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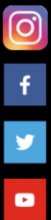
LawEx

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ISSUE - 33



THAILAND LEGALISES SAME-SEX MARRIAGE



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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

Thailand will become the first country in Southeast Asia, and third in Asia after Nepal and Taiwan, to legalise same-sex marriage. The Lok Sabha on 26 June 2024 passed a resolution against the Emergency which was declared on June 25, 1975, to create awareness about all historic events. The United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, on June 24, unveiled a set of principles aimed at curbing the spread of online misinformation, disinformation, and hate speech. The Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi on June 19 inaugurated the new campus of the Nalanda University in Bihar's Rajgir. Keep reading for more updated information.

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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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QUICK BOOSTERS



THAILAND LEGALISES SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

WHY IN NEWS?

- The Thai Senate, the upper house of Thailand's National Assembly, passed the Marriage Equality Bill on June 18, with a hundred and thirty senators voting in its favour, 18 abstaining, and only four voting against.
 - The Bill now awaits the formal endorsement of Thai monarch King Rama X.
 - After that, Thailand will become the first country in Southeast Asia, and third in Asia after Nepal and Taiwan, to legalise same-sex marriage.

Key Features

- The new legislation changes references to “men”, “women”, “husbands” and “wives” in Thai marriage laws to gender-neutral terms such as “spouse” and “person”.
 - This means that two persons can marry each other, regardless of their gender.
- It also grants same-sex couples the same rights as heterosexual couples in areas such as adoption, inheritance, and tax benefits.
- LGBTQ+ couples effectively possess the same legal powers as their heterosexual counterparts in case of legal incapacitation, from being able to access bank accounts to providing consent for medical treatment.

A 2022 poll by Thailand's National Institute of Development Administration found 91% of respondents to be 'tolerant' towards LGTBQ+ family members, and 80% in favour of same-sex marriage.

Situation in Rest of Asia and World

- Apart from Thailand, Taiwan, and Nepal, other Asian countries do not fare well when it comes to marriage equality and LGBTQ+ rights.
- In fact, at least 20 Asian countries outlaw same-sex sexual activity, with Afghanistan, Brunei, Iran, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Yemen, even prescribing the death penalty.
- Currently, same-sex marriage is legal in 36 countries (not including Thailand) globally, according to LGBTQ+ rights advocacy Human Rights Campaign.
 - These are Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Uruguay.

In India

- In October 2023, a five-judge Bench of the Supreme Court of India refused to alter the Special Marriage Act (SMA) of 1954 to give legal recognition to same-sex marriages, putting the onus on Parliament to legislate marriage equality. Thus far, there has been next to no political backing of the move.
 - The Bench however unanimously acknowledged that same-sex couples face discrimination and harassment in their daily lives and accordingly urged the government to form a high-powered committee chaired by the Union Cabinet Committee to expeditiously look into the concerns faced by them.
- In India, same-sex relations between consenting adults were decriminalised after a landmark Supreme Court judgment in 2018.





74th ANNIVERSARY OF THE START OF THE KOREAN WAR

WHY IN NEWS?

- Seventy-four years ago, on June 25, 1950, North Korean troops invaded South Korea in a bid to reunite the two countries.
- At the time, the Korean Peninsula was divided along the 38th parallel – a split unprecedented in Korean history – with the Soviet Union backing Kim Il-Sung's Workers Party in the North and the United States' supporting Syngman Rhee's government in the South.
- The three-year war – pitting Soviet and China-backed northern troops against US-led United Nations forces – killed an estimated two million people and laid to waste cities and villages on both sides of the border.
- It ended with an armistice between the US, China and North Korea, but South Korea did not agree, and no formal peace treaty was signed.
- And 74 years on, the two Koreas remain technically at war.

What led to the divide in the Korean Peninsula?

- The war was a result of Cold War tensions and the rivalry for supremacy between the communist Soviet Union and the liberal capitalist United States.
- The two superpowers emerged after the Second World War (1939 to 1945) and attempted to extend their influence over the Korean peninsula as it had just gained independence from colonial rule.
- Several dynasties ruled Korea before that with some uniting the entire region, such as the Silla dynasty in the 7th century.
- Korea then came under Japanese colonial rule from 1910 to 1945 and it ended with Japan's surrender in WW2. However, Korea's liberation was quickly followed by division.
- To manage the Japanese surrender, the Allied forces (comprising the US, the USSR, the UK, France, and others) agreed to a temporary division of Korea into two occupation zones: the Soviet Union-controlled one in the north and the US one in the south.
- US authorities decided the 38th parallel would be the dividing line.
- Over time, the Cold War rivalry and the influence of the occupying powers made the division permanent.
- Today, a buffer zone called the demilitarised zone (DMZ) runs along the 38th parallel to avoid border skirmishes. Army members of both countries guard it on either side.
- In the North, the Soviet Union helped establish a communist regime led by Kim Il-sung, a former guerrilla fighter and Soviet-trained leader.
- In the South, the United States supported the creation of a capitalist state under Syngman Rhee, an anti-communist leader who had spent many years in exile in the United States.
- By 1948, two separate governments were officially established: the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) and the Republic of Korea (South Korea), each claiming legitimacy over the entire peninsula.

The Korean War

- On June 25, 1950, North Korean forces, backed by the Soviet Union and China, launched a surprise invasion of South Korea by crossing the 38th parallel.
 - The invasion began in the early morning and caught the South Korean army and its American allies off guard.
- The North Korean forces quickly advanced, overwhelming the South Korean defences and capturing key areas — including the capital Seoul.
- This alarmed the international community and prompted the United Nations to intervene.
- The UN Security Council passed a resolution condemning the invasion and calling for a withdrawal of North Korean forces from South Korea.
 - UN members were recommended to assist South Korea against the attack and “restore peace on the Korean Peninsula”.
- In response, a coalition of UN forces primarily led by the United States intervened.
 - This marked the beginning of a bloody and protracted conflict that would last for three years and result in millions of casualties.

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Legacy of the Korean War

- The Korean War shaped the geopolitical landscape of East Asia and impacted global affairs.
- It has had far-reaching implications for regional security, contributing to the militarisation of the Korean Peninsula and ongoing tensions between the two Koreas and between North Korea and the West.
- It also solidified the alliance between the United States and South Korea.
 - The US established a lasting military presence in South Korea by stationing American troops and remains committed to defending it against any external aggression.
- China's entry into the war demonstrated its commitment to supporting communist regimes and a willingness to confront US-led forces in the region.
 - China and North Korea largely maintain a close strategic partnership, with China being a key economic and diplomatic ally of North Korea.
 - China's support for North Korea in the UN and its role in providing economic assistance despite international sanctions highlights the enduring nature of their relationship.
- Russia has also emerged as a North Korean ally, trading weapons with the largely isolated 'hermit' kingdom.

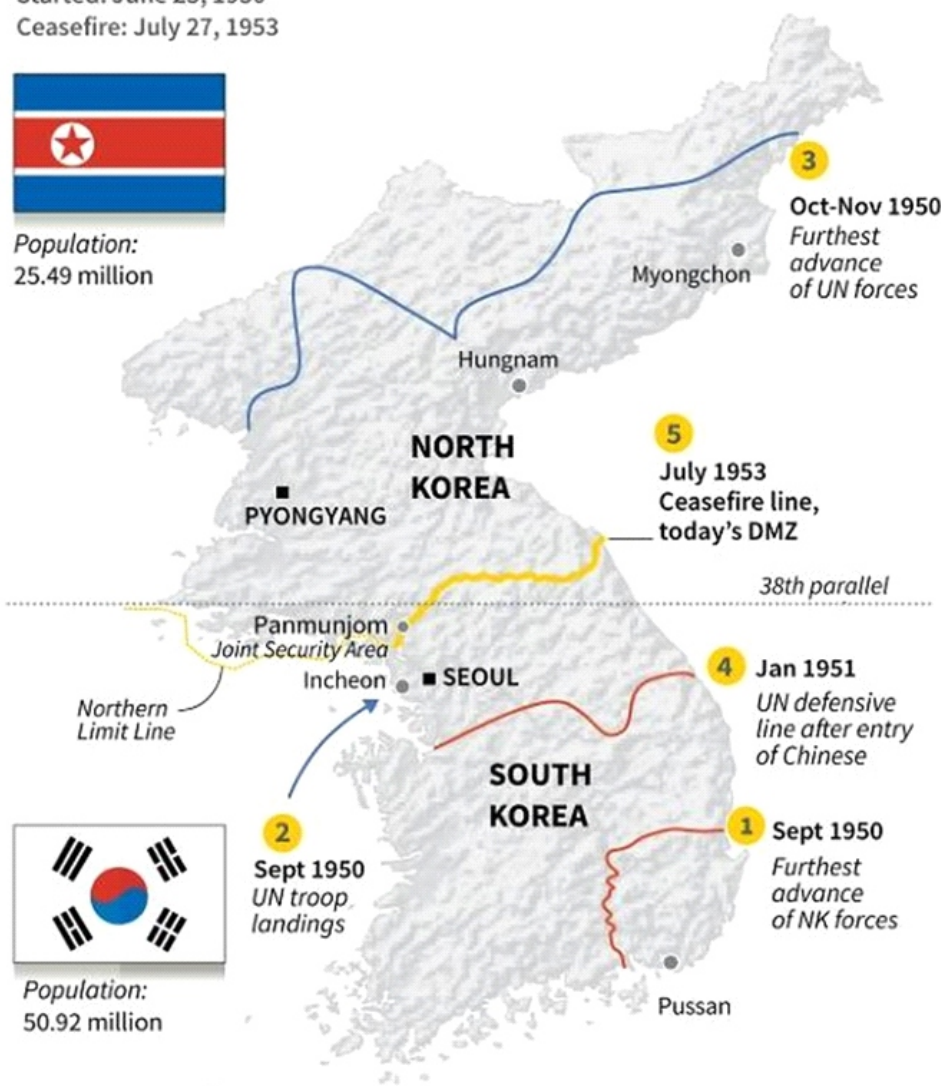
The Korean War

Started: June 25, 1950

Ceasefire: July 27, 1953



Population:
25.49 million



Population:
50.92 million

Casualties

Multiple contradictory accounts on all sides

Up to three million Koreans died, the vast majority of them civilians

According to Seoul's defence ministry, **520,000 North Korean soldiers** were killed, as were **137,000 Southern troops**

A display at Pyongyang's main war museum says more than **1.5 million** of the "enemy" were killed or captured

Chinese casualty figures remain disputed, with Western estimates commonly citing a figure of **400,000**, while Chinese sources put it at about **180,000**

Nearly **37,000 American soldiers** were killed, while other UN fatalities included **more than 1,000 British soldiers**

Source: "The Korean War" Volume 3 by the Korean Institute of Military History/Institute for Military Compilation, Ministry of National Defense, South Korea/Stockholm International Peace Research Institute/UN/NTI/IJSS/CSIS

AFP

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50th YEAR OF THE IMPOSITION OF THE EMERGENCY

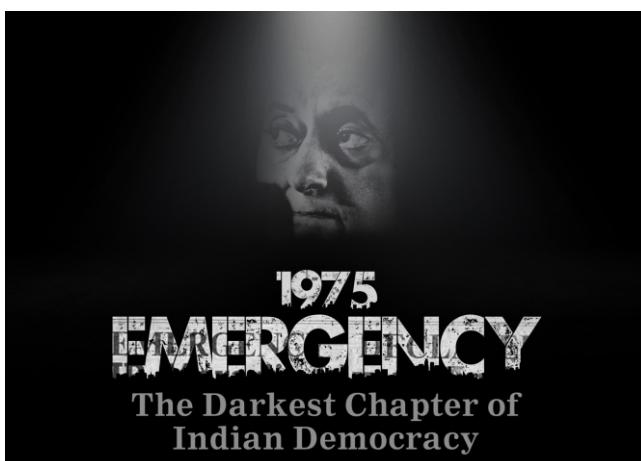
WHY IN NEWS?

- The Lok Sabha on 26 June 2024 passed a resolution against the Emergency which was declared on June 25, 1975, to create awareness about all historic events.
- The Lower House decided to pass this resolution on its 50th anniversary as post facto ratification of the Emergency was done by the cabinet on June 26, 50 years back.
- The newly elected speaker of the Lok Sabha strongly criticised then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's decision to impose an Emergency on the nation. He called the decision a "black chapter" in the history of Indian democracy.

The Story of the Emergency

- The Emergency refers to the period from June 25, 1975, to March 21, 1977, during which the government of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi used special provisions in the Constitution to impose sweeping executive and legislative consequences on the country.
- Almost all opposition leaders, including JP, were detained. About 36,000 people were put in jail under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA).
- Fundamental rights, including the freedom of speech and expression guaranteed under Article 19(1)(a), were curtailed, which led to pre-censorship of the press.
- Newspapers were subjected to pre-censorship. UNI and PTI were merged into a state-controlled agency called Samachar. The Press Council was abolished.
- Indira's son Sanjay Gandhi pushed a "five-point programme" that included forced family planning and clearance of slums.
 - Sanjay gave officials at the Centre and in the states family planning targets, leading to forced sterilisations.
- With the opposition in jail, Parliament passed The Constitution (Thirty-eighth Amendment) Act that barred judicial review of the Emergency, and The Constitution (Thirty-ninth Amendment) Act that said the election of the Prime Minister could not be challenged in the Supreme Court.
- The Constitution (Forty-second Amendment) Act made changes to a range of laws, taking away the judiciary's right to hear election petitions, widening the authority of the Union to encroach on State subjects, gave Parliament unbridled power to amend the Constitution with no judicial review possible, and made any law passed by Parliament to implement any or all directive principles of state policy immune to judicial review.
- In the famous case of ADM Jabalpur vs Shivkant Shukla, 1976, a five-judge Bench of the Supreme Court ruled that detention without trial was legal during an emergency.
 - The sole dissenter to the majority judgment was Justice H R Khanna.

- The declaration of Emergency converts the federal structure into a de facto unitary one, as the Union acquires the right to give any direction to state governments, which, though not suspended, come under the complete control of the Centre.
- Parliament may by law extend the (five-year) term of Lok Sabha one year at a time, make laws on subjects in the State List, and extend the Union's executive powers to the states.
- The President can modify, with parliamentary approval, constitutional provisions on the allocation of financial resources between the Union and states.



