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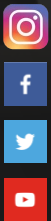
LawEx

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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

The 28th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change was held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from 30 November to 12 December 2023. On December 11, 2023, a Constitution Bench headed by Chief Justice of India (CJI) D.Y. Chandrachud unanimously upheld the Central government's 2019 decision to abrogate Article 370 of the Constitution which conferred special status on the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister has approved the Terms of Reference for the Sixteenth Finance Commission. Keep reading for more updates.

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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 at least 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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The Question Bank



QUICK BOOSTERS



28TH EDITION OF UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE (COP28)

WHY IN NEWS?

- The 28th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change was held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from 30 November to 12 December 2023.

Key Highlights

Loss and damage

- On the opening day of the COP28 climate conference, a loss and damage fund to help vulnerable countries cope with the impact of climate change has been officially launched.
- The initial funding is estimated to be \$475 million — host UAE pledged \$100 million, the European Union promised \$275 million, \$17.5 million from the US, and \$10 million from Japan.
- The loss and damage fund was first announced during COP27 in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, in 2022.
- The World Bank will oversee the loss and damage fund for four years.

Global Decarbonization Accelerator (GDA)

- Tripling Renewables - On December 2, 118 countries signed the “Global Renewables and Energy Efficiency Pledge” to triple the world's green energy capacity to 11,000 GW by 2030 and countries have to “double the global average annual rate of energy efficiency improvements from around 2% to over 4% every year until 2030”.
 - According to the pledge, the tripling of renewable energy is expected to practically eliminate fossil fuels as energy sources by 2050.
 - India and China have stayed away as the initiative calls for phasing down of coal and “ending the continued investment in unabated new coal-fired power plants”.
- Oil and Gas Decarbonization Charter
 - The Oil and Gas Decarbonization Charter (OGDC) commits signatories to zero methane emissions and ending routine flaring by 2030, and to net-zero operations by 2050 at the latest.

Tripling Nuclear

- In a bid to attain a net-zero emissions status, more than 20 countries have pledged to triple the global nuclear-installed capacity from 2020 to 2050.
- Just as in the case of the pledge to triple renewable energy, India is not a part of the nuclear energy commitment as well.

Cooling Pledge

- Sixty-three countries, including the US, Canada, and Kenya, signed up to the world's first-ever pledge to drastically cut cooling emissions.
- The Global Cooling Pledge commits the countries to reduce their cooling emissions by at least 68% by 2050 and outlines several strategies to tackle them.

New Collective Quantified Goal

- As the 2024 deadline to adopt the new climate finance goal — New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) — approaches, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) calculated that \$500 (wealthy nations owe developing countries) billion should be channelled to developing countries in 2025.
- This figure should increase to \$1.55 trillion by 2030. This can be further broken down into \$1 trillion for mitigation, \$250 billion for adaptation and \$300 billion for loss and damage by 2030.

UAE Climate Investment Fund

- The UAE said it was putting \$30 billion into a new private climate investment fund.
- The fund, called ALTERRA, would partly try to focus on climate projects in the developing world and hoped to stimulate investments totalling \$250 billion by 2030.

Food and Farming

- Nearly 160 countries agreed to prioritise food and agriculture systems in their national climate plans.
- The non-binding declaration was welcomed by observers, with food systems estimated to be responsible for roughly a third of human-made greenhouse gases.
- But some criticised it for lacking concrete goals -- and for not mentioning fossil fuels or signalling any shift to more sustainable diets.

Healthy Future

- Over 140 countries signed a declaration to “place health at the heart of climate action”.
- It called for governments to step up action on climate-related health impacts like extreme heat, air pollution and infectious diseases.

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20. Almost nine million people a year die from polluted air, while 189 million are exposed to extreme weather-related events.

Fossil Fuels

21. The Powering Past Coal Alliance (PPCA) picked up more than 10 new members during the talks -- including the US and the UAE. Over 80 per cent of OECD and EU countries are now committed to the alliance.
22. Colombia became one of the largest fossil fuel producers to join the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative, a movement led by climate-vulnerable island nations to end new development of coal, oil and gas.
23. More than 100 cities and subnational governments also came together to call for the treaty, but they were ultimately dismayed.

CHAMP Pledge

24. The 'Coalition for High Ambition Multilevel Partnerships (CHAMP) Pledge to advance the integration of sub-national leaders in climate-related decision-making, which has been endorsed by 67 countries.

Global Youth Statement

25. The collective climate policy demands of children and youth from over 160 countries across the world.
26. Its delivery follows a year of youth engagements championed by H.E. Shamma Al Mazrui, the first official Youth Climate Champion.

The UAE Consensus

27. The first Global Stocktake deal at COP28, termed the UAE consensus, called for a "transitioning away from fossil fuels in energy systems, in a just, orderly and equitable manner, accelerating action in this critical decade, so as to achieve net zero by 2050 in keeping with the science."
28. However, the new proposal doesn't go so far as to seek a "phase-out" of fossil fuels, which more than 100 nations had pleaded for.
29. This was for the first time that there was a language on fossil fuels in the final agreement.
30. The stocktake recognizes the science that indicates global greenhouse gas emissions need to be cut 43% by 2030, compared to 2019 levels, to limit global warming to 1.5°C.
31. But it notes Parties are off track when it comes to meeting their Paris Agreement goals.
32. The stocktake calls on Parties to take action towards achieving, at a global scale, a tripling of renewable energy capacity and doubling energy efficiency improvements by 2030.

33. The list also includes accelerating efforts towards the phase-down of unabated coal power, phasing out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies, and other measures that drive the transition away from fossil fuels in energy systems, in a just, orderly and equitable manner, with developed countries continuing to take the lead.

When it comes to fossil fuels, "unabated" means doing nothing to reduce the carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other greenhouse gases that are released from the burning of coal, oil, and natural gas.

Conversely, "abated" refers to the attempts to decrease the release of polluting substances to an acceptable level. However, there isn't any clarity on what this level is and how to get there. Moreover, there is no international or agreed-upon definition of the two phrases.

- In the short-term, Parties are encouraged to come forward with ambitious, economy-wide emission reduction targets, covering all greenhouse gases, sectors and categories and aligned with the 1.5°C limit in their next round of climate action plans (known as nationally determined contributions) by 2025.

COP28 also saw Parties agree to Azerbaijan as host of COP29 from 11-22 November 2024, and Brazil as COP30 host from 10-21 November 2025.





India At COP28

- At the opening session of the summit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said India proposes to host COP33 in 2028.
 - India hosted the 8th edition of COP in 2002.
- On the sidelines of COP28, Prime Minister Narendra Modi along with Prime Minister of Sweden Ulf Kristersson, co-launched Phase II of the Leadership Group for Industry Transition (LeadIT 2.0) for the period 2024-26.
 - LeadIT 2.0 focuses on co-development and transfer of low-carbon technology and financial assistance to emerging economies.
- India and Sweden also launched the 'Industry Transition Platform', which will connect the governments, industries, technology providers, researchers and think tanks of the two countries.
- India launched the Green Credit Initiative at COP28, to create a participatory global platform for the exchange of innovative environmental programs and instruments.
 - The Green Credit Initiative has been conceptualised as a mechanism to incentivise voluntary pro-planet actions, as an effective response to the challenge of climate change.
 - It envisions the issue of Green Credits for plantations on waste/degraded lands and river catchment areas, to rejuvenate and revive natural ecosystems.
- The National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG), which implements the government's flagship Namami Gange programme, has launched the Global River Cities Alliance (GRCA) at the United Nations Climate Change Conference COP28.
 - GRCA is a unique alliance covering 275+ global river cities in 11 countries, international funding agencies and knowledge management partners and is the first of its kind in the world.
 - Partner countries include Egypt, Netherlands, Denmark, Ghana, Australia, Bhutan, Cambodia, Japan and river-cities of The Hague (Den Haag) from the Netherlands, Adelaide from Australia, and Szolnok of Hungary.
- The NMCG on behalf of River Cities Alliance (RCA), has signed a Memorandum of Common Purpose (MoCP) with the Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative (MRCTI), representing 124 cities/towns situated along the banks of the Mississippi River, USA.
- India has joined the United Nations 'Race to Resilience', a global campaign to mainstream the idea of climate resilience in cities across India during COP28.
 - The Climate Centre for Cities (C-Cube) at the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA), an autonomous institution under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, will spearhead this initiative.
 - 'Race to Resilience' is a global platform to bring together non-state actors, investors, businesses, cities, regions, and civil society to increase the resilience of the most vulnerable to the climate crisis by 2030.



Partners have pledged to make 2.3 billion people more resilient by 2030



Our partners have pledged to invest US\$3billion into resilience projects



34 partners have joined from 127 different countries



Risk Analytics in collaboration with McKinsey



Technical Backbone built: MAG, CR2 – Technical lead, ERG



Partners have pledged to increase the resilience of over 100 natural systems

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SC VERDICT ON ABROGATION OF ARTICLE 370

WHY IN NEWS?

- On December 11, 2023, a Constitution Bench headed by Chief Justice of India (CJI) D.Y. Chandrachud unanimously upheld the Central government's 2019 decision to abrogate Article 370 of the Constitution which conferred special status on the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K).

Key Highlights of the Verdict

- Pointing out that Article 370 is a 'temporary provision', the Bench said that it was enacted due to wartime conditions in the State and was meant to serve a transitional purpose.
- The Bench pronounced three verdicts – one by CJI DY Chandrachud for himself and Justices Gavai and Surya Kant.
- Whereas, Justices SK Kaul and Sanjiv Khanna have authored two separate concurring judgments.
 - Justice S.K. Kaul in his concurring judgment recommended the constitution of an impartial Truth and Reconciliation Commission to investigate and report on the violations of human rights both by the State and non-state actors since the 1980s.
 - The Commission has been tasked to suggest measures for reconciliation in a time-bound manner.
 - The Commission should not turn into a criminal court and must offer a platform for dialogue instead.

A Truth and Reconciliation Commission, also known as a 'truth and justice commission' or simply, a 'truth commission', is an official mechanism to not just acknowledge, but also reveal, wrongdoings by a government (or sometimes non-state actors or combatants) so that conflicts of the past can be addressed and resolved. In India's neighbourhood, truth commissions have been set up in Sri Lanka and Nepal.

- The court held that J&K did not retain any internal sovereignty after its integration and that the concurrence of the State Government was not required to apply the Indian Constitution to the State.
- The court also directed the Election Commission of India to take steps to conduct elections to the J&K Legislative Assembly by September 30, 2024.
- In ruling that Parliament can, effectively, unilaterally change the status of a state to a Union Territory if the state is under the President's rule, the Supreme Court, in upholding the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution, seemed to tilt the federal balance in favour of the Union.
 - Article 3 of the Constitution, which deals with the formation of new states and alteration of areas, boundaries or names of existing states, requires the President to necessarily refer such a law to the state legislature concerned for "expressing its views."
 - In the case of Jammu and Kashmir, the President referred the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Bill, 2019, to Parliament for its views since the state was under President's rule.
 - Under the President's rule, Parliament exercised the "powers of the Legislature."
 - The petitioners had framed this key challenge against removing statehood to J&K on the grounds that the President could not have unilaterally made such a move.
 - However, the SC in its ruling falls back on the 1994 landmark ruling in SR Bommai v Union of India to hold that such unilateral action is permissible as long as it is not "mala fide."

