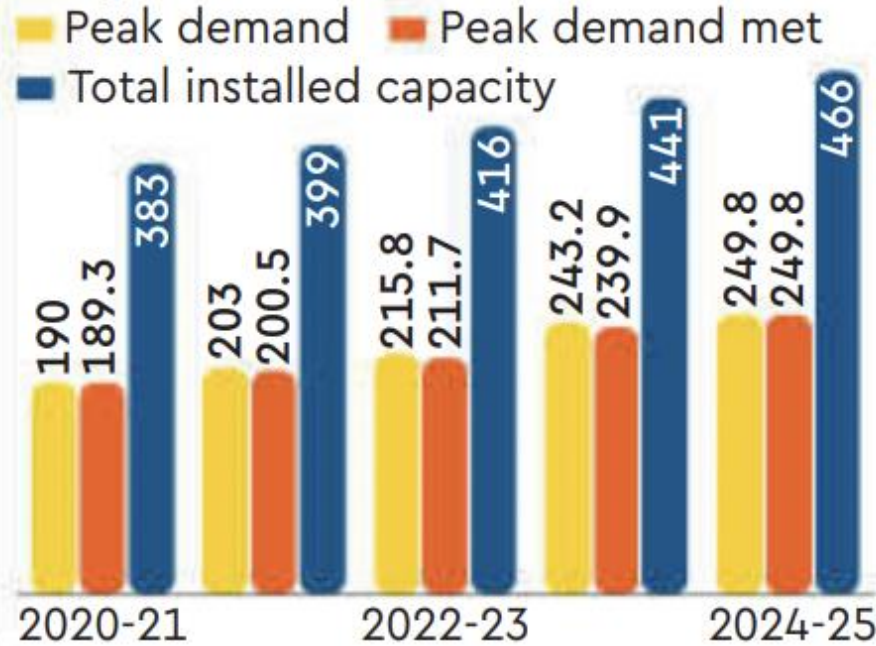
- बिजली खपत को प्रबंधित करने के लिए स्मार्ट मीटर और प्रोत्साहन योजनाएं।
- औद्योगिक और वाणिज्यिक क्षेत्रों में ऊर्जा दक्षता उपाय लागू करना।

# TO BEAT THE HEAT

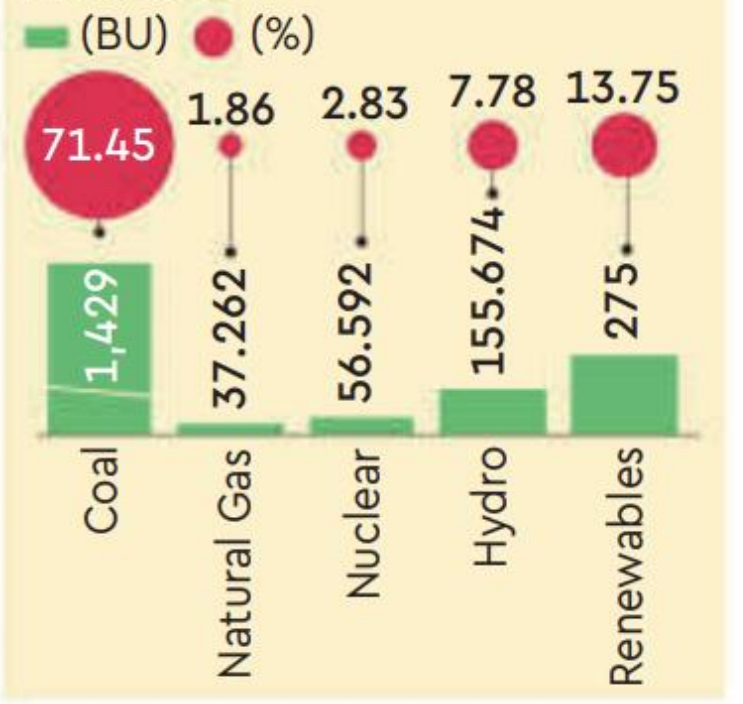
India's power generation sources in 2024-25 (in%)



India's peak demand in the past five years (in GW)



How the CEA is planning to meet the expected power demand in 2025  
Proposed Generation Programme FY 2025-26



Source: India Climate Energy Dashboard, NITI Aayog, Office of the member (grid operation and distribution), CEA, advised by the chairperson

## ● What does India Graduate Skills Index 2025 say?

**THE INDIA GRADUATE** Skills Index 2025, published by online talent assessment firm Mercer Mettl, has shown a worrying trend: only 42.6% of graduates were employable in 2024, a decline from 44.3% in 2023. Technical proficiency is not dismal, however, with employability for technical roles showing a marginal growth from 41.3% to 42%, said the report which compiled data from 2,700 campuses in 31 states and Union Territories (UTs) and assessed over one million students. Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning roles showcased the highest employability at 46.1%; however, employability for non-technical roles saw a sharp dip (from 48.3% to 43.5%). Soft skills like creativity are one area where graduates are not proficient. Even for other soft skills like communication and critical thinking, the rate hovers around 50-55%. The index also brought regional disparities to light. While Delhi (53.4%), Himachal Pradesh, and Punjab (51.1% each) have the most employable graduates, only one southern state (Telangana) managed a spot in the top 10 regions with employable graduates.