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- On June 12, 1975, Justice Jagmohanlal Sinha of Allahabad High Court delivered a historic verdict in a petition filed by Raj Narain, convicting Indira Gandhi of electoral malpractice, and striking down her election from Rae Bareilly.
- On appeal, the Supreme Court gave the Prime Minister partial relief — she could attend Parliament but could not vote.
- As demands for her resignation became louder and her aides in Congress dug in their heels, JP asked the police not to follow immoral orders.
- Late on June 25 evening, President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed signed the proclamation of Emergency. The Cabinet was informed about the decision the next morning.
- Since no newspapers could be printed, people got the news from Indira's address on All India Radio.

Constitutional Provisions

- The Emergency provisions are contained in Part XVIII of the Indian Constitution, from Articles 352 to 360.
- The Constitution stipulates three types of emergencies:
 - An emergency due to war, external aggression, or armed rebellion (Article 352).
 - An Emergency due to the failure of the constitutional machinery in the states (Article 356).
- Under Article 352 of the Constitution, the President may, on the advice of the Cabinet headed by the Prime Minister, issue a proclamation of emergency if the security of India or any part of the country is threatened by "war or external aggression or armed rebellion".
 - This is popularly known as 'National Emergency'.

- In 1975, instead of armed rebellion, the ground of "internal disturbance" was available to the government to proclaim an emergency.
- This was the only instance of the proclamation of emergency due to "internal disturbance". The two occasions in which an emergency was proclaimed earlier, on October 26, 1962, and December 3, 1971, were both on grounds of war.
- This ground of "internal disturbance" was removed by The Constitution (Forty-fourth Amendment) Act, 1978 by the Janata government that came to power after the Emergency.

- Article 356 of the Indian Constitution deals with the provisions of an emergency due to the failure of the constitutional machinery in the states (President's Rule).
- This is popularly known as 'President's Rule'. It is also known by two other names—'State Emergency' or 'Constitutional Emergency'. However, the Constitution does not use the word 'emergency' for this situation.
- Article 360 of the Indian Constitution deals with the provisions of financial emergency due to a threat to the financial stability or credit of India.

- Article 358 frees the state of all limitations imposed by Article 19 ("Right to freedom") as soon as an emergency is imposed.
- Article 359 empowers the President to suspend the right of people to move court for the enforcement of their rights during an emergency.

After the Emergency

- The Janata government reversed many of the constitutional changes effected by the 42nd Amendment Act of 1976.
 - It did not do away with the provision of the emergency but made it extremely difficult to impose for the future.
 - It made judicial review of a proclamation of emergency possible again and mandated that every proclamation of emergency be laid before both Houses of Parliament within a month of the proclamation.
- Unless it was approved by both Houses by a special majority — a majority of the total strength of the House and not less than two-thirds of the members present and voting — the proclamation would lapse.
- The Shah Commission, constituted by the Janata government to report on the imposition of the Emergency and its adverse effects, submitted a damning report that found the decision to be unilateral and adversely affecting civil liberties.

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70th ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIVE PRINCIPLES OF PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE

WHY IN NEWS?

- On June 28, 2024, the Conference Marking the 70th Anniversary of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence was held in Beijing, China.
- The conference issued the Beijing Declaration.
- The theme of the event was "From the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence to Building a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind".

What are these Five Principles?

- In 1954, while inaugurating bilateral talks between India and China over Tibet, Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai proposed the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, which was favoured by Nehru.
 - What China calls the Five Principles is known in India as Panchsheel.
- The word Panchsheel traces its origin to the Buddhist concept of Pañcaśīla, which describes the five moral vows of Buddhism: abstinence from murder, theft, sexual misconduct, lying, and intoxicants.
- The Panchsheel Agreement, formally known as The Agreement on Trade and Intercourse with Tibet Region, was signed on April 29, 1954, by N Raghavan, the Indian Ambassador to China, and Zhang Han-Fu, China's Foreign Minister.
- The preamble of the Panchsheel Treaty laid down five guiding principles-
 - Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty;
 - Mutual non-aggression;
 - Mutual non-interference;
 - Equality and mutual benefit; and
 - Peaceful co-existence.
- The agreement aimed to enhance trade and cooperation between the two countries, establishing each country's trade centres in major cities of the other, and laid out a framework for trade.
- The agreement also listed important religious pilgrimages, provisions for pilgrims, and acceptable routes and passes available to them.
- Importantly, India for the first time recognised Tibet as the Tibet Region of China.



Panchsheel to Non-Alignment

- A year after the Sino-Indian Agreement, the Five Principles would feature prominently at the first African-Asian Conference in Bandung, Indonesia.
- Twenty-nine countries of Asia and Africa took part in the Bandung Conference of April 1955 and signed a 10-point declaration that co-opted the Five Principles or Panchsheel.

The Bandung Conference would serve as the precursor to the Non-Aligned Movement, a grouping of nations that consciously chose to not align themselves with either of the two global power blocs led by the United States and the Soviet Union.

NAM was founded with the signing of the Brioni (Brijuni) Declaration on July 19, 1956, by Nehru, Egypt's President Gamal Abdel Nasser, and Prime Minister Josip Broz Tito of Yugoslavia.

The Brioni Islands are in the northern Adriatic Sea, and are now a part of Croatia.

- The first NAM Summit in Belgrade accepted Panchsheel as the "principled core" of the grouping.



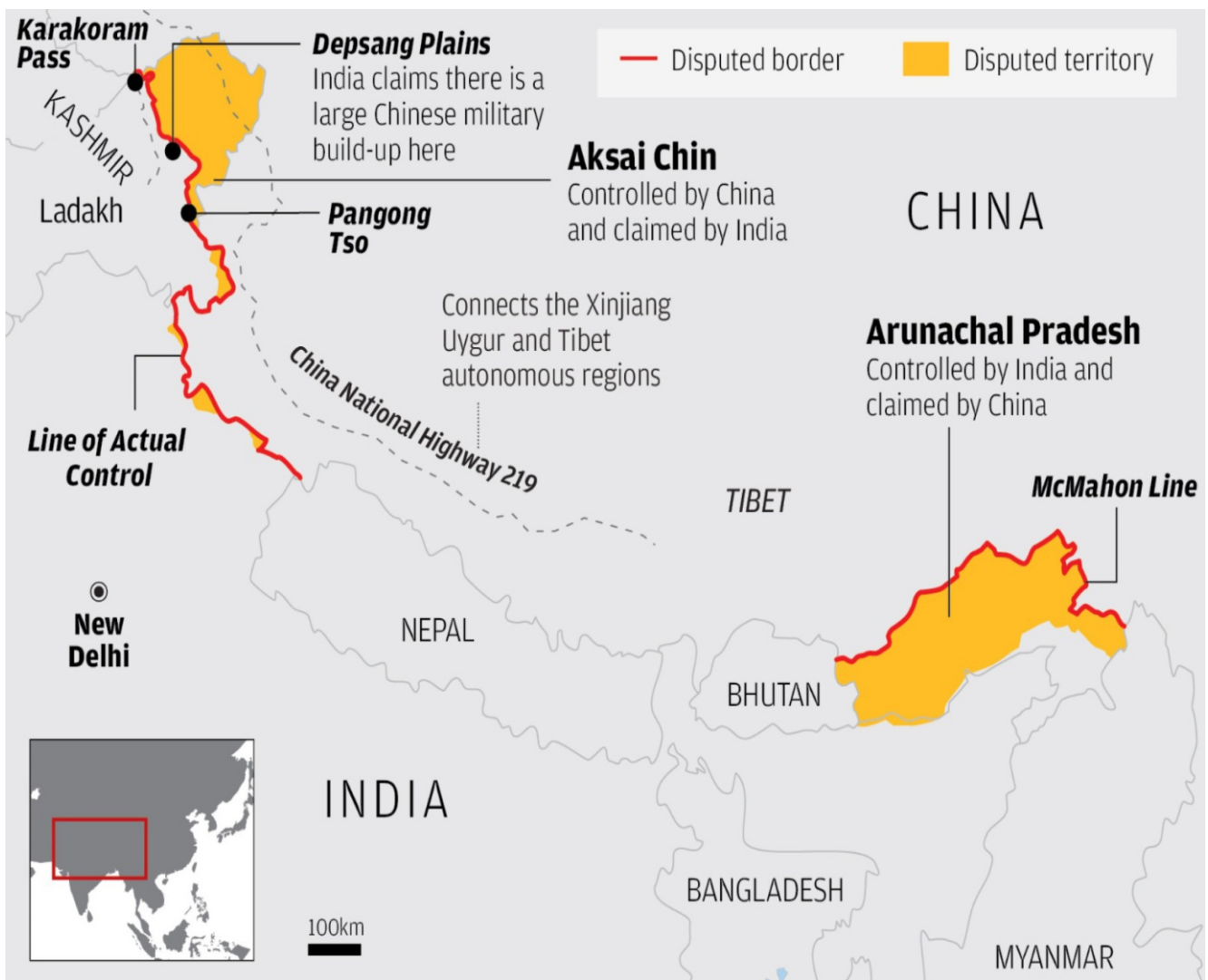
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China's Foreign Policy Today

- Panchsheel was visualised as an agreement that promoted peaceful coexistence between India and China, but its heart was ripped out by the India-China War of 1962.
- Since the summer of 2020, Indian and Chinese forces have been locked in a standoff along the LAC in Ladakh, and repeated meetings at multiple levels have failed to achieve a substantive breakthrough.
- China has made claims over territories in the South China Sea and has repeatedly engineered hostile situations with much smaller neighbours to its east and south-east.
- China's relationship with the United States has been hostile, as it has mounted a trade and diplomatic challenge to American dominance in various parts of the world.



SCMP





THE STARLINER MISSION

WHY IN NEWS?

- The return of Boeing's Starliner spacecraft, which took NASA astronauts Sunita Williams and Butch Wilmore to the International Space Station (ISS) in June, has been postponed.

Key Points

- Following lift-off on June 5, the Boeing-built spacecraft docked at the ISS and was scheduled to begin its return journey towards Earth on June 26.
- Subsequently, four helium leaks, and five failures of its 28 manoeuvring thrusters, were reported. Officials reportedly have a 45-day window to bring them back.
- The mission is seen as a landmark for the entry of another private player in the American space sector.
 - Before Boeing, Elon Musk's company SpaceX was the only one to successfully take US astronauts to space.

About Boeing's Starliner Spacecraft

- The Boeing website describes the CST-100 Starliner as a "space capsule that will take people to and from low-Earth orbit."
- LEO refers to Earth-centered orbits with an altitude of 2,000 km or less. According to NASA, this is considered near enough to Earth for convenient transportation, communication, observation, and resupply.
- Starliner's spacecraft was developed in collaboration with NASA's Commercial Crew Program.
 - It can accommodate up to seven passengers or a mix of crew and cargo for LEO missions.
 - It is also reusable up to 10 times with a six-month turnaround time.

Back in 2012, SpaceX's Dragon spacecraft became the first commercial spacecraft to deliver cargo to and from the ISS. In 2020, it became the first to take humans to space and bring them back.

Why are Starliner Astronauts still in Space?

- Two NASA astronauts were originally scheduled to return home after one week, completing a test flight of Boeing's Starliner spacecraft.
 - Instead, the astronauts, Butch Wilmore and Sunita Williams, will remain on the station for longer as NASA and Boeing engineers continue to study misbehaving thrusters on the vehicle.
- The vessel's return to Earth was delayed because of issues with some of its thrusters and leaks of the helium gas which pushes fuel into the propulsion system.
 - Helium is used to push propellant to the thruster systems used for manoeuvring in space and slowing down to re-enter the Earth's atmosphere.
- According to a report from The Telegraph, the delay in launch was linked to issues detected in a spacecraft valve responsible for regulating the flow of oxidisers.
 - On spacecraft, oxidisers are chemicals that help rockets during lift-off and in changing the rocket's path by aiding combustion. A large amount of energy is required to propel it forward.
- The initial issue seemed small-scale. However, since its June 5 liftoff, the capsule has had five helium leaks, five manoeuvring thrusters go dead and a propellant valve failed to close completely, prompting the crew in space for more time.

What's Next?

- The spacecraft can remain docked for up to 45 days.
- Beyond that, the ISS has supplies and other materials that can last for several months. Therefore, there is no immediate danger to the two astronauts.
- If safety concerns remain, they may have to come back to Earth on SpaceX's Dragon spacecraft, which is also currently attached to the ISS.
- Further, the spacecraft can be brought to Earth in case of an emergency, but the space agency is looking to understand the nature of the problem first in the interest of the next such mission.

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ROLE OF THE LOK SABHA LEADER OF OPPOSITION

WHY IN NEWS?

- Rae Bareilly MP Rahul Gandhi is Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, a position that lay vacant for 10 years because no party had numbers equalling a tenth of the strength of the House, which has been by practice a requirement to lay claim to the post.

Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha

- The Leader of the Opposition is the Leader of the largest opposition party.
- The post was not recognised till 1969 when Ram Subhag Singh became the first recognised LoP of the Lok Sabha.
- The position of Leader of Opposition was officially described in The Salary and Allowances of Leaders of Opposition in Parliament Act, 1977.
 - The Act describes the Leader of Opposition as a "member of the Council of States or the House of the People, as the case may be, who is, for the time being, the Leader in that House of the party in opposition to the Government having the greatest numerical strength and recognised as such by the Chairman of the Council of States or the Speaker of the House of the People".
- Although several political parties may exist in the Opposition, the post of Leader of the Opposition is said to be taken up by the party that secures one-tenth of the total strength of the Lok Sabha.
 - As per this rule, since the Lok Sabha has 543 members, a political party will need 55 members to appoint a Leader of the Opposition.
- The Institute of Secretariat Training and Management mentioned in one of its booklet that the recognition of the Leader of Opposition is given by the Speaker of the Lok Sabha – "provided the largest party in opposition have minimum 55 MP in the House".
 - This institute is managed by the Department of Personnel and Training, under the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Government of India.
 - However, no such 10 per cent rule for the appointment of the Leader of Opposition is mentioned in the Leaders of Opposition in Parliament Act.

