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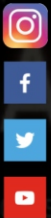
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INDIA'S HISTORIC SHOW AT

CANNES 2024



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About Magazine

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

Editor's Note

The Cannes Film Festival, held from May 14 to 25 this year, saw several Indian artists win major prizes and receive critical acclaim for their works. Major Radhika Sen and Naik Dhananjay Kumar Singh were honoured with the UN Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award and the Dag Hammarskjold Medal (posthumously) respectively. The charter of the BIMSTEC came into effect on May 20, 2024. The Supreme Court limits ED's power to arrest PMLA accused. The NOTA button has again emerged as a formidable option for voters in the recently concluded general elections. Keep reading for more updates.

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VAISHNAV BHATT

Our Top Achiever

AIR - 113th

CLAT 2024

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

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

Q. When did you think about doing law?

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

Q. When did you seriously start preparing for CLAT?

Ans. I started my preparation in March 2023.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Q. How to maintain mock scores?

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

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

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

Q. How many Mocks are sufficient for CLAT Preparation?

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

Q. What is your advice to CLAT Aspirants?

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

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The Question Bank



QUICK BOOSTERS



INDIA'S HISTORIC SHOW AT CANNES 2024

WHY IN NEWS?

- The Cannes Film Festival, held from May 14 to 25 this year, saw several Indian artists win major prizes and receive critical acclaim for their works.

Key Highlights

- Director Payal Kapadia's 'All We Imagine as Light', which focuses on the theme of sisterhood, was nominated for the highest award in the festival — the Palme d'Or.
 - However, 'All We Imagine As Light' won the coveted Grand Prix prize.
- Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) student Chidananda S Naik bagged the first prize in the La Cinef section for 'Sunflowers Were the First Ones to Know', a 15-minute short film based on a Kannada folklore.
 - Chidanand S Naik was also selected as one of the 75 Creative Minds at the 53rd International Film Festival of India (IFFI), an initiative of the Ministry of I&B to recognize and support budding young artists in the field of Cinema.
- India-born Mansi Maheshwari's 'Bunnyhood', an animated film, bagged the third prize in the La Cinef Selection.
- Cinematographer Santosh Sivan became the first Asian to be awarded the Pierre Angénieux Tribute Award, with recognition for his "career and exceptional quality of work".
- Additionally, Anasuya Sengupta became the first Indian to win the Best Actress prize in 'The Shameless' in the Un Certain Regard category.
- Independent filmmaker Maisam Ali's film "In Retreat" was also screened at the ACID Cannes sidebar programme.
 - It was the first time an Indian film was screened in the section run by the Association for the Diffusion of Independent Cinema, since its inception in 1993.



About the Palme d'Or and the Grand Prix

- The Palme d'Or (French for 'The Golden Palm') and the Grand Prix (meaning 'Grand Prize') are the two biggest awards at the Cannes Film Festival.
- No film can win any other award apart from the Palme d'Or, such as those for Best Actor or Best Screenplay, since it is considered the pinnacle of prizes across categories.

- From India, directors Satyajit Ray, Mrinal Sen, Shaji N. Karun and Payal Kapadia have been nominated. No Indian director has won the Palme d'Or to date.
- Chetan Anand's classic Neecha Nagar (first and only Indian film) won the Palme d'Or in 1946.

- The Grand Prix is the second-highest award in the main competition of the festival.

About Un Certain Regard

- Introduced in 1978, Un Certain Regard (meaning 'a certain glance') is a section of the festival's official selection.
- It has its own jury and is meant to award young talent and "encourage innovative and audacious works."
- Other awards also exist in the category, such as for Best Performance, for Ensemble Cast, etc.

- From India, the Bollywood film Masaan won the Un Certain Regard for Prix Avenir Prometteur ('Promising future'), before Anasuya Sengupta's Best Actress win this year.

About La Cinef Prize

- It is an official section of the festival aimed at encouraging new talents and recognises films from film schools across the world.
- The Cannes website states it has a separate jury.

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JAGANNATH TEMPLE RATNA BHANDAR

WHY IN NEWS?

- A controversy erupted in Odisha over the missing keys of the Jagannath temple's Ratna Bhandar (treasury) during political campaign.

What is Ratna Bhandar?

- The precious ornaments of sibling deities Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Goddess Subhadra, given by devotees and erstwhile kings over centuries, are stored in the Ratna Bhandar of the 12th-century shrine.
- It is located within the temple and has two chambers — Bhitara Bhandar (inner chamber) and Bahara Bhandar (outer chamber).
- The outer chamber is opened regularly to fetch ornaments for the deities during Suna Besha (golden attire), a key ritual during the annual Rath Yatra, and also during major festivals throughout the year.
- The inner chamber has not been opened in the past 38 years.

As per the last inventory in 1978, the Bahara Bhandar stores 87 pieces of gold ornaments, some with precious stones, and 62 pieces of silver items. The Bhitara Bhandar has 367 gold items including ornaments studded with precious stones, plates of gold, pearls, diamonds, corals and other precious stones and 231 items of silver articles.

