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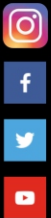
FARMERS' PROTEST
2024

A product by **SmartKeeda**

About Magazine

"LawEx" is a carefully curated set of Current Events designed specifically for CLAT aspirants. To take you one step closer to realizing your dream, "LawEx" provides a fortnightly overview of the most significant current events related to politics, economics, science and technology, & sports with a wide range of infographics to ensure a smoother learning experience and enhanced retention of information.

Editor's Note

Farmers from Punjab and other states are heading to New Delhi under the 'Delhi chalo' banner once again to protest against the Centre. But, police in both Haryana and Delhi have imposed several restrictions to stop the movement of the protesting farmers. The Supreme Court has decided to examine if a divorced Muslim woman is entitled to a claim of maintenance under Section 125 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) against her former husband. Recently, the 9th edition of the Raisina Dialogue was held in New Delhi from February 21 to February 23. The Union government on February 21 modified the Surrogacy (Regulation) Rules, 2022, and notified that both gametes need not come from a married couple in case they are certified as suffering from medical conditions. To know more, keep reading.

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TEST ZONE

CROSSWORD CORNER

VAISHNAV BHATT

Our Top Achiever
AIR - 113th
CLAT 2024

Q.   Give us a brief intro about yourself, Vaishnav.

Ans. Hello, I'm Vaishnav and I secured AIR 113 in CLAT 2024. I completed my 10th standard in Delhi and have moved to Bangalore this year.

Q.   When did you think about doing law?

Ans. I've had some very unpleasant experiences in life when I was staying in Delhi where my family and I had to suffer emotionally and financially and a major part of it was due to insufficient knowledge of the law and our rights. In this process I had to interact with some lawyers, and visit the court as well. These experiences made me want to pursue law as a profession as I found it interesting and also felt that having this knowledge would keep me safe and I would be able to help others as well who face similar situations due to insufficient knowledge.

Q.   When did you seriously start preparing for CLAT?

Ans. I started my preparation in March 2023.

Q.   What is the role of LawEx in your preparation?

Ans. LawEx helped me a lot with my preparation for CLAT. Their current affairs magazine and Maths YouTube videos are excellent and have been of great help. I also found their GK topic tests to be very useful.

Q.   Do you think LawEx Lectures with sufficient reading and mock practice enough for CLAT?

Ans. I feel LawEx should increase the number of mock tests that they offer. Apart from this I think that they provide sufficient study material.

Q.   What did you do for your subject-wise strategy?

Ans. My weak point was GK, so I gave it a bit more attention compared to the other subjects. For this I read The Hindu newspaper everyday for 1.5 hrs and focused on the editorial as that improved my vocabulary and helped improve my English as well. I allocated 4-5 hours for GK everyday. I gave 2 hours for legal reasoning. During this time I had not yet started giving mock tests. I watched LawEx's maths YouTube videos to improve my maths for around 30 minutes. A bulk of my preparation was focused on these 3 subjects. Apart from this I attempted around 60 mock tests, 20 of which were from LawEx and the rest I had to source from other test series.

Q.   What was your highest and lowest score in mock tests?

Ans. My lowest score was 72 and my highest score was 96.25. On average my score was around 90 marks out of 120.

Q.   How did you keep your confidence up when scoring low in mocks?

Ans. My performance in mocks was more or less pretty consistent throughout my preparation. So I did not face this issue.

Q.   How to maintain mock scores?

Ans. In my opinion, analysing the mocks after attempting them is very important as it makes you understand what kind of mistakes you have made and helps you to improve upon them in the next mock. This will also make you understand your own weak points and which subject needs improvement. This will help you maintain and improve your score.

Q.   How much GK is sufficient and how to revise it?

Ans. No amount of GK can be considered sufficient in my opinion. So I would suggest to find 2-3 sources which are of good quality like The Hindu newspaper and LawEx magazine which covers most of the topics which you need to know and for static GK you can purchase any book like A P Bharadwaj's Static GK book. I revised for GK by doing the topic tests multiple times.

Q.   How many Mocks are sufficient for CLAT Preparation?

Ans. According to me atleast 50 mock tests are required so that your speed along with accuracy improves and it doesn't make you feel anxious anymore as a calm mind will help you concentrate better and score more. Clat is a reading based exam and it can be quite draining especially in the last 30-35 minutes so practicing mocks is important here.

Q.   What is your advice to CLAT Aspirants?

Ans. I would advise CLAT aspirants to give themselves at least one year for preparation and attempt 1-2 mock tests every week so that it doesn't drain you out. I made this mistake too by attempting around 60 mocks in 2 months. It is not feasible. CLAT is highly competitive and requires consistency and patience. As my English was at a decent level to begin with, I was somehow able to manage the stress. Also don't forget to take short breaks and have good sleep. Some books which I purchased for CLAT are A P Bharadwaj's Legal reasoning and A P Bharadwaj's static GK. Also practice 15-20 mocks on OMR printouts as well and try finishing your mocks in 115 minutes as this is the time you'll get in your actual examination. Best wishes to all of you.

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QUICK BOOSTERS

FARMERS' PROTEST 2024

WHY IN NEWS?

- Farmers from Punjab and other states are heading to New Delhi under the 'Delhi chalo' banner once again to protest against the Centre.
  - But, police in both Haryana and Delhi have imposed several restrictions to stop the movement of the protesting farmers.

Reasons Behind Farmers' Protest

- The demands of the farmers are manifold, but primarily, they are asking for a legal guarantee for Minimum Support Prices (MSP).
  - By making MSP a legal guarantee, they are also asking for the MSP formula to be set along the lines of recommendations of the MS Swaminathan Commission which submitted its report in 2006.
  - According to the suggested formula, MSP should be set at 50 per cent over the cost of production.
  - While the Centre has fixed MSP for 23 farm commodities, it is implemented mostly for rice and wheat mainly because India has vast storage facilities for these grains and uses the produce for its public distribution system (PDS).
- The National Commission on Farmers (NCF), chaired by the late MS Swaminathan, who was recently conferred the Bharat Ratna, recommended that the MSP should be at least 50 per cent more than the weighted average cost of production.
  - This was also known as the C2+50 per cent formula, which includes the input cost of capital and the rent on the land, to give the farmers 50 per cent of the returns.
- In addition, the farmers are demanding –
  i. debt waiver for farmers and labourers;
  ii. pension for farmers and farm labourers;
  iii. reinstatement of the Land Acquisition Act, 2013, with provisions for written consent from farmers before acquisition, and compensation at four times the collector rate;
  iv. India's withdrawal from the World Trade Organization (WTO) which, they allege, places pressure on the Centre to draft policies for procurement and MSP;
  v. compensation for farmers who died during the Delhi protest in 2020, including a job for one family member;
  vi. punishment for the perpetrators of the October 2021 Lakhimpur Kheri killings;
  vii. scrapping of 'The Electricity Amendment Bill 2020';
  viii. 200 (instead of 100) days' employment under MGNREGA per year, the daily wage of Rs 700, and the scheme should be linked with farming;
  ix. strict penalties and fines on companies producing fake seeds, pesticides, fertilisers; improvements in seed quality;
  x. a national commission for spices such as chilli and turmeric; and
  xi. ensure the rights of indigenous peoples over water, forests, and land.

Government's Stance

- The government formed a 26-member committee under the chairmanship of Sanjay Agarwal, former agriculture secretary in July 2022 with a mandate to explore ways to "make MSP more transparent and effective".
- The agriculture ministry did not specify the tenure of the committee. So far, according to a member of the panel, it has held 30 meetings with various stakeholders and the report of the committee will be finalised in the next couple of months.
  - The Union government has repeatedly asserted that a legal guarantee for MSP is not possible.
- As far as the current protest is concerned, the stalemate between farmers and government has continued despite several rounds of talks.
- During the last round of talks, which ended past midnight on February 18, the panel of three Union ministers made an offer to buy five crops -- moong dal, urad dal, tur dal, maize, and cotton -- from farmers at MSP for five years through central agencies.
- However, the protesting farmers turned down the demand.

What is MSP?

- MSP is the minimum rate at which farmers sell their crops to the government. This price prevents farmers from market fluctuation and offers stability and income security.
- The determination of MSP falls under the purview of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP), initially established in 1965 as the Agricultural Prices Commission and later renamed in 1985.
- Operating within the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, the CACP forwards its recommendations to the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), presided over by the Prime Minister of India, which ultimately makes the final decisions regarding MSP levels.
- The MSP is calculated by considering both the explicit and implicit costs incurred by farmers.
- Explicit costs cover expenses like chemicals, fertilisers, seeds, and hired labour, while implicit costs include factors such as family labour and rent. These variables are represented by A2, FL, and C2.
    - A2 refers to the expenses for inputs like chemicals, fertilisers, seeds, and hired labour for crop growth, production, and maintenance.
    - A2 + FL includes both actual and implicit costs, such as family labour.
    - C2 incorporates A2 + FL along with fixed capital assets and rent paid by farmers.
- As of now, the CACP recommends MSPs for 22 mandated crops and fair and remunerative price (FRP) for sugarcane.

Key demands of protesters

Legal guarantee for MSP
Enactment of a law to guarantee MSP for crops as recommended by National Commission on Farmers led by M S Swaminathan in 2005

Loan waiver
A waiver on farm loans across the country

Withdrawal of police cases
Farm unions seek withdrawal of cases against them during the 2020-21 stir against now-repealed three agricultural laws

Justice for Lakhimpur Kheri violence
Stricter action against accused in Oct 3, 2021 violence when four farmers were mowed down by a vehicle. Ashish Mishra, son of MoS Ajay Mishra, is the key accused

Pension, memorial for farmers
A monthly pension of ₹10,000 for every farmer; grant of land in Delhi for building a memorial for farmers who died during 2020-21 protests

INDIA - UAE RELATIONS

WHY IN NEWS?

• India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in February 2024 signed eight pacts to bolster cooperation in key areas such as investments, electricity trade and digital payment platforms.

Key Highlights

• Both countries signed separate agreements for linking their instant payment platforms – India's Unified Payment Interface (UPI) and the UAE's AANI – and their domestic debit and credit cards, India's RuPay with the UAE's Jaywan.
  – UAE's domestic card JAYWAN is based on the digital RuPay credit and debit card stack.

• As of February 2024, seven countries - Sri Lanka, Mauritius, France, UAE, Singapore, Bhutan, and Nepal - officially support the UPI payment system.
• Bhutan was one of the first countries to adopt UPI payments outside India back in 2021 in collaboration with the Royal Monetary Authority (RMA) of Bhutan.
  – Besides, Bhutan is also one of the first countries to adopt and issue RuPay bank cards.
• France is one of the first countries in the European region to access UPI payments, that too at the iconic Eiffel Tower in collaboration with Lyra.
• Srilanka and Mauritius are the latest islands to adopt India's UPI payment system on February 12, helping Indian tourists to send and receive money in these countries.

• Both countries also aimed at supporting the Maritime Heritage Complex at Lothal, Gujarat.
• The foundation stone of Bharat Mart, which will combine retail, warehousing and logistics facilities at Jebel Ali Free Trade Zone in Dubai, was laid by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
  – Bharat Mart is a joint initiative of DP World, a Dubai-based multinational and India's commerce ministry that is aimed at boosting exports by Indian small and medium-sized enterprises.
• India thanked the UAE for its support in granting land for the construction of the BAPS Temple in Abu Dhabi, emphasizing the significance of the temple as a symbol of UAE-India friendship and cultural bonds.