In Bommai, a nine-judge bench of the Supreme Court interpreted Article 356 of the Constitution to define the contours of proclamation of President's rule. Article 356 contains provisions "in case of failure of constitutional machinery in States", including that for the imposition of President's rule.

While all nine judges unanimously upheld the provision, the Court ruled that the President's decision would be subject to judicial review. Bommai is still the settled law on when and how President's rule can be imposed.

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- In upholding the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution on December 11, the Supreme Court ruled that Jammu and Kashmir did not retain an element of sovereignty or internal sovereignty after it joined the Union of India.
 - In his judgment, CJI recalled that in November 1949, Yuvraj Karan Singh, heir to the throne of Jammu and Kashmir, had issued a proclamation that reflected the “full and final surrender of [J&K’s] sovereignty... to India.”

DID YOU KNOW?

- On October 17, 1949, Article 370 was added to the Indian constitution, as a 'temporary provision', which exempted Jammu & Kashmir, permitting it to draft its own Constitution and restricting the Indian Parliament's legislative powers in the state.
- Article 35A stems from Article 370 and empowered the Jammu & Kashmir legislature to define the permanent residents of the state, and their special rights and privileges.
- The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Bill, 2019, passed by Parliament on August 5, 2019, divided the state of Jammu and Kashmir into two new Union Territories (UTs): Jammu & Kashmir, and Ladakh.
 - This is the first time that a state has been converted into a UT.



SUPREME DECISION

▶ **SC directs the Centre for the restoration** of statehood of J&K

▶ **Justice S K Kaul recommends setting up** of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission

▶ **The court refuses to decide on the validity of the 2019 law** to bifurcate state into two UTs: J&K and Ladakh

▶ **It also refuses to rule on the validity of the President's rule** imposed on J&K in Dec 2018

“ WE HAVE HELD THAT THE STATE OF JAMMU & KASHMIR DID NOT RETAIN AN ELEMENT OF SOVEREIGNTY (WHEN IT JOINED THE UNION OF INDIA) ”

D Y Chandrachud, Chief Justice of India

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CABINET APPROVES CONTINUATION OF FAST-TRACK COURTS

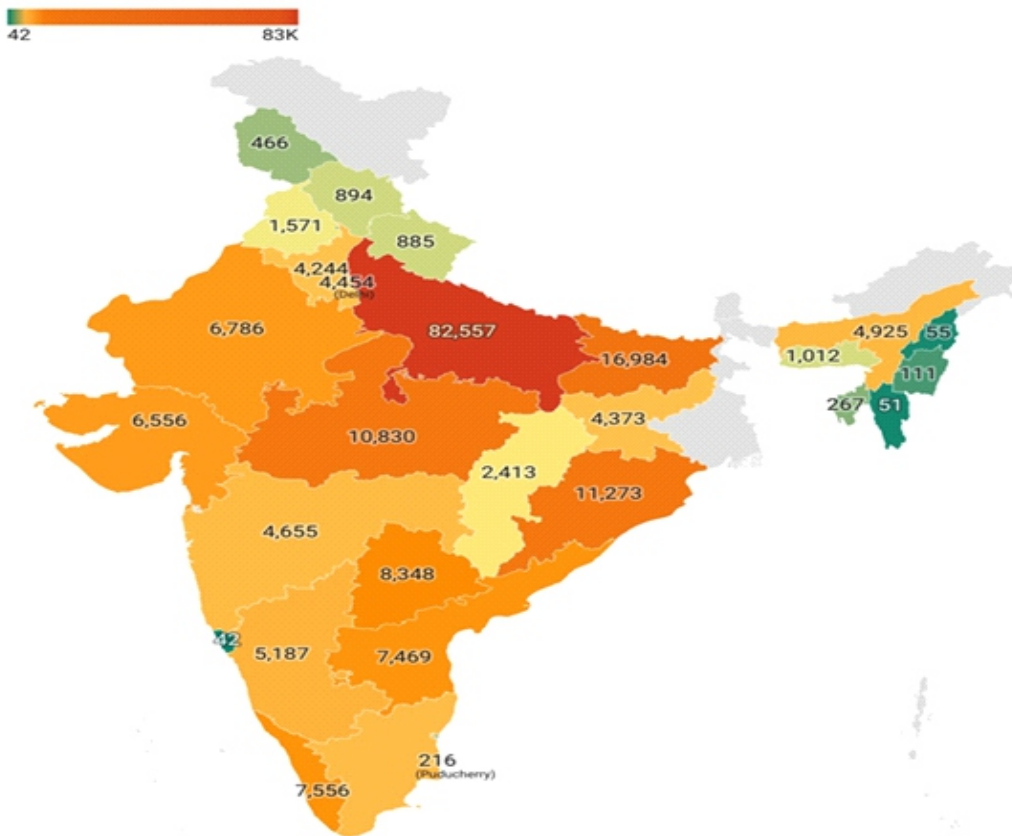
WHY IN NEWS?

- The Union Cabinet on November 29 approved the continuation of fast-track courts, dedicated to the dispensation of justice in cases of sexual offences, for a period of three years. (up to March 31, 2026).
- Initially commenced in October 2019 for one year, the scheme was extended for an additional two years until March 31, 2026, with the Central Share funded from the Nirbhaya Fund.

What are Fast Track Courts ?

- The Fast Track Special Court (FTSC), a centrally sponsored scheme was launched in 2019 after the passage of the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act in 2018 in the aftermath of the Nirbhaya gangrape case in Delhi.
- The Centre had decided to set up 1,023 fast-track courts. These courts deal exclusively with cases related to violations of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act in all States and UTs.
- Implemented by the Department of Justice, Ministry of Law and Justice, the centrally sponsored scheme has established fast-track courts across the country, ensuring the swift disposal of cases related to rape and those coming under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.
- A total of 30 States and Union Territories have participated in the scheme, operationalising 761 fast-track courts including 414 dedicated POCSO courts, which have together resolved over 1,95,000 cases.
- Each FTSC is conceived to take up trials of between 65 and 165 cases every year. The annual expenditure to run one such court was pegged at Rs 75 lakh with one judicial officer and seven support staff.
- As of August 2023, 758 FTSCs including 411 exclusive POCSO Courts are functional in 29 States / UTs which have disposed of more than 1,88,000 pending cases.

Pendency of Rape and POCSO Act cases in Fast Track Special Courts in India



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About Nirbhaya Fund

- The Centre therefore created a non-lapsable corpus known as the Nirbhaya Fund in 2013.
- It is administered by the Department of Economic Affairs of the Ministry of Finance.
- Also, the Ministry of Women and Child Development is the nodal Ministry to appraise/recommend proposals and schemes to be funded under the Nirbhaya Fund.
- An Empowered Committee of officers constituted under the Nirbhaya Framework appraises and recommends the proposals for funding under the Nirbhaya Fund in conjunction with the concerned Ministries/ Departments/ Implementing Agencies.
- Under the Nirbhaya Fund, one of the schemes namely the "One Stop Centre (OSC) Scheme" is implemented across the country since 1st April 2015.

DID YOU KNOW?

- POCSO Act came into effect on 14th November 2012 which was enacted in consequence of India's ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1992.
- India ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1992.
- The Act defines a child as any person below the age of 18 years. The Act provides punishment as per the gravity of the offence.
- The Act was further reviewed and amended in 2019 to introduce more stringent punishment including the death penalty for committing sexual crimes on children.
- The Government of India has also notified the POCSO Rules, 2020.



- 1023 Fast Track Special Courts get 2 year extension
- Cabinet extends centrally sponsored scheme till 31.03.2023
- 389 exclusive POCSO Courts also get extension
- Central Share of outlay to be funded from Nirbhaya Fund

Benefits

- Providing quick justice to the hapless victims
- Deterrence framework for sexual offenders
- Reduction in number of pending cases of Rape & POCSO Act
- Speedy access to justice to victims of sexual crimes
- De-clogging of the judicial system

Fast Track Special Courts: Fighting Crime Against Women

1023 Fast Track Special Courts to be set up

Over 1.44 Lakh pending cases of rape & POCSO act disposed

9 Years
Seva, Sushasan and Garib Kalyan

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TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE SIXTEENTH FINANCE COMMISSION

WHY IN NEWS?

- The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister has approved the Terms of Reference for the Sixteenth Finance Commission.

Terms of Reference of the Sixteenth Finance Commission

- The Commission's recommendations will be implemented from April 1, 2026, for 5 years.
- The Finance Commission will make recommendations on the distribution between the Union and the States of the net proceeds of taxes that are to be divided between them.
- It will also suggest the principles that should govern the grants-in-aid of the revenues of the States out of the Consolidated Fund of India and the sums to be paid to the States by way of grants-in-aid of their revenues under Article 275 of the Constitution for purposes other than those specified in the provisos to clause (1) of that article.
- The ToRs also included the measures needed to augment the Consolidated Fund of a State to supplement the resources of the Panchayats and Municipalities in the State on the basis of the recommendations made by the Finance Commission of the State.
- The Commission may review the present arrangements on financing disaster management initiatives with reference to the funds constituted under the Disaster Management Act, 2005 (53 of 2005), and make appropriate recommendations thereon.

DID YOU KNOW?

- The previous Fifteenth Finance Commission had retained the criteria and weights according to which 15 per cent weight each is for population and area, 10 per cent for forest and ecology, 45 per cent of income distance, 45.0 2.5 per cent for tax and fiscal efforts, and 12.5 per cent for demographic performance.
 - This is a point of discomfort for the southern States which have higher human development indices and a low population. In the fiscal redistribution process based on weightage to population, their shares get reduced.
- The Fifteenth Finance Commission, headed by N.K. Singh, was constituted on November 27, 2017.
- It made recommendations covering the period of six years commencing on 1st April, 2020. The recommendations of the Fifteenth Finance Commission are valid upto the financial year 2025-26.
- The last time the Constitutional body was given a six-year mandate was for the Ninth Finance Commission formed in June 1987.
 - But the Tenth Finance Commission was still constituted in June 1992 within the five-year deadline specified by the Constitution.
- The First Finance Commission was constituted under the chairmanship of K.C. Neogy on 6th April, 1952.
- The Fifteenth Finance Commission has recommended the use of Census 2011 instead of the norm of considering Census 1971.

What is the Finance Commission?