**PERSISTING SKILLS GAP**

# A reality check for India's graduates

Less than half of India's graduates are employable, according to a recent research report. There are disparities between states and the government has tried to address the problem, but meeting industry needs remains a challenge for higher education, explains *Anviti Rai*



# HANTAVIRUS

The rodent-borne virus that killed pianist Betsy Arakawa, wife of actor Gene Hackman

**ANAGHA JAYAKUMAR**  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 9

NEARLY TWO weeks after actor Gene Hackman and his pianist wife Betsy Arakawa were found dead in their home in Santa Fe, New Mexico, officials on Friday said Hackman died of heart disease days after Arakawa succumbed to hantavirus pulmonary syndrome (HPS).

## What is hantavirus?

Hantavirus is a family of rodent-borne viruses that can cause serious illness, even death, in humans. Infected rodents spread the viruses through their urine, faeces, and saliva, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The virus does not spread via people-to-people contact.

The specifics of the virus, and the disease it causes, depends on the region and the rodent host that carries it. HPS is endemic to the Western Hemisphere where the most common hantavirus strain causing the disease is carried by the deer mouse. Haemorrhagic fever with renal syndrome (HFRS) is another group of illnesses caused by hantaviruses found primarily in Europe and Asia. Among these, the Hantaan (after which hantavirus is named) and Dobrava strains are most dangerous.

## What are the symptoms of HPS?

Flu-like symptoms present one to eight weeks after exposure. This includes fatigue, fever, and muscle aches. As the disease advances, the infected person may experience respiratory difficulties as the lungs fill with fluid.

The CDC estimates that 38% of those who develop respiratory symptoms die from the disease. The mortality for the hantavirus strain in southwestern US — where Arakawa died — ranges from 38% to 50%.

## Can HPS be cured?

There is no known cure for HPS. Early detection and treatment are crucial — some antivirals may help manage the



Santa Fe County officials hold a presser on the death of actor Gene Hackman and his wife Betsy Arakawa, on March 7. Reuters

symptoms, and patients can benefit from respiratory support.

Speaking to *The New York Times*, Johns Hopkins University microbiologist Sabra L Klein advised people living in areas known to house hantavirus-infected rodents to clean any excrement with a wet paper towel, gloves, and a tight-fitting N95 mask.

Klein also advised the use of commercial disinfectants to sanitise the area with rodent droppings.

## What do we know of the Hackman & Arakawa deaths?

The couple and their dog were found dead by a building caretaker on February 26. They had already been dead for days.

While it is unknown how Arakawa contracted the disease, investigators found signs of rodents in some buildings on the couple's property. She likely died of HPS around February 11, according to New Mexico's chief medical officer.

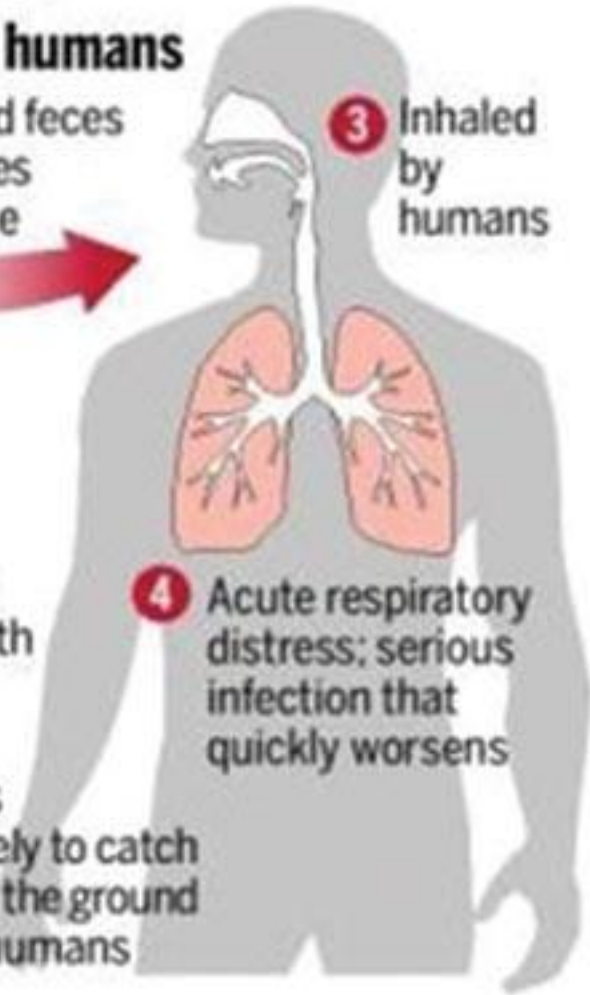
With his caregiver no more, Hackman, who was 95 and suffered from Alzheimer's, likely succumbed to heart disease a week later. It is possible he did not even register his wife's passing.