• India and the UAE also signed an inter-governmental framework agreement on the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) to build on earlier understandings and foster cooperation for regional connectivity.
• The UAE is one of India's closest strategic and energy partners in West Asia, and trade was boosted by the signing of a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement or free trade agreement (FTA) in 2022, which eliminated duties on 99% of the UAE's imports from India.
• Both countries signed pacts on cooperation in the field of electrical interconnection and trade, which "opens new areas of collaboration in the field of energy, including energy security and energy trade.
• Two more agreements were also signed to enhance cooperation between the national archives of the two sides, including restoration and preservation of archival material, and in the field of heritage and museums.

About the First Hindu Temple in the UAE

- The temple was built by the Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS), a denomination of the Swaminarayan Sampradaya, a Vaishnav sect of Hinduism.
    - BAPS has a network of around 1,550 temples across the world, including the Akshardham temples in New Delhi and Gandhinagar, and Swaminarayan temples in London, Houston, Chicago, Atlanta, Toronto, Los Angeles, and Nairobi.
    - It also runs 3,850 centers and 17,000 weekly assemblies globally.
- Built in the traditional Nagar style, the temple's front panel depicts universal values, stories of harmony from different cultures, Hindu spiritual leaders, and avatars.
- The Abu Dhabi temple is a traditional stone Hindu temple with seven shikhars.
    - The seven shikhars (spires) are representative of the seven Emirates of the UAE.
- Spread over 27 acres, the temple complex is on 13.5 acres, with a parking area of 13.5 acres that can accommodate around 1,400 cars and 50 buses.
    - The 13.5 acres of land was gifted by Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the President of the UAE in 2019.
- The height of the temple is 108 ft, its length 262 ft, and its width 180 ft. While the external facade uses pink sandstone from Rajasthan, the interior uses Italian marble.
- The temple has two central domes, the Dome of Harmony and the Dome of Peace, emphasising human coexistence through the carvings of earth, water, fire, air, and plants.
- A Wall of Harmony, one of the largest 3D-printed walls in the UAE, features a video showcasing key milestones of the temple's construction.
    - The word 'harmony' has been written in 30 different ancient and modern languages.

New India Insights

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UNIFIED PAYMENTS INTERFACE

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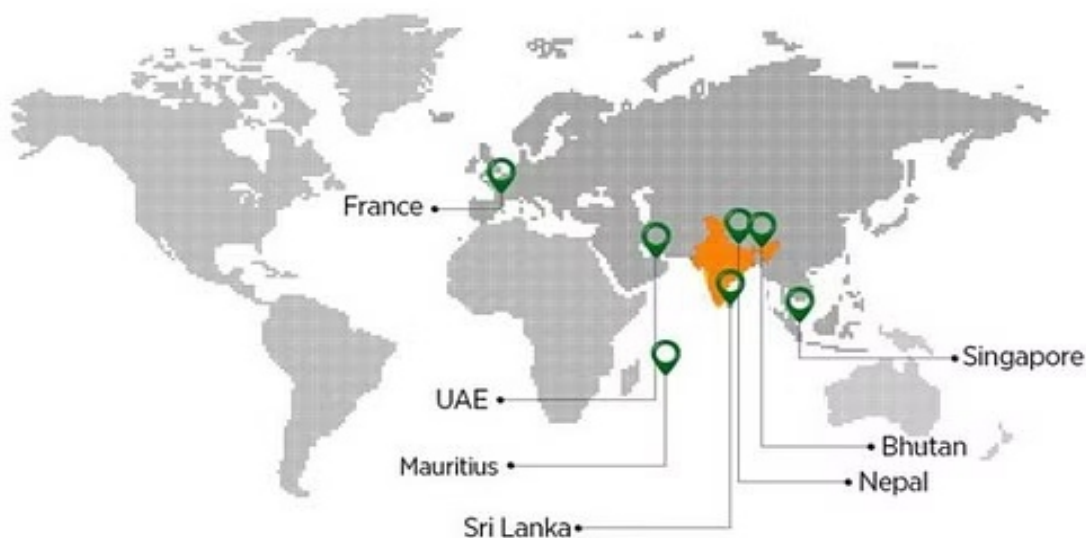
METEOROLOGICAL SATELLITE INSAT-3DS

WHY IN NEWS?

- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on 17 February launched INSAT-3DS meteorological satellite onboard a Geosynchronous Launch Vehicle F14 (GSLV-F14), from Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh.

Key Highlights

- INSAT-3DS Satellite is a follow-on mission of Third Generation Meteorological Satellite from Geostationary Orbit.
- GSLV-F14/INSAT-3DS mission is fully funded by the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES).
- The objective of the mission GSLV-F14/INSAT-3DS is to provide continuity of services to existing operational INSAT-3D (launched in 2013) and INSAT-3DR (September 2016) for enhanced meteorological observations, monitoring of land and ocean surfaces for weather forecasting and disaster warning.
  - It will also provide Satellite Aided Research and Rescue services (SAR).
- The satellite, once operational, would serve various departments under the Ministry of Earth Sciences, the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD), the National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT), the National Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasting, and the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services.
- The imager payloads, sounder payloads, data relay transponders and Satellite Aided Search and Rescue transponders incorporated in the latest mission will be used to study cloud properties, fog, rainfall, snow cover, snow depth, fire, smoke, land and ocean, among other uses.

About GSLV

- The Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) was termed the "naughty boy" of Indian space due to its repeated failures in the past.
  - At least four of the 15 launches using the GSLV so far have been unsuccessful.
  - In comparison, only two of the 60 missions so far by ISRO's workhorse PSLV (Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle), and none of the seven by its successor LVM-3, have failed.
- GSLV is a three-stage 51.7 m long launch vehicle having a liftoff mass of 420 tonnes.
- GSLV can be used to launch a variety of spacecraft capable of performing communications, navigation, earth resource surveys, and any other proprietary mission.

- The success of the GSLV-F14/INSAT-3DS mission is a big boost for ISRO ahead of the launch of the NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR) satellite, which is scheduled in the coming months.
- The NISAR will be launched by the GSLV Mark-II launch vehicle.
- NISAR, which is being jointly developed by NASA and ISRO, will map the entire globe in 12 days and provide "spatially and temporally consistent" data for understanding changes in Earth's ecosystems, ice mass, sea level rise and natural hazards such as earthquakes and tsunamis.
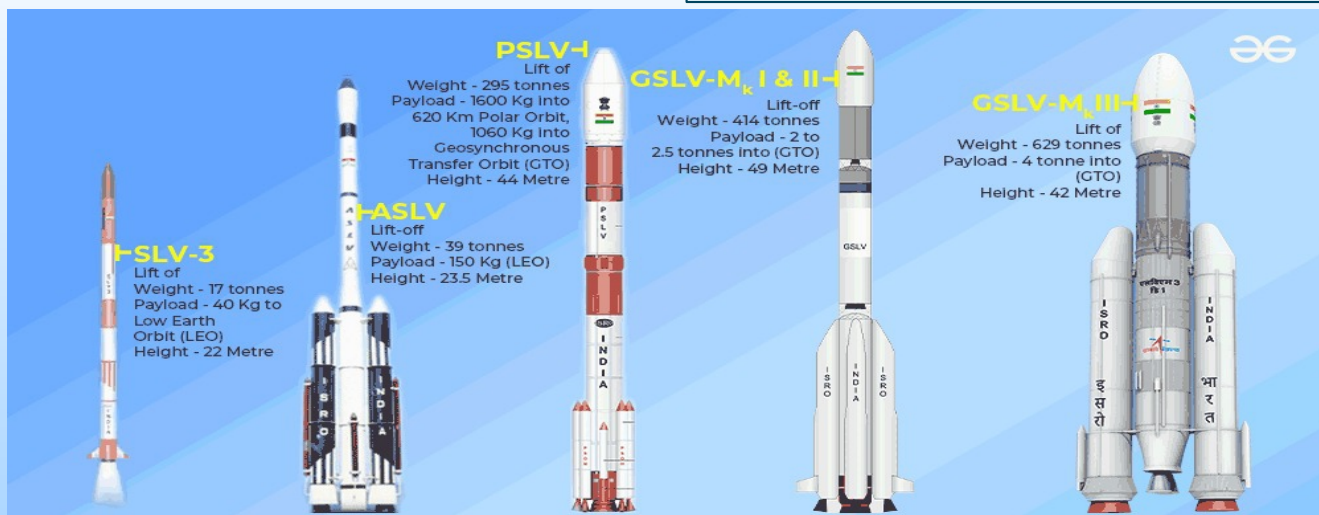
58th JNANPITH AWARD 2023

WHY IN NEWS?

- Celebrated Urdu poet and Bollywood writer and director Gulzar and Sanskrit scholar Jagadguru Rambhadracharya have been selected for the 58th Jnanpith Award for 2023, considered by many to be the country's highest literary honour.
  – It is the second time the award has been given for Sanskrit and the fifth time for Urdu.

Who is Gulzar?

- Gulzar or Sampooran Singh Kalra is considered one of the finest Urdu poets of his generation and is a top director and writer of Hindi cinema.
- Gulzar, born in 1934, has received the Sahitya Akademi Award for Urdu in 2002, the Dadasaheb Phalke Award in 2013, the Padma Bhushan in 2004, and at least five National Film awards for his work.
- His song "Jai Ho" for the film Slumdog Millionaire, received an Oscar in 2009 and Grammy in 2010. He is known for his work in Maachhis, Omkara, Dil Se, Guru and Aandhi.
- He has directed classics such as Koshish, Parichay, Mausam, and Ijaazat, as well as the television serial Mirza Ghalib.
- Along with his long film journey, Gulzar has been setting new milestones in the field of literature. In poetry, he invented a new genre 'Triveni' which is a non-mukaffa poem of three lines.
- Gulzar has always created something new through his poetry. For some time now he has also been paying serious attention to children's poetry.

Who is Jagadguru Rambhadracharya?

- Rambhadracharya, is a renowned Hindu spiritual leader, educator and writer of more than 240 books and texts, including four epics. He was born in 1950 in Jaunpur in Uttar Pradesh.
- He is also the founder and head of Tulsi Peeth in Chitrakoot in Madhya Pradesh.
- Rambhadracharya, a polyglot, who speaks 22 languages, is one of the present four Jagadguru Ramanandacharyas of the Ramananda sect and has been holding this position since 1982.
- A poet and writer in several Indian languages including Sanskrit, Hindi, Awadhi and Maithili, he received the Padma Vibhushan in 2015.
- He was named Giridhara Misra. He lost his eyesight at the age of two months due to trachoma and was home-tutored during the initial years by his grandfather.
  – By age five, he had memorized the entire Bhagwad Gita and by eight, the entire Ramcharitmanas.

About Prize

- The Jnanpith Award given annually for outstanding contributions to Indian literature since 1965.
- It is presented by the Bharatiya Jnanpith, which was established in 1944.
- The Award considers both English and other Indian languages. However, eligibility is restricted to Indian citizens. It is not given posthumously.
- The award carries a cash component of Rs 11 lakh, a statue of Vagdevi and a citation.
- Goan writer Damodar Mauzo received the prestigious award for 2022.

2024 SDG PROGRESS REPORTS FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

WHY IN NEWS?

- The 2024 SDG Progress Report, released by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) has painted a bleak picture of the performance of the countries of the Asia-Pacific region on the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals).