- The Finance Commission in India is a constitutional body established under Article 280 of the Indian Constitution.
- Its primary function is to recommend the distribution of net proceeds of taxes between the central government and the state governments, allocation between the States of respective shares of such proceeds; grants-in-aid and the revenues of the States and measures needed to supplement the resources of the Panchayats during the award period.
- This crucial role of the Commission makes it instrumental in the implementation of fiscal federalism.
- It is constituted by the President of India every fifth year or at such earlier time as he considers necessary.
- It consists of a chairman and four other members to be appointed by the President.
- The commission submits its report to the President. He lays it before both the Houses of Parliament along with an explanatory memorandum as to the action taken on its recommendations.

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UNLF PEACE ACCORD

WHY IN NEWS?

- The Union and Manipur governments have signed a peace agreement with the United National Liberation Front (UNLF), a banned Meitei extremist organisation which is also the oldest armed group based in the Manipur valley.

Key Points

- It is the first time a valley-based Manipuri armed group has agreed to return to the mainstream by abjuring violence and agreeing to honour the Constitution of India and the laws of the land.
- The agreement will not only bring an end to hostilities between UNLF and security forces which have claimed precious lives on both sides over the last more than half a century but also provide an opportunity to address the longstanding concerns of the community.
- It is hoped that the return of the UNLF to the mainstream will also encourage other valley-based armed groups to participate in the peace process in due course.

About UNLF

- The UNLF was formed in 1964 and has been operating both within and outside Indian territory.
- It was formed with the demand of secession from India under the leadership of Arembam Samarendra Singh, who was the general secretary of the group.
 - Two of the top central committee leaders — Khalalung Kamei and Thangkhopao Singait — were a Naga and a Kuki.
- It is one of the eight Meitei extremist organisations that the Ministry of Home Affairs has declared to be unlawful associations under the anti-terror law, the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967.
- In November 2023, the ban against these groups, which seek Manipur's secession from India, was extended for another five years.

ESTABLISHING PEACE AND PROSPERITY IN THE NORTHEAST

United National Liberation Front (UNLF) signed a peace agreement

It marks the end of a six-decade-long armed movement

UNLF, the oldest valley-based armed group of Manipur, agreed to renounce violence



DID YOU KNOW?

- Several other Insurgent groups of Manipur are Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP), People's Liberation Army (PLA), Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup (KYKL), People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK), National Socialist Council of Nagaland - Khaplang (NSCN-K).
- A trilateral Suspension of Operations (SoO) agreement was established in 2008 involving the Central government, the state of Manipur, and insurgent groups from the Kuki-Zomi region.
- On August 7, 2023, the Supreme Court of India appointed three former High Court judges committee under the chairship of former Chief Justice of J&K High Court Justice Gita Mittal along with Justice Shalini Joshi, and Justice Asha Menon- to look into the investigation, relief, remedial measures, compensation, rehabilitation in violence-stricken Manipur.

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ALL INDIA JUDICIAL SERVICE

WHY IN NEWS?

- During her inaugural address at the Supreme Court's Constitution Day celebration on November 26, President Droupadi Murmu called for an "All-India Judicial Service (AIJS)" to recruit judges.

What is the All India Judicial Service?

- Article 312 of the Constitution provides for the establishment of an All-India Judicial Service (AIJS), along the lines of the central civil services, upon a resolution by the Rajya Sabha.
- If the Rajya Sabha declares through a resolution, supported by at least two-thirds of its present and voting members, that it is necessary or expedient to create a service in the "national interest."
- The Parliament "may by law provide for the creation of one or more all India services (including an all India judicial service) common to the Union and the States" and regulate the recruitment and service conditions of persons appointed to any such service.
- However, Article 312 (2) states that the AIJS cannot include any post inferior to that of a district judge, as defined in Article 236.
- A district judge can include a city civil court judge, additional district judge, joint district judge, assistant district judge, chief judge of a small cause court, chief presidency magistrate, additional chief presidency magistrate, sessions judge, additional sessions judge, and assistant sessions judge.

Present System of Selection

- Articles 233 and 234 of the Constitution of India deal with the appointment of district judges and place it in the domain of the states.
- The selection process is conducted by the State Public Service Commissions and the concerned High Court, since HCs exercise jurisdiction over the subordinate judiciary in the state.
- Panels of HC judges interview candidates after the exam and select them for appointment.
- All judges of the lower judiciary up to the level of district judges are selected through the Provincial Civil Services (Judicial) exam.
- PCS (J) is commonly referred to as the judicial services exam.

Previous Efforts

- The idea of a centralised judicial service was first deliberated in the Law Commission's 1958 'Report on Reforms on Judicial Administration'.
- The idea was proposed again in the Law Commission Report of 1978, which discussed delays and arrears of cases in the lower courts.
- In 2006, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law, and Justice, in its 15th Report, supported the idea of a pan-Indian judicial service and also prepared a draft bill.

In 1992, the SC in 'All India Judges' Association (1) v. UOI' directed the Centre to set up an AIJS. However, in a 1993 review of the judgement, the court left the Centre at liberty to take initiatives on the issue.

In 2017, the Supreme Court took suo motu cognizance of the issue of appointment of district judges and mooted a "Central Selection Mechanism".

DID YOU KNOW?

- Article 312 of the Constitution was amended by the 42nd Amendment for the creation of an AIJS.
- Under Article 312, only the Rajya Sabha can authorise the Parliament to create new All-India Services common to both the Centre and the states.
- The Rajya Sabha was constituted on 3rd April 1952 and the first session was held on 13th May 1952.



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NCRB'S CRIME IN INDIA 2022 REPORT

WHY IN NEWS?

- The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) released its annual report on crime in India for the year 2022 on December 3.

Key Highlights

- In 2022, a total of 58,24,946 cognizable crimes comprising 35,61,379 Indian Penal Code (IPC) crimes and 22,63,567 Special & Local Laws (SLL) crimes were registered.
 - This was a decline of 4.5% in the registration of cases over the second pandemic year, 2021.
- The crime rate, or crimes registered per lakh population, has declined from 445.9 in 2021 to 422.2 in 2022.
 - This is seen as a better indicator, since absolute numbers on crime increase as the population increases.
- Kolkata emerged as the safest city in India for the third consecutive year, recording the least number of cognisable offences per lakh population among metropolises.
 - Pune (Maharashtra) and Hyderabad (Telangana) secured the second and third positions, respectively.
- 4,45,256 cases of crime against women were registered in 2022. This was an increase of 4% over the 2021 numbers.
 - The largest share of crimes against women under IPC sections was registered under 'Cruelty by Husband or His Relatives' (31.4%), followed by 'Kidnapping & Abduction of Women' (19.2%), and 'Assault on Women with Intent to Outrage her Modesty' (18.7%).
- Reporting of cybercrime increased significantly by 24.4 percentage points compared to 2021, to 65,893 cases.
 - Around 64.8% of registered cases were of fraud, followed by extortion (5.5%), and sexual exploitation (5.2%).
- An increase of 4.2% was observed in suicides reported during 2022 (1,70,924 suicides) as compared to 2021.
 - 'Family Problems (other than marriage-related problems)' (31.7%), 'Marriage Related Problems' (4.8%) and 'Illness' (18.4%) have together accounted for 54.9% of total suicides in the country during the year 2022.
 - Maharashtra reported the highest number of suicides, followed closely by Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, and Telangana.
- The report highlighted an overall increase in crimes and atrocities against Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) persons.
 - States like Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Telangana experienced a surge in such cases in 2022.
 - Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan persist as key contributors, consistently ranking among the top five states with the highest occurrences of crimes and atrocities against SC and ST communities.
 - Other states witnessing elevated levels of such offences include Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, and Punjab.
- The report also disclosed that government authorities confiscated fake Indian currency notes (FICN) totaling over Rs.342 crore in 2022.
- The states/ UTs reporting the highest charge sheeting rate under IPC crimes are Kerala (96.0%), Puducherry (91.3%), and West Bengal (90.6%).
 - This is the percentage of cases in which the police reached the stage of framing charges against the accused, out of the total true cases (where a charge sheet was not laid but a final report submitted as true, plus the total cases charge-sheeted).
- A total of 5,610 cases were registered in 2022 as compared to 5,164 cases in 2021, and 5,613 in 2020 under the wider category of "Offences against the State".
 - Of the total cases in 2022, 78.5 per cent were registered under the Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act (4,403 cases), followed by 1,005 (17.9 per cent) cases under the UAPA.

About NCRB

- The NCRB was established in January 1986 as a body mandated to compile and keep records of data on crime.
- It also acts as a "national warehouse" for the fingerprint records of Indian and foreign criminals, and assists in locating interstate criminals through fingerprint search.
- For the NCRB's flagship annual Crime in India reports, information is obtained from the police forces of 36 states and Union Territories.

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SECTION 6A OF THE CITIZENSHIP ACT

WHY IN NEWS?

- The Supreme Court recently directed the Union Government to furnish data on the number of immigrants who were conferred Indian citizenship through Section 6A(2) of the Citizenship Act, 1955.

Key Highlights

- A five-judge Constitution Bench headed by Chief Justice of India (CJI) D.Y. Chandrachud is hearing a batch of petitions challenging the constitutional validity of Section 6A of the Citizenship Act, 1955.
- Section 6A is a special provision inserted into the 1955 Act in furtherance of a Memorandum of Settlement called the 'Assam Accord' signed on August 15, 1985, by the then Rajiv Gandhi Government with the leaders of the Assam Movement to preserve and protect the Assamese culture, heritage, linguistic and social identity.
- The Constitution Bench also sought to know the steps taken by the government to curb illegal immigration into the territory of India, particularly the North-Eastern States.
- Information was also sought on the influx of illegal migrants in such States post-March 25, 1971 – the date of commencement of the Bangladesh Liberation War.
- The Constitution Bench clarifies its focus is limited to examining the validity of Section 6A and not the Assam National Register of Citizens (NRC).

About Citizenship Act, 1955

- The Parliament enacted the Citizenship Act, 1955 to regulate the matters of citizenship in India.
- It has been amended six times since its enactment. The amendments were made in the years 1986, 1992, 2003, 2005, 2015, and 2019.
- The latest amendment was made in 2019, which granted citizenship to certain illegal migrants belonging to Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi, and Christian communities from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, who entered India on or before 31st December 2014.

Legislative History of the Provision

- Section 6A was enacted as a humanitarian measure in the wake of the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War and is deeply interwoven in the country's history.
- The provision establishes March 24, 1971, as the cut-off date for entry into the State – those who came to the State on or after January 1, 1966, but before March 25, 1971, were to be declared as “foreigners” and would have all the rights and obligations of Indian citizens except that they would not be able to vote for 10 years.
- In November 2012, the Assam Sanmilita Mahasangha, a Guwahati-based civil society organisation, filed a petition challenging Section 6A on the ground that it discriminates against other Indian citizens by permitting different cut-off dates for regularising illegal migrants entering Assam and the rest of the country.
 - It also sought the court's intervention in directing the concerned authority to update the National Register for Citizens (NRC) concerning the State of Assam by taking into account the details available following the 1951 National Census instead of the electoral rolls before March 24, 1971.
- In December 2014, the Supreme Court framed 13 questions covering various issues raised against the constitutionality of Section 6A, including whether the provision diluted the “political rights of the citizens of the State of Assam”; whether it was a violation of the rights of the Assamese people to conserve their cultural rights; whether an influx of illegal migrants in India constitutes 'external aggression' and 'internal disturbance', among others.
- In 2015, a three-judge Bench of the court referred the case to a Constitution Bench.