The dog died of starvation.

# Hantavirus in brief

## How the virus spreads to humans

- 1 Virus found in rodent feces
- 2 Infected feces becomes airborne
- 3 Inhaled by humans



4 Acute respiratory distress; serious infection that quickly worsens

## Symptoms

### Early

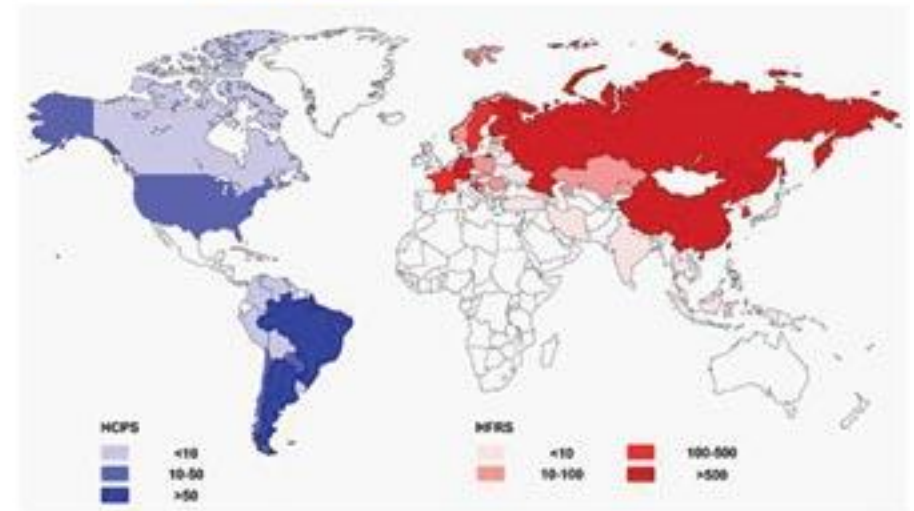
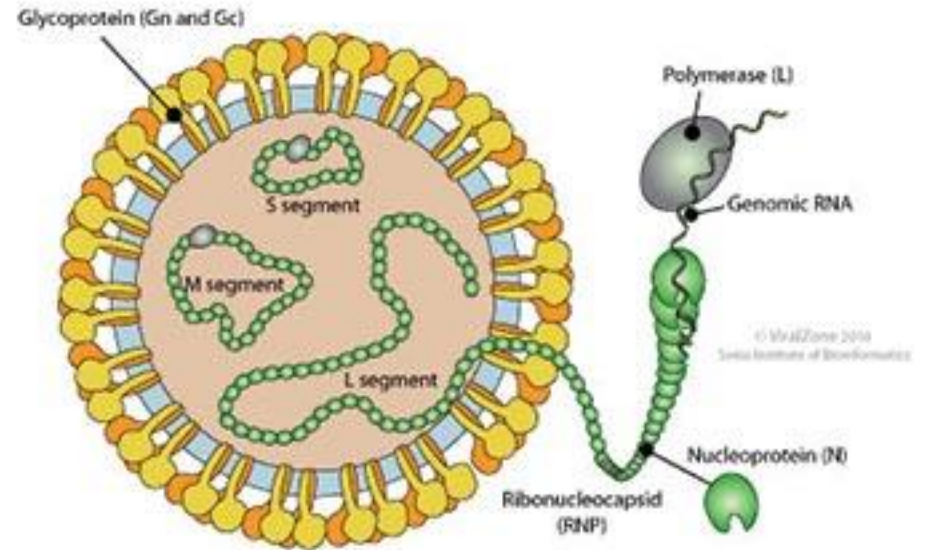
- Chills
- Fever
- Muscle aches

### Later, 1-2 days

- Dry cough
- Headache
- Nausea, vomiting
- Shortness of breath

## Characteristics

- Most prevalent in rural areas
- Campers and hikers more likely to catch the virus, because tents rest on the ground
- Cannot be spread between humans



# Hantavirus: Know your rodents

Four kinds of rodents are known to carry hantavirus, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): the cotton rat, white-footed mouse, rice rat and deer mouse. Of those, **only the deer mouse is found in Washington state**. Three rodents common in Washington **do not** carry hantavirus and they are shown below for comparison.

The deer mouse prefers woodland and desert areas. It is smaller than some rodents in our area, such as the Norway rat. Its fur tends to be lighter in color than the house mouse, and unlike the house mouse, the deer mouse has two-toned fur with a white belly.