Key Highlights

- None of the 17 United Nations-mandated SDGs are on track in the Asia-Pacific region.
  - At the current pace of growth, the region will not attain the 17 SDGs until 2062 or will be 32 years behind schedule.
- Just 11 per cent of the 116 measurable SDG targets (out of the total 169) are on track.
  - By 2030, the region will achieve just one-third of the required progress if it continues on its current course.
- Goals 1 and 9, which are about elimination of poverty, and sustainable industry, innovation and infrastructure, respectively, have seen the maximum progress.
- Of the 17 SDGs, the progress towards the goal of climate action (SDG 13) remains critically behind and requires the greatest attention. This is due to the fact that progress on all SDG 13 targets is stalled or reversed.
- The report also called for a significant ramp-up in investment in sustainable infrastructure and renewable energy sources.
- Progress on mitigating hunger (SDG 2), enhancing health and well-being (SDG 3), ensuring clean water and sanitation (SDG 6), expanding affordable and clean energy (SDG 7) and building sustainable cities and communities (Goal 11) too has not been as needed.
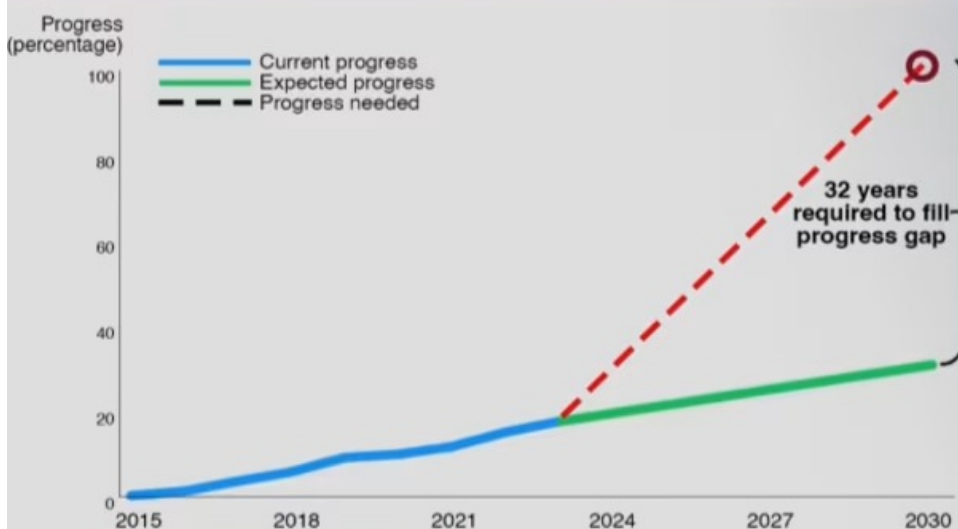
India's Performance

- India's performance has been mixed.
- The country performed well on 85 indicators, stagnated on 27, and declined on 36.
- India's overall SDG score improved by 6 points, rising from 60 in 2019 to 66 in 2020–21.
- Notable achievements include Goal 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) and Goal 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), with composite goal scores of 83 and 92, respectively.
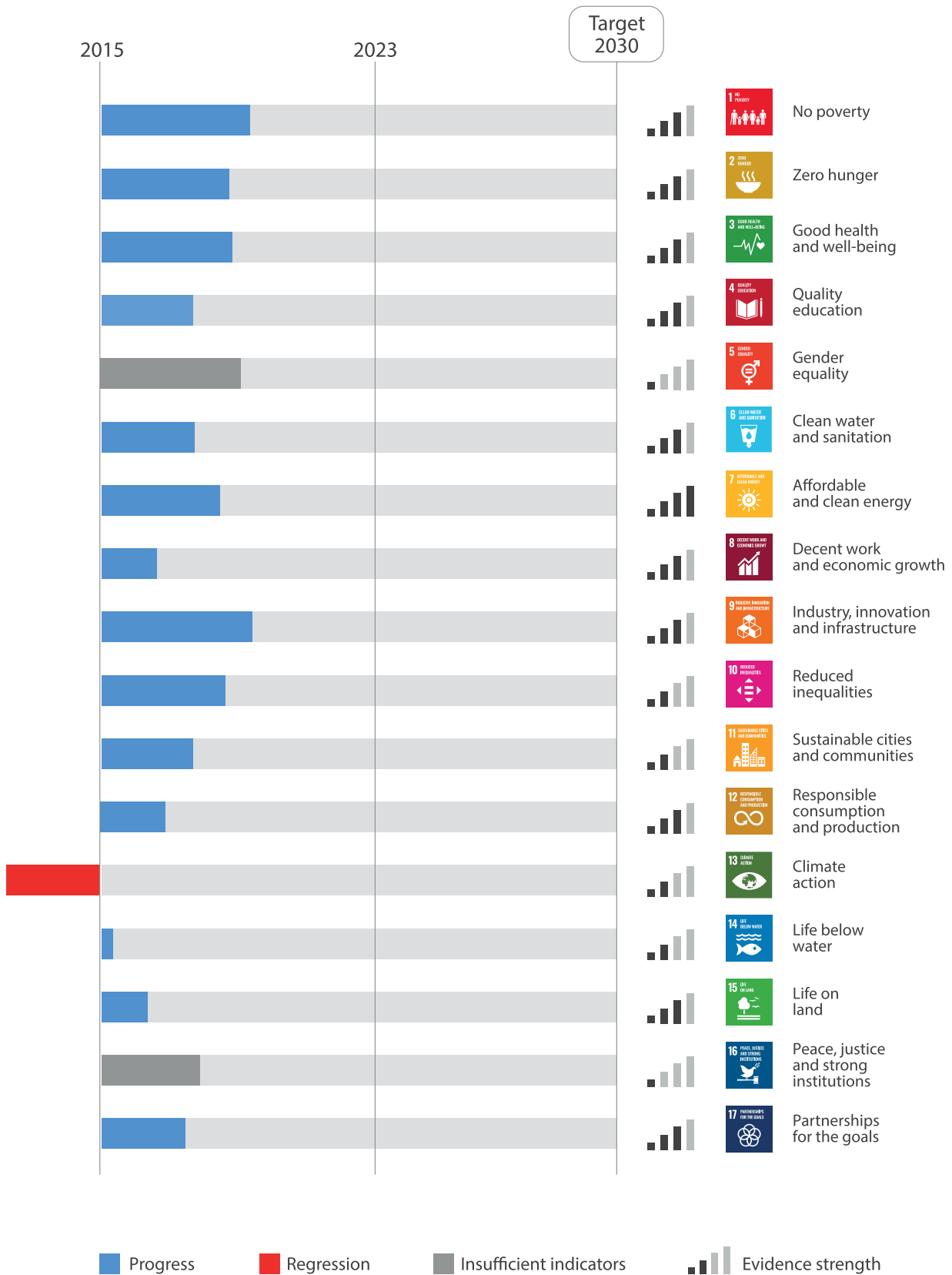
About UNESCAP

- The UNESCAP is the regional development arm of the United Nations for the Asia-Pacific region.
- The UNESCAP, established in 1947, has 53 Member States and 9 Associate Members from the Asia-Pacific Region including India.
- Headquarters: Bangkok, Thailand

AVERAGE PROGRESS RECORDED TOWARDS ALL 17 SDGS

	2015	2023	Target 2030

Progress | Regression | Insufficient indicators | Evidence strength

No poverty
Zero hunger
Good health and well-being
Quality education
Gender equality
Clean water and sanitation
Affordable and clean energy
Decent work and economic growth
Industry, innovation and infrastructure
Reduced inequalities
Sustainable cities and communities
Responsible consumption and production
Climate action
Life below water
Life on land
Peace, justice and strong institutions
Partnerships for the goals

Source: ESCAP Asia-Pacific SDG Gateway, SDG Progress Snapshot. Available at https://data.unescap.org.

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DIVORCED MUSLIM WOMEN'S RIGHT TO MAINTENANCE

WHY IN NEWS?

- The Supreme Court has decided to examine if a divorced Muslim woman is entitled to a claim of maintenance under Section 125 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) against her former husband — reigniting the debate on whether secular laws should be given precedence over distinct personal laws.
- On February 19, a bench comprising Justices BV Nagarathna and Augustine George Masih reserved its verdict in the case.

Background of the Case

- The current dispute arose after a Muslim man challenged a Telangana High Court direction to pay ₹10,000 interim maintenance to his former wife.
- The case involves an appeal by the Appellant, whose former wife approached a family court in Hyderabad, alleging that he had given her triple talaq and claimed monthly maintenance under Section 125 of the CrPC.
- The husband on the other hand contended that the provisions of the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986 (1986 Act), being a special law, would prevail over Section 125 of the CrPC.
- He argued that the 1986 Act gives jurisdiction to the First-Class Magistrate to decide the issue of mahr and payment of other subsistence and thus relief cannot be sought before the family court.
- He also apprised the court that the wife did not file any affidavit before the magistrate saying that she prefers the CrPC provisions over the 1986 Act, in accordance with Section 5 of the latter.

The 1986 Act

- The 1986 Act is a religion-specific law that provides for a procedure for a Muslim woman to claim maintenance during divorce.
    - It was enacted to essentially nullify the Supreme Court's 1985 decision in the case of Mohd. Ahmad Khan v. Shah Bano Begum which upheld a Muslim woman's right to seek maintenance from her divorced husband under Section 125 of the CrPC.
    - It restricted the maintenance period to the iddat period and tied the amount to the mahr or dowry given to the woman.
    - Iddat is a period, usually of three months, which a woman must observe after the death of her husband or a divorce before she can remarry.
    - After the completion of the iddat period, a woman can approach a first-class magistrate for maintenance in case she has not remarried and is not in a position to take care of herself financially.
- Subsequently, a Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court in the Danial Latifi v. Union Of India (2001) case upheld the constitutional validity of the 1986 Act by extending the right of a Muslim woman to get maintenance till she re-marries.
    - It, however, reduced the period of maintenance to the completion of iddat.
- In 2009, a Division Bench of the Supreme Court reiterated a divorced Muslim woman's right to claim maintenance under Section 125 of the CrPC as long as she does not remarry.
    - It further highlighted that such relief would be extended even after the expiry of the iddat period.
- In 2019, Justice Ahsan Amanullah of the Patna High Court set aside a family court order rejecting a Muslim woman's plea for maintenance by underscoring that she has the option to avail of maintenance both under the CrPC and the 1986 Act.
    - If she chose the CrPC, she could not be said to be debarred from seeking maintenance on account of being a divorced Muslim lady, the order added.

Section 125 of the CrPC

- The law governing maintenance for destitute wives, children, and parents has been codified under Section 125 of the CrPC.
- It stipulates that if any person "having sufficient means neglects or refuses to maintain" his wife, then a magistrate of the first class may, upon proof of such neglect or refusal, order such a person to make a monthly allowance for the maintenance of his wife at a monthly rate as the magistrate thinks fit.
- The explanation to this provision clarifies that a "wife" includes a woman who has been divorced by, or has obtained a divorce from, her husband and has not remarried.
- It does not specify anything about the woman's religion.
  - Many States have made religion-specific amendments to the section to allow a ceiling on the maintenance amount the court can order.

Prior Judicial Precedents

- In a plethora of judgments recently such as Arshiya Rizvi v. State of U.P. and Anr (2022), Razia v. State of U.P. (2022), and Shakila Khatun v. State of U.P (2023), Allahabad High Court has reaffirmed a divorced Muslim woman's right to claim maintenance under Section 125 of the CrPC even after the completion of the iddat period as long as she does not marry.
- In Mujeeb Rahiman v. Thasleena (2022), a single judge of the Kerala High Court observed that a divorced Muslim woman can seek maintenance under Section 125 of the CrPC until she obtains relief under Section 3 of the 1986 Act.
  - Such an order will remain in force until the amount payable under Section 3 is paid.
- Taking a differing stance, Justice A. Badharudeen of the Kerala High Court in Noushad Flourish v. Akhila Noushad (2023), ruled that a Muslim wife who effected her divorce by the pronouncement of khula (divorce at the instance of, and with the consent of the wife) cannot claim maintenance from her husband under Section 125 of the CrPC.