DID YOU KNOW?

- The Indian Constitution deals with citizenship from Articles 5 to 11 under Part II.
- The Indian Constitution has established a single Citizenship for the whole of the country.
- Citizenship is listed in the Union List under the Constitution and thus is under the exclusive jurisdiction of Parliament.
- According to the Citizenship Act, 1955, Indian citizenship can be acquired by birth, by descent, by registration, by naturalisation, and by incorporation of territory.
- Indian citizenship can be lost by renunciation, termination, and deprivation as per the Citizenship Act, 1955.

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JAMMU & KASHMIR RESERVATION BILL & J&K REORGANISATION (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2023

WHY IN NEWS?

- Recently, the Lok Sabha passed the Jammu and Kashmir Reservation (Amendment) Bill, 2023 and the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2023.

Jammu and Kashmir Reservation (Amendment) Bill, 2023

- The Jammu and Kashmir Reservation (Amendment) Bill, 2023, was first introduced in Lok Sabha on July 26, 2023.
- The Bill amends the Jammu and Kashmir Reservation Act, 2004.
- The Act provides for reservation in jobs and admission in professional institutions to members of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and other socially and educationally backward classes.
- It seeks to change the nomenclature of a section of people who are eligible for quotas in appointments and admissions.
- Under the Act, socially and educationally backward classes include:
 - people residing in villages declared as socially and educationally backwards by the Union Territory (UT) of Jammu and Kashmir,
 - people residing in areas adjoining the Actual Line of Control and International Border, and
 - weak and underprivileged classes (social castes), as notified.
- As per the Bill, "the government may make inclusions or exclusions from the category of weak and underprivileged classes, on the recommendations of a Commission".
- The proposed Bill replaces the term "weak and underprivileged classes" with "other backward classes" as identified by the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, effectively eliminating the definition of weak and underprivileged classes from the Act.

Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2023

- The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill was first introduced in the Lok Sabha on July 26, 2023.
- The Bill amends the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019.

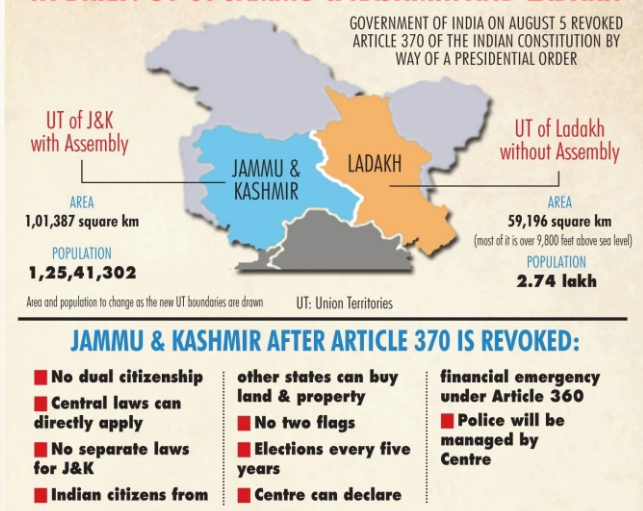
The Second Schedule of the Representation of the People Act of 1950 provides for the number of seats in legislative assemblies.

The 2019 Act amended the Second Schedule of the 1950 Act to specify the total number of seats in the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly to be 83.

It reserved six seats for Scheduled Castes. No seats were reserved for Scheduled Tribes.

- The Act provides for the reorganisation of the state of Jammu and Kashmir into the union territories of Jammu and Kashmir (with legislature) and Ladakh (without legislature).
- It seeks to nominate two members from the Kashmiri migrant community and one representing the displaced persons from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) to the legislative assembly.
- The amendment Bill proposes to increase the number of seats in the Legislative Assembly to 90 from 83.
 - It also reserves seven seats for Scheduled Castes and nine seats for Scheduled Tribes.
- The legislation specifies that the Lieutenant Governor is authorized to appoint a maximum of two individuals from the Kashmiri migrant community to the Legislative Assembly.
 - It is mandated that one of the appointed members must be a woman.

IN BRIEF: UT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR AND LADAKH



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ADVOCATES (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2023

WHY IN NEWS?

- On the first day of the Parliament's Winter Session (December 4), the Lok Sabha passed the Advocates Amendment Bill, 2023 to regulate the legal profession by targeting "touts".
- The Bill had earlier been cleared by the Rajya Sabha during the Monsoon Session of Parliament.

Key Provisions

- Aimed at weeding out 'touts' from the legal system, the Bill repeals the Legal Practitioners Act, 1879, and amends the Advocates Act, 1961, to reduce "the number of superfluous enactments in the statute book" and repeal all "obsolete laws".
- It provides for the insertion of a new section, namely Section 45A in the Advocates Act, 1961.
- It incorporates the provisions of Section 36 (power to frame and publish lists of touts in courts) of the Legal Practitioners Act, 1879 in the Advocates Act, 1961.
- The Advocates (Amendment) Act, 2023 provides that every High Court and District judge can frame and publish lists of touts, who procure clients for legal practitioners in return for any payment.
- Tout refers to a person who:
 - (i) either proposes to procure or procures the employment of a legal practitioner in a legal business in return of any payment, or
 - (ii) frequents places such as the precincts of civil or criminal courts, revenue offices, or railway stations to procure such employment.
- The Court or judge may exclude from the premises of the Court any person whose name is included in the list of touts.
- Any person who acts as a tout while his name is included in the list of touts will be punished with imprisonment up to three months, a fine up to Rs 500, or both.

The Legal Practitioners Act, 1880

- The Advocates Act, 1961, was enacted to amend and consolidate the law relating to legal practitioners and to provide for the constitution of Bar Councils and an All-India Bar.
- Before this, legal practitioners were governed by three Acts – the Legal Practitioners Act, 1879, the Bombay Pleaders Act, 1920, and the Indian Bar Councils Act, 1926.
- The Legal Practitioners Act came into force in 1880, "to consolidate and amend the law relating to Legal Practitioners in certain provinces."
- The Act initially extended to areas in West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Assam, Orissa, and Delhi.
- Any state government could, by notification in the Official Gazette, extend it to their states.
- Section 2 of the 1879 Act defined the term "legal practitioner" to include advocates, vakils, or attorneys of any High Court.



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THE WORLD'S FIRST COMPREHENSIVE SET OF RULES REGULATING THE USE OF AI

WHY IN NEWS?

- European Union officials have reached a provisional deal on the world's first comprehensive laws to regulate the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in tools such as ChatGPT and biometric surveillance.

Key Highlights

- The European Parliament will now vote on the proposed AI Act early next year, and the legislation is likely to come into force by 2025.
- The EU legal framework broadly divides AI applications into four risk classes based on their level of risk and invasiveness.
- Some applications will be largely banned, including the deployment of facial recognition on a mass scale, with some exemptions for law enforcement.
 - AI applications focused on behavioural control will be also banned.
- High risk applications such as the use of AI tools for self-driving cars will be allowed, but subject to certification and an explicit provision for the backend techniques to be made open to public scrutiny.
- Those applications that fall in the "medium risk" category can be deployed without restrictions, such as generative AI chatbots, but there has to be detailed documentation of how the tech works and users have to be explicitly made aware that they are dealing with an AI and not interacting with a human.
 - Developers will need to comply with transparency obligations before they release chatbots into the markets, including details about the contents used for training the algorithm.
- The use of real-time remote biometric identification systems in public spaces by law enforcement will only be allowed to help identify victims of kidnapping, human trafficking, sexual exploitation, and to prevent a specific and present terrorist threat.
- General purpose AI systems (GPAI) and foundation models will be subject to transparency requirements such as drawing up technical documentation, complying with EU copyright law and disseminating detailed summaries about the content used for algorithm training.
 - Foundation models classed as posing a systemic risk and high-impact GPAI will have to conduct model evaluations, assess and mitigate risks, conduct adversarial testing, report to the European Commission on serious incidents, ensure cybersecurity and report on their energy efficiency.
 - Until harmonised EU standards are published, GPAs with systemic risk may rely on codes of practice to comply with the regulation.
- Sanctions for violations - depending on the infringement and the size of the company involved, fines will start from 7.5 million euros (\$8 million) or 1.5 % of global annual turnover, rising to up to 35 million euros or 7% of global turnover.

Different Global Approaches

- These developments come as policymakers across jurisdictions have stepped up regulatory scrutiny of generative AI tools, prompted by ChatGPT's explosive launch.
- The policy response to the generative AI tools has been different, across jurisdictions.
- The concerns being flagged fall into three broad heads: privacy, system bias and violation of intellectual property rights.
- The EU has taken a predictably tougher stance that segregates AI as per use case scenarios, based broadly on the degree of invasiveness and risk.
- The UK is seen to be on the other end of the spectrum, with a decidedly 'light-touch' approach that aims to foster innovation in this nascent field.
- The US approach slots somewhere in between strict regulation and innovation support.
- China too has released its own set of measures to regulate AI.

India's Approach

- India has yet to have a comprehensive framework for regulating AI.
 - However, India has pitched itself, especially to nations in the Global South, as a country that has effectively used technology to develop and deliver governance solutions, at a mass scale.
 - These solutions are at the heart of what New Delhi calls Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI).
- Now, India wants to take the same DPI approach with AI.

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SECOND PHASE OF LEADERSHIP GROUP FOR INDUSTRY TRANSITION (LeadIT 2.0)

WHY IN NEWS?

- Recently, India and Sweden co-hosted the second phase of the Leadership Group for Industry Transition (LeadIT 2.0) Summit 2023 at the Conference of Parties (COP 28) in the United Arab Emirates.

Key Points

- The LeadIT Summit serves as an opportunity for governments and industries to discuss plans and policies for the low-carbon transition of the industrial sector to align with the goals of the Paris Agreement.
- The Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change announced the three pillars of the second phase of LeadIT and introduced the next phase (2024-2026) of LeadIT to the world and industry leaders.
 - The current phase of LeadIT is set to conclude in 2023.
- The three pillars of Phase II has been developed on three pillars, which are – A global forum for dialogue; Technology transfer and co-development; and Industry Transitions.
- The event addressed how LeadIT 2.0 will accelerate a just and equitable industry transition through partnerships, technology co-development, and financial and technical assistance focused on industry decarbonization for emerging and developing economies.
- At COP28, LeadIT members adopted a Mission Statement for the initiative's next phase (2024-2026) to reaffirm their dedication to accelerating a just and equitable industry transition to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement.

What is LeadIT?