- The safety of the Ratna Bhandar vests with the Temple's Managing Committee, which is headed by titular 'King of Puri' Dibyasingha Deb (Chairman), the Chief Administrator (an IAS-level officer) and other members appointed or nominated by the State government.
- The Ratna Bhandar of the Jagannath temple has been opened only four times in the last century: in 1984, 1978, 1926, and 1905.
- Following a direction from the Orissa High Court, the state government attempted to open the chamber for physical inspection on April 4, 2018. The attempt was unsuccessful because the keys to the chamber could not be found.
- The ASI team, thus, carried out the inspection from outside.
 - The inspection was done as per the orders of the Orissa High Court, which was monitoring temple repairs undertaken by the ASI since 2016, and a report was submitted to the High Court in a sealed cover.

The Controversy that Followed

- As it emerged in a temple committee meeting on April 5, 2018, that there was no information regarding the keys of the Ratna Bhandar, a state-wide outrage followed.
- The Puri Collector is the official custodian of the key to the inner treasure.
- The Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik ordered a judicial inquiry into the matter on June 4, 2018.
- Days after the inquiry was ordered, the then Puri Collector said an envelope with "duplicate keys of inner Ratna Bhandar" written on it had been found in the record room of the Collectorate.
- While the inquiry commission submitted a 324-page report to the Odisha government on November 29, 2018, on the issue, the details of the findings are yet to be made public.
- In February 2024, as per the High Court's orders, Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik formed a 12-member committee, headed by former Supreme Court Justice Arijit Pasayat, to oversee the inventory of jewellery and other precious stones kept in the Ratna Bhandar.
- However, the CM has not revealed when and if the missing keys probe report will be tabled or when the inner chamber will be opened.

DID YOU KNOW?

- The Jagannath temple, a sacred temple devoted to Lord Jagannath along with his brother Lord Balabhadra and sister Devi Subhadra, was constructed by a famous king of Ganga Dynasty Ananta Varman Chodaganga Deva dating back to the 12th century.
- It is known as the "White Pagoda" and one of the four pilgrimage sites of Char Dham Pilgrimage.
- It is also called as 'Yamanika Tirtha' where, according to the Hindu beliefs, the power of 'Yama', the god of death, has been nullified in Puri due to the presence of Lord Jagannath.





WIPO'S NEW TREATY ON GENETIC RESOURCES AND TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

WHY IN NEWS?

- The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) member states adopted a historic new treaty on intellectual property, genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge at the Diplomatic Conference held under the aegis of the WIPO at its headquarters in Geneva, between May 13 and May 24, 2024.

Key Features

- This is the 27th treaty under WIPO and the first in the last 10 years.
- Members of the WIPO have concluded an agreement under which it will be mandatory for patent applicants to disclose the country of origin or source of genetic resources if the claimed invention is based on those materials or associated traditional knowledge.
- For the first time, the connection between local communities and their genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge is recognised in the global IP community.
- The current patent legislation does not have a mandatory provision requiring patent applicants to disclose the country of origin or source in cases where the invention is based on genetic resources.
- However, the final text still does not address the problem of the biopiracy of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge using patents, even though concern has been raised through the years.
 - The Nagoya Protocol under the Convention on Biological Diversity does ensure that benefits earned through the use of traditional knowledge are shared with the communities that have protected the resource and the associated knowledge for centuries.
- This treaty will require contracting parties, including the developed world, to bring changes in their existing legal framework for enforcing disclosure of origin obligations on patent applicants.

- Genetic resources (GRs) are present in things like medicinal plants, agricultural crops, and animal breeds.
 - While genetic resources themselves cannot be directly protected as intellectual property, inventions developed using them can, most often through a patent.
- Some genetic resources are also associated with traditional knowledge (ATK) through their use and conservation by indigenous peoples as well as local communities, often over generations.
 - This knowledge is sometimes used in scientific research and, as such, may contribute to the development of a protected invention.

Significant for India and the Global South

- The WIPO Treaty is a significant win for countries of the global South and for India, which is a hub of biodiversity hotspots with an abundance of traditional knowledge, and wisdom.
- The treaty will provide additional protection for Indian genetic resources and traditional knowledge.
 - The treaty is important to India as the country holds 7-8 per cent of global biodiversity and a rich repertoire of knowledge based on these genetic resources.
 - Although these are currently protected within India, they are prone to misappropriation in countries, which do not have disclosure obligations.
- The Global South holds a wealth of traditional knowledge on medicinal plants, agriculture, and other aspects of life, passed down through generations.
 - The WIPO Treaty protects this knowledge from misappropriation.
 - The WIPO Treaty helps combat biopiracy by establishing a legal framework to protect genetic resources and traditional knowledge from unauthorised commercial exploitation.