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
Government of India

Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav

Nari Shakti

From **Women Development** to **Women-led Development**

Abolishment of Triple Talaq
Providing **Security** to **Muslim Women**

Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act, 2019

Up to **3 years imprisonment** and a fine for practicing **instant Triple Talaq**

Triple Talaq Cases **decreased** by **82% within 1 year** of passing of the Act

GLOBAL INITIATIVE ON DIGITAL HEALTH (GIDH)

WHY IN NEWS?

- Achieving one of the three priority areas agreed upon during India's G20 presidency in 2023, the World Health Organization (WHO) on 21 February launched the Global Initiative on Digital Health (GIDH), a platform for sharing knowledge and digital products among countries.
- Digital health is a proven accelerator to advance health outcomes towards achieving Universal Health Coverage and the health-related Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.
  - It uses an array of digital technologies to make quality medical care services accessible, affordable, and sustainable.

Key Points

- The new GIDH initiative (pronounced "guide" for short) will operate as a WHO-managed network and platform to support the implementation of the Global Strategy on Digital Health 2020–2025.
- WHO serves as the Secretariat for the strategy implementation to converge and convene global standards, best practices and resources to fast-track digital health system transformation.
- The GIDH initiative aims to bring countries and partners together to achieve measurable outcomes by:
  - developing clear priority-driven investment plans for digital health transformation;
  - improving reporting and transparency of digital health resources;
  - facilitating knowledge exchange and collaboration across regions and countries to accelerate progress;
  - supporting whole-of-government approaches for digital health governance in countries; and
  - increasing technical and financial support to the implementation of the Global Strategy on Digital Health 2020–2025 and its next phase.
- The GIDH initiative will be a network of networks with four main components — the country needs tracker, country resource portal (a map of resources available in a country), and transformation toolbox that will share quality-assured digital tools and knowledge exchange.

What were the Three Priorities?

- The three priorities kept in mind the economic and social disruption caused by Covid-19, and what could be done to prevent such losses in the future.
  - i. Building resilient systems for health emergency prevention, preparedness, and response.
  - ii. Strengthening cooperation in the pharmaceutical sector with a focus on ensuring equitable availability and access to vaccines, diagnostics, and therapeutics during a pandemic.
  - iii. Creating a platform for sharing digital health innovations and solutions to ensure better and universal health coverage, like CoWIN and e-Sanjeevani.

India's Initiatives Related to Digital Health

- Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM)
- e-Sanjeevani Teleconsultation Service
- Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY)
- CoWIN App

ARTICLE 142 AND CHANDIGARH MAYOR'S ELECTION

WHY IN NEWS?

- In overturning the results of the January 30 elections for the post of Mayor of the Chandigarh Municipal Corporation, the Supreme Court on February 20 invoked the sweeping powers conferred on the court under Article 142 of the Constitution.
- The court used its power under Article 142 of the Constitution to do "complete justice" and protect the sanctity of electoral democracy.

What is Article 142 of the Constitution?

- Article 142 provides a unique power to the Supreme Court, to do "complete justice" between the parties, where, at times, the law or statute may not provide a remedy.
- It enables the Supreme Court to exercise executive and legislative functions in certain situations, such as issuing guidelines, directions, or orders to the government or other authorities.
- It allows the Supreme Court to intervene in matters of public interest, human rights, constitutional values, or fundamental rights, and to protect them from any violation or infringement.
- It enhances the Supreme Court's role as the guardian of the constitution, the final arbiter of the law, and as a source of judicial activism and innovation.
- Article 142 is supported by several other provisions, including Article 32 (which ensures the right to constitutional remedies), Article 141 (mandating that all courts within India must abide by the Supreme Court's decisions), and Article 136 (which allows for the Special Leave Petition).
  - This collective framework is known by the term "judicial activism."
  - This concept has often led to the Supreme Court overriding parliamentary legislation to deliver "complete justice," as however, Article 142 is not without its limitations and challenges.
  - Some of them are - it may encroach upon the principle of separation of powers and the domain of the executive and the legislature and may invite criticism of judicial overreach or activism.

SC and Article 142

- In the Bhopal gas tragedy case ('Union Carbide Corporation vs Union of India'), the SC in 1991 ordered UCC to pay $470 million in compensation for the victims of the tragedy.
  - In doing so, the Bench highlighted the wide scope of Article 142 (1) and clarified that its powers are of a different quality and not subject to express statutory prohibitions
- In 1998, the apex court in 'Supreme Court Bar Association vs Union of India' held that the powers under Article 142 are supplementary in nature and could not be used to supplant or override a substantive law and "build a new edifice where none existed earlier".
  - The court said that the powers conferred by Article 142 are curative and cannot be construed as powers "which authorise the court to ignore the substantive rights of a litigant while dealing with a cause pending before it".
- In its 2006 ruling in 'A. Jideranath vs Jubilee Hills Co-op House Building Society', the Supreme Court discussed the scope of the power, holding that in its exercise no injustice should be caused to a person not party to the case.
- In 2006, the apex court ruling by a five-judge Bench in 'State of Karnataka vs Umadevi' also clarified that "complete justice" under Article 142 means justice according to law and not sympathy while holding that it will "not grant a relief which would amount to perpetuating an illegality encroaching into the legislative domain."

Results 'patently illegal', says top court

A look at how SC held that the results of Chandigarh mayoral polls were illegal

The election process

'Defacement' of ballots: The bench physically inspected the ballots and found that barring the writing on it made by the presiding officer (**Anil Masih**), votes were in favour of the AAP candidate

Plea to conduct poll again: Solicitor general representing Chandigarh admin and advocate for the BJP cadidate suggested fresh elections, but SC rejected this

ON PRESIDING OFFICER

Votes counted afresh: Instead, the top court opted to count the votes and added the 8 "nulled" votes to the tally of 12 votes secured by AAP's Kuldeep Kumar.

20 for AAP **TO** **16** for BJP

The final vote tally according to the SC

"We come to the conclusion that the result declared by presiding officer is patently illegal and is set aside," SC said.

The court blasted Anil Masih and ordered proceedings be initiated against him for "deliberately defacing" ballots and then making false statements

"By his conduct he has unlawfully altered course of mayoral election. And in making a solemn statement on Monday, the presiding officer has expressed patent falsehood for which he needs to be held accountable," the bench said.
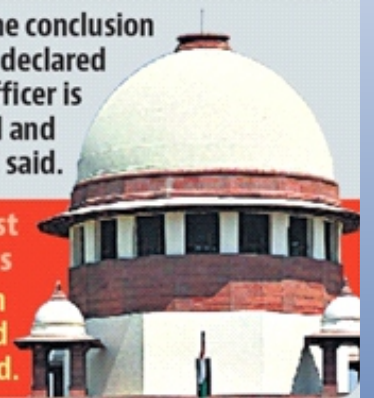
LEGAL EDUCATION REFORMS IN INDIA

WHY IN NEWS?

- The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law, and Justice recently submitted a significant report on legal education, making several path-breaking recommendations to strengthen the quality of legal education in India.
- Since Independence, legal education, unlike medicine and engineering, has not been a top priority for India's policymakers.

Key Recommendations

- The committee recommended the creation of an independent body called the National Council for Legal Education and Research (NCLER) to oversee non-litigation aspects of legal education and limit the Bar Council of India's regulatory powers to regulate legal education.
- The committee emphasises the need to prioritise and promote research in legal education, which, in turn, will lead to better teaching outcomes and help students develop a critical perspective.
- Further, to strengthen research, the committee recommended that there is a need to recruit world-class global faculty who are top researchers.
  - Acknowledging the necessity for increased state funding to support law schools.
- The committee is cognisant of the effect of globalisation on legal education.
  - It thus correctly recommends developing and delivering a global curriculum, promoting student and faculty international exchange programmes, incorporating more international law courses in the curriculum, and increasing students' exposure to different legal systems.
- The Committee recommends that topics such as Law and Medicine, Sports Law, Energy Law, Tech Law/Cyber Law, Commercial & Investment Arbitrations, Securities Law, Telecom laws, and banking laws must not only be included but must be given mandatory status as the interdisciplinary subjects are the need of the hour.
- The Committee further recommends that the Universities should work with BCI to incorporate more practical training programs like moot court competitions, where students can apply legal theory in a simulated courtroom setting, enhancing oral advocacy and critical thinking skills.
- The Committee recommends that for every academic year, the undergraduate law student should mandatorily go for a two-month apprenticeship to get enrolled as an advocate.
- The Committee recommends that Law graduates must be made more conversant with emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI), blockchain and other IT-related tools, which in the years ahead, will certainly have a bearing on how law is practised.
- The Committee feels that with India's increasing role in the global context, there is a need to produce legal luminaries who can advise for protecting India's interest as well as ensure fair, just and reasonable dealing in the international sphere.
- The Committee further recommends that both Student exchange and faculty exchange programs with Indian and Foreign institutions should be encouraged to gain perspectives of other legal systems and fields.

Origin of Legal Education in India

- The origin of Legal education in India revolves around the Vedic era whereby the concept of Dharma was the source of legal structure.
- In Ancient India, the Chola judicial system was the forerunner of the present Indian judicial system.
  - The principle of "All are equal before law" or the present 'Rule of law' was pursued in the Chola kingdom.
- In Medieval India, for the first time in India, the Mughals established the system of courts by following the formal procedure.
  - The change in the legal system of India mainly during this period gave the emergence of legal experts who were known as Vakils.
- In British India, the development of legal education mainly took place by the establishment of various Charters in different times by the Colonial Government.
  - The Adalat System in India formally started in 1772, but development reached to a level in 1833 after the establishment of the Law Commission in India to codify the laws.

DID YOU KNOW?

- The Bar Council of India is a statutory body established under the Advocates Act, 1961, and it regulates legal practice and legal education in India.
- The Advocates Act of 1961 was enacted to revise and unify laws concerning legal practitioners and to establish the Bar Council and an All-India Bar.
- In March 2023, the Bar Council of India allowed foreign lawyers and law firms to practise in India.
  - Although they cannot appear in court, they can advise clients on foreign law and work on corporate transactions.
- India's ranked improved to 113 out of 190 countries in the World Bank's Women, Business and Law index.
- In India Justice Report (IJR) 2022 the State of Karnataka has achieved the top rank among the 18 large and mid-sized States with populations over one crore, as per the justice delivery namely Police, Judiciary, Prisons, and Legal Aid.
  - The State of Tamil Nadu has ranked in second position and Telangana in Third. The State of Uttar Pradesh is at rank 18 which is the lowest.
- The 22nd law panel was constituted for a period of three years on February 21, 2020 and its chairperson, Justice Rituraj Awasthi (retd), assumed office on November 9, 2022.
  - However, the tenure of the 22nd Law Commission has been extended up to August 31, 2024.

CHINA'S 'XIAOKANG' BORDER DEFENCE VILLAGES ALONG THE LAC

WHY IN NEWS?

- Chinese nationals have started occupying several of their model "Xiaokang" border defence villages across India's north-eastern borders which the country has been building along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) since 2019.
  - Some villages along the LAC, and opposite the Lohit Valley and the Tawang sector of Arunachal Pradesh, are now being occupied by residents.

'Xiaokang' Border Defence Villages

- China has been constructing 628 such Xiaokang or "well-off villages" along India's borders with the Tibet Autonomous Region for over five years now.
- The structures include mostly double-storey, large and spacious buildings. The exact purposes of these villages have remained unclear, but they were understood to be dual-use infrastructure — can be used both for civil and military purposes.
- China has been constantly building infrastructure all along the LAC, including in Arunachal Pradesh's Tawang region and the Siang Valley.
  - This includes the construction of new roads and bridges to improve connectivity through the passes. China has also been constructing houses and other infrastructure in Bhutanese territory.