- The Leadership Group for Industry Transition (LeadIT) gathers countries and companies that are committed to action to achieve the Paris Agreement.
- It was launched by the governments of Sweden and India at the UN Climate Action Summit in September 2019 and is supported by the World Economic Forum.
- LeadIT members subscribe to the notion that energy-intensive industries can and must progress on low-carbon pathways, aiming to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.
- The LeadIT Secretariat is responsible for managing the work of the Leadership Group and is hosted by Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI).
- LeadIT, boasting 38 members, encompasses countries and companies.

#INDIASWEDEN

COLLABORATING FOR A GREEN FUTURE

LEADERSHIP GROUP ON INDUSTRY TRANSITION (LEADIT)

- Launched by India & Sweden at **UN Climate Action Summit** in **Sept 2019** with World Economic Forum
- Brings together countries and companies committed to a **low carbon future** by 2050
- 35** Member countries & companies

LeadIT
LEADERSHIP GROUP FOR INDUSTRY TRANSITION

Leadership Group on Industry Transition (LeadIT)

- Launched by **India & Sweden** at **UN Climate Action Summit** in New York in September 2019
- To provide a platform for sharing the know-how on **technologies**, and for sectoral and cross-sectoral learning for commercialization of new technologies
- Achieve the industrial transition and reach **net-zero carbon emissions** from industry by 2050

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BILL ON ELECTION COMMISSION APPOINTMENTS

WHY IN NEWS?

- The Rajya Sabha passed the Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Bill, 2023 on December 12.

Key Provisions

- The Bill aims to regulate the appointment, conditions of service, and term of office for the chief election commissioner (CEC) and other election commissioners (EC), as well as outline the procedure for the functioning of the Election Commission.
- The new Bill will replace the Election Commission (Conditions of Service of Election Commissioners and Transaction of Business) Act, 1991.
- As per the new Bill, the President would appoint the CEC and ECs based on the recommendation of a selection committee, comprising the Prime Minister, a Union Cabinet Minister, and the Leader of the Opposition or the Leader of the Largest Opposition Party in the Lok Sabha.
 - The recommendations of this committee would remain valid even in the absence of a full committee.
- Notably, the Bill drops the Chief Justice of India from the selection committee.
- A search committee, headed by the Law Minister, would propose a panel of names to the selection committee, with eligibility criteria requiring candidates to have held a position equivalent to the secretary to the central government.
- The salary and conditions of service for the CEC and ECs were set to be equivalent to that of the cabinet secretary, deviating from the previous equivalence with a Supreme Court judge's salary.
 - However, the Union Government introduced an amendment to maintain the salary and perks of the CEC and ECs at the level of a Supreme Court judge, rather than aligning them with that of a cabinet secretary.
- The amendment also includes a clause safeguarding the CEC and ECs from legal proceedings related to actions taken during their tenure, provided such actions were carried out in the discharge of official duties.
- The amendment aimed to shield these officials from civil or criminal proceedings related to their official functions.

- In March 2023, a constitution bench of the Supreme Court had ruled that the election commissioners shall be selected by a committee comprising the Prime Minister, the Leader of Opposition, and the Chief Justice, till the parliament frames a law prescribing the selection process.
- The bench led by Justice KM Joseph passed the direction to ensure the independence of the election commissioners.

What the new bill proposes



WHAT THE LAW IS RIGHT NOW

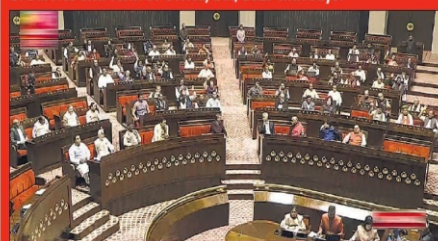
CEC, ECs are appointed by the PM and council of ministers, under the seal of the President.

WHAT DID SC SAY ON MARCH 2?

A bench headed by justice KM Joseph said ECs and CECs will be chosen by a panel comprising PM, LoP and CJ, till Parliament passes a law.

THE PLAN AHEAD

The government tabled the Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners (Appointment Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Bill, 2023 that says:



- Search panel, led by the law minister with 2 secy as members, to shortlist five names.
- Selection committee - comprising PM, LoP and a Union cabinet minister - to review names and recommend appointments; the panel can also consider other names.
- President to ratify appointments.

"Functioning of ECI was and will remain impartial and transparent, and the govt is committed to ensuring that."

— Arjun Ram Meghwal,
Union law minister

DID YOU KNOW?

- Currently, there is no specific legislative process defined in the Constitution for the appointment of the CEC and ECs. There are just five Articles (324-329) in Part XV (Elections) of the Constitution.
- Article 324 (2) of the Constitution states that the President will appoint the CEC and ECs till Parliament enacts a law, as well as the Supreme Court's March 2 order.
- Till now, the CEC and ECs were appointed by the President on the advice of the government.
- The Election Commission of India was established in 1950 to ensure free and fair elections in India.
- The Election Commission consists of a CEC who is the Chairman of the Election Commission and other ECs.

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75th ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

WHY IN NEWS?

- 10 December 2023 marks the 75th anniversary of one of the world's most groundbreaking global pledges: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).
- Human Rights Day is observed annually on 10th December to commemorate the approval of the UDHR by the UN General Assembly in 1948 in Paris, France.
- The theme of the year 2023 is "Freedom, Equality and Justice for All."

What is the Universal Declaration?

- The Declaration was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on 10 December 1948 and sets out, for the first time, fundamental human rights to be universally protected.
- Available in more than 500 languages, it is the most translated document in the world.

The UDHR, together with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its two Optional Protocols (on the complaints procedure and on the death penalty) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and its Optional Protocol, form the so-called International Bill of Human Rights.

- The Declaration consists of a preamble and 30 articles setting out fundamental rights and freedoms.
- Article 1 states that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights."
- Article 2 says that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms the declaration sets out, "without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status."
- Other articles state that "everyone has the right to life, liberty and the security of person," and that no one "shall be held in slavery or servitude" or "subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."
- The declaration says that "all are equal before the law" and that everyone is entitled to "a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal."
- It also says that "everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution."

- The declaration enshrines the rights to freedom of religion; to freedom of opinion and expression; and to freedom of peaceful assembly. And it says that everyone has the right to education.
- The declaration isn't a treaty and isn't legally binding in itself, but the principles it sets out have been incorporated into many countries' laws and it is viewed as the basis for international human rights law.

Other Human Rights Conventions

A series of international human rights treaties and other instruments adopted since 1945 have expanded the body of international human rights law. They include –

- The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948)
- The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965)
- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979)
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
- The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)
- The International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (2006)
- In 2011, the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) passed the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs).

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2023 SUMMIT OF GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (GPAI)

WHY IN NEWS?

- The 2023 summit of the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) was held on 12–14 December 2023, in New Delhi, India.

Key Highlights

- The Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) has unanimously adopted the New Delhi declaration underscoring the need to mitigate risks arising from the development and deployment of artificial intelligence (AI) systems, and promoting equitable access to critical resources for AI innovation, including computing and high-quality diverse datasets.
- The declaration stands out as a contrast from the agreement signed at the United Kingdom AI Safety Summit at Bletchley Park, Buckinghamshire, in November 2023, where countries had committed to first tackle the risks emanating from AI systems.
- The New Delhi declaration has attempted to find a balance between innovation and the risks associated with AI systems.
 - While it is largely upbeat about the economic benefits that AI can bring, it also flags issues around fairness, privacy, and intellectual property rights that will have to be taken into consideration.
- The declaration said that a global framework for the use of AI should be rooted in democratic values and human rights; safeguarding dignity and well-being; ensuring personal data protection; the protection of applicable intellectual property rights, privacy, and security; fostering innovation; and promoting trustworthy, responsible, sustainable, and human-centred use of AI.
- GPAI members also promoted equitable access to critical resources for AI innovation including computing, high-quality diverse datasets, algorithms, software, testbeds, and other AI-relevant resources.
- The declaration also agreed to support AI innovation in the agriculture sector as a new “thematic priority”.
- The declaration said that the GPAI will pursue a diverse membership, with a particular focus on low- and middle-income countries to ensure a broad range of expertise, national and regional views, and experiences based on shared values.
- Senegal, a current member of the grouping, was elevated to the steering committee of the GPAI.

GPAI New Delhi Declaration vs Bletchley Declaration

- While the GPAI New Delhi declaration addresses the need to tackle AI-related risks, it largely supports innovation in technology in various sectors.
 - By contrast, the Bletchley declaration that was signed at the UK AI Safety Summit put security and safety risks related to AI at the centre of the discussions.
- The essence of the GPAI New Delhi declaration can be summed up as AI is inherently good and is a catalyst for economic growth, but some harms need to be mitigated along the way.
 - The Bletchley declaration noted the “potential for serious, even catastrophic, harm, either deliberate or unintentional, stemming from the most significant capabilities of these AI models”, as well as risks beyond frontier AI, including those of bias and privacy.
 - “Frontier AI” is defined as highly capable foundation generative AI models that could possess dangerous capabilities that can pose severe risks to public safety.



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About GPAI

- The GPAI is a multi-stakeholder initiative which aims to bridge the gap between theory and practice on AI by supporting cutting-edge research and applied activities on AI-related priorities.
- Launched in June 2020 with 15 members, GPAI is the fruition of an idea developed within the G7.
- Today, GPAI's 29 members are Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, the Republic of Korea, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the European Union.
- India is a founding member of GPAI, having joined the multi-stakeholder initiative on June 15, 2020.
- GPAI has a Council and a Steering Committee, supported by a Secretariat hosted by the OECD, and two Centres of Expertise: one in Montreal (CEIMIA, the International Centre of Expertise in Montreal for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence) and one in Paris (at INRIA, the French National Institute for Research in Digital Science and Technology).
- Currently, GPAI has four working groups on the themes of Responsible AI, Data Governance, the Future of Work, and Innovation and Commercialization.



GUIDING THE RESPONSIBLE DEVELOPMENT AND USE OF AI

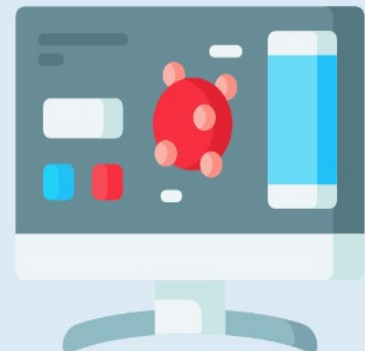
The Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI)

is an international initiative to guide the responsible development and use of AI, grounded in **human rights, inclusion, diversity, innovation, and economic growth.**



GPAI is composed of experts from governments, academia, industry, and civil society to help **bridge the gap between theory and practice on AI** by supporting cutting-edge research and applied activities on AI-related priorities.