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DID YOU KNOW?

- The WIPO is the United Nations agency that serves the world's innovators and creators, ensuring that their ideas travel safely to the market and improve lives everywhere.
- It is a self-funding agency of the United Nations, with 193 member states.
- The members include both developing and developed nations like India, Italy, Israel, Argentina, Austria, Bhutan, Brazil, China, Cuba, Egypt, Pakistan, the U.S. and the U.K.
- The diplomatic conference marked the final stage of the negotiations that began in 2021. The treaty is borne of a proposal by Colombia in 1999.



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UN HONOURED INDIAN PEACEKEEPERS

WHY IN NEWS?

- Major Radhika Sen, an Indian woman peacekeeper and Naik Dhananjay Kumar Singh, who served with the UN Stabilisation Mission in DRC, were honoured with the UN Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award and the Dag Hammarskjöld Medal (posthumously) respectively.

About Major Radhika Sen

- Major Sen served in the East of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) from March 2023 to April 2024 as the Commander of MONUSCO's Engagement Platoon for the Indian Rapid Deployment Battalion (INDRDB).
- The Community Alert Networks she helped create in North Kivu served as a platform, including community leaders, young people and women to voice their security and humanitarian concerns, which she would in turn help address together with her colleagues in the Mission.
- Major Sen facilitated English classes for children, and health, gender and vocational training for displaced and marginalised adults. Her efforts directly inspired women's solidarity, providing safe spaces for meetings and open dialogue.
- Major Sen is the second Indian peacekeeper to receive this award after Major Suman Gawani, who had served with the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and was honoured with the 2019 United Nations Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award.

UN Military Gender Advocate of the Year Awards

- Created in 2016, the UN 'Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award' recognises the dedication and efforts of an individual military peacekeeper in promoting the principles of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.
- Created by the Office of Military Affairs within the Department for Peace Operations (DPO), the Award recognises a military peacekeeper who has best integrated a gender perspective into peacekeeping activities.
- Each year, the awardee is selected from among candidates nominated by Force Commanders and Heads of Mission from all peace operations, according to UN Peacekeeping.

About Naik Dhananjay Kumar Singh

- Naik Dhananjay Kumar Singh served under the United Nations (UN) flag as part of MONUSCO. He lost his life in the line of duty, demonstrating unwavering commitment to peacekeeping efforts.
- MONUSCO took over from a previous UN peacekeeping mission in the African country in 2010.
- MONUSCO aims to protect civilians, humanitarian personnel and human rights defenders from the imminent threat of physical violence and to support the government of the country in its stabilisation and peace consolidation efforts.

Dag Hammarskjöld Medal

- The Dag Hammarskjöld medal was established in December 2000 as a posthumous award to members of peacekeeping operations who lost their lives during service with a peacekeeping operation under the operational control and authority of the United Nations.
- Each year on Peacekeeper's Day (29th May), this medal is awarded to any Member State who has lost one or more military or police peacekeepers at a ceremony at headquarters of the UN.
- It is named after former UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld, who died in a plane crash while on a peacekeeping mission in 1961.





India's Contribution to UN Peacekeeping

- India is currently the 11th largest contributor of women military peacekeepers to the United Nations with 124 now deployed.
- India is the second largest contributor of uniformed personnel to UN Peacekeeping.
- It currently deploys more than 6,000 military and police personnel to the UN operations in Abyei, the Central African Republic, Cyprus, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lebanon, the Middle East, Somalia, South Sudan, and Western Sahara.
- Nearly 180 Indian peacekeepers have made the supreme sacrifice in the line of duty, the highest number by far from any troop-contributing country.
- The Indian Army has established a Centre for UN Peacekeeping (CUNPK) in New Delhi to impart niche training in peacekeeping operations. This Centre trains more than 12,000 troops every year.
- In 2007, India deployed an all-women Formed Police Unit to the UN Operation in Liberia (UNMIL), making it the first country to send an all-women contingent to a UN Peacekeeping mission.

International Day of UN Peacekeeping

- The International Day of UN Peacekeepers, marked on May 29, was established by the UN General Assembly in 2002, to pay tribute to all men and women serving in peacekeeping, and to honour the memory of those who have lost their lives in the cause of peace.
- The theme for 2024 International Day of UN Peacekeepers is "Fit for the future, building better together".



Major Radhika Sen

Engagement Platoon Commander, UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
Recipient of the 2023 United Nations Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award



Fit for the
future
Building better
together

INTERNATIONAL DAY
OF UN PEACEKEEPERS
29 MAY

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WOODEN ARTIFACTS OF STONE AGE

WHY IN NEWS?

- New research indicates that the Stone Age — a long prehistoric period characterised by the use of stone tools by humans and our ancestors — might as accurately be described as the 'Wood Age'.