About LAC

- The LAC is the demarcation that separates Indian-controlled territory from Chinese-controlled territory.
- India considers the LAC to be 3,488 km long, while the Chinese consider it to be only around 2,000 km.
- It is divided into three sectors:
  - i. the eastern sector which spans Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim,
  - ii. the middle sector in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh, and
  - iii. the western sector in Ladakh.

India's Response

- The strategic community looks at it as a way to assert Chinese claims over certain areas along the LAC.
  - Therefore, in response, India is also enhancing its border infrastructure through several initiatives like the Vibrant Villages Programme.
- The Indian government announced the Vibrant Villages Programme in 2022 to develop its border villages into modern villages with all amenities and as tourist attractions.
  - Under the programme, India plans to develop 663 border villages into modern villages in the first phase.
  - In Arunachal Pradesh, villages in the eastern part of the state and in the Tawang region have been identified such as Zemithang, Taksing, Chayang Tajo, Tuting and Kibithu.
- The BRO has completed 90 infrastructure projects along the India–China border.
  - Also, in Arunachal Pradesh, three major highways are at different stages of construction: the Trans-Arunachal Highway; the Frontier Highway; and the East-West Industrial Corridor Highway.
  - There are plans to improve connectivity to Tawang with the construction of at least two alternate axes — in addition to the existing one connecting Guwahati and Tawang.

FINANCIAL DEVOLUTION AMONG STATES

WHY IN NEWS?

- Recently various Opposition-ruled States especially from south India have claimed that they have not been receiving their fair share as per the present scheme of financial devolution.
- They have raised issues about their less than proportionate share of receipt in tax revenue when compared to their contribution towards tax collection.

What is a Divisible Pool of Taxes?

- Article 270 of the Constitution provides for the scheme of distribution of net tax proceeds collected by the Union government between the Centre and the States.
  - The taxes that are shared between the Centre and the States include corporation tax, personal income tax, Central GST, the Centre's share of the Integrated Goods and Services Tax (IGST) etc.
  - This division is based on the recommendation of the Finance Commission (FC) that is constituted every five years as per the terms of Article 280.
- Apart from the share of taxes, States are also provided grants-in-aid as per the recommendation of the FC.
  - The divisible pool, however, does not include cess and surcharge that are levied by the Centre.
- Currently, as per the recommendation of the 15th FC, the share of States from the divisible pool (vertical devolution) stands at 41%.
- Recently, the Union government has notified the constitution of the 16th FC under the chairmanship of Dr. Arvind Panagariya for making its recommendations for the period of 2026-31.

Basis for Allocation

- The distribution among the States (horizontal devolution) is based on various criteria. These are -
  - 'Income distance' is the distance of a State's income from the State with the highest per capita income.
    - States with lower per capita income would be given a higher share to maintain equity among States.
  - 'Population' is the population as per the 2011 Census.
    - Till the 14th FC, weightage was given for the population as per the 1971 Census but that has been discontinued in the 15th FC.
  - 'Forest and ecology' consider the share of dense forest of each State in the aggregate dense forest of all the States.
  - 'The demographic performance' criterion has been introduced to reward efforts made by States in controlling their population.
    - States with a lower fertility ratio will be scored higher on this criterion.
  - 'Tax effort' as a criterion has been used to reward States with higher tax collection efficiency.

Table 1 : The criteria for horizontal devolution among States over the last five FCs

Criteria	11th FC 2000-05	12th FC 2005-10	13th FC 2010-15	14th FC 2015-20	15th FC 2021-26
Income Distance	62.5	50	47.5	50	45
Population (1971 Census)	10	25	25	17.5	-
Population (2011 Census)	-	-	-	10	15
Area	7.5	10	10	15	15
Forest cover	-	-	-	7.5	-
Forest and ecology	-	-	-	-	10
Infrastructure index	7.5	-	-	-	-
Fiscal discipline	7.5	7.5	17.5	-	-
Demographic performance	-	-	-	-	12.5
Tax effort	5	7.5	-	-	2.5
Total	100	100	100	100	100

RAISINA DIALOGUE 2024

WHY IN NEWS?

- Recently, the 9th edition of the Raisina Dialogue was held in New Delhi from February 21 to February 23.

Key Points

- The conference was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- Greece's Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis joined the inauguration session as the chief guest.
- More than 2,500 participants from around 115 countries joined the conference in person.
- The theme of the 2024 edition is "Chaturanga: Conflict, Contest, Cooperate, Create."
- During the three-day conference, the participants engaged with each other over six "thematic pillars".
- These include –
  i.   Tech Frontiers: Regulations & Realities
  ii. Peace with the Planet: Invest & Innovate
  iii. War & Peace: Armouries & Asymmetries
  iv. Decolonising Multilateralism: Institutions & Inclusion
  v.   The Post 2030 Agenda: People & Progress
  vi. Defending Democracy: Society & Sovereignty

What is Raisina Dialogue?

- The Raisina Dialogue, India's premier foreign policy conference, was launched in 2016 along the lines of the Shangri-La Dialogue with a focus on strategic issues and connectivity in the Asia-Pacific region commensurate with its rising global profile.
  – Singapore hosts the Shangri-La Dialogue every year.
- The Raisina Dialogue is an annual conference on geopolitics and geoeconomics, which aims to address the most challenging issues faced by the world.
  – The Dialogue takes its name from the Raisina Hills, where India's seat of power resides.
- The conference takes place in New Delhi and is attended by people from political, business, media, and civil society backgrounds.
- Delhi-based think tank Observer Research Foundation, in partnership with the Ministry of External Affairs, hosts the conference.

Key Takeaways

- External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar called India a "bridging power", a country seeking common ground through a "multi-vector" policy, and playing the role of a "Vishwamitra" or friend of the world.
- European Ministers urged India to reconsider trade and ties with Russia, and to press the case for Ukraine's sovereignty ahead of the second anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine that falls on February 24.
  – In particular, they urged India to join a "Peace Conference" in Switzerland, set to be held shortly, at the request of Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky.
  – Since February 2022, the Modi government has abstained from all United Nations resolutions on Ukraine and maintained ties with Russia while sending aid to Ukraine.
- Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis spoke about the importance of connectivity projects such as the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor.
- Global governance, the inequality at the top of the UN Security Council and the need for reform were discussed.
- The greater part of the conversations, however, focused on global conflicts, with the heavy presence of the European dignitaries turning the spotlight on the Russian war in Ukraine, and panels on military and naval strategy concentrating on the need to handle an aggressive China.
- The ministerial contingent from Central and Eastern Europe, which included all Ministers of the Baltic-Nordic forum, enabled a new diplomatic outreach for the government.
  – This outreach aims to establish trade agreements and investment ties with this part of Europe, which is often soft-overlooked but economically competitive.

SURROGACY RULES CHANGED IN INDIA

WHY IN NEWS?

- The Union government on February 21 modified the Surrogacy (Regulation) Rules, 2022, and notified that both gametes need not come from a married couple in case they are certified as suffering from medical conditions.
- This revoked a previous amendment made in March 2023 that banned the use of such donor gametes.

- Prior to the March 2023 notification — which insisted on the use of both eggs and sperm from the intending couple — surrogacy rules allowed the use of donor eggs, but not sperm.
- The March 2023 notification was challenged in the Supreme Court by a woman with Mayer-Rokitansky-Kuster-Hauser (MRKH) Syndrome, a rare congenital disorder that affects the reproductive system and can cause infertility.

Key Amendments

- As per the amended Surrogacy (Regulation) Rules, 2022 the District Medical Board has to certify that either the husband or wife is suffering from a medical condition, necessitating the use of donor gamete.
  - On March 14, 2023, Form 2 (Consent of the Surrogate Mother and Agreement for Surrogacy) of the Surrogacy Rules read with Rule 7 was amended to stipulate that donor eggs could not be used for gestational surrogacy of an intending couple.
- However, the notification outlines that the child to be born through surrogacy must have at least one gamete from the intended parents.
  - This implies that a married couple where both partners are unable to use their gametes due to an existing medical condition cannot opt for surrogacy.
- The change is however not applicable to widowed or divorced women.
  - The modified rules state — "Single woman (widow or divorcee) undergoing surrogacy must use self-eggs and donor sperms to avail surrogacy procedure."

What is Surrogacy?

- The Act defines surrogacy as a practice where a woman gives birth to a child for an intending couple with the intention to hand it over to them after the birth.
- It is permitted only for altruistic purposes or for couples who suffer from proven infertility or disease.
  - Surrogacy is prohibited for commercial purposes including for sale, prostitution or any other forms of exploitation.
- Moreover, once the child is born, it will be deemed to be the biological child of the couple for all intents and purposes.
- Abortion of such a fetus is allowed only with the consent of the surrogate mother and the authorities and must adhere to the provisions of the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act.
- A surrogate mother has to be a close relative of the couple, a married woman with a child of her own, aged between 25-35 years, who has been a surrogate only once in her life.
  - She must also possess a certificate of medical and psychological fitness for surrogacy.

- The Act allows access to surrogacy only to two categories of single women — those who are widowed or divorced.
  - Even in these cases, the regulations stipulate that the woman's own eggs have to be used; this was underlined by the recent notification as well.
- These provisions have been challenged in the Delhi High Court by a 44-year-old unmarried woman on the ground that the restrictions are violative of her fundamental rights under Articles 14 (right to equality) and 21 (right to life) of the Constitution.
  - Questioning the association of marital status with the eligibility for surrogacy, the petitioner has pointed out that at her age, the use of donor eggs is recommended by medical practitioners.

MONEY BILLS AND CONSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGE

WHY IN NEWS?

- Although the Supreme Court struck down the electoral bond scheme as unconstitutional earlier this month, it did not clarify one aspect of the challenge — the use of the money Bill route by the government to pass key legislation.

What is a Money Bill?

- According to Article 110 of the Constitution, a Bill can be designated as a money Bill if it exclusively deals with certain subjects.
  - These include taxation, financial obligations of the Indian government, the consolidated fund (revenue received by the government through taxes and expenses incurred in the form of borrowings and loans) or contingency fund (money to meet unforeseen expenditure) of India, or "any matter incidental" to the subjects listed in the Article.
- The Article 110 also states that the Lok Sabha Speaker will have the final say on whether a Bill is a money Bill or not.
- Money Bills provide a fast-tracked option for the enactment of laws by Parliament.
  - Typically, both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha must pass a Bill before it can become law.
- Under Article 109, however, a Bill introduced as a money Bill only requires assent from the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha merely has 14 days to consider the Bill and return it with recommendations.
  - The Lok Sabha may either accept or reject these recommendations and enact the money Bill into law.

> The current issue emerged when the NDA government began to use the money Bill route to enact crucial laws such as the Aadhaar Act, 2016, amendments to the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA), and the Foreign Contributions Regulations Act, 2010.

Challenged in the Supreme Court

- **Aadhaar Act**
  - The petitioners claimed that parts of the Act were passed as a money Bill, despite containing provisions that were unrelated to the subjects listed under Article 110.
  - The Supreme Court, however, upheld the Aadhaar Act as constitutional in September 2018.
  - But the court added that the Speaker's decision on whether a Bill is a money Bill or not, despite being "final" according to the Constitution, can still be subject to judicial review.
  - The court also observed that the passage of the Aadhaar Act as a Money Bill is an abuse of the constitutional process and also highlighted how passing an ordinary Bill as a Money Bill would limit the role of the Rajya Sabha in lawmaking.
- **Constitutionality of the Finance Act, 2017**
  - The Finance Act, 2017 brought in a number of changes to different Acts, including the Appellate Tribunal and Other Authorities (Qualifications, Experience and Other Conditions of Service of Members) Rules of 2017.
  - In its 2019 judgement, the apex court quashed some of the reforms introduced by the law, but it didn't strike down the entire Finance Act, 2017.
  - The Supreme Court observed that the five-judge bench in the Aadhaar case had not detailed the scope of what constitutes a money Bill.
  - As they were a bench of the same size, the court referred the question of whether the 2017 Finance Act was validly passed as a Money Bill to a larger seven-judge bench.
  - Challenges to amendments passed through the Money Bill route have been put on hold until the seven-judge bench decides on what constitutes a Money Bill.