Position of the Leader of Opposition in the House

- The Leader of the Opposition sits in the front row to the left of the Chair and enjoys certain privileges on ceremonial occasions like escorting the Speaker-elect to the rostrum.
- The Leader of Opposition is also entitled to a seat in the front row during the Address by the President to both Houses of Parliament.
- The main duty of the Leader of Opposition is to serve as the voice of the opposition in the House.
- An official booklet on Parliament published in 2012 says the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha "is considered as a shadow Prime Minister with a shadow Cabinet, ready to take over the administration if the Government resigns or is defeated on the floor of the House".
- In order of precedence, the Leaders of Opposition in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha come at No. 7, along with Union Cabinet Ministers, the National Security Advisor, the Principal Secretary to the PM, the Vice-Chairperson of the NITI Aayog, former PMs, and Chief Ministers.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Parliament did not have a LoP the past two Sessions (10 years) as no Opposition party had members equalling one-tenth of the total Lok Sabha strength, which has by practice been required to qualify for the post.
 - While the Congress won 44 seats in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls, in 2019, it won 52.
- In 2014, Mallikarjun Kharge — who is now Congress president and Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha — was recognised Leader of the Congress party in Lok Sabha.
- In 2019, this position went to then Baharampur MP Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury. Both Congress leaders were part of panels to select candidates for high positions that required the presence of the Leader of Opposition.
- Before the BJP in 2014 and 2019, the Congress, which had 415 members in Lok Sabha in 1984, had denied the TDP, which had 30 MPs, the post of Leader of Opposition.





DUTIES OF A SPEAKER AND DEPUTY SPEAKER

WHY IN NEWS?

- Om Birla, three-time BJP MP, was elected the Lok Sabha Speaker for the second time after he defeated the INDIA bloc's candidate K Suresh via voice vote in a rare contest.

Speaker pro tem

- The President has appointed seven-time MP Bhartruhari Mahtab as the 'Speaker pro tem' of the 18th Lok Sabha.
 - Article 94 of the Constitution states that the Speaker of the Lok Sabha shall not vacate his/her office until immediately before the first meeting of the Lok Sabha after its dissolution. This is to ensure that the office of the Speaker is never left vacant.
 - Hence, Om Birla who was the Speaker of the 17th Lok Sabha continues in that post till June 24 when the first meeting of the 18th Lok Sabha is scheduled.
 - Article 95(1) of the Constitution provides that when the post of Speaker and Deputy Speaker is vacant, the President shall appoint a member of the Lok Sabha to perform the duties of the Speaker. This would be the situation when the first meeting of a new Lok Sabha commences.
 - Hence, the President appoints 'Speaker pro tem' under this provision till the full-time Speaker is elected. The term 'pro tem' means 'for the time being' or 'temporary'.
 - This term is not found in the Constitution or rules of Lok Sabha but is a conventional term which finds mentioned in the 'Handbook on the working of Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs.'
 - As per tradition, one of the senior-most members of the Lok Sabha is selected by the government, who is then administered oath by the President.
 - The Speaker pro tem administers oath of office to other MPs and presides over the election of full-time Speaker.
- Article 93 of the Constitution states that the Lok Sabha shall choose two members to be its Speaker and Deputy Speaker.
 - The election of the Speaker is held on a date fixed by the President.
 - All the Speakers in independent India have been elected unopposed except on three occasions (1952, 1967 and 1976).
 - The election of the Deputy Speaker is held on a date fixed by the Speaker.
- The Deputy Speaker is an important constitutional officer who steps in during the vacancy or absence of the Speaker.
 - The convention of offering the post of Deputy Speaker to the Opposition started in the year 1991.
 - Thereafter, till the 16th Lok Sabha this has been followed without a break.
 - It was a travesty of the Constitution that no Deputy Speaker was elected in the 17th Lok Sabha.
- Apart from the conduct of business, the Speakers perform two important constitutional functions of certifying a Bill to be a Money Bill (over which the Rajya Sabha has a limited role) and deciding on disqualification under the Tenth Schedule for defection.
 - The Lok Sabha rules provide the Speaker with the powers of referral of Bills introduced to Standing Committees and suspension of members for grave disorder up to a maximum of five days.
 - Referral of Bills to committees has declined from 71% during 2009-14 to 16% during 2019-24.
 - With the return of a coalition government, it is expected that the Speaker would refer important Bills to Standing committees for scrutiny.



Conventions

- In Britain, the Speaker once elected to his/her office, resigns from the political party to which he/she belonged.
 - In subsequent elections to the House of Commons, he/she seeks election not as a member of any political party but as 'The Speaker seeking re-election'.
 - This is to reflect his/her impartiality while presiding over the House.

Somnath Chatterjee, who was the Speaker of the 14th Lok Sabha acted independently by not resigning from the post despite his party's (CPM) direction after it had withdrawn support from the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government during a confidence vote in 2008.

- While the Tenth Schedule allows a Speaker to resign from their political party on being elected to their office, it has never been done by any Speaker till date.
 - Resignation from their political parties on being elected as Speaker could be a first step towards demonstrating independence.

DEPUTY SPEAKERS SINCE THE FIRST LOK SABHA

Deputy Speaker	Tenure	DY Speaker's party	Status in LS
M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar	1952-1956	Congress	Ruling
Hukam Singh	1956-1957	Congress	Ruling
Hukam Singh	1957-1962	Congress	Ruling
S V Krishnamoorthy Rao	1962-1967	Congress	Ruling
R K Khadilkar	1967-1969	Congress	Ruling
G G Swell	1969-1970	APHLC*	Opposition
G G Swell	1971-1977	APHLC*	Opposition
Godey Murahari	1977-1979	Congress	Opposition
G Lakshmanan	1980-1984	DMK	Ruling
M Thambi Durai	1985-1989	AIADMK	Ruling
Shivraj V Patil	1990-1991	Congress	Opposition
S Mallikarjuniah	1991-1996	BJP	Opposition
Suraj Bhan	1996-1997	BJP	Opposition
P M Sayeed	1998-1999	Congress	Opposition
P M Sayeed	1999-2004	Congress	Opposition
Charanjit Singh Atwal	2004-2009	SAD	Opposition
Kariya Munda	2009-2014	BJP	Opposition
M Thambi Durai	2014-2019	AIADMK	Ruling

*APHLC: All Party Hill Leaders Conference

Source: Lok Sabha and Election Commission of India

THE POST OF LOK SABHA SPEAKER

- Eligibility:** The Constitution of India requires the Speaker to be a member of the House. Usually, a member belonging to the ruling party is elected for the post.

- Term of office:** The Speaker holds Office for about

5 YEARS

— from the date of his election till before the first meeting of the next Lok Sabha.

- Re-election:** The speaker once elected is eligible for re-election.



DID YOU KNOW?
Meira Kumar and Sumitra Mahajan are the only two women to be elected as Lok Sabha Speaker.

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THE NEW PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS ACT

WHY IN NEWS?

- The Centre on June 24 notified the Rules required to operationalize The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024, the anti-cheating law passed by Parliament in February 2024.
- The government is under great pressure from the opposition and protesting students across the country after being forced to postpone the UGC-NET, CSIR UGC-NET, and NEET PG competitive exams.

Key Features

- The law came into force on June 21, after it was notified in the official gazette.
- The Bill aims to prevent “unfair means” in order to “bring greater transparency, fairness and credibility to the public examinations system”.
- The Rules notified by the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, provide a framework of actions to prevent the use of unfair means in public examinations, including appointing Centre Coordinators, venue in-charges, and Regional Officers.
- **Computer-based Test** - The Rules lay down the full parameters of Computer-based Tests (CBT) — from the registration of candidates, allocation of centres, and issue of admit cards to the opening and distribution of question papers, evaluation of answers, and the final recommendations.
 - The central government’s National Recruitment Agency shall prepare the norms, standards, and guidelines for CBTs in consultation with stakeholders. Once finalised, these norms will be notified by the Centre.
- **Centre Coordinator** - The Rules provide for the appointment of a Centre Coordinator for Public Examinations, who may be “serving or retired employees of the Central Government, State Government, Public Sector Undertakings, Public Sector Banks, Government Universities, autonomous bodies and other Government Organisations”.
 - The Rules also lay down the definition of “service provider” for the purposes of the Act.
- **Public Examination:** Section 2(k) of The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024 defines a “public examination” as “any examination conducted by the public examination authority” listed in the Schedule of the Act, or any “such other authority as may be notified by the Central Government”.
 - The Schedule lists five public examination authorities:
 - i. Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) - conducts the Civil Services Examination, Combined Defence Services Examinations, Combined Medical Services Examination, Engineering Services Examination, etc.
 - ii. Staff Selection Commission (SSC), which recruits for Group C (non-technical) and Group B (non-gazetted) jobs in the central government
 - iii. The Railway Recruitment Boards (RRBs), which recruit Groups C and D staff in the Indian Railways
 - iv. Institute of Banking Personnel Selection (IBPS), which hires at all levels for nationalised banks and regional rural banks (RRBs)
 - v. National Testing Agency (NTA), which conducts the JEE (Main), NEET-UG, UGC-NET, the Common University Entrance Test (CUET), etc.
 - Apart from these designated public examination authorities, all “Ministries or Departments of the Central Government and their attached and subordinate offices for recruitment of staff” also come under the purview of the new law.
 - The central government can add new authorities in the Schedule through a notification as and when required.
 - The law defines a “candidate” in these exams as “a person who has been granted permission by the public examination authority to appear in public examination” as well as “a person authorised to act as a scribe on his behalf in the public examination”.





- **Use of “Unfair Means”:** Section 3 of the Act lists at least 15 actions that amount to using unfair means in public examinations “for monetary or wrongful gain”.
 - These actions include: “leakage of question paper or answer key or part thereof” and colluding in such leakage; “accessing or taking possession of question paper or an Optical Mark Recognition response sheet without authority”; “tampering with answer sheets including Optical Mark Recognition response sheets”; “providing solution to one or more questions by any unauthorised person during a public examination”, and “directly or indirectly assisting the candidate” in a public examination.
 - The section also lists “tampering with any document necessary for short-listing of candidates or finalising the merit or rank of a candidate”; “tampering with the computer network or a computer resource or a computer system”; “creation of fake website” and “conduct of fake examination, issuance of fake admit cards or offer letters to cheat or for monetary gain” as illegal acts.

Rationale for the Law

- The ongoing controversy over alleged paper leaks would appear to provide an obvious justification for such an Act, and future incidents of the use of unfair means in examinations will be prosecuted under the provisions of the law.
- There have been a very large number of cases of question paper leaks in recruitment exams across the country in recent years — an investigation by The Indian Express had found at least 48 instances of paper leaks in 16 states over the last five years, in which the process of hiring for government jobs was disrupted.
 - These leaks touched the lives of at least 1.51 crore applicants for about 1.2 lakh posts.
- The new law, which provides for fines of Rs 1 crore and up to 10 years in prison, is also expected to serve as “a model draft for States to adopt at their discretion”.

#Committed2ExamIntegrity

**Government of India
Committed to Exam Integrity**

The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act 2024

First-ever **national law** against the use of **unfair means** to rig recruitment exams conducted by:

- ✓ Union Public Service Commission
- ✓ Staff Selection Commission
- ✓ Railway Recruitment Board
- ✓ Institute of Banking Personnel Selection (IBPS)
- ✓ All examinations conducted by NTA*

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RESOLVE TIBET ACT

WHY IN NEWS?

- The United States Congress recently passed the Promoting a Resolution to Tibet-China Dispute Act, better known as the Resolve Tibet Act.
- The bipartisan legislation now awaits assent from President Joe Biden following which it will be ratified into law.

Key Points

- This Act is the third notable piece of legislation that the US has taken regarding Tibet, following the Tibetan Policy Act or TPA (2002), and the Tibetan Policy & Support Act or the TPSA (2020).
- This legislation aims to promote a peaceful resolution to the Tibet-China dispute according to international law and the United Nations (UN) Charter through peaceful dialogue without preconditions.

Key Provisions

- The Resolve Tibet Act authorises the use of funds to counter Chinese disinformation about Tibet "including disinformation about the history of Tibet, the Tibetan people, and Tibetan institutions, including that of the Dalai Lama."
- The Act also challenges the Chinese contention that Tibet has been a part of China since ancient times.
- It urges China to engage in meaningful and direct dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his representatives, as well as democratically elected leaders of the Tibetan community "without preconditions, to seek a settlement that resolves differences."
- Underlining the right of the Tibetan people to self-determination and human rights, the Act makes a note of China's duty as a signatory of two covenants — the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights — that advocate the same.
- The Resolve Tibet Act seeks to recognise and address the multi-faceted socio-cultural identity of the Tibetan people, in particular their "distinct historical, cultural, religious, and linguistic identity."
- Finally, it amends the TPA to define the exact geographical areas part of the Tibetan Autonomous Region.

Different from Previous Legislation

- The Resolve Tibet Act is a bold successor to the two acts which preceded it.
- Unlike the 2002 act, which recognized China's claim over Tibet, the Resolve Tibet Act directly challenges this claim.
- The 2002 Act encouraged dialogue with the Dalai Lama, but only in his capacity as a spiritual leader, not as a political representative. In contrast, this Act urges China to engage in dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his democratically elected representatives, without preconditions.
- The Tibetan Policy & Support Act of 2020 also pushed for constructive dialogue, but the Resolve Tibet Act goes further by stating that these talks should aim to "resolve differences" between the parties.



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INDUS WATER TREATY

WHY IN NEWS?

- A five-member Pakistani delegation was flown to Jammu's Kishtwar recently to inspect power projects set up on the rivers covered under the Indus Water Treaty (IWT) of 1960.
- It is the first such visit since Jammu & Kashmir's special status was scrapped in 2019.

Key Points

- The latest visit comes against the backdrop of Pakistan's repeated technical objection to the Kishanganga (330 MW) and Ratle hydroelectric projects.
- India has objected to Pakistan's bid to hold "parallel proceedings by an illegally constituted Court of Arbitration on the same set of issues pertaining to the Kishenganga and Ratle Hydro-Electric Projects".
- So far, Pakistan has formally raised objections over the 1,000 MW Pakal Dul and 48 MW Lower Kalnai hydropower projects.
- It has flagged its objections to other projects in Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, which include 10 hydroelectric power projects of Durbuk Shyok, Nimu Chilling, Kiru, Tamasha, Kalaroos-II, Baltikulan Small, Kargil Hunderman, Phagla, Kulan Ramwari and Mandi.