Key Points

- A recently-published study of around 300,000-400,000-year-old wooden artefacts excavated from a coal mine in Schöningen, Germany between 1994 and 2008, indicated that these were not simply “sharpened sticks” but “technologically advanced tools” which required skill, precision, and time to build.
- In total, 187 wooden artefacts could be identified demonstrating a broad spectrum of wood-working techniques” including “splitting, scraping or abrasion”.
- The wooden tools have been around just as long as stone ones... But since wood deteriorates and rarely survives, preservation bias distorts our view of antiquity.” This is why the finds in Schöningen are so important.
- Due to the damp and oxygen-less conditions of the site's soil, wood and other organic matter could not decompose — leading to the most well-preserved assemblage of prehistoric wooden artefacts in the world.
- A minimum of 20 hunting weapons is now recognised and two newly identified artefact types comprise 35 tools made on split woods, which were likely used in domestic activities.
- The new study shone further light on the technological complexity of Schöningen's wooden artefacts. With the aid of 3-D microscopy and micro-CT scanners, researchers studied signs of wear or cut marks.

About Stone Age

- The Stone Age began when hominids first picked up stone tools, some 3.4 million years ago (mya), in modern-day Ethiopia.
- This period, which went on till about 6,000-4,000 BP (Before Present), comprises 99% of human history.
- It is further divided into three periods — Palaeolithic ('Old Stone Age'), Mesolithic ('Middle Stone Age',), and Neolithic (New Stone Age).
- The Palaeolithic period, which went on till about 11,650 BP in some places, is characterised by the use of rudimentary stone tools, and a hunter-gatherer lifestyle.
- The Mesolithic period is a transitional phase.
- The Neolithic period, which first began roughly 12,000 BP in West Asia, is characterised by the development of settled agriculture, and the domestication of animals.



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BIMSTEC's FIRST CHARTER

WHY IN NEWS?

- The charter of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) came into effect on May 20, 2024 — 27 years after the grouping was first envisioned in Bangkok, Thailand.

Key Points

- The seven members of BIMSTEC — Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand — first signed the charter on 30 March 2022 at the fifth BIMSTEC summit held virtually in Colombo, Sri Lanka.
- However, it could come into force only after every country ratified the document, which finally happened in April 2024.
- The Parliament of Nepal finally endorsed the charter in the early weeks of April 2024, which allowed the document to come into force on May 20, 2024.
- The document also gives the organisation a legal personality, establishes a mechanism for admitting new members and observers, and enables negotiations and agreements with countries and other regional and international groupings.

Significance of Charter

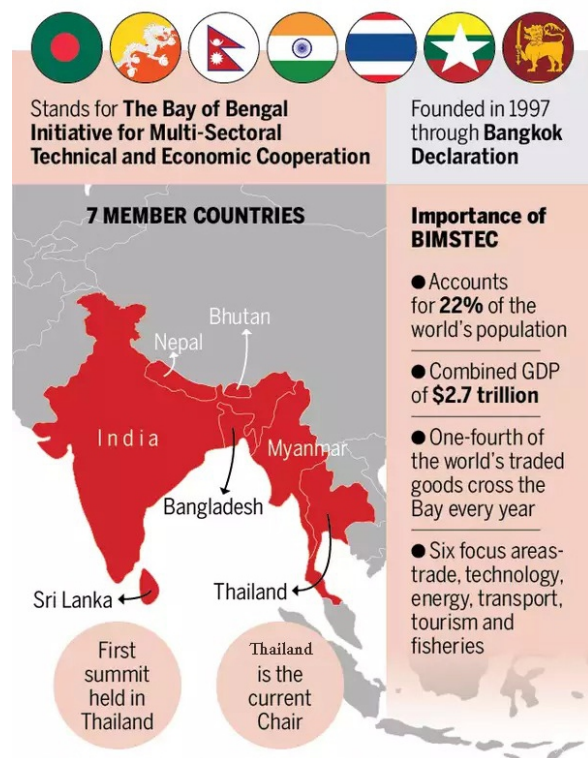
- Among the key facets of the charter is that it highlights the long-term vision and priorities of the member countries.
- It is an important step towards promoting regional cooperation and allowing for agreements to be signed with other countries and regional organisations.
- The charter makes it clear that all decisions will be taken by consensus among current members.
- The charter gives the institution a clear process for the admission of new members, including adding the criteria of geographical contiguity or “primary” dependence on the Bay of Bengal for trade and transport purposes.
- The charter also highlights that the leaders' summit will be held every two years and indicates the procedure for the rotational chairmanship of the organisation.

About BIMSTEC

- BIMSTEC was formed in 1997 with the adoption of the Bangkok Declaration to promote multifaceted technical and economic cooperation among the countries of the Bay of Bengal region.
- The BIMSTEC countries are home to 22 per cent of the total world population and have a combined gross domestic product (GDP) of about \$3.6 trillion.
- Initially consisting of 4 Member States, it was known as 'BIST-EC' (Bangladesh, India, Sri-Lanka and Thailand Economic Cooperation).
- In 1997, it was renamed 'BIMST-EC' after Myanmar joined.
- The admission of Nepal and Bhutan in 2004 led to another name change to the 'Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation' (BIMSTEC).
- The chair of BIMSTEC was taken up by Thailand after the 5th Leaders' Summit, held in Sri Lanka, in 2022.
- The BIMSTEC Secretariat is in Dhaka.