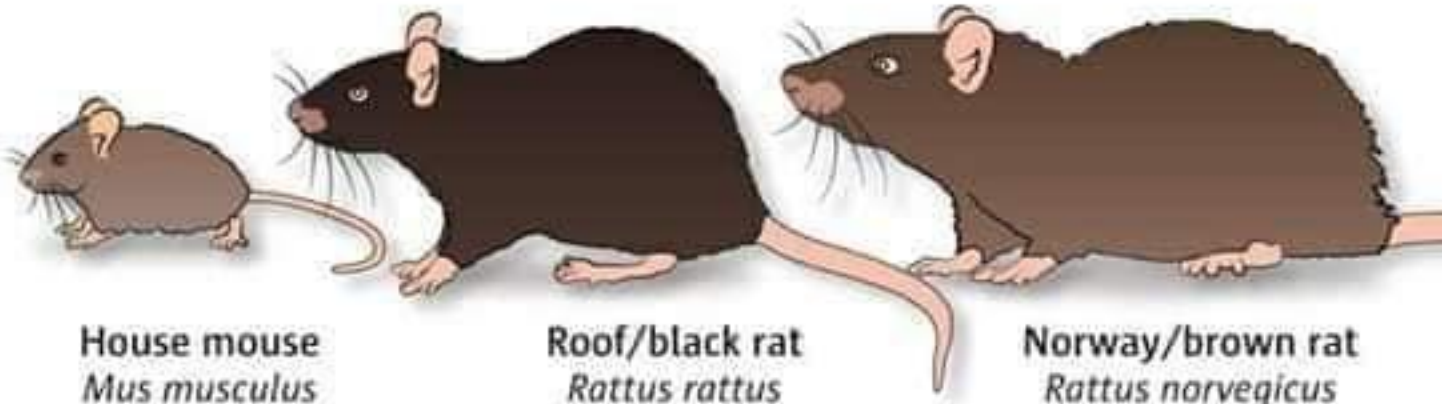
## CAN CARRY HANTAVIRUSES



**Deer mouse**  
*Peromyscus maniculatus*

Body size: 2 to 3 inches  
Distinguishable from the house mouse by its two-toned fur and larger eyes and ears.

## NOT KNOWN TO CARRY HANTAVIRUSES



**House mouse**  
*Mus musculus*



Body size: 3 to 4 inches  
Usually living closely with humans, this species of mouse has been domesticated and bred as pets.



**Roof/black rat**  
*Rattus rattus*

Body size: 7 inches  
These medium-sized blackish-to-brown rats live among humans. They are commonly found in the attic and rafters of buildings.

**Norway/brown rat**  
*Rattus norvegicus*

Body size: 9.25 inches  
Larger than the roof rat, these rats live at ground level in basements or burrows under sidewalks.

- 
- **Hantavirus: The Rodent-Borne Virus That Killed Betsy Arakawa**
  - **Betsy Arakawa, wife of actor Gene Hackman, died due to hantavirus pulmonary syndrome (HPS).**
  - **Both Hackman (95) and Arakawa were found dead in their home in Santa Fe, New Mexico, on February 26, 2024.**
- 

- 
- **Gene Hackman died of heart disease a few days after Arakawa's death. Rodents spread hantavirus through urine, saliva, and feces.**
  - **The virus does not spread via human-to-human transmission.**
  - **HPS is mostly reported in the Western Hemisphere, and the most common strain is carried by deer mice.**
  - **Hantavirus infections in Europe and Asia cause hemorrhagic fever with renal syndrome (HFRS).**
- 

**Symptoms of HPS include flu-like signs such as fever, fatigue, and muscle aches, progressing to respiratory issues.**

**CDC estimates that 38% of patients with respiratory symptoms from HPS die.**

**There is no known cure for HPS; early detection and antiviral treatments help manage symptoms.**

- (बेट्सी अरकावा, अभिनेता जीन हैकमैन की पत्नी, हैंटावायरस पल्मोनरी सिंड्रोम (HPS) के कारण मृत्यु हो गई।
- जीन हैकमैन (95) और अरकावा 26 फरवरी, 2024 को न्यू मैक्सिको, सांता फ़े स्थित अपने घर में मृत पाए गए।
- अरकावा की मृत्यु के कुछ दिनों बाद, जीन हैकमैन की मृत्यु हृदय रोग के कारण हुई।
- रोडेंट (चूहे) हैंटावायरस को मूत्र, लार और मल के माध्यम से फैलाते हैं।
- यह वायरस मनुष्यों के बीच नहीं फैलता है।
- HPS पश्चिमी गोलार्ध में सबसे अधिक रिपोर्ट किया जाता है और सबसे आम स्ट्रेन हिरण चूहे (deer mouse) द्वारा फैलता है।