About the Indus Water Treaty

- Indus Waters Treaty was signed by former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and then President of Pakistan, Ayub Khan on September 19, 1960.
- It was brokered by the World Bank. Therefore, the former Vice President of the World Bank, W.A.B. Iliff, also signed it.
- The Indus river basin has six rivers- Indus, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas and Sutlej; originating from Tibet and flowing through the Himalayan ranges to enter Pakistan, ending in the south of Karachi.
- The treaty prescribed how water from the six rivers would be shared between India and Pakistan.
 - It allocated the three western rivers—Indus, Chenab and Jhelum—to Pakistan for unrestricted use, barring certain non-consumptive, agricultural and domestic uses by India and the three Eastern rivers—Ravi, Beas and Sutlej—were allocated to India for unrestricted usage.
- This meant that 80% of the share of water or about 135 Million Acre Feet (MAF) went to Pakistan, leaving the rest 33 MAF or 20% of water for use by India.
- It also required both countries to establish a Permanent Indus Commission constituted by permanent commissioners on both sides.
- The functions of the commission include serving as a forum for the exchange of information on the rivers, for continued cooperation and as a first stop for resolution of conflicts.

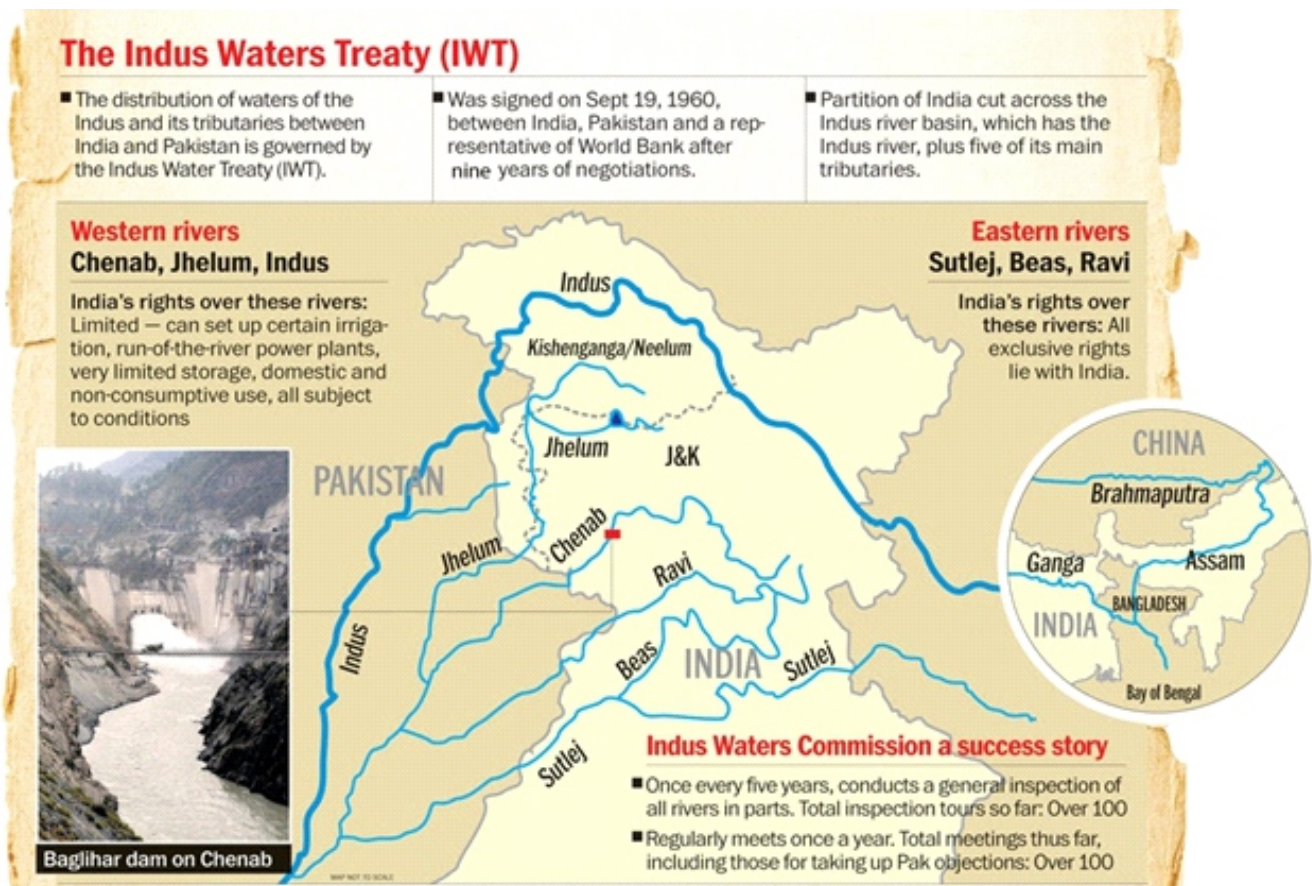
- The Indus Water Treaty provides a three-step dispute resolution mechanism under which "questions" on both sides can be resolved at the Permanent Commission, or can also be taken up at the inter-government level.
- Unresolved differences between the countries on water-sharing can be addressed by the World Bank-appointed Neutral Expert.
- Appeal from a Neutral Expert of World Bank can be referred to a Court of Arbitration set up by the World Bank.





What are Pakistan's Objections?

- Pakistan's initial request to the World Bank in 2016, concerning its objections to the design features of the two hydroelectric power projects, sought a settlement through a 'Neutral Expert.'
- However, Pakistan later withdrew this request and sought adjudication through a Court of Arbitration. India, on the other hand, insisted that the issue should be resolved solely through 'Neutral Expert' proceedings.
- After failed negotiations, the World Bank appointed a Neutral Expert and the chair of the Court of Arbitration in October 2022.
- Issuing a notice for modifying the Treaty, India warned that "such parallel consideration of the same issues is not covered under any provision of the IWT".
- In July 2023, the Court of Arbitration ruled that it was "competent to consider and determine the disputes set forth by Pakistan's request for arbitration".
- Pakistan filed its first Memorial, which listed out its legal case with documents, under this process in March 2023.
- A month later, the Court undertook a week-long visit to the Neelum-Jhelum Hydro-Electric Plant in Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir "to familiarise the court with general aspects of the design and operation of run-of-river hydro-electric plants along the Indus system of rivers.
- While India refused to take part in the Court of Arbitration, it submitted a Memorial to the Neutral Expert in August 2023.
- Pakistan joined the second meeting of the parties held by Neutral Expert in Vienna in September last year which discussed matters related to the organisation of the site visit.
- The Jammu and Kashmir administration has appointed 25 "liaison officers" to coordinate the visit of neutral experts along with delegations from India and Pakistan.





UN GLOBAL PRINCIPLES FOR INFORMATION INTEGRITY

WHY IN NEWS?

- The United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, on June 24, unveiled a set of principles aimed at curbing the spread of online misinformation, disinformation, and hate speech.

Key Principles

- The seeds for the Global Principles for Information Integrity were sown in the 2021 UN report Our Common Agenda, which envisioned future global cooperation and multilateral action.
- These principles will serve as a vital resource for Member States ahead of the upcoming Summit of the Future in September, where further discussions on global cooperation are expected to take place.
- Titled the 'United Nations Global Principles for Information Integrity', these guidelines are designed to address the widespread harm caused by false information on digital platforms.
- At the heart of the initiative, there are five core principles -
 - Societal trust and resilience;
 - Independent, free, and pluralistic media;
 - Healthy incentives;
 - Transparency and research, and
 - Public empowerment
- These principles form the foundation of a vision for a more humane information ecosystem adding that the initiative is aimed to prioritise human rights and support sustainable development, climate action, democracy, and peace.

Key Recommendations

- Combating disinformation and hate speech:** All stakeholders, including governments, tech companies, advertisers, and media, should avoid using, supporting, or amplifying disinformation and hate speech for any purpose.
- Promoting media freedom:** Governments should ensure timely access to information, maintain a free, viable, independent, and plural media landscape, and provide strong protections for journalists, researchers, and civil society.
- Enhancing tech company responsibilities:** Technology companies should incorporate safety and privacy by design in all products, apply policies consistently across countries and languages, and give particular attention to groups often targeted online.
 - Additionally, they should prioritise crisis response and support information integrity during elections.
- Ethical AI development:** AI developers must take immediate, inclusive, and transparent measures to ensure AI applications are designed, deployed, and used ethically and safely, upholding human rights.
- Reforming business models:** Tech companies should explore business models that do not rely on programmatic advertising and prioritise human rights, privacy, and safety.
 - Users should have greater control over their online experiences and personal data.
- Transparency in advertising:** Advertisers should demand transparency in digital advertising processes to ensure their budgets do not inadvertently fund disinformation or hate and do not undermine human rights.
- Data transparency and accountability:** Tech companies and AI developers should ensure meaningful transparency, allow researchers and academics access to data while respecting user privacy, commission independent audits, and co-develop accountability frameworks.
- Protecting children:** Special measures should be taken to protect and empower children, with governments providing resources for parents, guardians, and educators.

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BIHAR QUOTA STRUCK DOWN BY HC

WHY IN NEWS?

- Recently, the Patna High Court struck down the laws passed by the Bihar Legislative Assembly providing 65% reservation to the domiciles of Bihar belonging to Schedule Castes (SCs), Schedule Tribes (STs), and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in matters of public employment and admission to education institutions.
- The Court reasoned that the enhancement of reservations beyond the 50% is bad in law and goes against the principles of equality emanating from the Constitution.

Key Points

- The decision of the Bihar Government to provide 65% reservations to certain reserved categories was based on the Caste Survey Report (2023) conducted in the State of Bihar.
- The Bihar Government's Caste Survey report states that the majority of the population within the State, belongs to the marginalized and deprived communities of Backward & Extremely Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes, and Scheduled Tribes, therefore, an attempt was made by the Bihar Government to provide reservation in proportion to the composition of the castes in the State.
- The Bihar Government's argument for breaching the 50% ceiling limit was based on the concept of 'proportionate representation' which means that reservation should be provided in proportion to the caste composition in the state.
- As per the caste survey report 85% of Bihar's total Population comprises of SCs, STs, and OBCs; therefore, the State Government justified 65% reservation provided to such categories.
- The Bihar Government's argument was considered bad and rejected by the High Court because the caste survey report doesn't specify the status of the people at large in a caste and the economic and social status they achieved based on the reservations & beneficial schemes.
- The Bihar Government's reliance on the M. Nagaraj Case was also rejected by the High Court on the ground that reservation could not be extended merely on the ground there exists quantifiable data.

The Indra Sawhney Ruling

- The 50% ceiling was introduced by the Supreme Court in its landmark 1992 decision in Indra Sawhney v Union of India in order to ensure "efficiency" in administration.
- The 6-3 majority verdict that upheld the 27% quota for socially and economically backward classes (SEBC) set two important precedents —
 - first, it said that the criteria to qualify for reservation is "social and educational backwardness";
 - second, it reiterated the 50% limit to vertical quotas that the court had laid down in earlier judgments (M R Balaji v State of Mysore, 1963, and Devadasan v Union of India, 1964).
- The 50% limit would apply unless in "exceptional circumstances", the court said.
- The Indra Sawhney ruling has been re-affirmed in a host of cases since then. But efforts to breach the 50% limit have also continued, in Bihar and other states, and gained significant political currency.

Legal Challenge to Ceiling

- The 50% limit is under challenge before the Supreme Court. Despite the pending challenge, laws that could breach the limit have been set aside by the courts.
- The only exception has been the 10% quota for the Economically Weaker Section (EWS) introduced in 2019.
 - In November 2022, a five-judge Bench of the Supreme Court upheld the EWS quota in a 3-2 verdict that said the 50% ceiling applied only to SC/ ST and OBC quotas, and not to a separate quota that operated outside the 'backwardness' framework which was "an entirely different class".
- This observation has led to questions on whether the SC might reopen the Indra Sawhney question itself.






- Observing that the 50% ceiling limit could be breached in extraordinary circumstances, the Court in the Indra Sawhney Case noted that every excess over 50 percent will have to be justified on valid grounds to make such an extension in conformity with Articles 16(1) and 16(4) of the Constitution.
 - The Supreme Court in Union of India v. Rakesh Kumar gave exceptional treatment to the Schedule Tribes while upholding the Jharkhand Panchayat Raj Act that reserved 80% of seats in the Panchayats for the people belonging to Schedule Tribes in Schedule Areas.
 - However, the Supreme Court K. Krishna Murthy v. Union of India clarified that exceptional considerations of crossing the ceiling limits cannot be invoked when the quantum of reservations is examined in favour of backward classes for the purpose of local bodies located in general areas.
- On the other hand, an argument is made that breaching 50% would be antithetical to the principle of equality since reservations are an exception to the rule.
 - Dr B R Ambedkar's speech in the Constituent Assembly is often quoted as a caution that reservations without qualifiers could “eat up the rule of equality”.
 - However, there is also a view that reservations are a feature of the fundamental right to equality and part of the basic structure of the Constitution.
 - In its ruling of 2022 upholding the 27% OBC quota in NEET, the SC had said that “reservation is not at odds with merit but furthers its distributive consequences.”

Reservation in Other States

- The 76th constitutional amendment in 1994 inserted the Tamil Nadu reservation law breaching the 50% limit into the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution.
 - The Ninth Schedule provides the law with a “safe harbour” from judicial review under Article 31A of the Constitution.
 - Laws placed in the Ninth Schedule cannot be challenged for reasons of violating any fundamental right protected under the Constitution.
- In May 2021, a five-judge SC Bench unanimously struck down a Maharashtra law that provided reservation to the Maratha community as unconstitutional, holding that the quota limit could not exceed 50%.
 - With the implementation of the Maratha quota, reservations in the state could have gone up to 68%.
- Similar to the Maratha issue are the cases of Patels in Gujarat, Jats in Haryana, and Kapus in Andhra Pradesh.
- North-eastern States including Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland (80% each).
- Lakshadweep has 100% reservations for STs.