BIMSTEC

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW



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ICC ARREST WARRANTS AGAINST ISRAEL AND HAMAS LEADERS

WHY IN NEWS?

- The Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Karim Khan on May 20 requested arrest warrants against leaders of Hamas and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel about the October 7, 2023 attacks and the war in Palestine.

Key Points

- The Prosecutor has sought arrest warrants for three senior leaders of the Palestinian militant group Hamas — its leader in the Gaza Strip Yahya Sinwar; the commander-in-chief of its militant wing, the Al-Qassam Brigades, Mohammed Deif (born Mohammed Diab Ibrahim Al-Masri); and the head of the Hamas Political Bureau, Ismail Haniyeh.
- On the Israeli side, warrants have been sought for Netanyahu and Israel's Minister of Defence Yoav Gallant.
- All five individuals have been charged with crimes against humanity and war crimes.

About ICC

- The ICC, based at The Hague, investigates and tries individuals charged with the most serious crimes of concern to the international community: genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and the crimes of aggression.
- It is a court of last resort and seeks to complement, not replace, national courts. It prosecutes cases only when states are unwilling or unable to do so.
- It requires a deferral to national courts only when they engage in independent and impartial judicial processes that do not shield suspects.
- This principle of complementarity lies at the heart of the Rome Statute, the international treaty by which the ICC is governed.
- The Rome Statute creating the ICC was adopted in 1998 and took effect when it got 60 ratifications on July 1, 2002. The U.N. General Assembly endorsed the ICC, but the court is independent.
- ICC is not a UN organisation but it has a cooperation agreement with the UN.
- When a situation is not within the Court's jurisdiction, the UNSC can refer the situation to the International Criminal Court granting it jurisdiction.
- Currently, 124 countries are Parties to the Rome Statute.
- However, dozens of countries don't accept the court's jurisdiction over war crimes, genocide and other crimes. They include Israel, the United States, Russia and China.
- India is not a party to the Rome Statute along with the US and China.

In 2023, the ICC issued a warrant for Russian President Vladimir Putin on charges of responsibility for the abductions of children from Ukraine.

Other high-profile leaders charged by the court include ousted Sudanese strongman Omar al-Bashir on allegations including genocide in his country's Darfur region.

Former Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi was captured and killed by rebels shortly after the ICC issued a warrant for his arrest on charges linked to the brutal suppression of anti-government protests in 2011.

ICC and Palestine

- The U.N. General Assembly raised the Palestinians' status in 2012 from a UN observer to a nonmember observer state.
- That opened the door for the Palestinian territories to join international organizations, including the ICC.
- The ICC accepted "The State of Palestine" as a member in 2015, a year after the Palestinians accepted the court's jurisdiction.

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19TH SESSION OF UNITED NATIONS FORUM ON FORESTS (UNFF)

WHY IN NEWS?

- India participated in the 19th Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) held at the UN headquarters in New York from May 6 to 10.

Key Highlights

- The UNFF 19 meeting, which was held between 6 and 10 May, focused on achieving global forest goals and increasing progress towards sustainable development by 2030.
- India informed the UNFF that it has made significant advancements in forest conservation and management, leading to a consistent increase in forest cover over the past 15 years.
 - Globally, India ranks third in the net gain in average annual forest area between 2010 and 2020.

As per latest India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2021, the total forest cover of the country is 7,13,789 square kilometre which is 21.72% of the geographical area of the country.