HANOOMAN - A SERIES OF LARGE LANGUAGE MODELS

WHY IN NEWS?

- Recently, the BharatGPT group announced that it would launch its first ChatGPT-like 'Hanooman'.

What is Hanooman?

- Hanooman is a series of large language models (LLMs) that can respond in 11 Indian languages like Hindi, Tamil, and Marathi, with plans to expand to more than 20 languages.
- Hanooman has been designed to work in four fields, including health care, governance, financial services, and education.
- Hanooman has multimodal AI capabilities for generating text-to-text, text-to-speech, text-to-video and vice versa content.
- Hanooman joins the Indic AI race with other language models such as Ola's Krutrim, SaravamAI's OpenHathi and IIT-Madras's Airavata model.
- The BharatGPT ecosystem, built Hanomaan, spearheaded by IIT Bombay along with seven other IITs, receives backing from the Department of Science and Technology, Seetha Mahalaxmi Healthcare, and Reliance Jio.

What are LLMs?

- Large language models use deep learning techniques to process large amounts of text.
  - They work by processing vast amounts of text, understanding the structure and meaning, and learning from it.
- LLMs are 'trained' to identify meanings and relationships between words.
  - The greater the amount of training data a model is fed, the smarter it gets at understanding and producing text.
- The training data is usually large datasets, such as Wikipedia, OpenWebText, and the Common Crawl Corpus.
  - These contain large amounts of text data, which the models use to understand and generate natural language.

- **Hanooman is** a series of open-source Indic language AI models named after Hindu deity Hanuman
- **It is** the result of one such project by Indian Institute of Technology-Bombay
  - **Hanooman can generate both text and speech in several Indian languages**
- **The first** version of the model is scheduled to be launched late March

DID YOU KNOW?

- Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT Madras) and Translational Health Science and Technology Institute (THSTI), as part of 'Interdisciplinary Group for Advanced Research on Birth Outcomes – DBT India Initiative' (GARBH-Ini) program, have developed the first India-specific Artificial Intelligence (AI) model to determine the age of a foetus in a pregnant woman in the second and third trimesters precisely.
- Recently, a controversy erupted when Gemini, an AI model, made uncharitable comments about Prime Minister Modi but was circumspect when the same query was posed about Donald Trump and Volodymyr Zelenskyy.
- In December 2023, Prime Minister Narendra Modi used an AI-powered Indian language translation tool, Bhashini, during a speech at the Kashi Tamil Sangamam in Uttar Pradesh's Varanasi, to provide a translated version in real-time.
- Recently, the Union Cabinet approved a Rs 10,371.92 crore India Artificial Intelligence Mission for the next five years, aimed at creating computing infrastructure in public-private partnerships.
- India is the lead chair of Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) in 2024. India is a founding member of GPAI, having joined the multi-stakeholder initiative on June 15, 2020.

ILLUSTRATION: SANTAN

THE PASSING OF A LEGAL DOYEN

FALI SAM NARIMAN

Fali in court:
9 notable cases

In his 75-year career, Fali S Nariman played a crucial role in a number of landmark cases — from the collegium system of appointing judges to Cauvery water dispute between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

Here's a look at some of the cases ➤

The 2nd judges case: *Establishment of the Supreme Court collegium system*

In 1981, SC granted central govt authority over judicial appointments and transfers, allowing the President to reject recommendations from CJI, but in 1993, following a challenge by Supreme Court Advocates -on-Record Association, the court established the Supreme Court Collegium.

It was represented by Senior Advocate Nariman among others.
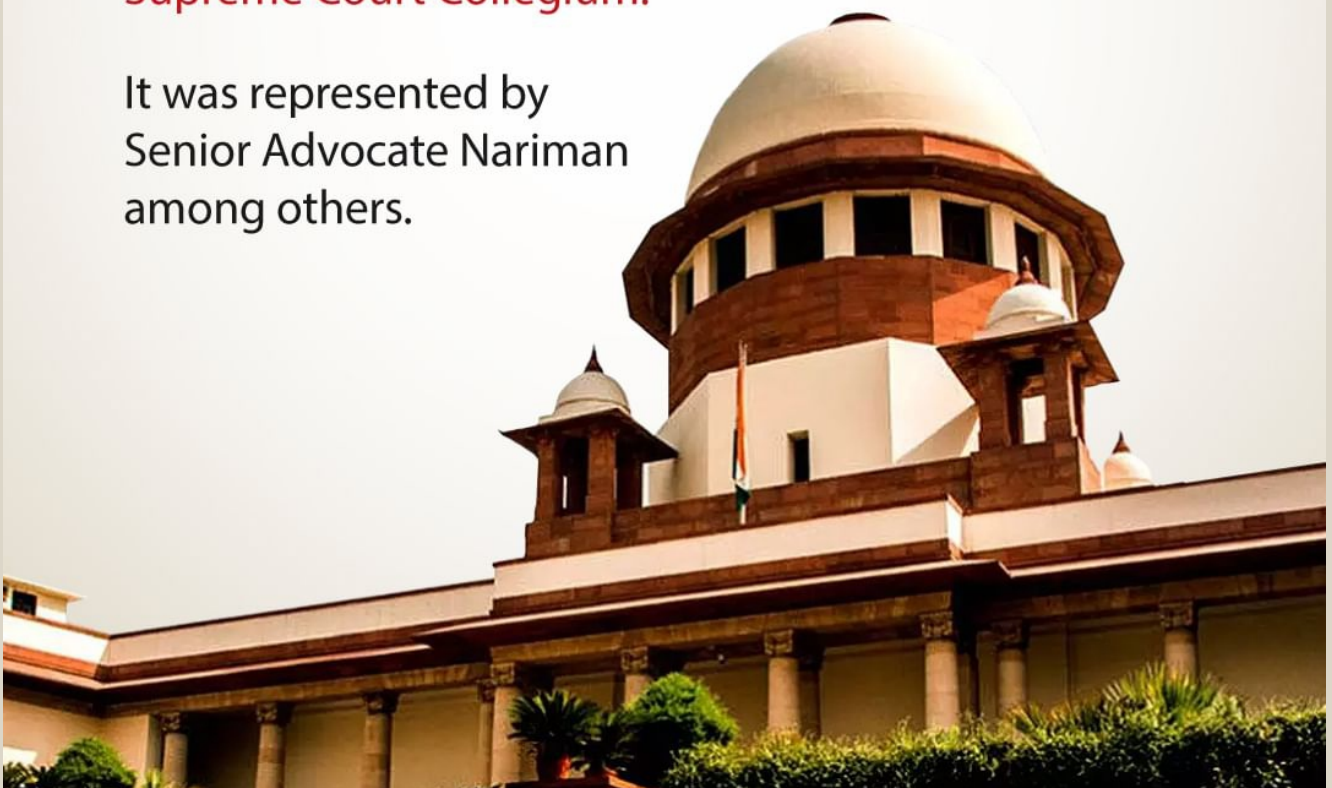
The 3rd judges case: *CJI must consult other SC judges before making recommendations for judicial appointments*

In 1998, President K R Narayanan sought a clarification from SC on the procedure for appointment of judges by issuing Presidential Reference under Article143 of the Constitution.

Nariman made submissions to assist the court in the case.

National Judicial Appointments Commission case: *SC struck down the NJAC Act as 'unconstitutional and void'*

Nariman argued that NJAC would impinge upon judicial independence if central govt and the legislature were allowed to participate in the selection and appointment of judges.

Illustration: Suvajit Dey

Golak Nath case: *SC ruled that Parliament can't curtail fundamental rights*

Nariman appeared on behalf of the intervenors who supported the petitioners. They argued that Parliament's power to amend the Constitution under Article 368 did not include Articles contained in the fundamental rights chapter.

Union Carbide case: *Compensation worth $470 million paid to Bhopal gas tragedy victims*

Nariman appeared for Union Carbide and offered to pay $426 million as compensation.

The old lady who lost her eyes sites in Bhopal Gas leakage.   Express archive photo

TMA Pai foundation case: *Minorities have the right to establish and administer education institutions*

Nariman argued in support of rights of minorities to establish and administer educational institutions under Article 30(1) of the Constitution.

Express archive photo

Arunachal Pradesh crisis case: *Governor to act upon aid and advice of the council of ministers, CM*

Nariman appeared in the case —
Nabam Rebia, and Bamang Felix v. Deputy Speaker —
on behalf of the house whip Bamang Felix.

He argued the governor did not have power to advance the Assembly session as it could only be done upon aid and advice of council of ministers and CM.

The Indian EXPRESS

Jayalalithaa corruption case: *Bail for the former CM*

Nariman appeared on behalf of Jayalalithaa. He convinced the court to grant her bail against executing the fine and suspend the sentence passed by the Bengaluru court.

Express archive photo

Cauvery water dispute case: *On questions of federalism*

Nariman represented Karnataka for over 30 years in Cauvery water-sharing dispute.

In 2016, SC ordered Karnataka to release 6,000 cusecs of water from Sept 21 to Sept 27. Nariman skillfully negotiated several interim orders for Karnataka on quantum of water to be released to TN.

Express archive photo

Visit 🔗 **LINK IN BIO** 🅢 to know more about Fali S Nariman's role in the landmark cases.

QUICK FACTS

CONTEMPORARY EVENTS OF SIGNIFICANCE FROM INDIA AND THE WORLD

1. Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has unveiled the **'Sangam: Digital Twin' initiative**, an unparalleled venture inviting Expressions of Interest (EoI) from industry pioneers, startups, MSMEs, academia, innovators and forward-thinkers. Digital Twin technology offers a solution by creating virtual replicas of physical assets, allowing for real-time monitoring, simulation and analysis for experimental iterations and feedback loops to adapt to the changes to achieve the best outcomes.

2. The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (**AIIMS) Delhi**, in collaboration with the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing, Pune, has launched an **Artificial Intelligence (AI) platform** - **iOncology.ai.** - designed for the early detection of breast and ovarian cancer. iOncology AI aims to sequence the genomes of 3,000 cancer patients who are currently seeking treatment at AIIMS, aiming to address a fundamental question: Does a patient's genetic makeup correlate with the efficacy of diverse cancer therapies?

3. In a groundbreaking development, **Aarogya-Doctor on Wheels**, an innovative mobile telemedicine clinic driven by Artificial Intelligence (AI), has revolutionized healthcare access for remote communities in the Udhampur-Kathua-Doda Lok Sabha constituency of Jammu and Kashmir. Inspired by the Digital Health Mission and Ayushman Bharat, this trailblazing super-speciality mobile hospital offers doorstep consultations with medical professionals, effectively bridging the gap between urban and rural healthcare services.

4. The **Global Pulses Conference**, an annual meeting of pulses producers, processors and traders, suggested that India augment the production of pulses to meet the nutritional requirements. The two-day conference is jointly organised by the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd. (NAFED) and the Global Pulse Confederation (GPC). India is aiming to achieve self-sufficiency in pulses by 2027, focusing on expanding cultivation and supplying new varieties of seeds.

5. The **Foundation Day of Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh** is celebrated every year on **February 20** to honour the northeastern state's accomplishment of statehood in 1987. It was on this day that the Lushai Hills Autonomous District Council was raised to the status of a complete state, turning into the 23rd state of India. On February 20, 1987, Arunachal Pradesh attained full statehood, becoming the 25th state of the Indian Union.