- युरोप और एशिया में हैंटावायरस संक्रमण रक्तस्रावी बुखार और गुर्दे की विफलता (HFRS) का कारण बनते हैं।
- HPS के लक्षण फ्लू जैसे होते हैं, जिनमें बुखार, थकान, और मांसपेशियों में दर्द शामिल हैं, जो धीरे-धीरे गंभीर श्वसन समस्याओं में बदल सकते हैं।
- CDC का अनुमान है कि जिन रोगियों में श्वसन लक्षण विकसित होते हैं, उनमें से 38% की मृत्यु हो जाती है।
- HPS का कोई ज्ञात इलाज नहीं है; जल्दी पहचान और एंटीवायरल उपचार लक्षणों को प्रबंधित करने में मदद कर सकते हैं।)







Jan Aushadhi Diwas

Every year, March 7th is celebrated as Jan Aushadhi Diwas to raise awareness about affordable generic medicines under the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP).

Jan

7 Mar. 2019

Jan Aushadhi Diwas: Initiated on 7th March 2019, under the PMBJP. The initiative includes a week-long celebration, 'Janaushadhi Week,' from 1st-7th March across the nation.


- 
- 2025 Theme: “Daam Kam - Dawai Uttam,” emphasizing affordable and high-quality medicines for all. PMBJP:
  - The PMBJP was originally launched in 2008 as the Jan Aushadhi Scheme under the Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers to provide affordable medicines through outlets called Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Kendras (PMBJKs).
- 

- **Features of PMBJP:**
- **Jan Aushadhi Kendras offer medicines at 50-80% lower prices** than branded alternatives.
- A one-time Rs 2.00 lakh incentive is given to PMBJKs in targeted regions or opened by women, ex-servicemen divyang, a person from SC and ST.



- Suvidha Sanitary Napkins launched in 2019 at Rs 1 per pad, reached 72 crore in sales by January 2025

**OBJECTIVES OF PRADHAN MANTRI BHARTIYA JANAUSHADHI PARIYOJANA (PMBJP)**



- To make available quality medicines, consumables and surgical items at affordable prices for all and reduce out of pocket expenditure of consumers/patients.
- To popularize generic medicines among the masses and dispel the prevalent notion that low priced generic medicines are of inferior quality or are less effective.
- To ensure easy availability of the menstrual health services to all women across India.
- To generate employment by engaging individual entrepreneurs in the opening of Jan Aushadhi Kendra.

Financial Year	Number of PMBJP Kendras opened		Sales at MRP Value in Rs. Cr.
	Yearly Addition	Cumulative	
2014-15	8	80	7.29
2021-22	1053	8610	893.56
2022-23	694	9304	1235.95
2023-24	1957	11261	1470
2024-25 (As on 28.02.2025)	3796	15057	1767



**Emocracy**

- 
- A row of human figures, mostly white, with one red figure in the center. The figures are simple, rounded shapes representing people. The background is a solid grey color.
- Vice President called for a national debate on the shift from democracy to ‘Emocracy’, warning that emotion-driven policies threaten good governance.
  - About Emocracy:
  - What is ‘Emocracy’?
  - **‘Emocracy’ (Emotion-Driven Democracy) refers to governance influenced by emotions rather than rational policy-making.**
  - It replaces evidence-based decision-making with populist rhetoric and emotionally charged narratives.

Type of - cracy	Meaning	Example Countries
<b>Democracy</b>	Rule by the people, where citizens vote for leaders.	India, USA, UK
<b>Autocracy</b>	Rule by a single person with absolute power.	North Korea (dictatorship)
<b>Bureaucracy</b>	Rule by government officials and administrators.	China, France (strong bureaucracies)
<b>Theocracy</b>	Rule by religious leaders or based on religious laws.	Iran, Vatican City
<b>Plutocracy</b>	Rule by the wealthy class.	Historically Venice, concerns in modern economies
<b>Oligarchy</b>	Rule by a small, elite group.	Russia (influential oligarchs)
<b>Aristocracy</b>	Rule by a privileged noble class.	Pre-revolutionary France, Ancient Greece



<b>Technocracy</b>	Rule by technical experts or scientists.	Singapore (elements of technocracy)
<b>Kleptocracy</b>	Rule by corrupt leaders who exploit resources for personal gain.	Some authoritarian regimes
<b>Meritocracy</b>	Rule by individuals based on ability and merit.	Singapore (strong meritocratic elements)
<b>Gerontocracy</b>	Rule by elders or senior leaders.	Soviet Union (in later years), Iran (partially)
<b>Stratocracy</b>	Rule by military forces.	Myanmar (military junta rule)
<b>Anocracy</b>	A mix of democracy and autocracy, often unstable.	Sudan, Thailand (historically)
<b>Nomocracy</b>	Rule based on laws rather than individuals.	USA (strong legal framework)



# T-72 Tanks





India signed a \$248 million contract with Russia's Rosoboronexport to procure 1,000 HP engines for its fleet of T-72 tanks, replacing the existing 780 HP engines to enhance combat capabilities.