- The recent celebrations marking 50 years of 'Project Tiger' and 30 years of 'Project Elephant' underscore India's commitment to species conservation and habitat protection.
- India also highlighted the creation of the International Big Cat Alliance, a global initiative aimed at protecting and conserving the seven big cat species worldwide through collaborative efforts.
- The country also informed the UNFF about the introduction of the 'Green Credit Program', a market-based mechanism rewarding voluntary environmental actions by individuals, communities, and the private sector.
- India presented its revised National Forest Policy emphasising forest fire prevention and management through recommendations and technological solutions.
 - According to UNFF, about 100 million hectares of forest or 3% of the world's total forest area are affected by fires each year.
- India proposes operationalising the Global Fire Management Hub, a collaborative effort by the UNEP and the FAO to share knowledge and experiences in mitigating forest fires.
- India suggests establishing universally accepted standards like the Model Forests Act for forest certification programs for consistent and responsible forest management practices worldwide.
- The forum reviewed the UN's strategic plan for forests (2017-2030) and progress made in achieving global forest goals like enhancing forests' economic, social, and environmental benefits and securing finances
- In October 2023, India hosted the Country Led Initiative under UNFF in Dehradun, attended by representatives from 40 countries and 20 international organisations, focusing on forest fire management and forest certification.
 - The recommendations from this initiative were presented during UNFF 19.
- The Ministry also organised a side event on 'Principles and Strategies for Landscape Integrated Fire Management through Collaborative Governance', in partnership with the Agency for Integrated Rural Fire Management, Portugal, Korea Forest Service, and International Tropical Timber Organization at UNFF19.
- Delegates agreed to implement the UN forest framework, known as the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests (UNSPF) and the achievement of the Global Forest Goals.
 - Additionally, they acknowledged the importance of forests in achieving sustainable development and the objectives outlined in the sustainable development goals, all within the framework of the 2030 agenda.
- Countries also showed commitment to the first of the six Global Forest Goals adopted in the 2017 UN Strategic Plan for Forests, which highlighted the need to increase forest cover and focused on stopping and reversing the impacts of land degradation.
- Indonesia presented its Forest and Other Land Use Net Sink 2030 strategy, and Malaysia committed to keeping at least 50% of its territory under tree cover.

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About UNFF

- The UNFF is a functional commission of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) with universal membership.
- The UNFF aims to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests.
- Since its establishment in 2000, the Forum has set many milestones including –
 - The first UN Forest Instrument in 2007, a UN non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests
 - The International Year of Forests, “Forests for People” - 2011
 - The Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network (GFFFN) in 2015
 - Adoption of the first UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2030 and its six Global Forest Goals in 2017



United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030

GLOBAL FOREST GOALS



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SC LIMITS ED'S POWER TO ARREST PMLA ACCUSED

WHY IN NEWS?

- The Supreme Court recently ruled that the Enforcement Directorate (ED) loses the authority to arrest an accused once a special court takes cognisance of a charge sheet filed under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), in a judgment that limits ED's power to execute arrests and emphasises the inviolability of personal liberty.

Background

- The judgment was based on an appeal filed by Tarsem Lal against the ED challenging a Punjab and Haryana High Court denying him anticipatory bail.
- The crux of the issue before the Supreme Court is whether the execution of the bond by an accused for showing his presence before the court under Section 88 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (Cr.P.C.) would amount to applying for bail to make twin conditions of bail under Section 45 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 applicable.
- The court also deliberated on whether an accused not arrested during the PMLA investigation would have to meet the stringent PMLA bail conditions if they appear before the court after being summoned or having a warrant issued for their failure to appear.

What are the Twin Conditions of Bail?

- The twin conditions of bail under Section 45 of the PMLA pose stringent thresholds for an accused.
 - For one, the person has to prove in court that he or she is prima facie innocent of the offence.
 - Secondly, the accused should be able to convince the judge he would not commit any offence while on bail.
- The burden of proof is entirely on the incarcerated accused, who would be often handicapped to fight the might of the state.
- The twin conditions make it almost impossible for an accused to get bail under the PMLA.



Key Observations

- In its judgment, the top court said if the accused appears before the special court pursuant to a summons, it cannot be treated that he is in custody. Therefore, it is not necessary for the accused to apply for bail.
 - The ED will have to separately apply for the custody of a person who appears in court, showing specific grounds necessitating custodial interrogation.
 - This presumption of liberty is a crucial step towards protecting the fundamental right of personal liberty.
- The special court can direct the accused to provide a surety/guarantee (bonds) as per Section 88 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.
 - However, this surety is not the same as granting bail and does not require satisfying the stringent twin conditions of Section 45 of the PMLA.
- If the accused fails to appear before the court despite being summoned, the special court can first issue a bailable warrant (where bail can be obtained).
- If the accused still does not appear, the court can then issue a non-bailable warrant (arrest without bail).
- The ED can still arrest an individual who is not named as an accused in the initial PMLA complaint.
 - However, to do so, the ED must follow the proper arrest procedures outlined in Section 19 of the PMLA.

Such a practice (taking accused into custody when they appear pursuant to summons), if followed by some special courts, is completely illegal as it **may offend the right to liberty guaranteed under Article 21** of the Constitution

If the accused appears before the special court pursuant to summons, **he shall not be treated as if he is in custody.** Therefore, it is not necessary for him to apply for bail. However, the **special court can direct the accused to furnish bond** to ensure he appeared before the court on proceeding dates

If the accused does not appear after a summons is served or does not appear on a subsequent date, the special court **will be well within its powers to issue a bailable warrant**, and if that does not bring the accused before the court, then it **can issue a non-bailable arrest warrant**

– Supreme Court

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PREFIRE MISSION OF NASA

WHY IN NEWS?

- Recently, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) launched one of the two climate satellites as part of the PREFIRE (Polar Radiant Energy in the Far-InfraRed Experiment) polar mission from New Zealand.
- The second satellite will be launched in the following days.