Critically, in the short term, GPAI's experts are exploring **how AI can be used to better respond to and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.**



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**CONTEMPORARY EVENTS OF
SIGNIFICANCE FROM INDIA
AND THE WORLD**

QUICK FACTS



1. The first of the three ships, **INS Mahe, INS Malvan and INS Mangrol**, in a series of eight Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) shallow water crafts being built by the Cochin Shipyard for the Indian Navy were launched concurrently at the shipyard premises on November 30. The shipyard inked a contract with the Ministry of Defence to build a total of eight ASW vessels in 2019. These Mahe class of ships will replace the Navy's in-service Abhay class ASW corvettes.
2. The **Supreme Court** recently noted that the **Centre's notification** extending the **jurisdiction of the Border Security Force (BSF)** in Punjab from 15 to 50 km only confers concurrent power on the BSF to prevent the commission of certain offences within the limits and does not take away the power of investigation from the state police. In all border states, there is a power under the BSF Act, 1968 to extend the jurisdiction of BSF so far as offences are considered.
3. The **Defence Acquisition Council (DAC)** recently cleared the procurement of 97 Light Combat Aircraft Tejas Mk 1 A for the Indian Air Force (IAF) and 156 Light Combat Helicopters for IAF and the Army from Hindustan Aeronautics Limited among other big-ticket acquisitions worth Rs 2.23 lakh crore. The Defence Acquisition Council, which is headed by the Defence Minister, is among the top bodies for clearing major capital acquisitions for defence.
4. **Indian Navy Day**, celebrated on **December 4** each year, to recognise the role and achievements of the Indian Navy. The date holds historical significance as it commemorates 'Operation Trident' during the 1971 Indo-Pak War. This year, the theme is "Operational Efficiency, Readiness, and Mission Accomplishment in the Maritime Domain".
5. Eight years after its inception, past its brief discontinuation during the COVID period, the Ministry of Education is gearing up to restart the **fourth phase** of the **Global Initiative of Academic Networks (GIAN)** — Prime Minister Narendra Modi's pet project to rope in eminent scholars from across the world to teach at Indian universities.
6. The **Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)**, India's top consumer watchdog, has recently notified guidelines for the prevention and regulation of Dark Patterns, 2023. These guidelines, issued under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, are designed to protect consumers from deceptive practices employed by online platforms. Dark patterns involve using design and choice architecture to deceive, coerce, or influence consumers into making choices that are not in their best interest. Dark patterns encompass a wide range of manipulative practices such as drip pricing, disguised advertisement, bait and switch, false urgency etc.
7. On the occasion of India Navy Day (December 4), PM Modi announced that the **ranks** of the **Navy personnel** and officers will be renamed as per the **Indian culture**. The PM also mentioned that the epaulettes (ornamental shoulder pieces denoting rank) adorned by Naval officers would now feature the emblem of Shivaji Maharaj's army.
8. The Union Cabinet recently approved a scheme worth ₹1 trillion to **increase foodgrain storage capacity by 700 lakh tonnes in the cooperative sector**. The plan aims to converge various schemes of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, and the Ministry of Food Processing Industries. Currently, the grain storage capacity in the country is about 1,450 lakh tonnes. In the next five years, the storage will expand to 2,150 lakh tonnes.
9. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has paid tribute to the courage, commitment, and sacrifices of the nation's brave soldiers on the occasion of **Armed Forces Flag Day on 7th December 2023**. It has been observed annually in India on 7th December since 1949. On this day, the nation pays tribute to martyrs in the Indian Army, Navy, Air Force, and other defence forces who lost their precious lives while serving the country.
10. **Twenty blocks of critical minerals** are currently on auction for commercial mining by the private sector. The mineral blocks contain lithium ore, which is used in batteries and electric vehicles, and another 10 of the 30 minerals that the government declared as "critical" in July 2023. This is the first time that rights related to the mining of lithium ore are being auctioned to private parties.
11. **Undergraduate (UG) courses** like Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) and Bachelor of Computer Application (BCA) will be regulated by the **All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)** from 2024-25

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onwards. AICTE released its new approval process handbook on December 6, which will remain valid for three years from 2024-25 to 2026-27.

12. Recently, a bill seeking to establish a **Central Tribal University in Telangana** was passed by the Lok Sabha. The Bill, which amends the Central Universities Act, 2009 to set up the **Sammakka Sarakka Central Tribal University in Telangana's Mulugu district**, was cleared by the Union Cabinet in October. Establishing a Central Tribal University in Telangana was obligatory under the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014, which carved out Telangana from the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh state.
13. In order to encourage the **Spatial Planning by the Gram Panchayat**, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj had launched the Geographic Information System (GIS) application "**Gram Manchitra**". The Ministry has also launched **mActionSoft**, a mobile-based solution to help in capturing photos with Geo-Tags (i.e. GPS Coordinates) for the works which have assets as an output. Geo-tagging of the assets is done in all three stages viz. (i) before the start of the work, (ii) during the work and (iii) on completion of work.
14. The Government of India has decided to **map and document all villages** under the '**Mera Gaon, Meri Dharohar (MGMD)' Programme**. This National Mission on Cultural Mapping is conducted in coordination with the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) under the Ministry of Culture.
15. Recently, the **Supreme Court** has deployed **SUVAS**, a machine-assisted translation tool trained by Artificial Intelligence, in order to promote regional languages in judicial procedure. This tool is specially designed for the judicial domain and currently has the capacity to translate English judicial documents, orders or judgments into eleven vernacular languages.
16. Under **Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP)**, the Government has launched **Jan Aushadhi Suvidha Sanitary Napkins** at Rs. 1/- per pad for women to ensure easy availability of menstrual health services at affordable prices. These pads are being sold through more than 10000 Jan Aushadhi Kendra, opened across the country.
17. The **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) - Madras** has developed a **technology** called '**AMRIT (Arsenic and Metal Removal by Indian Technology)** for the removal of Arsenic and Metal ions from water. The technology uses nano-scale iron oxy-hydroxide, which selectively removes arsenic when water is passed through it. This water purifier has been developed for both domestic as well as community levels. Also, the technology has been recommended by the erstwhile 'Standing Committee' of the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation for the examination of the best technologies concerning water and sanitation.
18. After missing the deadline thrice, **India** is poised to achieve the **elimination** target for visceral leishmaniasis or **kala azar** this year with no block in the country reporting more than one case per 10,000 people. In October 2023, **Bangladesh** became the first country in the world to be officially validated by the World Health Organisation (WHO) for eliminating kala azar as a public health problem.
19. **NTPC**, India's largest integrated power company, won the **Brandon Hall Group's Excellence in Technology Awards 2023** on 7 December 2023. NTPC stands out as the only PSU in India to secure dual accolades in the Technology Awards category. The company received the coveted silver awards in two distinct categories: "Best Advance in Corporate Wellbeing Technology" and "Best Advance in Augmented and Virtual Reality."
20. Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the '**Viksit Bharat @2047: Voice of Youth**' initiative. The initiative will provide a platform for the youth of the country to contribute ideas to the vision of Viksit Bharat @2047. 'Viksit Bharat @2047' is the vision to make India a developed nation by 2047, the 100th year of independence. The vision encompasses various aspects of development, including economic growth, social progress, environmental sustainability, and good governance.
21. **India** ranked **7th** in the **2024 Climate Change Performance Index**, up one spot from the previous one, and also remained among the highest performers. Monitoring Climate Mitigation Efforts of 63 Countries plus the EU - covering more than 90 per cent of the Global Greenhouse Gas Emissions, India has received a high ranking in the greenhouse gas Emissions and Energy Use categories, but a medium in Climate Policy and Renewable Energy, as in the previous year.





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INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

QUICK FACTS



1. Recently, **India** has been **re-elected** to the **International Maritime Organisation (IMO) Council**, marking its continuous service at IMO. India's re-election falls under the Category of 10 states with "the largest interest in international seaborne trade", alongside Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The IMO is a specialized agency of the United Nations (UN) that is responsible for regulating shipping and preventing marine pollution from ships. IMO was established in 1948 following a UN conference in Geneva and came into existence in 1958. India joined the IMO in 1959.
2. **India** has been unanimously elected as a **member representing the Asian region** in the Executive **Committee of Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC)** during its 46th meeting being held at the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Headquarters in Rome. The Executive Committee is an important arm of the CAC. The Executive Committee comprises the Chair, three vice Chairs, six regional coordinators and seven elected representatives from the various geographical regions of Codex.
3. **World AIDS Day** is observed every year on **December 1** to spread awareness about HIV/AIDS. World AIDS Day was founded in 1988 and was the first ever global health day. Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is a virus which causes damage to the immune system. The **theme** of World AIDS Day 2023 is '**Let communities lead**'.
4. The **decade from 2011-2020** was the warmest ever in history. While there has been a rise in economic losses from extreme weather and climate losses, this was the decade with the lowest number of deaths from extreme events, according to a report titled "**The Global Climate 2011-2020: A Decade of Acceleration**" from the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO).
5. The **International Civil Aviation Day** is observed on **December 7** every year across the globe. The day aims to raise awareness of the importance of civil aviation and its significant contribution to the world economy as well as other fields. The date marks the establishment of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), on December 7, 1944. The day was established in 1994 as part of the 50th anniversary of the ICAO. The United Nations General Assembly officially recognized the day in 1996.
6. Google launched **Project Gemini**, an artificial intelligence (AI) model designed to exhibit human-like behaviour. The rollout will unfold in phases, with less sophisticated versions of Gemini called "Nano" and "Pro" being immediately incorporated into Google's AI-powered chatbot Bard and its Pixel 8 Pro smartphone.
7. **World Soil Day** is held annually on **5 December** as a means to focus attention on the importance of healthy soil and to advocate for the sustainable management of soil resources. This year's theme is "**Soil and Water: A Source of Life**". The Day was recommended by the International Union of Soil Sciences (IUSS) in 2002. 5th December 2014 was designated as the first official World Soil Day by the UN General Assembly (UNGA).
8. The **91st Interpol General Assembly** was held in **Vienna, Austria**. A high-ranking Indian delegation to the 91st Interpol General Assembly has urged other member countries to deny safe havens to crime, criminals, and the proceeds of crime. The delegation was led by Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) director Praveen Sood and included National Investigation Agency (NIA) director-general Dinkar Gupta.
9. According to a study published in 'Nature', **six exoplanets** orbiting around a nearby bright star (**HD 110067**) in the Coma Berenices constellation have been discovered. Planets with radii between that of the Earth and Neptune (referred to as 'sub-Neptunes') are found in close-in orbits around more than half of all Sun-like stars, but details of their composition, formation and evolution are not well understood. HD 110067 is a bright star in the Coma Berenices constellation (around 100 light-years away), which is visible from Earth's Northern Hemisphere.
10. Amid Israel's ongoing military attacks on the Gaza Strip, particularly in its southern region, **United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres** has invoked **Article 99 of the UN Charter** in a bid to establish a ceasefire. The UN Charter is the founding document of the United Nations. Based on the powers conferred through it, the UN can take action on a wide variety of issues. Article 99 states: "The Secretary-General may bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security."