The deal includes Transfer of Technology (ToT) to Armoured Vehicles Nigam Limited (AVNL) in Avadi, Chennai.




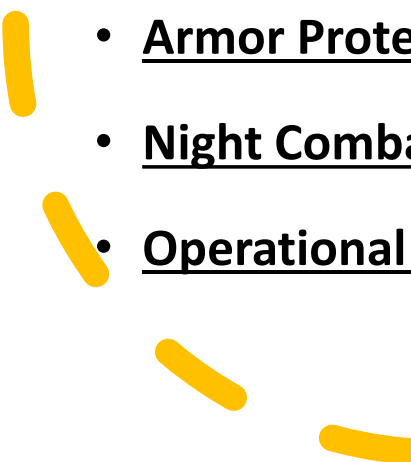
- What is the T-72 Tank?

- A **main battle tank (MBT)** originally developed by **the Soviet Union** and introduced in the **1970s**.

- One of the most **widely used tanks worldwide**, with over **25,000 units produced**.



- India operates **2,400+ T-72 tanks**, making it the **backbone of the Indian Army's armored forces**.

- 
- India locally manufactures and upgrades T-72 tanks at the **Heavy Vehicles Factory, Avadi**.
  - **Features of T-72 Tank:**
  - **Firepower:** Equipped with a 125mm smoothbore gun, 7.62mm coaxial machine gun, and 12.7mm anti-aircraft gun.
  - **Mobility:** Now upgraded with 1,000 HP engines, improving battlefield speed and manoeuvrability.
  - **Armor Protection:** Features composite and reactive armour to withstand enemy fire.
  - **Night Combat Capability:** Enhanced thermal imaging systems allow for effective night operations.
  - **Operational Range:** Can travel 460 km on-road and 300 km off-road with auxiliary fuel tanks.
- 


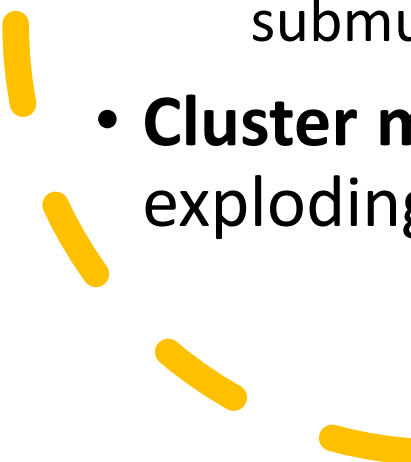
# Convention on Cluster Munitions






- **Lithuania** withdrew from the **Convention on Cluster Munitions**, citing security concerns over the Russia-Ukraine war.
  - It is the **first country to leave the convention.**



- 
- **Convention on Cluster Munitions**
  - **Adopted:** Signed in **2008** in Oslo, Norway.
  - **Purpose:** Aimed at banning the use, production, transfer, and stockpiling of cluster munitions.
    - Seeks to protect civilians from the indiscriminate harm caused by unexploded submunitions.
  - **Cluster munitions** can be dropped from aircraft or fired from artillery, exploding mid-air and scattering bomblets over a wide area
- 

- 
- They release smaller explosive submunitions that can remain dangerous long after conflicts end.
  - **Signatories:** Over 100 countries have signed or ratified the treaty.
    - Some countries, including major military powers like the **U.S., India, Russia, and China, have not signed the treaty.**



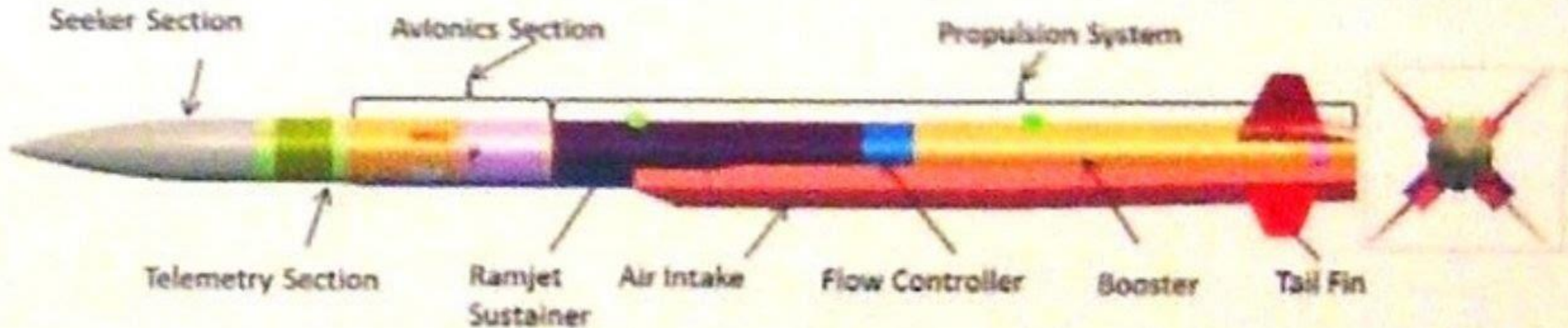
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# ASTRA MK-III Renamed Gandiva