RESERVATION: A VEXED ISSUE	
OPTIONS BEFORE GOVT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Filing a review petition » Challenging the Patna HC verdict in Supreme Court » Accepting the verdict 	
OF CASTE SURVEY & QUOTA POLITICS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following the survey, the then Nitish Kumar-led Grand Alliance govt issued gazette notifications on November 21 last year, raising the quota for deprived castes from 50% to 65% in state govt jobs and educational institutions 	 <p>PATNA HIGH COURT पटना उच्च न्यायालय</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The court held the quota hike as “ultra vires” and violative of the Supreme Court’s verdicts. “These two amended laws violate the equality clause envisaged under Articles 14, 15, and 16 of the Constitution of India,” the court said • The 50% ceiling on reservations was introduced by the Supreme Court in its landmark 1992 decision in Indra Sawhney v Union of India to ensure “efficiency” in administration. The only exception was the 10% quota for the EWS introduced in 2019 • The high court’s verdict as sparked political debate over the non-inclusion of the two recently enacted laws aimed at increasing quotas in the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution to protect them from judicial scrutiny • As the Bihar govt weighs its options and the political debate continues, it is crucial to ensure that any decision taken upholds the principles of social justice, equality, and inclusive development





NALANDA UNIVERSITY'S NEW CAMPUS IN BIHAR

WHY IN NEWS?

- The Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi on June 19 inaugurated the new campus of the Nalanda University in Bihar's Rajgir.

Key Features

- Spread across 455 acres, it is located in Rajgir, roughly 100 km from Patna, and merely 12 km away from the ruins of the eponymous ancient Buddhist monastery, considered to be among the greatest centres of learning in all of Antiquity.
- It was then President APJ Abdul Kalam who officially proposed 'reviving' Nalanda in 2006.
- In 2007, the proposal to re-establish Nalanda was endorsed at the East Asia Summit in Mandaue, Philippines. This endorsement was re-iterated in the East Asia Summit of 2009, in Hua Hin, Thailand.
- In total, 17 countries other than India — Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Laos, Mauritius, Myanmar, New Zealand, Portugal, Singapore, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam — have helped set up of the university.
 - Ambassadors of these countries attended the recent inauguration ceremony.
- The Bihar Assembly, in 2007, passed the University of Nalanda Bill to facilitate the creation of a new, international university near the site of the ancient learning centre in Rajgir.
- In 2010, Parliament replaced this Act with the Nalanda University Bill, which deemed the proposed university to be one of "national importance", and laid down rules regarding how it would be governed.
- In 2013, the masterplan for the campus, proposed by renowned architect B V Doshi's Vastu Shilpa Consultants, was chosen after an international competition.
- Nalanda University admitted its very first batch of fifteen students in 2014, to the School of Historical Studies, and the School of Ecology and Environmental Studies.
- Since 2014, four more schools have been established for Buddhist Studies, Languages and Literature, Management Studies, and International Relations and Peace Studies.
- The Campus is a 'Net Zero' Green Campus. It is self-sustainable with a solar plant, domestic and drinking water treatment plant, water recycling plant for reusing wastewater, 100 acres of water bodies, and many other environment-friendly facilities.
- Nobel Prize-winning economist Amartya Sen, who had been associated with the project since 2007, became the University's first Chancellor, and then-President Pranab Mukherjee became the first Visitor.

Nalanda Mahavira

- Mahavira in Sanskrit/Pali means 'great monastery'. Nalanda Mahavira was active from the fifth to thirteenth century CE.
- Gupta Emperor Kumaragupta (Shakraditya) of the Gupta dynasty founded Nalanda University in 427 CE in modern Bihar in the early 5th century, and it flourished for 600 years until the 12th century.
- During King Harshavardhana's reign (606-647 AD) Chinese scholar Xuan Zang (also known as Hiuen Tsang and Moksadeva, a 7th-century Chinese Buddhist monk, scholar, traveller, and translator) came here and studied for about 5 years.
 - The chronicles of seventh-century Chinese traveller Hsuan Tsang provide the most detailed description of ancient Nalanda.
 - Hsuan Tsang estimated that at the time of his visit, the monastery housed 10,000 students, 2,000 teachers, and a gargantuan retinue of servants.
- Great masters such as Nagarjuna, Aryabhatta, and Dharmakirti contributed to the scholarly traditions of ancient Nalanda.
- The university was destroyed in 1193 by Bakhtiyar Khilji, a general of the Turkish ruler Qutbuddin Aibak.
- It was rediscovered in 1812 by Scottish surveyor Francis Buchanan-Hamilton and later identified as the ancient university by Sir Alexander Cunningham in 1861.
- The ruins of Nalanda University were declared as a UN Heritage Site in 2016.

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SIPRI YEARBOOK 2024

WHY IN NEWS?

- The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) recently launched its annual assessment of the state of armaments, disarmament and international security.

Key Highlights

- The nine nuclear-armed states—the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, China, India, Pakistan, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) and Israel—continued to modernize their nuclear arsenals and several deployed new nuclear-armed or nuclear-capable weapon systems in 2023.
- Of the total global inventory of an estimated 12,121 warheads in January 2024, about 9585 were in military stockpiles for potential use.
 - An estimated 3904 of those warheads were deployed with missiles and aircraft—60 more than in January 2023—and the rest were in central storage.
 - Around 2100 of the deployed warheads were kept in a state of high operational alert on ballistic missiles.
 - Nearly all of these warheads belonged to Russia or the USA, but for the first time, China is believed to have some warheads on high operational alert.
- India, Pakistan and North Korea are all pursuing the capability to deploy multiple warheads on ballistic missiles, something Russia, France, the UK, the USA and—more recently—China already have.
 - This would enable a rapid potential increase in deployed warheads, as well as the possibility for nuclear-armed countries to threaten the destruction of significantly more targets.
- Russia and the USA together possess almost 90 per cent of all nuclear weapons.
 - The sizes of their respective military stockpiles (i.e. useable warheads) seem to have remained relatively stable in 2023, although Russia is estimated to have deployed around 36 more warheads with operational forces than in January 2023.
- Transparency regarding nuclear forces has declined in both countries in the wake of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, and debates around nuclear-sharing arrangements have increased in saliency.

Size of Nuclear Arsenal










- SIPRI's estimate of the size of China's nuclear arsenal increased from 410 warheads in January 2023 to 500 in January 2024, and it is expected to keep growing.
 - For the first time, China may also now be deploying a small number of warheads on missiles during peacetime.
- Although the UK is not thought to have increased its nuclear weapon arsenal in 2023, its warhead stockpile is expected to grow in the future as a result of the British government's announcement in 2021 that it was raising its limit from 225 to 260 warheads.
- In 2023 France continued its programmes to develop a third-generation nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine (SSBN) and a new air-launched cruise missile, as well as to refurbish and upgrade existing systems.
- The report put India's 'stored' nuclear warheads at 172 in January this year while the number for Pakistan was 170.
 - India slightly expanded its nuclear arsenal in 2023, it said, adding that both India and Pakistan continued to develop new types of nuclear delivery systems in 2023.
- North Korea has approximately 50 warheads and materials for up to 90.
- Israel which does not publicly acknowledge possessing nuclear weapons—is also believed to be modernizing its nuclear arsenal and appears to be upgrading its plutonium production reactor site at Dimona.



ICAN Report

- In a separate report, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, ICAN, said the nine nuclear-armed states spent a combined total of \$91.4 billion on their arsenals in 2023 – equivalent to \$2,898 per second.
 - The Geneva-based coalition of disarmament activists, ICAN, won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2017.
- The group said that figures show a \$10.7 billion increase in global spending on nuclear weapons in 2023 compared to 2022, with the United States accounting for 80% of that increase.
- The U.S.' share of total spending — \$51.5 billion — is more than all the other nuclear-armed countries put together.
- The next biggest spender was China at \$11.8 billion with Russia spending the third largest amount at \$8.3 billion.

World nuclear forces, January 2024

Country	Deployed warheads ^a	Stored warheads ^b	Military ^c stockpile		Retired ^d warheads	
	2024	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024
 United States	1 770	1 938	3 708	3 708	1 536	1 336
 Russia	1 710	2 670	4 489 ^f	4 380	1 400	1 200
 United Kingdom	120	105	225	225^g	–	–
 France	280	10	290	290	–	–
 China	24 ^h	476	410	500	–	–
 India	–	172	164	172	–	–
 Pakistan	–	170	170	170	–	–
 North Korea	–	50	30	50ⁱ	–	–
 Israel	–	90	90	90	–	–
Total	3 904	5 681	9 576^f	9 585	2 936	2 536

– = nil or a negligible value.

Notes: All estimates are approximate. SIPRI revises its world nuclear forces data each year based on new information and updates to earlier assessments. The data for Jan. 2024 replaces all previously published SIPRI data on world nuclear forces. Countries are ordered by date of first known nuclear test; however, there is no conclusive open-source evidence that Israel has tested its nuclear weapons. Russia and the USA no longer publish aggregate numbers for strategic nuclear forces limited by the 2010 Treaty on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (New START).

► Click here for additional notes.

Source: SIPRI Yearbook 2024.





SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2024

WHY IN NEWS?

- The UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) recently released the 9th edition of the Sustainable Development Report.

Key Findings

- On average, only 16 per cent of the SDG targets are on track to be met globally by 2030, with the remaining 84 per cent showing limited progress or a reversal of progress.
 - At the global level, SDG progress has been stagnant since 2020, with SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities), SDG 14 (Life Below Water), SDG 15 (Life on Land) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) particularly off track.
 - The five SDG targets show a reversal of progress since 2015 are the obesity rate (SDG 2), press freedom (SDG 16), the Red List Index (SDG 15), sustainable nitrogen management (SDG 2), and life expectancy at birth (SDG 3).
 - Goals and targets related to basic access to infrastructure and services, including SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), show slightly more positive trends.
- BRICS and BRICS+ countries (Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, UAE) have shown faster-than-average SDG progress since 2015.
- European countries – notably the Nordic countries – top the 2024 SDG Index. Finland is ranked first, followed by Sweden (#2), Denmark (#3), Germany (#4), and France (#5).
- East and South Asia has emerged as the region that has made the greatest progress toward the SDGs.
- The bottom three countries are South Sudan, Central African Republic and Chad.
- The five countries most committed to UN-based multilateralism (UN-Mi) are Barbados (#1), Antigua and Barbuda (#2), Uruguay (#3), Mauritius (#4), and the Maldives (#5).
 - By contrast, the United States (#193), Somalia (#192), South Sudan (#191), Israel (#190), and the Democratic Republic of Korea (#189) rank the lowest on the UN-Mi.
- Low-income countries (LICs) and lower-middle-income countries (LMICs) urgently need to gain access to affordable long-term capital so that they can invest at scale to achieve their sustainable development objectives.
 - Mobilizing the necessary levels of finance will require new institutions, new forms of global financing (including global taxation), and new priorities for global financing (such as investing in quality education for all).
- The SDG targets related to food and land systems are particularly off-track.
 - Globally, 600 million people will still suffer from hunger by 2030; obesity is increasing; and greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture, forestry, and other land use (AFOLU) account for almost a quarter of total annual global GHG emissions.

India's Rank

- India secured 109th rank with an overall score of 64.0.
- As per the report, only around 30% of SDG targets are on track or have been achieved.
- There is limited progress in the other 40% of the targets and in around 30% of targets the situation is worsening.
- Highest performance is observed in achieving SDG 1, SDG 4, SDG 12 and SDG 13.

SDG Index Rank

109_{/166}

SDG Index Score

63.99

Spillover Score

95.74

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International Spillover Index

- This index is a metric used to assess how a country's actions impact the ability of other countries to achieve the SDGs.
 - It measures the international ripple effects of a country's policies and practices.
 - It considers three main dimensions of these effects - Environmental & social impacts embodied in trade (e.g., pollution caused by production for export), Economic & financial spillovers (e.g., financial crises spreading across borders) and Security spillovers (e.g., instability in one country impacting the safety of others).

INTERNATIONAL SPILLOVER INDEX



Statistical Performance Index

- India scored 74.5 on this index.
- It measures the strength of a country's national statistical system.
- A higher score indicates a country has a more reliable and comprehensive statistical system, which is crucial for effectively tracking progress towards the SDGs.

SDG DASHBOARDS AND TRENDS





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QUICK FACTS

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



1. Recently, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) released the findings of the **first-ever all-India national survey** on Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy (**AYUSH**) systems of medicine. It was conducted by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) from July 2022 to June 2023. This survey covered the entire Indian Union, excluding a few inaccessible villages in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands.
2. The **Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary** will be the second home for cheetahs in India, after the **Kuno National Park**. The Madhya Pradesh government has announced that it has completed its preparations for the ambitious project. The final call on when the cheetahs will be imported from Namibia and South Africa will be made after the monsoons.
3. **Russia** is all set to ship the first batch of 26 turbine hall pipeline valves, a total weighing about 27.50 tonnes, for the **Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project's (KKNPP)** reactors 5 and 6. These specially designed valves can withstand temperatures up to 350 degrees Celsius. KNNP has been modernised jointly by Russia's Rosatom and the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL). It is the largest nuclear power plant in India.
4. As many as nine ports of India have made it to the global top 100 rankings in the latest edition of the **Container Port Performance Index (CPPI)**. The CPPI, developed by the World Bank and S&P Global Market Intelligence, measures the resilience, efficiency and overall performance of the Ports. While Visakhapatnam Port made it to the top 20 ports of the World at 19 in 2023, Mundra Port also climbed up the index at 27 in the current ranking.
5. The **10th International Day of Yoga (IDY)** was celebrated on 21st June 2024 with the theme of "**Yoga for Self and Society**". 21st June was declared as the IDY by the United Nations in 2014, by resolution 69/131. The IDY was celebrated in 2015 with the theme "Yoga for Harmony and Peace".
6. **Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)**, the intergovernmental organisation established to strengthen the science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, is one of the two recipients of the **2024 Blue Planet Prize**. The Blue Planet Prize, awarded by Japan's Asahi Glass Foundation, is awarded annually to individuals and organisations to recognise outstanding achievements in scientific research and its application, which have helped provide solutions to global environmental problems.
7. Recently, the **Ministry of New & Renewable Energy (MNRE)** has increased the yearly allocation of **Green Ammonia** for the **fertiliser sector from 550,000 to 750,000 tonnes** to meet rising demand, enhancing support for Green Hydrogen in India. India launched the National Green Hydrogen Mission (NGHM) in January 2023.
8. The **Odisha government** recently announced the extension of its **sponsorship for Hockey India until 2036** – a year that marks the centenary of the state's formation in 1936. In 2018, the Odisha Mining Corporation Ltd (OMC), a state-run PSU, entered into an agreement with Hockey India for sponsorship of the Indian Hockey Teams (Men/Women, Senior/Junior) for five years from 2018 to 2023. In recognition of the success of the men's and women's teams in the Tokyo Olympics, the state government announced that the sponsorship would be extended for another 10 years – up to 2033.
9. In a rare achievement that brought laurels to the country, four Armed Forces Medical Service (AFMS) officers, including a couple from Thrissur district and another officer from Kannur, have clinched a record 32 medals in the recently held **43rd World Medical and Health Games** at Saint-Tropez, France. The World Medical and Health Games, often regarded as the Olympic Games for health professionals, has evolved into the most prestigious global sporting event within the medical community. With a legacy dating back to 1978, the Games annually attracts over 2500 participants from more than 50 countries.
10. The Centre has notified amended rules to allow women government employees to take **180 days of maternity leave** in case they have children through surrogacy. The government has also allowed the "commissioning mother" (the intending mother of the child born through surrogacy) with child care leave besides paternity leave of 15 days to the "commissioning father", according to the changes





made in the Central Civil Services (Leave) Rules, 1972. Till now, there were no rules to grant maternity leaves to women government employees in case a child was born through surrogacy.