6. The **Maharashtra Assembly on February 20** unanimously passed a Bill granting **10% reservation** in education and government jobs to the **Maratha community**. The Bill does not disturb the existing OBC quota and is distinct from the Maharashtra government's earlier notification on the issuance of Kunbi caste certificates to eligible Marathas for inclusion within the OBC category. Thus, non-Kunbi Marathas will continue to be covered under the new law, making the Maratha community eligible for reservations under two separate categories for the first time.

7. The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved the proposal of the Ministry of Home Affairs for the continuation of the implementation of the **Umbrella Scheme on 'Safety of Women'** at a total cost of Rs.1179.72 crore during the period from **2021-22 to 2025-26.** Of the overall project cost, a portion will be financed by the MHA from its budget, while the remaining will be sourced from the Nirbhaya Fund.

8. Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the **'Sudarshan Setu,'** **India's longest cable-stayed bridge** on 26 February. Spanning 2.32 km, the bridge connects Okha and Beyt in Dwarka, a pilgrimage site in Gujarat. This bridge, India's longest cable-stayed structure, incorporates solar panels on the upper sections of its footpath, generating one megawatt of electricity. Previously known as the 'Signature Bridge,' it has been renamed 'Sudarshan Setu' or Sudarshan Bridge.

9. The **Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts**, an autonomous body under the Union Culture Ministry, proposes to conduct a linguistic survey across the country to create a **'Language Atlas'** of India. The aim is to showcase the linguistic diversity of the country. India recognises 22 languages officially, which are part of Schedule 8 of the Indian Constitution. According to Census data, 97 % of the Indian population speaks one of these languages. There are an additional 99 non-scheduled languages included in the Census, and according to the 2011 Census, around 37.8 million people identify one of these non-Scheduled languages as their mother tongue.

10. Six years after he announced the decision to send Indians into space, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 29

February handed over the **'Astronaut Wings'** to **four pilots chosen for the Gaganyaan mission**. This is the first maiden appearance of the 'astronauts' selected for India's first human space flight programme. The astronaut team has three Group Captains - Prashanth Balakrishnan Nair, Ajit Krishnan, and Angad Pratap and a Wing Commander Shubanshu Shukla. They will follow in the footsteps of Rakesh Sharma, the first and only Indian to have travelled to space, way back in 1984, in a Russian spacecraft. (Two Indian-Americans — Kalpana Chawla and Sunita Williams — have also been to space on NASA missions).

11. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inaugurated the **Ammunition & Missiles Complex, the first leg of the state's defence corridor in Kanpur**. The Adani ammunition centre is South Asia's largest ammunition manufacturing complex and has been dedicated to the brave warriors of the Balakot strike who carried out 'Operation Bandar' in response to the Pulwama attack that claimed the lives of 40 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) soldiers.

12. **India's first septic tank/manhole cleaning robot**, **Homosep Atom**, offering an end-to-end solution to eliminate manual scavenging, is strengthening the Swachhata Abhiyan in different corners of the country. It is developed by the startup incubated in the Department of Science and Technology (DST)-Technology Business Incubator (TBI) of IIT Madras. It empowers extensive blade cleanings, solid waste desilting, suction and storage at one device; thereby reducing the cost of owning multiple assets and promoting robotic cleaning in sewers.

13. **National Science Day** is celebrated on **February 28** to commemorate the discovery of the Raman Effect. On February 28, 1928, CV Raman announced the discovery of the Raman Effect and for it, he was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1930. The theme for this year's National Science Day celebration is "Indigenous Technologies for Viksit Bharat."

MISSION GAGANYAAN

Group Captain Prasanth Nair

Group Captain Ajit Krishnan

Group Captain Angad Pratap

Wing Commander Shubhanshu Shukla

QUICK FACTS

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

1. **Kosovo** recently secured visa-free access to the **Schengen zone in Europe**, the world's largest zone of free movement, becoming the last western Balkan non-European Union nation to be waived visa requirements. The zone is known after Schengen, the tiny Luxembourg village bordering France and Germany, where the agreement was signed in 1985 among five of the six EU founding members except Italy. Citizens of Kosovo can now enter the Schengen as tourists for 90 days within 180 days. Croatia, a European Union (EU) member since 2013, joined Schengen in 2023, while Romania and Bulgaria, EU members since 2007, will gain partial Schengen entry in March.

2. The **Indian women's badminton team**, led by PV Sindhu and Anmol Kharb, won a **historic gold medal** at **the Badminton Asia Team Championships 2024**, which was held in Shah Alam, Malaysia from February 13 to 18. This was India's first-ever gold medal at the Badminton Asia Team Championships. The Indian men's team had previously won two bronze - in 2016 and 2020.

3. **India** sent medical and material assistance to **Zambia** as the southern **African country dealt with a deadly cholera outbreak**. The aid consists of 3.5 tonnes of water purification supplies, chlorine tablets and ORS sachets Zambia has been reeling under an outbreak of cholera over the past few weeks which prompted a closure of schools in the country. Zambia has been asking for more medical help to deal with the situation that has been described as a "cholera emergency".

4. The **14th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties** (CoP) to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS 14) was held in **Samarkand, Uzbekistan** from 11-17 February 2024.

5. A moon lander, **Nova-C lander - dubbed Odysseus**, built by Houston-based aerospace company Intuitive Machines was launched from Florida recently on a mission to conduct the first U.S. lunar touchdown in more than a half-century and the first by a privately owned spacecraft. If successful, the flight would represent the first controlled descent to the lunar surface by a U.S. spacecraft since the final Apollo crewed moon mission in 1972, and the first by a private company.

6. The **6th Regional Dialogue of Secretaries of Security Councils/National Security Advisers** (NSA) on Afghanistan was held **in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan**. India reiterated its collective approach to combating terrorism as stated in the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR 2593). India hosted the third Regional Security Dialogue on Afghanistan in New Delhi on November 10, 2021.

7. A historic ban on the trade in donkey skin has been agreed upon by the **African heads** of state during the **African Union summit in Ethiopia**. This is a significant outcome following the Dar es Salaam declaration adopted at the first AU-IBAR Pan-African Donkey Conference in December 2022. The Dar es Salaam declaration was signed in Tanzania during the Pan African Donkey Skin Conference, organised by the AU-IBAR, where government ministers gathered to understand the harmful effects of the donkey skin trade on animals and communities in Africa.

8. The world is on the brink of a public health triumph as it closes in on eradicating **Guinea worm disease**. There were more than 3.5 million cases of this disease in the 1980s, but according to the World Health Organization's (WHO) weekly epidemiological report, they dwindled to 14 cases in 2021, 13 in 2022, and just six in 2023.

9. The **second India-U.S. Defense Acceleration Ecosystem (INDUS-X) Summit** was held in New Delhi, India. The summit was jointly organized by Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX), MoD, and the DoD, and coordinated by the US-India Business Council (USIBC) and Society of India Defense Manufacturers (SIDM).

10. The **fifth joint military exercise named 'Dharma Guardian'** between the **Indian** Army and **Japan** Ground Self Defense Force was successfully conducted at Mahajan Field Firing Range in Rajasthan. The primary objective of the exercise was to promote military cooperation and enhance capabilities to carry out joint operations in semi-urban environments under the mandate of the United Nations. India and Japan's defence forces also organise a series of bilateral exercises such as JIMEX (naval), Malabar exercise (Naval Exercise), 'Veer Guardian' & 'SHINYUU Maitri' (Air Force), and Dharma Guardian (Army).

11. **Google DeepMind** has just introduced **Genie**, a new model that can generate interactive video games from just a text or image prompt. That too without any prior training on game mechanics (which are essentially rules, elements, and processes that make up a game).

QUICK FACTS

ARTS & CULTURE AND HISTORICAL EVENTS OF CONTINUING SIGNIFICANCE

1. **Purulia Chhau, a folk dance**, was recently performed in Kozhikode, Kerala. The Chhau is a semi-classical dance form from Eastern India which has tribal and folk origins. The performances range from acrobatic to martial and also include dances which are structured around religious themes. The name Purulia Chau comes from the district of Purulia in Bengal which is a Chhau stronghold.

2. Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of **Shri Kalki Dham in Uttar Pradesh's Sambhal district** on 19 February. This temple will be built by the Shri Kalki Dham Nirman Trust, led by Acharya Pramod Krishnam. Dedicated to Lord Kalki, the temple is considered the world's most special due to being the first 'Dham' where God's temple is established before the incarnation. Ten sanctums within the temple symbolise the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu.

3. The Indian National Trust is making efforts for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) to get the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to declare the annual **'Paruveta' (mock hunting festival),** celebrated at the Sri Narasimha Swamy temple in Ahobilam as an 'intangible cultural heritage'. The intangible cultural heritages are those traditions, festivals, and skills inherited from ancestors and passed on through generations. This festival stands as a symbol of communal harmony where the deity from the temple's sanctum sanctorum is taken to the 32 Chenchu tribal hamlets around Ahobilam for 40 days.

4. The Prime Minister of India extended greetings at the start of **Asia's largest tribal festival**, **Sammakka Saralamma Jathara or Medaram Jathara**. Medaram Jatara is the second-largest fair of India, after the Kumbh Mela, celebrated by the second-largest Tribal Community of Telangana- the Koya tribe for four days. As the largest tribal fair in Asia, Medaram Jathara is conducted in honour of the Goddesses Sammakka and Saralamma. It is celebrated once in two years in the month of 'Magha' (February) on the full moon day. Saralamma was the daughter of Sammakka. Her idol, according to the rituals, is installed in a temple at Kannepalli, a small village near Medaram.

5. Commemorating **200 years of Rani Chennamma's rebellion** against the British East India Company, several social groups across the country, including Act Now for Harmony and Democracy (ANHAD) and the National Federation of Indian Women (NFIW), are organising a national campaign, Naanoo Rani Chennamma (I am Rani Chennamma too) on February 21.

6. **Guru Ravidas Jayanti** was observed on **February 24, 2024**, on the Purnima Tithi of the Magha Month. The festival commemorates the birth anniversary of Guru Ravidas, a revered saint, poet, and spiritual leader. Guru Ravidas, also recognized as Raidas, Rohidas, and Ruhidas, Ravidas was born in the village of Sir Gobardhanpur, near Varanasi in what is now Uttar Pradesh, India.

PASSAGE - 1

India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on Tuesday signed eight pacts to bolster cooperation in key areas such as investments, electricity trade and digital payment platforms, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi and UAE President Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan discussed new fields of collaboration.

India and the UAE have a close partnership in every field, and the linking of digital payment systems of the two sides will open a new era in fintech, while the bilateral investment treaty will have a long-lasting impact, Modi said.

The bilateral investment treaty with the UAE is a follow-up to the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement or FTA, which entered into force in May [1] and eliminated duties on 99% of the UAE's imports from India.

A new memorandum of understanding (MoU) on cooperation in electrical interconnection and trade will open up new areas of collaboration in energy, including energy security.

The two sides signed separate agreements for linking their instant payment platforms – India's Unified Payment Interface (UPI) and the UAE's AANI – and their domestic debit and credit cards, India's RuPay with the UAE's Jaywan.

Modi congratulated Mohamed bin Zayed on the launch of Jaywan, which is based on the digital RuPay credit and debit card stack. The leaders witnessed a transaction using the Jaywan card.

The linking of digital payment systems will facilitate seamless cross-border transactions, and this follows another MoU on linking payment and messaging systems in July 2023. The linking of debit and credit cards will build financial sector cooperation and enhance RuPay's acceptance in the UAE.

[Extracted, with edits and revisions, from: "India, UAE ink eight pacts on electricity, digi payments", by Rezaul H Laskar, Hidustan Times]

Q.1 India and the UAE signed agreement for linking their instant payment platforms – India's UPI and the UAE's AANI. As of February 2024, how many countries officially supported the UPI payment system?