# ASTRA MK-III TECH **SFDR** TESTED

## MISSILE CONFIGURATION





BCCL

**Operational range**

- Astra IR: 80 km (50 mi)<sup>[2]</sup>
- Astra Mk-1: 110 km (68 mi)<sup>[3]</sup>
- Astra Mk-2: 160 km (99 mi)<sup>[3]</sup>
- Astra Mk-3: 350 km (220 mi)<sup>[4][5]</sup>

**Flight ceiling**

20 km (66,000 ft)

**Maximum speed**

Mach 4.5 (Astra Mk 1) <sup>[6]</sup>

**Guidance system**

**Mid-course:** Fibre-optic gyro based inertial navigation system with mid-course update via datalink.

**Terminal:** Active radar homing

**Launch platform**

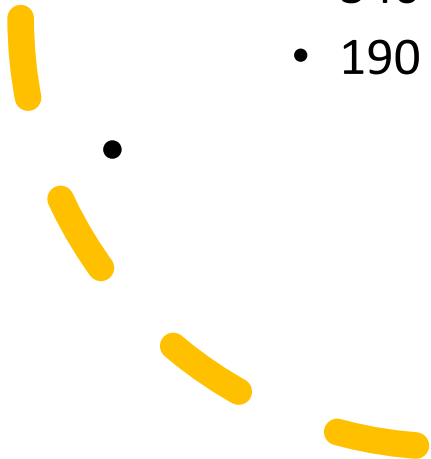
- Su-30MKI<sup>[7]</sup>
- MiG-29K
- Tejas Mk.1/1A
- MiG-29UPG (Trial-phase)
- HAL Tejas Mk2 (Planned)
- AMCA (Planned)
- TEDBF (Planned)
- Dassault Rafale (Planned)<sup>[8]</sup>

- 
- India's latest and most advanced **beyond visual range (BVR) air-to-air missile, Astra MK-III**, has been officially renamed **Gandiva**.

- **Key Features of Gandiva Missile**

- **Extended Range:**


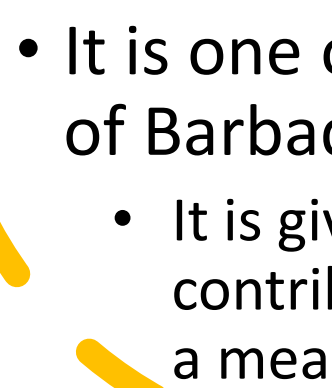
- 340 km when targeting enemies at 20 km altitude.
    - 190 km when engaging targets at 8 km altitude.





A close-up photograph of a hand holding a gold medal. The medal is circular with a decorative border and a central emblem. A red ribbon is attached to the top of the medal. The background is a bright, hazy sky. The text 'Honorary Order of Freedom of Barbados' Award is overlaid in white.

# 'Honorary Order of Freedom of Barbados' Award

- 
- The Prime Minister, Narendra Modi has received the '**Honorary Order of Freedom of Barbados' Award.**
  - **About**
  - It was in recognition of his “**strategic leadership**” and “**valuable assistance**” during the **Covid-19** pandemic.
  - It is one of the **highest national honors awarded** by the government of Barbados.
    - It is given to individuals or organizations that have made significant contributions to the country, its development, or to international relations in a meaningful and impactful way.
- 

## Vaccine Maitri Initiative

**Launch Date:** The initiative began in 2021, during the global COVID-19 pandemic.

**Goal:** To provide COVID-19 vaccines to countries around the world, especially to developing nations, to combat the spread of the virus.

**Scope:** India supplied vaccines to over 90 countries in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and Latin America, among others.

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### B5 | Ratio Part-2

2025-03-10 at 1:00 PM

Starts In: 06:36:56

Coming Soon!

### b5 | Tense Part-7

2025-03-10 at 12:00 PM

Starts In: 05:36:56

Coming Soon!

### B5 | blood relation Part-3

2025-03-10 at 11:00 AM

Starts In: 04:36:56

Coming Soon!