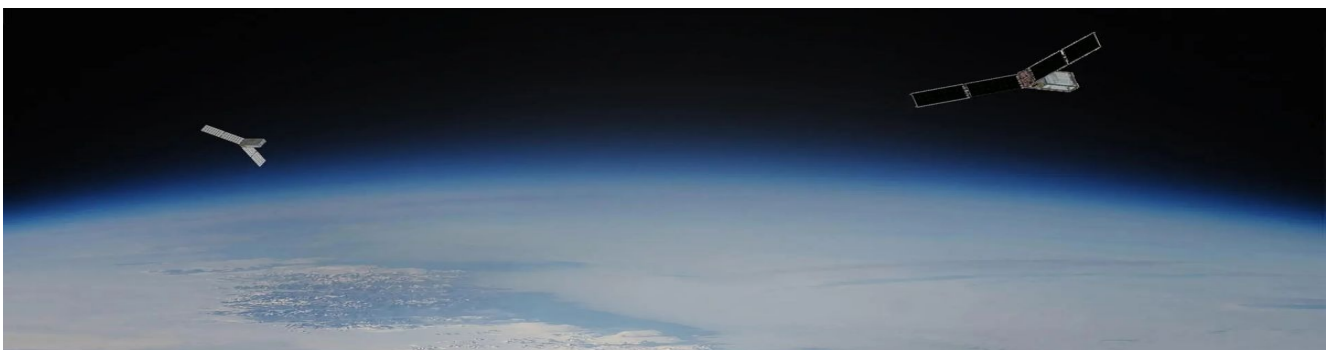
Key Points

- The mission involves two shoebox-sized cube satellites or CubeSats, which will measure how much heat the Arctic and Antarctica — two of the coldest regions on the Earth — radiate into space and how this influences the planet's climate.
 - The PREFIRE Mission was jointly developed by NASA and the University of Wisconsin-Madison (US).
- Each of the PREFIRE satellites is a 6U CubeSat. They measure around 90 cm in height and nearly 120 cm in width when the solar panels, which will power the satellite, are deployed.
 - Its two CubeSats can study far-infrared radiation from the Earth's pole and the data collected by them would help scientists better understand the energy budget of the planet.
 - The two satellites will be placed in a near-polar orbit (a type of low Earth orbit) at an altitude of about 525 kilometres.
- Each of the PREFIRE CubeSat is equipped with a thermal infrared spectrometer — known as Thermal Infrared Spectrometer (TIRS) — to measure the amount of infrared and far-infrared radiation from the Arctic and Antarctica.
 - The spectrometer features specially shaped mirrors and detectors for splitting and measuring infrared light, according to NASA.
- The CubeSats will also measure the amount of far-infrared radiation trapped by atmospheric water vapour and clouds at the poles and how this influences the greenhouse effect in the region.

- CubeSats are essentially miniature satellites whose basic design is a 10 cm x 10 cm x 10 cm (which makes up for “one unit” or “1U”) cube — just a little bigger than a Rubik's cube — and weight not more than 1.33 kg.
- Depending on the CubeSat's mission, the number of units can be 1.5, 2, 3, 6, and 12U, according to NASA.
- These satellites were first developed in 1999 by California Polytechnic State University at San Luis Obispo (Cal Poly) and Stanford University as educational tools.
- However, owing to their low cost and less mass in comparison to traditional satellites, they began to be put in orbit for technology demonstrations, scientific research, and commercial purposes.

Measurement of Heat at Earth's Poles

- It has to do with the Earth's energy budget, which is the balance between the amount of heat incoming to Earth from the Sun and the amount of heat outgoing from Earth into space.
 - The difference between the two determines the planet's temperature and climate.
- A large amount of the heat radiated from the Arctic and Antarctica is emitted as far-infrared radiation — wavelengths of 3 μm to 1,000 μm within the infrared range of electromagnetic radiation.
 - However, there is currently no way to measure this type of energy. As a result, there is a gap in knowledge about the planet's energy budget.
- Hence, the data from the PREFIRE mission will address the gap in knowledge and provide data to improve predictions of climate change and sea level rise.



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IRELAND, NORWAY AND SPAIN IN RECOGNIZE PALESTINE

WHY IN NEWS?

- Spain, Ireland and Norway officially recognised a Palestinian state on May 28, 2024.

Key Points

- The official recognition by three states means 146 of the 193 member states of the United Nations now recognise a Palestinian state.
- All three countries said they recognised a Palestinian state based on borders established before the war in 1967, with Jerusalem as the capital of both Israel and Palestine.
- Spain recognised a unified Palestinian state, including the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, under the Palestinian National Authority with East Jerusalem as its capital.
- Ireland's Department of Foreign Affairs said that it would upgrade its representative office in Ramallah in the West Bank to an embassy, appoint an ambassador there and upgrade the status of the Palestinian mission in Ireland to an embassy.
- In response, Israel has withdrawn its ambassadors from Ireland, Norway and Spain and formally reprimanded their envoys in Tel Aviv.
- A minority of European countries already recognise a Palestinian state. They include former members of the Soviet Bloc, such as Hungary, Poland, Romania, Czechia, Slovakia and Bulgaria, which adopted the position in 1988; and others including Sweden and Cyprus.
- But many European countries – and the US – say they will recognise a Palestinian state only as part of a long-term political solution to the conflict in the Middle East.