11. **Kerala** Assembly on June 24 unanimously passed a resolution urging the Centre to rename the state as "**Keralam**" in the Constitution. This is the second time in the past year that such a resolution has been passed. Kerala is the English word for the Malayali Keralam.
12. **Ladakh** has achieved a 97% literacy rate following the implementation of the **ULLAS - Nav Bharat Saaksharta Karyakram** scheme, making it a fully "functionally literate" administrative unit. ULLAS - Nav Bharat Saaksharta Karyakram, also known as the New India Literacy Programme (NILP), is a centrally sponsored initiative running from 2022 to 2027. Aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, it aims to empower adults aged 15 and above, regardless of background, who missed out on formal schooling, integrating them into society to enhance national development.
13. Recently, **PM's Economic Advisory Council (PMEAC)** chief **Bibek Debroy** pitched for a review of India's official poverty line and suggested analysing inequality at the state level. Poverty refers to a condition in which people or communities lack the financial resources and other essentials for a minimum standard of living. In September 2022, the World Bank set the International Poverty line at USD 2.15 using 2017 prices. It means that anyone living on less than USD 2.15 a day is considered to be living in extreme poverty.
14. **India's remittance growth** may slow down in 2024 compared to 2023 when it surged, as inflation dampened in US and Europe, with labour markets remaining strong. India's inflow of such remittances is forecasted to grow at 3.7% in 2024, while it grew at 7.5% in 2023. The growth estimate for 2025 is 4%. India received \$120 billion in remittances in 2023. The expectation for 2024 is \$124 billion, and it is \$129 billion in 2025. India was the country which received the highest amount in remittances in 2023, followed by Mexico at \$66 billion, China at \$50 billion, the Philippines at \$39 billion, and Pakistan at \$27 billion.
15. **President Droupadi Murmu** addressed the **joint sitting of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha** recently.
- Murmu's address to the joint sitting of Parliament was the first after the constitution of the 18th Lok Sabha. The first session of the 18th Lok Sabha began on June 24 and the 264th session of the Rajya Sabha will begin on June 27.
16. **South India's first and the country's largest leopard safari** was inaugurated at the **Bannerghatta Biological Park (BBP)**. As per Central Zoo Authority guidelines for safaris, an area of 20 hectares has been demarcated and fenced for the safari. Currently eight leopards have been released for the safari in the open forest area. The BBP was separated from Bannerghatta National Park (BNP) in 2004 and gained its status as a national park in 1974. It is home to free ranging leopards (*Panthera Pardus*).
17. The **Uttar Pradesh** government will set up a **bioplastic park in Gola Gokarnnath of Lakhimpur Kheri district** at an investment of Rs 2,000 crore. Bioplastic is made from natural materials such as corn, sunflower, or sugar beet. It decomposes quickly, thereby reducing environmental pollution. Using bioplastic not only promotes environmental sustainability but can also be used in various industries such as packaging, ready-made garments, electronics, and other industrial products.
18. The **Pench Tiger Reserve (PTR) in Maharashtra** has launched an advanced artificial intelligence-based system for early detection of forest fires. The state-of-the-art system will enhance the efficiency and responsiveness of fire detection efforts in the reserve.
19. **ISRO's** commercial arm NSIL announced recently that its newest rocket, the **Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV)**, will have its first dedicated commercial launch when it puts into orbit the Optimus -- a satellite built by Australia-based Space Machines Company. The satellite is slated for a dedicated launch in 2026 onboard the SSLV. This mission is named Space MAITRI (Mission for Australia-India's Technology, Research and Innovation).
20. **BlinkX**, the digital stockbroking arm of JM Financial, has set up BlinkX Gen AI Lab, **India's first Gen AI lab**, for operational efficiencies and enhancing customers' experiences. Spread over 10,000 sq ft, BlinkX Gen AI Lab, based in Mumbai, has a dedicated team of in-house researchers and developers who aim to drive

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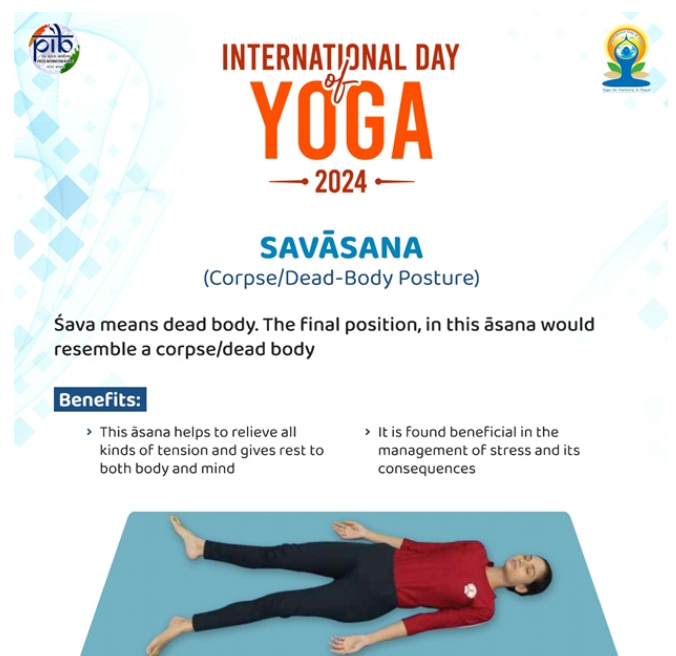
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consistent innovations to deliver personalised trading strategies, risk management, portfolio optimisation, and faster decision-making capabilities to customers.

21. **Lt Gen NS Raja Subramani** recently assumed charge as the new Vice Chief of the Army Staff. The officer, who was helming the Army's Central Command, succeeded Gen Upendra Dwivedi. Gen Dwivedi took charge as the Army Chief.
22. The Union Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, National Dairy Development Board (NDDB), and the International Dairy Federation (IDF) jointly organised the **first IDF Regional Dairy Conference Asia Pacific-2024** from June 26 to 28 in Kochi under the theme of 'Farmer-centric innovations in dairying'.
23. **Uttar Pradesh** to open **world's first Asian king vulture conservation and breeding centre** in Maharajganj to save critically endangered species. The facility aims to improve the population of the species, which has been listed as critically endangered in the International Union for Conservation of Nature's red list since 2007.
24. **India** has become the **world's third-largest** domestic aviation market after the **U.S. and China**. According to data compiled by aviation analytics firm Official Airline Guide (OAG), India is now third in the aviation market after airlines such as IndiGo and Air India have expanded their fleet size to cater to the surge in air passengers.
25. **India** has been **ranked 63rd on a global Energy Transition Index** released on June 19 by the World Economic Forum. European nations dominated the top ranks with Sweden topping the index, followed by Denmark, Finland, Switzerland and France in the top five. China was ranked 20th.
26. A project by the **Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology, Delhi (IIIT-Delhi)**, has won the joint **second prize in Trinity Challenge's** second competition, on tackling the escalating threat of antimicrobial resistance (AMR). The Trinity Challenge is a charity supporting the creation of data-driven solutions to help protect against global health threats. The project is known as AMRSense: Empowering Communities with a Proactive One Health Ecosystem.'

27. **Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)**, the intergovernmental organisation established to strengthen the science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, is one of the two recipients of the **2024 Blue Planet Prize**. The Blue Planet Prize, awarded by Japan's Asahi Glass Foundation, is awarded annually to individuals and organisations to recognise outstanding achievements in scientific research and its application.
28. According to the **Mercer's 2024 Cost Of Living Survey**, **Mumbai** remains the **most expensive city** in India for expatriates, maintaining this position since 2013. Globally, Mumbai has risen by 11 places to rank 136th out of 226 cities surveyed. Among other cities, New Delhi has climbed four spots to 164th place, Chennai has dropped five spots to 189th, Bengaluru has fallen six spots to 195th, Hyderabad remains stable at 202nd, Pune has moved up eight spots to 205th, and Kolkata has risen four spots to 207th.
29. **RBI** has been awarded the "**Risk Manager of the Year 2024**" by Central Banking, UK, for improving its risk culture and awareness. RBI's Risk Monitoring Department has been central to formulating and implementing an enterprise-wide risk management (ERM) framework. Over the past year, RBI has focused on three main areas: strengthening existing risk controls, developing new frameworks to cover a broader range of risks, and promoting a robust risk culture throughout the organisation.





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QUICK FACTS

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS



1. The **Silk Road**, the great patchwork of paths that connected the Atlantic seaboard of Europe with the Pacific coast of Asia, saw a **change in its main route** as a result of climate change, a study by Chinese scientists has found. The Silk Road has an over 1,500-year-old history. While contacts between Europe and China are very old, the Silk Road — the flow of goods, animals, people, ideas, religions and diseases between the opposite ends of Eurasia — is conventionally dated to the second century Before the Common Era.
2. A recent UNICEF report titled '**Child Food Poverty: Nutrition Deprivation in Early Childhood**' has revealed disturbing statistics about the state of child food poverty worldwide. According to the report, one in four children globally is living in severe food poverty, surviving on just one or two food groups a day, and sometimes even less. This deprivation places 181 million children at risk of severe malnutrition, impacting children's growth, development, and overall well-being.
3. The **Summit on Peace in Ukraine** at the Bürgenstock resort in **Switzerland** ended recently with participants hoping for an end to the war between Moscow and Kyiv. 80 countries and four organisations of the 100 attending delegations supported the final joint communiqué that emerged out of the Path To Peace Summit looking at ways to end the Russia-Ukraine war raging on since February 2022. India was a notable voice among those who did not sign the document. The current G-20 chair Brazil was in the room only as an observer.
4. Recently, **UNESCO** launched two new tools, the Greening Curriculum Guidance (**GCG**) and the Green School Quality Standards (**GSQS**) under the Greening Education Partnership.
5. **World Crocodile Day** is celebrated on **17th June**. The day is a global awareness campaign to highlight the plight of endangered crocodiles and alligators around the world. The Crocodile Conservation Project was initiated by the United Nations and the Government of India, shortly after the passage of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.
6. **AI technology** is helping to create **false stories about World War II** atrocities including Holocaust denial, risking an "explosive spread of anti-Semitism", the U.N. warned on June 18. The U.N.'s education and culture body UNESCO called for governments and tech companies to introduce ethical safeguards around AI technology, and for schools to spread the word about the risks of AI-generated content.
7. Every year, **June 21** is marked as the day of the **summer solstice** in the northern hemisphere of the world. The summer solstice is celebrated as the beginning of summer, or midsummer when one of Earth's poles is at its maximum tilt towards the sun. After this, the days gradually tend to become shorter.
8. Investigations into the bombing of the Air India Flight 182 remain "active and ongoing", the Canadian police have said, terming it the "longest" and one of the "most complex domestic terrorism" probe, ahead of the deadly bombing's **39th-anniversary** memorial. The Montreal-New Delhi Air India '**Kanishka**' **Flight 182** exploded 45 minutes before it was supposed to land at London's Heathrow Airport on June 23, 1985, killing all 329 people on board, most of them Canadians of Indian descent.
9. **South African** scientists recently injected **radioactive material into live rhinoceros horns** to make them easier to detect at border posts in a pioneering project aimed at curbing poaching. The country is home to a large majority of the world's rhinoceroses and as such is a hotspot for poaching driven by demand from Asia, where horns are used in traditional medicine for their supposed therapeutic effect.
10. Every year on June 26th, the world observes the **International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking**. The theme of this year is '**The evidence is clear: invest in prevention.**' Popularly known as World Drug Day, the Day was established by the United Nations to raise awareness about the global fight against drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking. Notably, as per the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), around 269 million people worldwide used drugs in 2018, and the numbers have continued to rise.
11. For the first time, **Russia** has sent two trains laden with coal to **India** via the **International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)**, which connects Russia to India via Iran. A multimodal route that includes a railway, roadway network and seaports, the INSTC spans 7,200km (4,500 miles) from St. Petersburg to the port of Mumbai in India.
12. Recently, the **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)** released its **World Drug Report 2024**, drawing global attention to escalating concerns in the international drug landscape. In 2022, the number of drug users worldwide reached 292 million, representing a 20% increase over the past decade.