### B5 | Ratio

2025-03-09 at 1:00 PM

Watch Now





10 MCQ from the session

- What is the primary reason for the recent surge in India's cotton imports?
- भारत में हाल ही में कपास आयात में वृद्धि का मुख्य कारण क्या है?
- A. Increase in domestic cotton production / घरेलू कपास उत्पादन में वृद्धि
- B. Lower international cotton prices and reduced domestic yield / अंतरराष्ट्रीय कपास की कीमतें कम और घरेलू उत्पादन में गिरावट
- C. Government subsidies on imported cotton / आयातित कपास पर सरकारी सब्सिडी
- D. Declining global cotton demand / वैश्विक कपास मांग में गिरावट



- Which organization in India procured large quantities of cotton to stabilize prices?
- भारत में कपास की कीमतों को स्थिर करने के लिए किस संगठन ने बड़े पैमाने पर कपास की खरीद की?
- A. Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA)
- B. Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) / भारतीय कपास निगम (CCI)
- C. National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation (NAFED)
- D. Food Corporation of India (FCI)

- What is the main economic challenge faced by Indian cotton farmers?
- भारतीय कपास किसानों के सामने मुख्य आर्थिक चुनौती क्या है?
- A. High production costs and low Minimum Support Price (MSP) / उच्च उत्पादन लागत और कम न्यूनतम समर्थन मूल्य (MSP)
- B. Lack of export opportunities / निर्यात अवसरों की कमी
- C. Government restrictions on cotton farming / कपास की खेती पर सरकारी प्रतिबंध
- D. Overproduction of cotton / कपास का अत्यधिक उत्पादन

- Which country recently unveiled its first nuclear-powered submarine?
- किस देश ने हाल ही में अपनी पहली परमाणु-संचालित पनडुब्बी का अनावरण किया?
- A. China / चीन
- B. Russia / रूस
- C. North Korea / उत्तर कोरिया
- D. Iran / ईरान

- **What is the estimated weight of North Korea's nuclear-powered submarine?**
- **उत्तर कोरिया की परमाणु-संचालित पनडुब्बी का अनुमानित वजन कितना है?**
- **A. 2,000-3,000 tonnes**
- **B. 4,000-5,000 tonnes**
- **C. 6,000-7,000 tonnes**
- **D. 8,000-10,000 tonnes**

- Madhav National Park, recently declared a Tiger Reserve, is located in which Indian state?
- हाल ही में टाइगर रिजर्व घोषित माधव राष्ट्रीय उद्यान किस भारतीय राज्य में स्थित है?
- A. Rajasthan / राजस्थान
- B. Madhya Pradesh / मध्य प्रदेश
- C. Maharashtra / महाराष्ट्र
- D. Chhattisgarh / छत्तीसगढ़

- Which of the following power sources currently dominates India's electricity generation?
- निम्नलिखित में से कौन सा स्रोत वर्तमान में भारत की बिजली उत्पादन प्रणाली में प्रमुख है?
- A. Nuclear power / परमाणु ऊर्जा
- B. Coal-based power / कोयला-आधारित ऊर्जा
- C. Renewable energy (solar and wind) / नवीकरणीय ऊर्जा (सौर और पवन)
- D. Hydroelectric power / जलविद्युत ऊर्जा

- **What is the expected peak power demand in India for 2024?**
- **2024 में भारत की अनुमानित चरम बिजली मांग कितनी होगी?**
- **A. 200 GW**
- **B. 220 GW**
- **C. 250 GW**
- **D. 270 GW**

- What is "Emocracy," a term recently discussed in India's governance debates?
- "इमोक्रेसी" क्या है, जिसे हाल ही में भारत की शासन चर्चाओं में शामिल किया गया?
- A. A form of governance driven by emotions rather than rational policy-making / ऐसा शासन जो तर्कसंगत नीति निर्माण के बजाय भावनाओं से प्रेरित होता है
- B. A democratic system influenced by artificial intelligence / कृत्रिम बुद्धिमत्ता द्वारा प्रभावित एक लोकतांत्रिक प्रणाली
- C. A governance model focusing on environmental policies / पर्यावरण नीतियों पर केंद्रित एक शासन मॉडल
- D. A new economic framework for emerging markets / उभरते बाजारों के लिए एक नया आर्थिक ढांचा



- What is the "Gandiva" missile, which was recently renamed from Astra MK-III?
- "गांडीव" मिसाइल क्या है, जिसे हाल ही में अस्त्र MK-III से पुनः नामित किया गया?
- A. A short-range air-to-air missile / एक छोटी दूरी की हवा से हवा में मार करने वाली मिसाइल
- B. An anti-tank guided missile / एक एंटी-टैंक गाइडेड मिसाइल
- C. A beyond visual range (BVR) air-to-air missile / एक दृष्टि से परे (BVR) हवा से हवा में मार करने वाली मिसाइल
- D. A nuclear-capable submarine-launched missile / एक परमाणु-सक्षम पनडुब्बी से लॉन्च की जाने वाली मिसाइल

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# Word of the day

## **Insouciant:**

marked by blithe unconcern

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**Synonyms:** casual, nonchalant

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**Usage:** *It is an utterly insouciant financial policy.*

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**Pronunciation:** newsth.live/  
insouciantpro


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**International Phonetic  
Alphabet:** /ɪn'su:ʃiənt/

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- Sustainable Future – Masdar City





Thank you  
guys.

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