11. Italy has **withdrawn from China's vast Belt and Road infrastructure** initiative, more than four years after becoming the only G7 nation to sign up. The deal was due to automatically renew in March 2024 unless Italy opted out by the end of this year. Italy, a member of the European Union, the G7 grouping of advanced economies and NATO, signed up in 2019 under the government of then Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte.
12. India has been selected as the pioneer lead country for the **International Maritime Organization (IMO) Green Voyage2050 Project**, with the objective to assist developing countries in their efforts to reduce Green House Gases (GHG) emissions from ships. Due to the global nature of international shipping having a diversity of stakeholders of all nationalities involved, emission from the maritime transport sector is addressed by the IMO through the International Convention for Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL). India is a signatory to this Convention.
13. The **National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)** on behalf of **River Cities Alliance (RCA)**, has signed a Memorandum of Common Purpose (MoCP) with the **Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative (MRCTI)**, representing 124 cities/towns situated along the banks of the Mississippi River, USA. NMCG, in association with the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) initiated a unique concept of River Cities Alliance (RCA) in November 2021.
14. The Indian Armed Forces contingent comprising 45 personnel participated in the **fourth edition of Joint Military Exercise VINBAX-2023** in Hanoi, Vietnam. Exercise VINBAX was instituted in 2018 and the first edition was conducted at Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh. It is an annual training event conducted alternatively in India and Vietnam. The last edition was conducted at Chandimandir Military Station in August 2022.
15. The term '**Anarcho-capitalism**' has recently gained popularity with **Javier Milei**, a self-proclaimed anarcho-capitalist, winning the presidential elections in Argentina recently. Anarcho-capitalism refers to a political philosophy which calls for the abolition of the state and for the provision of law and order to be controlled by private companies in a free market. The term was coined by American libertarian economist Murray Rothbard, while Belgian political economist Gustave de Molinari is considered to be the first anarcho-capitalist.
16. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (**IUCN Red List**) has recently reclassified the status of the **Saiga Antelope (Saiga tatarica) from Critically Endangered to Near Threatened**. The Saiga has two sub-species: Saiga tatarica tatarica (found in most of the range) and Saiga tatarica mongolica (found only in Mongolia). The antelope were once found throughout the Eurasian Steppe, the great band of grassland that stretches from Hungary in Europe to Manchuria in Asia.
17. The **world's deepest and largest underground laboratory** – built 2,400 metres (7,874 feet) under the surface in **southwest China** – has started operations in what could be a major boost to the global search for dark matter. Located at an extreme depth that blocks most cosmic rays, the lab is seen as an ideal “ultra-clean” site for scientists to detect dark matter, an invisible substance believed to make up at least a quarter of the universe. CERN's powerful particle accelerator, the Large Hadron Collider, is located 100 metres underground near Geneva on the Franco-Swiss border. The collider is used by international researchers to look for dark matter.

LET COMMUNITIES LEAD

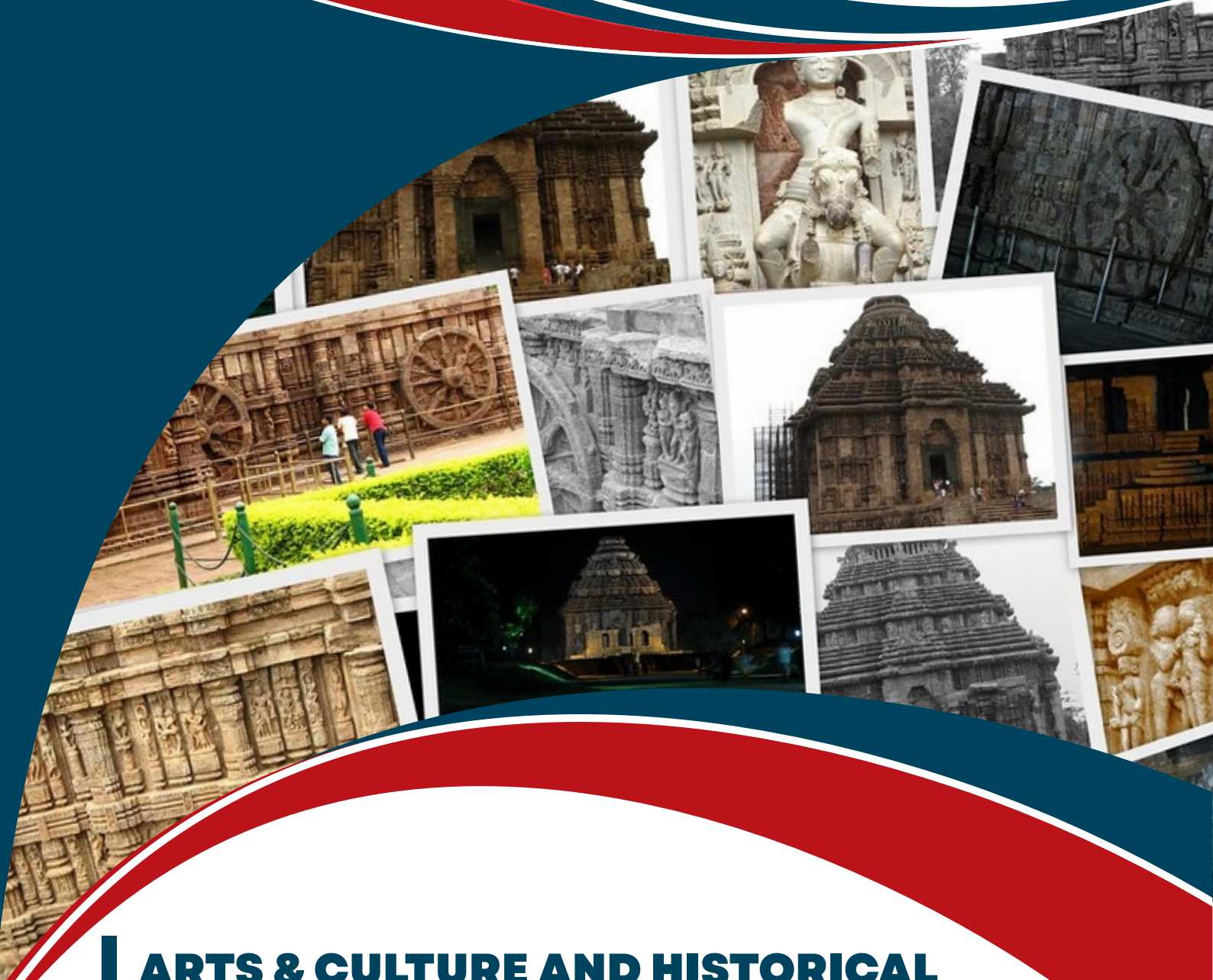


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ARTS & CULTURE AND HISTORICAL EVENTS OF CONTINUING SIGNIFICANCE

QUICK FACTS



1. '**Garba of Gujarat**' has been inscribed in the **Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of Humanity by UNESCO**, under the provisions of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage during the 18th meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage from 5th -9th December 2023 in Kasane, Botswana. The Garba dance form is the 15th cultural item from India to make it to the UNESCO list. Kolkata's Durga Puja was the last one added in 2021.
2. **December 6** marks the **Mahaparinirvan Diwas of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar**, the architect of the Indian Constitution. Parinirvana represents a fundamental concept in Buddhism, signifying the attainment of nirvana or liberation during one's lifetime and even after death. In Sanskrit, achieving nirvana posthumously or the release of the soul from the body after death is referred to as Parinirvana.
3. **Hanukkah – the Jewish festival of lights** –commences at sundown on **7th December, 2023**. It is an eight-day Jewish holiday that commemorates the rededication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem during the second century BCE. The first day of Hanukkah is always on the 25th day of Kislev on the Hebrew calendar, which is based on the movements of the sun and moon. Hanukkah celebrates the miracle of a small quantity of oil, which lasted for eight days, lighting the Temple's menorah (candelabrum) at the time of the Maccabean revolt, despite there being only enough oil for one day. The Hanukkah menorah is a nine-branched candelabrum that is lit during the eight-day holiday of Hanukkah.
4. A parliamentary panel has recommended the government to explore the possibility of **permitting puja and worship at monuments** protected by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) that have religious significance. The report on 'Issues relating to Untraceable Monuments and Protection of Monuments in India' was presented in both Houses recently.



COVETED STATUS

- Navratri is central to cultural identity of Gujaratis and Indians at large
- Unesco's ICH tag will ensure better protection of this cultural heritage
- The tag will also demonstrate the diversity of this heritage and raise awareness globally
- Garba forms a centuries-old tradition going back to the time of Lord Krishna
- The word 'garba' is derived from the word 'garbh deep'
- The dance celebrates fertility and is performed as a tribute to femininity - Shakti



Garba is also known as 'garbha', 'garbha deep' and 'garbhi' varying with local dialects

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TEST ZONE



PASSAGE - 1

The government has approved the 'Terms of Reference' for the 16 Finance Commission, which makes recommendations on sharing of tax revenues between the Centre and states. The recommendations would cover a five-year period commencing April 1, 2026. The commission would submit its report by October 31, 2025.

The 15th Finance Commission was constituted on November 27, 2017. It made recommendations covering a six-year period commencing April 1, 2020 through its interim and final reports. The recommendations of the 15th Finance Commission are valid up to financial year 2025-26.

The Constitution lays down the modalities for setting up of a Finance Commission to make recommendations on the distribution of net proceeds of taxes between the Union and states; allocation between states of respective shares of such proceeds; grants-in-aid and the revenues of states and measures needed to supplement the resources

of 'panchayats' during the award period.

The distribution between the Union and states of the net proceeds of taxes which are to be, or may be, divided between them under Chapter I, Part XII of the Constitution and the allocation between states of the respective shares of such proceeds, are among the terms of reference (ToR) approved by the Cabinet.

Another ToR is about the principles governing the grants-in-aid of the revenues of states out of the Consolidated Fund of India and the sums to be paid to states by way of grants-in-aid of their revenues.

It will also suggest measures needed to augment the Consolidated Fund of a State to supplement the resources of panchayats and municipalities, as per the ToR.

[Extracted, with edits and revisions, from: "Cabinet Approves Terms Of Reference For 16th Finance Commission", NDTV]

Q.1 The 15th Finance Commission was constituted by the President of India in November 2017, under the chairmanship of –

A Urjit Patel

B YV Reddy

C NK Singh

D Krishnamurthy Subramanian

Q.2 Under _____ of the Constitution, the President of India is required to constitute a Finance Commission at an interval of five years or earlier.

A Article 148

B Article 280

C Article 266

D Article 312

Q.3 Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) is a system of rural local self-government in India. PRI was constitutionalised through –

A 70th Constitutional Amendment Act

B 71st Constitutional Amendment Act

C 72nd Constitutional Amendment Act

D 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act

Q.4 Which Schedule was added to the Indian Constitution by the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act which deals with the provisions that specify the powers, authority and responsibilities of Municipalities?