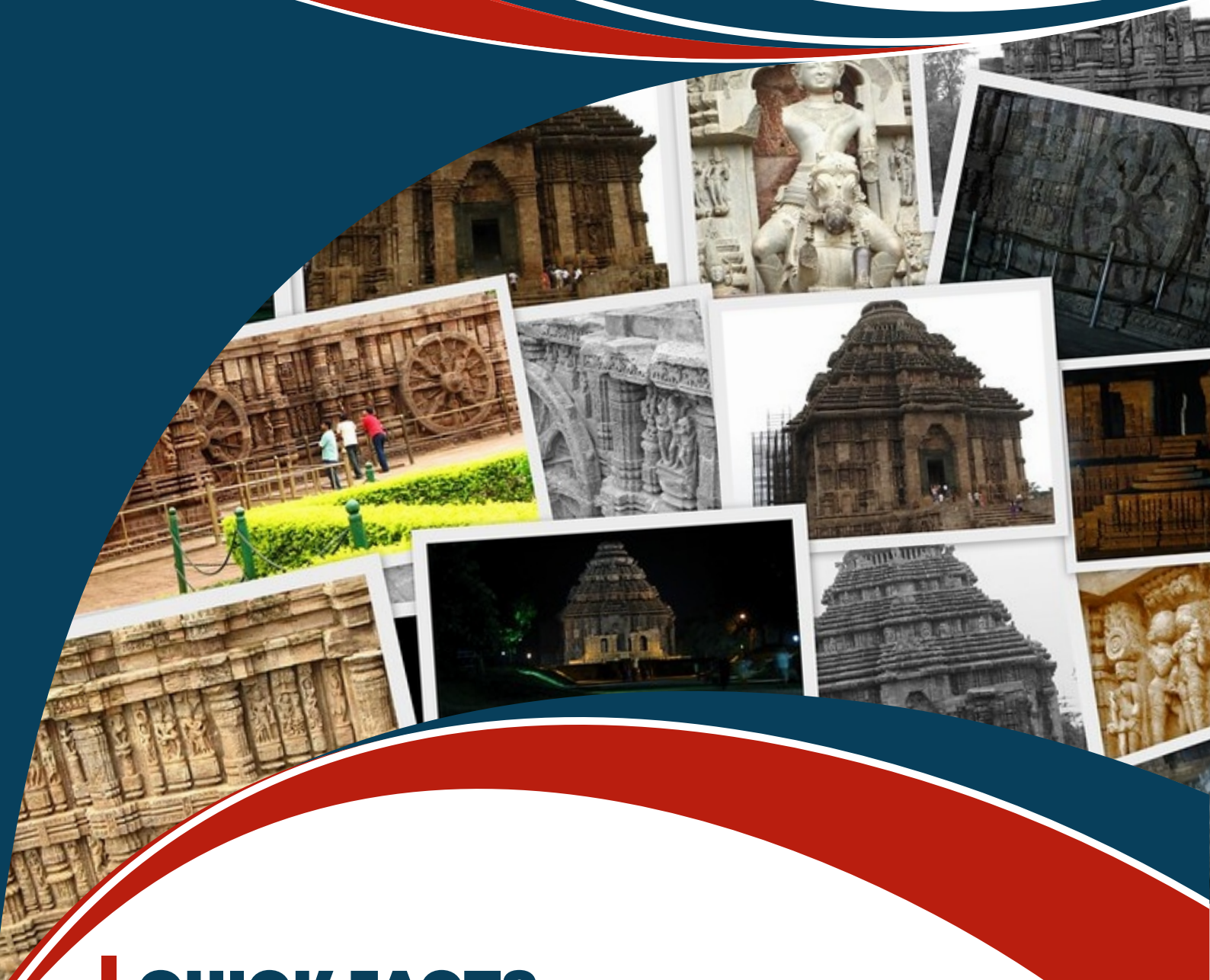
13. **Vienna** has been named the world's most liveable city for a third year running, according to the results of EIU's latest annual **Global Liveability Index 2024**. Notably, five Indian cities were featured in the report, with Delhi and Mumbai tied at 141st rank with a score of 60.2 out of 100, followed by Chennai (59.9), Ahmedabad (58.9), and Bengaluru (58.7), in the 2023 index. The index ranks the liveability of 173 cities across five key categories, including stability, healthcare, culture and environment, education and infrastructure.
14. **Denmark**, a major pork and dairy exporter, will **introduce a tax on livestock carbon dioxide emissions from 2030**, making it the first country to do so and hoping to inspire others to follow. A tax was first proposed in February by government-commissioned experts to help Denmark reach a legally binding 2030 target of cutting greenhouse gas emissions by 70 per cent from 1990 levels. The deal proposed taxing farmers 300 Danish crowns (\$43.16) per tonne of CO₂ in 2030, increasing to 750 crowns by 2035. Farmers will be entitled to an income tax deduction of 60 per cent, meaning that the actual cost per tonne will start at 120 crowns and increase to 300 crowns by 2035, while subsidies will be made available to support adjustments in farm operations.
15. The **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** released an **Artificial Intelligence Preparedness Index (AIPI) Dashboard**, tracking 174 economies globally for AI readiness. The Index has categorised each country into Advanced Economy (AE), Emerging Market Economy (EM), and Low-Income Country (LIC). Singapore (0.80), Denmark (0.78), and the United States (0.77) are among the highest-rated AEs, with India categorised as an EM with a 0.49 rating. India ranks 72 in a total of 174 countries, with Bangladesh (0.38) on 113, Sri Lanka (0.43) on 92, and China (0.63) on 31.
16. **Paraguay** has become the **100th country** to join the International Solar Alliance (ISA) as a full member. The ISA, co-founded by India and France during the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP21) in Paris, aims to promote solar energy deployment worldwide. Currently, 119 countries are signatories to the ISA Framework Agreement, of which 99 countries have submitted the necessary Instrument of Ratification to become full members of the ISA. Spain became the 99th member of the ISA.
17. **Mark Rutte**, the outgoing prime minister of the Netherlands, is set to take on a new role as the **next Secretary General of NATO**, succeeding Jens Stoltenberg in October. This transition marks a significant shift in Rutte's political career, as he leaves behind his decade-long tenure as the Netherlands' longest-serving prime minister.
18. **Pakistan's** top leadership has approved a new military **operation named Azm-e-Istehkam**, or 'Resolve for Stability,' to address the surge in violence and terrorism. This initiative follows Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's review of the country's counterterrorism operations, focusing on the National Action Plan adopted after the December 2014 Peshawar Army Public School attack, which resulted in over 140 deaths, mostly students. Operation Azm-e-Istehkam aims to counter domestic security threats and armed fighters crossing over from Afghanistan amidst rising tensions between Islamabad and Kabul.
19. **Scientists in South Africa** have been stunned to discover that termite mounds that are still inhabited in an arid region of the country are more than 30,000 years old, meaning they are the **oldest known active termite hills**. Some of the mounds near the **Buffels River in Namaqualand** were estimated by radiocarbon dating to be 34,000 years old, according to the researchers from Stellenbosch University.
20. **India** has slipped two places on the World Economic Forum's (WEF) **Global Gender Gap Index 2024** to **129th place**, while Iceland retained its top position in the rankings published on June 12. Within South Asia, India was ranked fifth after Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bhutan, while Pakistan was ranked last. Globally, Sudan was ranked last on the index of 146 countries, while Pakistan slipped three places to 145th.
21. **Nvidia** has become the **world's most valuable company** following a staggering rally in its shares, underlining the outsized role investors expect artificial intelligence to play in the global economy over coming years. Nvidia shares rose about 3%, giving it a market value of about \$3.33 trillion. That pushed the semiconductor bellwether past Microsoft and Apple, which had been jostling for the top spots in recent days.
22. **South Korean scientists** are developing a novel rice variety infused with protein cells, aiming to provide a more ethical source of protein. Named "**meaty rice**," this innovative type of rice has a slight buttery aroma, resembles regular rice but with a pink hue. The scientists have confirmed that no animals were harmed in the process, as the rice is embedded with beef muscle and fat cell culture.

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QUICK FACTS

**ARTS & CULTURE AND HISTORICAL
EVENTS OF CONTINUING SIGNIFICANCE**



- On 22nd June 2024, the Prime Minister commemorated the **647th birth anniversary of Sant Kabir Das**. Sant Kabir Das, a 15th-century Indian mystic poet and saint, was born in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh to a Muslim family but was raised by a Hindu weaver couple. He was a notable figure in the Bhakti movement, which emphasised devotion and love for the divine. The Bhakti movement started in the 7th century in South India and spread to North India during the 14th and 15th centuries.
- An **exhibition displaying a set of 115 oil paintings** made by a Marathi father-son duo, Shrikant Chougule and Gautam Chougule, for nearly 16 years, depicting the life and legacy of **Maratha ruler Chhatrapati Shivaji** was opened marking the 350th anniversary of his grand coronation. The paintings at the exhibition were created under the guidance of Padma Vibhushan Babasaheb Purandare. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj was crowned as the king of the Marathas on 6th June 1674, at Raigad.
- Srinagar** has become the **fourth Indian city to be recognised as a 'World Craft City'** by the World Craft Council (WCC), three years after it was designated as part of the UNESCO Creative City Network (UCCN) for crafts and folk arts. **Jaipur, Malappuram and Mysore** are the other Indian cities that have previously been recognised as World Craft Cities.
- Kozhikode** in north Kerala, known for its rich cultural heritage, was recently declared as **India's first UNESCO 'City of Literature'**. In October 2023, Kozhikode had earned a place in the 'Literature' category of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN). Gwalior from Madhya Pradesh was also included in the category of literature and Gwalior in the category of music. UCCN, created in 2004, covers seven creative fields namely Crafts and Folk Art, Design, Film, Gastronomy, Literature, Media Arts and Music. In 2024, the conference will be held in July in Braga, Portugal.
- UN General Assembly President Dennis Francis paid tribute to Indian reformer and educator **Hansa Mehta** as he honoured women diplomats' "invaluable contributions" on **International Day of Women in Diplomacy**. Mehta served as the Indian delegate to the UN Commission on Human Rights from 1947 to 1948 and is widely known for ensuring a more gender-sensitive language in the landmark Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UDHR. She is widely credited with significantly changing the language of Article 1 of the UDHR, by replacing the phrase "All men are born free and equal" with "All human beings are born free and equal." She died in Mumbai at the age of 97 in 1995.
- Recently, the **185th birth anniversary of Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay** was celebrated. Born on 27th June 1838, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay composed Vande Mataram in Sanskrit, of which the first two verses were adopted as National song. His other notable works include Durgeshnandini (1865) Kapalkundala (1866), Krishnakanter Will (1878), Devichaudhrani (1884), Bishabriksha (The Poison Tree), Chandrasekhar (1877) and Rajmohan's wife.
- Arundhati Roy** has been awarded the **PEN Pinter Prize 2024**, an annual award set up in 2009 by English PEN in memory of Nobel laureate playwright Harold Pinter. The Prize is awarded annually to a writer resident in the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland, the Commonwealth or former Commonwealth. Previous winners include Michael Rosen, Malorie Blackman, Margaret Atwood, Salman Rushdie, Tom Stoppard and Carol Ann Duffy.
- June 25** is the birth anniversary of **Sucheta Kripalani**, India's first woman Chief Minister. Kripalani, a freedom fighter who was born in 1908, served as Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh for about three and a half years from October 2, 1963 to March 13, 1967. She then served as Lok Sabha MP until 1971.
- A **long-lost ancient city famed for its pearl industry** may have been identified by archaeologists on Siniyah Island, off the coast of the **United Arab Emirates (UAE)**. Researchers have discovered a collection of ancient residential buildings believed to be part of the historical city of **Tu'am**. Although Tu'am is documented in historical sources, its precise location was never precisely known.





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TEST ZONE



PASSAGE - 1

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday hailed Speaker Om Birla for moving a resolution in Lok Sabha condemning the imposition of Emergency in 1975 by former prime minister Indira Gandhi and said it has exposed the "anti-democratic" thinking of the Congress which harmed the major pillars of democracy like "judiciary, bureaucracy and media". Shah also said that Lok Sabha remembered the Emergency, which was an "Era of Injustice" and expressed its sympathy to the poor, Dalits and backward people, who had to suffer the exploitation and atrocities of the then Indira Gandhi government, when the rights of the citizens of the country were destroyed and their freedom was snatched away.

The home minister said many sensitive amendments made in the Constitution during the dark period of Emergency

expose the dictatorial mentality of the Congress which centralised all powers in one person.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla read out the resolution condemning the imposition of Emergency and termed the decision by Indira Gandhi an attack on the Constitution, triggering a wave of protests by the opposition in the House.

Birla's reference to the Emergency, shortly after his election as Lok Sabha speaker, also saw a face-off between the treasury benches and the opposition in the first session of the lower house.

[Extracted, with edits and revisions, from: "Emergency resolution in Lok Sabha exposes anti-democratic thinking of Congress, says Amit Shah", The Economic Times]

Q.1 Which committee was constituted by Congress during the Emergency to provide recommendations for amendments to the Constitution?

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| A Chakravarty Committee | C Swaran Singh Committee |
| B Pradip Shah committee | D Irani Committee |

Q.2 When was the Emergency imposed?

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| A June 25, 1965 | C June 24, 1975 |
| B June 25, 1976 | D June 25, 1975 |

Q.3 The Emergency provisions are contained in Part XVIII of the Indian Constitution, from –

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| A Articles 353 to 360 | C Articles 351 to 360 |
| B Articles 352 to 360 | D Articles 350 to 360 |

Q.4 _____ of the Indian Constitution deals with the provisions of an emergency due to the failure of the constitutional machinery in the states (President's Rule).

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| A Article 356 | C Article 352 |
| B Article 354 | D Article 358 |

Q.5 The _____ was set up in 1977 to go into the various kinds of 'excesses' committed during the Emergency (1975-77).

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| A Chakravarty Committee | C Shah Commission |
| B Punchi Committee | D Irani Committee |

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

Answers

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PASSAGE - 2

A five-member Pakistani delegation was flown to Jammu's Kishtwar recently to inspect power projects set up on the rivers covered under the Indus Water Treaty (IWT). It is the first such visit since Jammu & Kashmir's special status was scrapped in [1].

The delegates from India, Pakistan and neutral experts from the World Bank visited the National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC) headquarters in Kishtwar. The 850 megawatts (MW) Ratle hydroelectric power project site at Drabshalla and the 1,000 MW Pakal Dul project on river Marusudar will be inspected in the coming days. Both these projects are over a tributary of the Chenab river, officials said.

The latest visit comes in the backdrop of Pakistan's repeated technical objection to the Kishanganga (330 MW) and Ratle hydroelectric projects. India has objected to Pakistan's bid to

hold "parallel proceedings by an illegally constituted Court of Arbitration on the same set of issues pertaining to the Kishenganga and Ratle Hydro-Electric Projects".

So far, Pakistan has formally raised objections over 1,000 MW Pakal Dul and 48 MW Lower Kalnai hydropower projects. It has flagged its objections to other projects in the Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, which include 10 hydroelectric power projects of Durbuk Shyok, Nimu Chilling, Kiru, Tamasha, Kalaroos-II, Baltikulan Small, Kargil Hunderman, Phagla, Kulan Ramwari and Mandi.