A. Five
B. Six
C. Seven
D. Eight

Q.2 Which of the following countries was the first country to adopt UPI payments outside India back in 2021?

A. France
B. Bhutan
C. Sri Lanka
D. United Arab Emirates

Q.3 Which country became the first country in the European region to access UPI payments?

A. France
B. Germany
C. Italy
D. Latvia

Q.4 Which year has been replaced with '[1]' in the passage above?

A. 2019
B. 2020
C. 2021
D. 2022

Q.5 The first Hindu temple in the UAE has a 'Wall of Harmony', one of the largest 3D-printed walls in the UAE. In how many languages the word 'harmony' has been written on the wall?

A. 30
B. 22
C. 45
D. 15

Answers
Q.1 (C) Q.2 (B) Q.3 (A) Q.4 (D) Q.5 (A)

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PASSAGE - 2

Achieving one of the three priority areas agreed upon during India's G20 presidency in 2023, the World Health Organization (WHO) Tuesday launched the GIDH virtually, a platform for sharing knowledge and digital products among countries.

At the launch of GIDH, Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya and India's representative to the UN Arindam Bagchi addressed the gathering.

The initiative will be a network of networks with four main components — country needs tracker, country resource portal (a map of resources available in a country), transformation toolbox that will share quality-assured digital tools, and knowledge exchange.

Calling it a "momentous day", Mandaviya said, "we have achieved the vision of establishing an institutional framework for digital health. This was a key deliverable of India's G20 presidency that was agreed upon in the Gandhinagar meeting in the presence of Dr Tedros (WHO director-general). This is a testament to our shared goal of digital health."

He said the platform will help in democratising digital health technologies, especially for countries of the Global South. He also urged the new director of WHO-South East Asia Region Saima Wazed to champion the implementation of digital health. Mandaviya said the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission is working towards creating a seamless electronic health record system in India.

[Extracted, with edits and revisions, from: "WHO launches digital health platform agreed upon in India's G20 presidency", by Anonna Dutt, The Indian Express]

Q.1 What does 'GIDH' stand for?

A Global Innovation on Digital Health

B Global Initiative on Digital Health

C Global Initiative on Direct Health

D Global Idea on Digital Health

Q.2 The 2024 G20 Summit will take place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. What is the theme of this summit?

A Recover Together, Recover Stronger

B Building Consensus for Fair and Free World

C Realizing Opportunities of the 21st Century for All

D Building a Just World and a Sustainable Planet

Q.3 Which state became the first state to operationalize Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission's (ABDM) microsite project?

A Mizoram

B Uttar Pradesh

C Assam

D Jharkhand

Q.4 World Health Day is observed every year on –

A 8 March

B 5 May

C 7 June

D 7 April

Q.5 Which of the following Sustainable Development Goals ensures healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages?

A SDG 10

B SDG 5

C SDG 3

D SDG 11

Answers

Q.1 (B) Q.2 (D) Q.3 (A) Q.4 (D) Q.5 (C)

PASSAGE - 3

Recently various Opposition-ruled States especially from south India have claimed that they have not been receiving their fair share as per the present scheme of financial devolution. They have raised issues about their less than proportionate share of receipt in tax revenue when compared to their contribution towards tax collection.

[1] of the Constitution provides for the scheme of distribution of net tax proceeds collected by the Union government between the Centre and the States. The taxes that are shared between the Centre and the States include corporation tax, personal income tax, Central GST, the Centre's share of the Integrated Goods and Services Tax (IGST) etc. This division is based on the recommendation of the Finance Commission (FC) that is constituted every five years as per the terms of [2]. Apart from the share of taxes, States are also provided grants-in-aid as per the recommendation of the FC. The divisible pool, however, does not include cess and surcharge that are levied by the Centre.

The FC is constituted every five years and is a body that is exclusively constituted by the Union Government. It consists of a chairman and four other members who are appointed by the President. The Finance Commission (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1951, has specified the qualifications for chairman and other members of the commission. The Union government has notified the constitution of the 16th Finance Commission for making its recommendations for the period of 2026-31.

[Extracted, with edits and revisions, from: "On financial devolution among States | Explained", by Rangarajan R., The Hindu]

Q.1 Which article of Indian Constitution has been replaced with '[1]' in the passage above?

A Article 324

B Article 124

C Article 270

D Article 280

Q.2 Which article of Indian Constitution has been replaced with '[2]' in the passage above?

A Article 312

B Article 270

C Article 142

D Article 280

Q.3 The 16th Finance Commission has been constituted by the government for making its recommendations for the period of 2026-31 under the chairmanship of –

A N. K. Singh

B Dr. Arvind Panagariya

C Amitabh Kant

D Urjit Patel

Q.4 GST, a value-added tax system, is a comprehensive indirect tax that was introduced in India in –

A 2016

B 2017

C 2018

D 2019

Q.5 Which part of Indian Constitution contains financial provisions including those related to taxation, definition of various Funds, the right to hold property, and borrowing by Union and State governments?

A Part XII

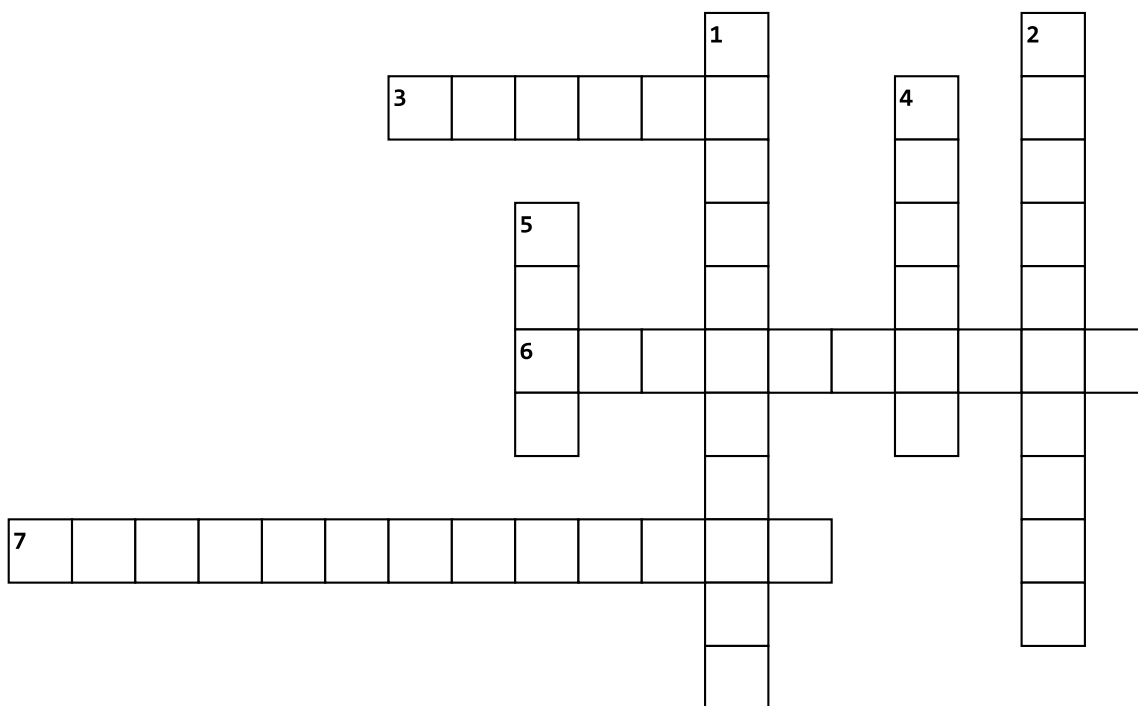B Part X

C Part XI

D Part XIII

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The Question Bank

CROSSWORD CORNER

CROSSWORD - 1

Across

3. Recently secured visa-free access to the Schengen zone in Europe

6. National Science Day

7. India's longest cable-stayed bridge in Gujarat

Down

1. India's first septic tank/manhole cleaning robot

2. Foundation Day of Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh

4. South Asia's largest ammunition manufacturing complex

5. Year by which India is aiming to achieve self-sufficiency in pulses
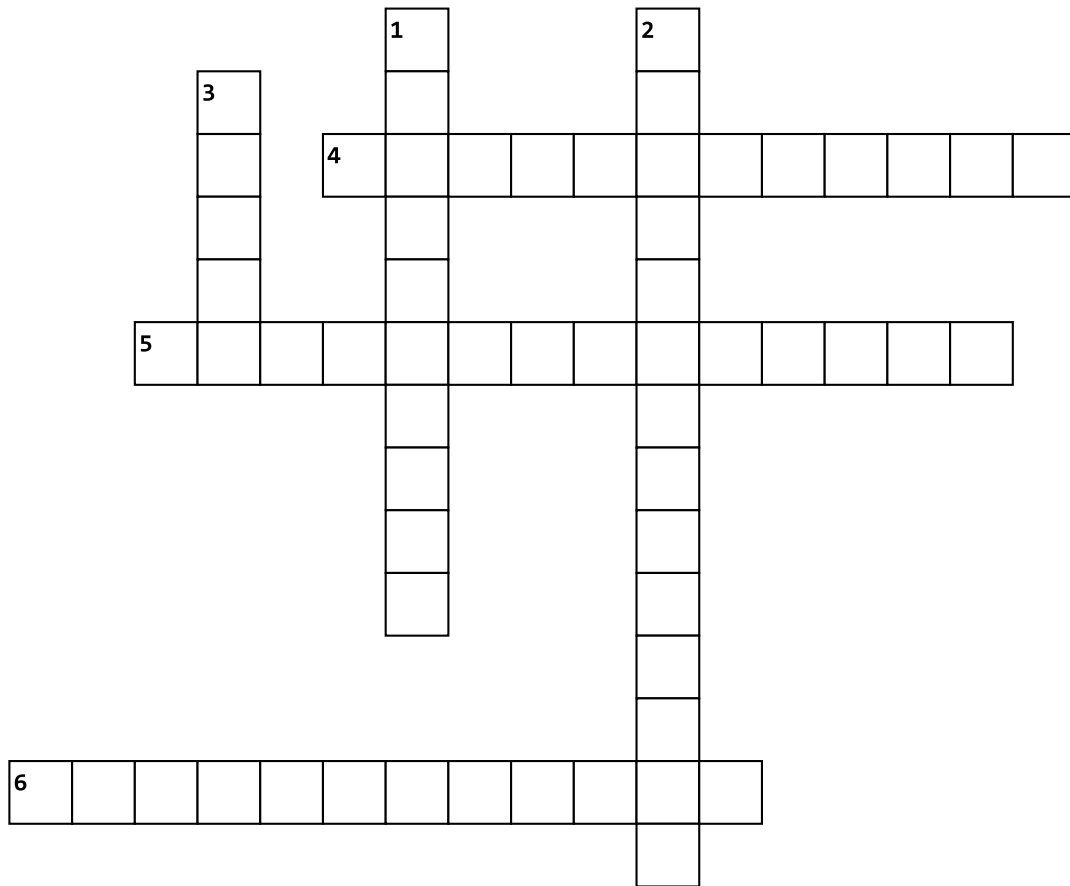
Answers

4 Kanpur		
7 SudarshanSetu	**3** Kosovo	
6 28February	**2** 20February	
5 2027	**1** HomoseAtom	

CROSSWORD - 2

Across

4. Bloc ban the trade in donkey skin

5. Asia's largest tribal festival

6. A semi-classical dance form from Eastern India

Down

1. Guru Ravidas Jayanti

2. Joint military exercise between the Indian Army and Japan

3. Google DeepMind introduced a new AI model

Answers

3 Genie		**6** PuruliaChhau	
2 DharmaGuardian		**5** MedaramJathara	
1 24February		**4** AfricanUnion	

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