A 12th Schedule

B 11th Schedule

C 10th Schedule

D 9th Schedule

Q.5 Consolidated Fund of India, a fund to which all receipts are credited and all payments are debited, was constituted under

A Article 312

B Article 266

C Article 213

D Article 267

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

Answers

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PASSAGE - 2

During her inaugural address at the Supreme Court's Constitution Day celebration, President Droupadi Murmu called for an "all-India judicial service" to recruit judges, saying this will help make the judiciary diverse by increasing representation from marginalised social groups.

"There can be an all-India judicial service which can select brilliant youngsters and nurture and promote their talents from lower levels to higher levels. Those who aspire to serve the Bench can be selected from across the country to create a larger pool of talent. Such a system can offer opportunities to the less-represented social groups too," Murmu said.

If the Rajya Sabha declares through a resolution, supported by at least two-thirds of its present and voting members, that it is necessary or expedient to create a service in "national interest," the Parliament "may by law provide for the creation of one or more all India services

(including an all India judicial service) common to the Union and the States" and regulate the recruitment and service conditions of persons appointed to any such service.

However, the AIJS cannot include any post inferior to that of a district judge, as defined in Article 236. A district judge can include a city civil court judge, additional district judge, joint district judge, assistant district judge, chief judge of a small cause court, chief presidency magistrate, additional chief presidency magistrate, sessions judge, additional sessions judge, and assistant sessions judge.

Essentially, the AIJS seeks to centralise the recruitment of judges at the level of additional district judges and district judges for all states.

[Extracted, with edits and revisions, from: "President Murmu advocates for All India Judicial Service: What the idea is, why it hasn't been implemented", by Khadija Khan, The Indian Express]

Q.1 _____ of the Constitution provides for the establishment of an All-India Judicial Service (AIJS), along the lines of the central civil services.

A Article 312

B Article 324

C Article 338

D Article 356

Q.2 Constitution Day, also known as National Law Day or Samvidhan Diwas, is celebrated in India on _____ every year to commemorate the adoption of the Constitution of India.

A 26th September

B 26th January

C 26th November

D 26th July

Q.3 The Parliament is entitled to create one or more All India Services including All India Judicial Services if the Rajya Sabha passes a resolution. The Rajya Sabha was constituted in –

A 1948

B 1952

C 1949

D 1951

Q.4 Who among the following acts as the ex-officio chairperson of the Rajya Sabha?

A Protem Speaker

B President

C Prime Minister

D Vice President

Q.5 Recently, a Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court unanimously upheld the Central government's decision to abrogate Article 370 of the Constitution. When did the Central Government abrogate Article 370?

A 2017

B 2018

C 2019

D 2020

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

Answers

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PASSAGE - 3

[1] policymakers and lawmakers clinched a deal on Friday on the world's first comprehensive set of rules regulating the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in tools such as ChatGPT and in biometric surveillance.

They will thrash out details in the coming weeks that could alter the final legislation, which is expected to go into force early next year and apply in 2026. Until then, companies are encouraged to sign up to a voluntary AI Pact to implement key obligations of the rules.

So-called high-risk AI systems - those deemed to have significant potential to harm health, safety, fundamental rights, the environment, democracy, elections and the rule of law - will have to comply with a set of requirements, such as undergoing a fundamental rights impact assessment, and obligations to gain access to the [1] market.

AI systems considered to pose limited risks would be subject to very light transparency obligations, such as disclosure labels declaring that the content was AI-generated to allow users to decide on how to use it.

The use of real-time remote biometric identification systems in public spaces by law enforcement will only be allowed to help identify victims of kidnapping, human trafficking, sexual exploitation, and to prevent a specific and present terrorist threat.

GPAI and foundation models will be subject to transparency requirements such as drawing up technical documentation, complying with [1] copyright law and disseminating detailed summaries about the content used for algorithm training.

[Extracted, with edits and revisions, from: "What are [1]'s landmark AI regulations?", The Hindu]

Q.1 The name of which group of countries has been replaced with [1] in the passage above?

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------------|
| A BRICS | C European Union |
| B G7 | D ASEAN |

Q.2 Which country hosted the 2023 summit of the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) on 12–14 December 2023?

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| A India | C Dubai |
| B United Kingdom | D Germany |

Q.3 In November 2023, the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Safety Summit 2023 was held in –

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| A United States | C United Arab Emirates |
| B United Kingdom | D China |

Q.4 Which IT company released its latest Gemini artificial intelligence (AI) model - Gemini Pro - to developers and enterprises on December 13, along with a range of new AI tools, models, and infrastructure?

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| A Microsoft | C Meta |
| B OpenAI | D Google |

Q.5 _____ announced the release of its Phi-2 small language model (SML), a text-to-text AI program that is "small enough to run on a laptop or mobile device."

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| A Google | C Microsoft |
| B Credo AI | D Nvidia |

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

Answers

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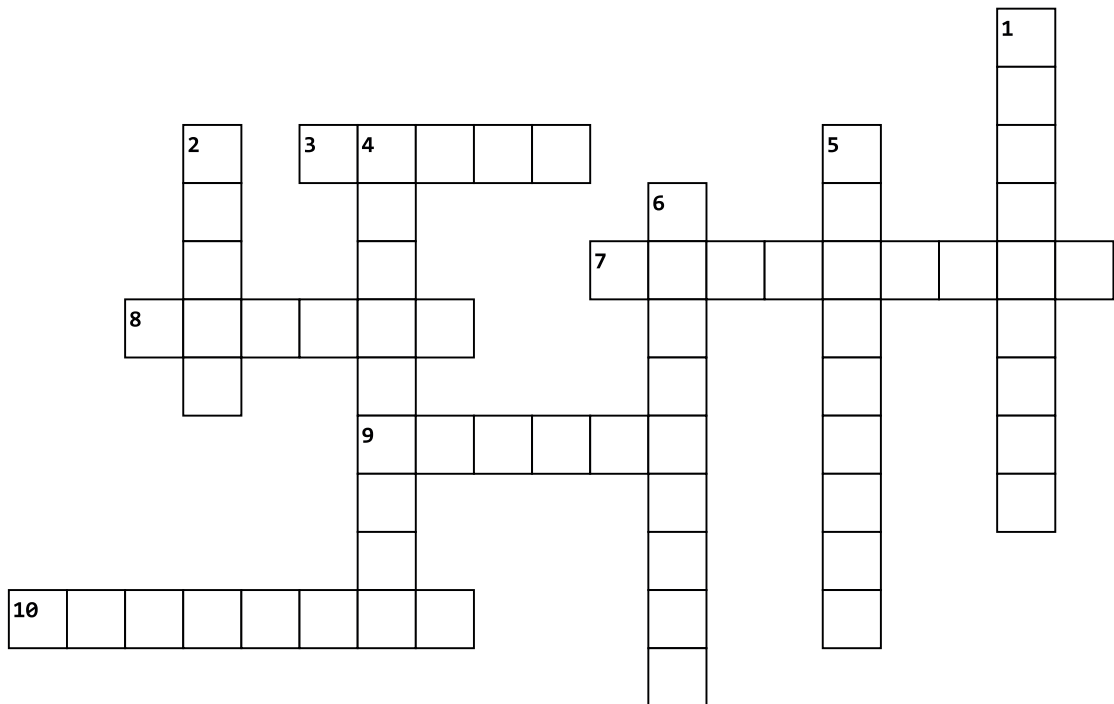
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CROSSWORD CORNER



CROSSWORD - 1



Across

3. European country withdrawn from China's BRI initiative
7. World Soil Day
8. Joint military exercise between India and Vietnam
9. Launched Project Gemini, an AI model designed to exhibit human-like behaviour
10. The Jewish festival of lights

Down

1. Indian Navy Day
2. Re-elected to the International Maritime Organisation Council
4. Central Tribal University will be set up
5. Armed Forces Flag Day
6. World AIDS Day

Answers

10	Hanukkah	5	7December
9	Google	4	Telangana
8	VINBAX	3	Italy
7	5December	2	India
6	1December	1	4December

NOW PREPARE FOR CLAT 2024

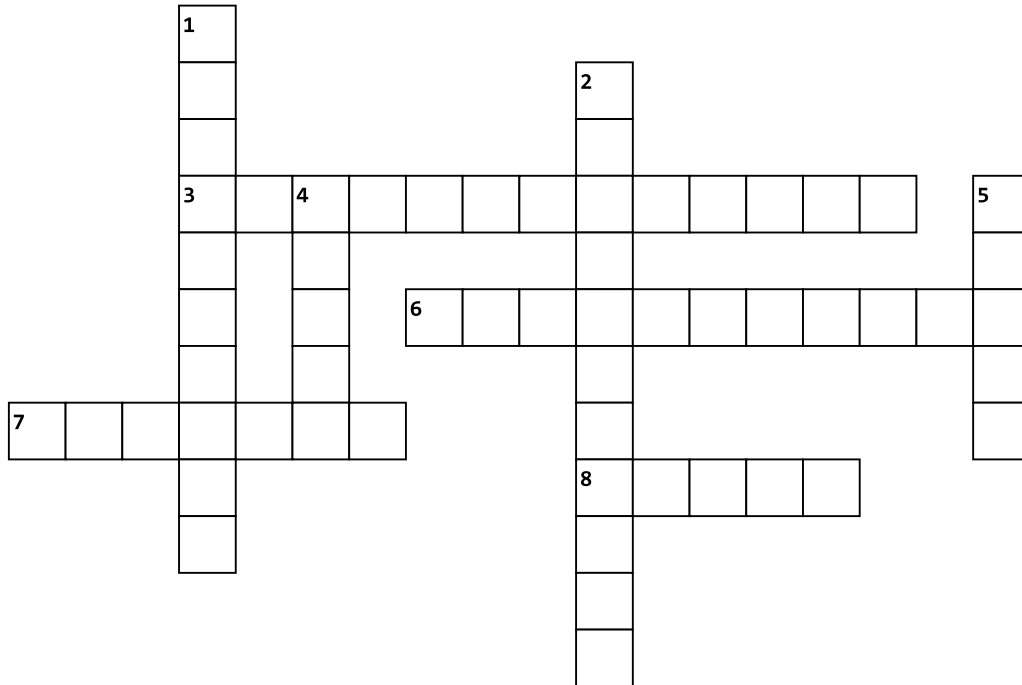
WITHOUT PAYING HEFTY COACHING FEES

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CROSSWORD - 2



Across

3. A GIS application launched by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj
6. Newly elected President of Argentina
7. Rank of India in the 2024 Climate Change Performance Index
8. An AI assisted translation tool deployed by the SC

Down

1. Became the first country in the world to eliminate kala azar as a public health problem
2. A mobile-based solution to help in capturing photos with Geo-Tags
4. Arsenic and Metal Removal by Indian Technology developed by IIT Madras
5. Location of world's deepest and largest underground physics laboratory

Answers

8	SUVAS	4	AMRIT
7	Seventh	3	GramManchitra
6	JavierMillei	2	mActionSoft
5	China	1	Bangladesh

HAVE ANY DOUBT REGARDING YOUR CLAT PREPARATION?

WRITE TO US AT HELP@SMARTKEEDA.COM OR CALL US ON - 8979589366