[Extracted, with edits and revisions, from: "Pakistan delegation in J&K to inspect power projects under Indus Water Treaty", by Peerzada Ashiq, The Hindu]

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

- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| A 2018 | C 2020 |
| B 2019 | D 2021 |

Q.2 Indus Waters Treaty was signed by former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and then President of Pakistan, Ayub Khan on -

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| A September 19, 1960 | C September 19, 1961 |
| B October 19, 1960 | D October 19, 1961 |

Q.3 Indus Waters Treaty was brokered by the _____. Therefore, its former Vice President W.A.B. Iliff, also signed it.

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| A Russia | C World Bank |
| B United Nations | D United States |

Q.4 Indus Waters Treaty allocated the three western rivers, _____, to Pakistan for unrestricted use.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| A Ravi, Beas and Sutlej | C Indus, Chenab and Jhelum |
| B Ravi, Jhelum and Sutlej | D Indus, Beas and Jhelum |

Q.5 The three Eastern Rivers, _____, were allocated to India for unrestricted usage.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| A Indus, Chenab and Jhelum | C Ravi, Jhelum and Sutlej |
| B Indus, Beas and Jhelum | D Ravi, Beas and Sutlej |

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

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PASSAGE - 3

The world's [1] nuclear-armed states continue to modernise their nuclear weapons as the countries deepened their reliance on such deterrence in 2023, a Swedish think tank said on Monday. "We have not seen nuclear weapons playing such a prominent role in international relations since the Cold War," said Wilfred Wan, director of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's weapons of mass destruction programme.

Earlier this month, Russia and its ally Belarus launched a second stage of drills intended to train their troops in tactical nuclear weapons, part of the Kremlin's efforts to discourage the West from ramping up support for Ukraine.

In a separate report, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, ICAN, said the [1] nuclear-armed states spent

a combined total of USD 91.4 billion on their arsenals in 2023 - equivalent to USD 2,898 per second. The Geneva-based coalition of disarmament activists won the Nobel Peace Prize.

SIPRI estimated that some 2,100 of the deployed warheads were kept in a state of high operational alert on ballistic missiles, and nearly all belong to Russia or the USA. However, it said that China is also believed to have some warheads on high operational alert for the first time.

[Extracted, with edits and revisions, from: "Watchdog: Nuclear-armed nations are deepening reliance on nuclear weapons", by The Economic Times]

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

- A** 6
- B** 7

- C** 8
- D** 9

Q.2 When did the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) win the Nobel Peace Prize?

- A** 2015
- B** 2016

- C** 2017
- D** 2018

Q.3 Which of the following countries is the biggest global spender on nuclear weapons in 2023 as per the ICAN report?

- A** China
- B** United States

- C** North Korea
- D** Israel

Q.4 The SIPRI 2024 report put India's 'stored' nuclear warheads at _____ in January 2024 while the number for Pakistan was 170.

- A** 171
- B** 169

- C** 172
- D** 168

Q.5 As per the SIPRI 2024, Russia and _____ together possess almost 90 per cent of all nuclear weapons.

- A** The USA
- B** France

- C** China
- D** The UK

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

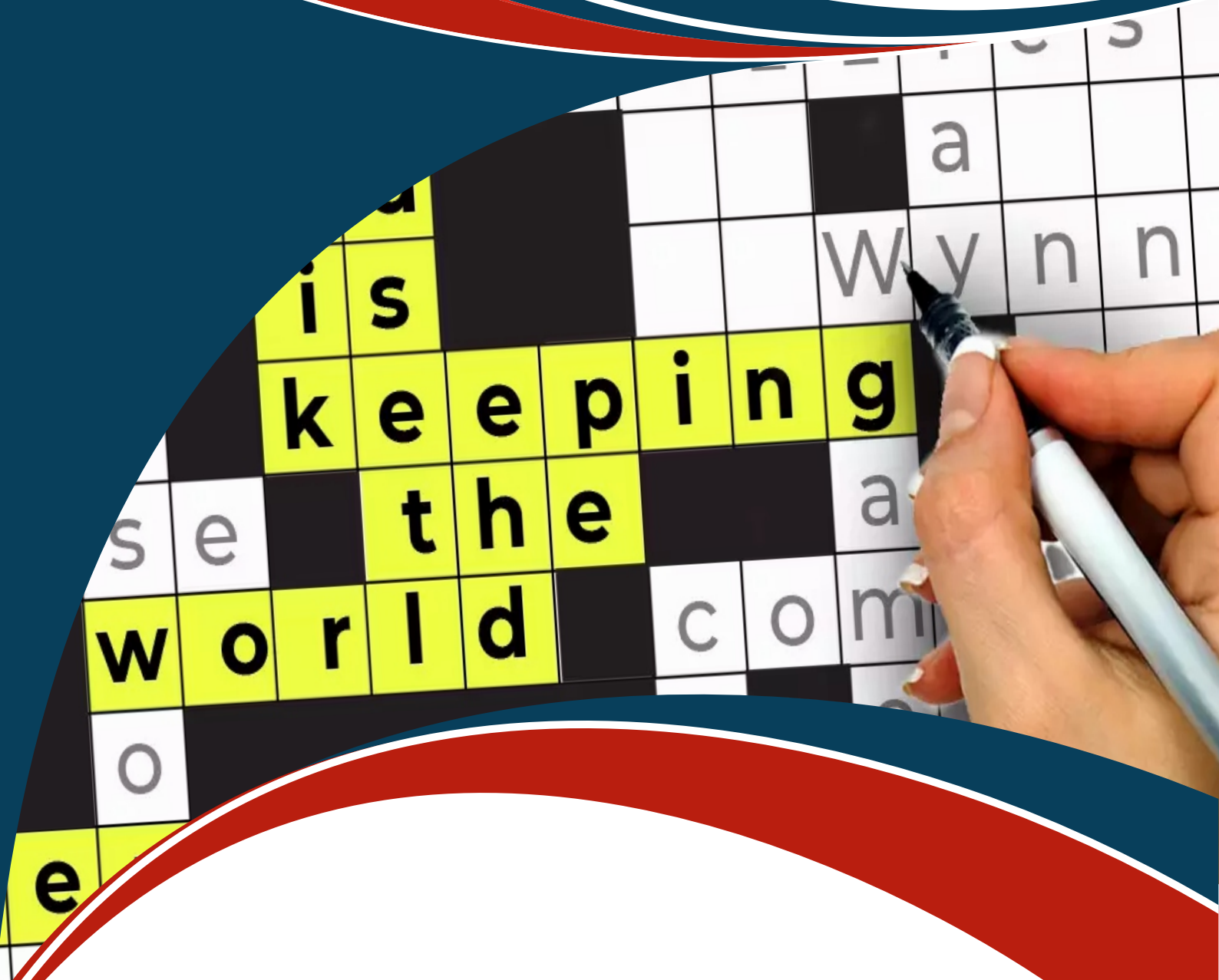
Answers

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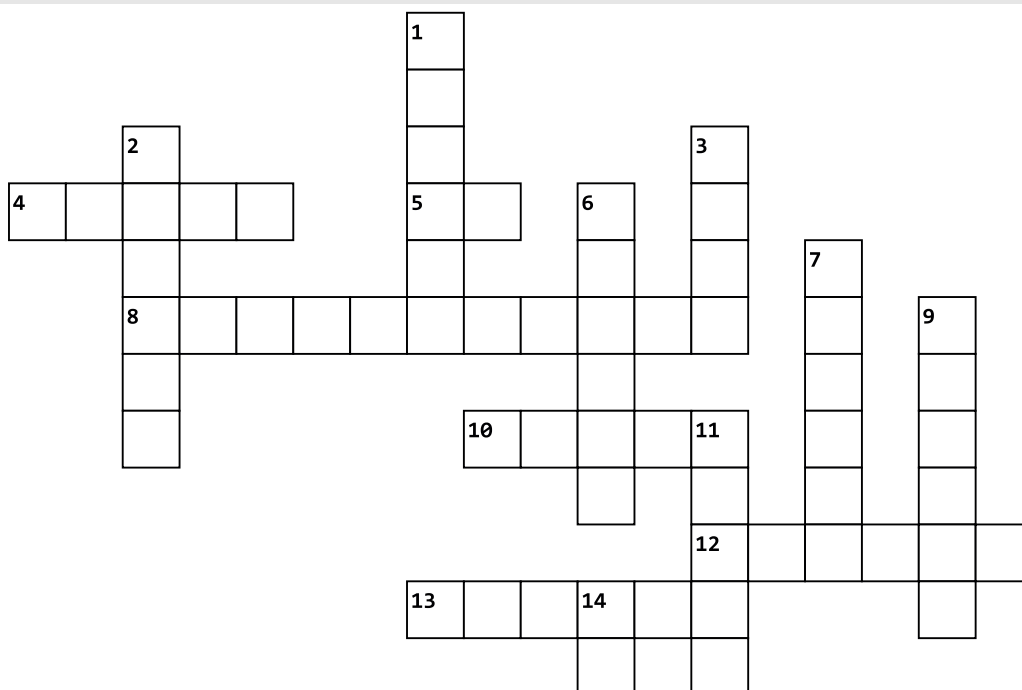
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CROSSWORD CORNER



CROSSWORD - 1



Across

- 4.** World's third-largest domestic aviation market
- 5.** State opened world's first Asian king vulture conservation centre
- 8.** Place for Summit on Peace in Ukraine
- 10.** Place for First IDF Regional Dairy Conference Asia Pacific-2024
- 12.** India's first Gen AI lab
- 13.** International Day of Yoga

Down

- 1.** World Crocodile Day
- 2.** State extended its sponsorship for Hockey India until 2036
- 3.** India's rank on the 2024 Global Energy Transition Index
- 6.** Place for 43rd World Medical and Health Games
- 7.** The most expensive city in India as per Mercer's 2024 Survey
- 9.** Achieved a 97% literacy rate
- 11.** One of the two recipients of the 2024 Blue Planet Prize
- 14.** State will set up a bioplastic park

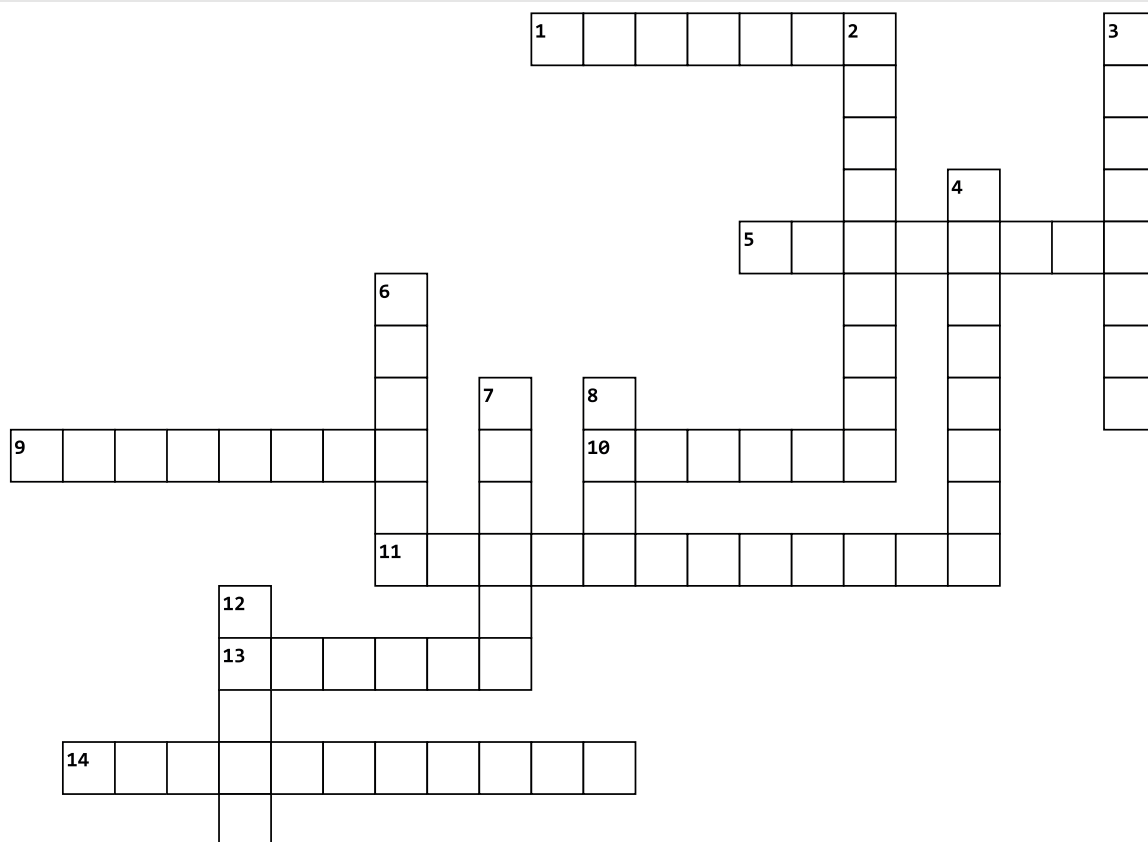
Answers

17 June	1	India	4	8	Switzerland	12	BlinkX
Odisha	2	63rd	3	7	Mumbai	11	IPBES
UP	5	France	6	10	Kochi	14	UP
Ladakh	9	13	21 June				





CROSSWORD - 2



Across

1. Country will introduce a tax on livestock carbon dioxide emissions
5. Fourth Indian city to be recognised as a 'World Craft City'
9. Country started a new military operation named Azm-e-Istehkam
10. Day of the Summer Solstice
11. Winner of PEN Pinter Prize 2024
13. Birth anniversary of Sucheta Kripalani
14. Country started pilot 'Rhisotope' project

Down

2. India's first UNESCO 'City of Literature'
3. Next Secretary General of NATO
4. 100th country to join the ISA
6. World's most liveable city as per Global Liveability Index 2024
7. World Drug Day
8. India's rank on AI Preparedness Index
12. India's rank on the Global Gender Gap Index 2024

Answers

4	Paraguay	8	72nd	12	129th
3	MarkRutt	7	26June	11	ArundhatRoy
2	Kozhikode	6	Vienna	10	21June
1	Denmark	5	Srinagar	9	Pakistan
				13	25June
				14	SouthAfrica

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