Current Status of Palestine

- Currently, Palestine is a “Permanent Observer State” — and not a “Member State” — at the UN.
- There is one other Permanent Observer State in the UN — the Holy See, representing Vatican City.
- As a Permanent Observer State, Palestine is allowed to “participate in all of the Organization's proceedings, except for voting on draft resolutions and decisions in its main organs and bodies, from the Security Council to the General Assembly and its six main committees”.
- Palestine graduated to the status of “non-member Permanent Observer State” from having Observer status in 2012.

What does it mean to be Recognised as a State?

- The Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States (1933), identified four conditions of a state: “a permanent population, defined territory, government, and capacity to enter into relations with other states”.
- The UN has a broad criterion for accepting states as Members.
 - Article 4 of the UN Charter states: “Membership in the United Nations is open to all other peace-loving states which accept the obligations contained in the present Charter and, in the judgment of the Organization, are able and willing to carry out these obligations.”
- Procedurally, admission to the UN as a Member State is granted by a two-thirds majority vote in the UN General Assembly.
- However, the UNGA takes up the candidature only upon the recommendation of the UN Security Council.
 - The UNSC comprises five permanent members — the United States, the United Kingdom, Russia, China, and France — and 10 temporary member countries chosen on a rotational basis.
- For the UNSC recommendation to pass, there must be a vote, with at least nine members in favour and no permanent members using their veto.
 - Essentially, it is the P5 who determine the fate of an issue in the UNSC.





NOTA IN LOK SABHA ELECTIONS 2024

WHY IN NEWS?

- The NOTA, or None Of The Above, button has again emerged as a formidable option for voters. As many as 63,47,509 voters pressed the NOTA button, choosing 'None Of The Above' in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

Constituencies with Highest NOTA Votes in 2024

- Indore re-wrote history by registering the highest-ever NOTA votes in the country at 2,18,674, breaking the previous NOTA record of Gopalganj in Bihar.
- Araku in Andhra Pradesh was a distant second, recording 50,470 NOTA votes this time around.
- Odisha's Nabarangpur seat followed closely behind, with 43,268 NOTA votes tallied.
- Bihar's Gopalganj in 2024 received 42,863 NOTA votes, a little less than the 51,660 NOTA votes recorded in the constituency in the 2019 LS polls, which was a record back then.
- Kodarma in Jharkhand also received 42,152 NOTA votes this time, wrapping up the top five constituencies in this regard.
- These five were followed by Koraput, Hajipur, Bastar, Jhanjharpur, and Dahod, which received 37,131, 36,927, 36,758, 35,928, and 34,938 NOTA votes respectively, this time around.
- In Gujarat, NOTA button was the third choice of voters in 24 of the 25 Lok Sabha constituencies, garnering a vote share of 1.56 per cent.
 - The only exception was Jamnagar, where NOTA votes cast bagged the fourth spot among the total votes polled.

Does NOTA make a difference?

- Experts and voters are highly divided on the merits and demerits of NOTA.
- In a recent media interview, former Chief Election Commissioner OP Rawat said that in the present situation, NOTA has only symbolic significance and cannot have an impact on the election result of any seat.
- In an election, if 99 votes out of 100 go to NOTA and a candidate gets only one vote, still the candidate, and not NOTA, will be declared the winner.
- In April 2024, motivational speaker Shiv Khera petitioned the Supreme Court asking for the ECI to treat NOTA as a fictional character, and establish guidelines for conducting re-elections in constituencies where NOTA garners a majority.
- The court has issued a notice to the ECI seeking its response on the matter.
- However, despite its electoral impotency, the 'NOTA' option has its significance as it shows voters' displeasure over the choice of candidates from a particular constituency.

What is NOTA?

- NOTA is an option on the Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) that allows voters to register their discontent with available options of candidates.
- NOTA was first introduced in 2013 after a human rights organisation PUCL (People's Union for Civil Liberties) moved the apex court of the country with a writ petition— demanding the inclusion of the NOTA option in the voting process.
 - The NOTA option was first implemented in the 2013 legislative assembly elections held in four States- Chhattisgarh, Mizoram, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh and the union territory of Delhi.
- Until 2013, if people wanted to exercise a similar option, they had to do it under Rule 49-O of Conduct of Elections.
 - However, this involved filling out a form at the polling station, which meant the secrecy guaranteed to the voter was compromised.

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NOTA as a Constitutional Right

- Advocates of NOTA argue that they believe it represents a basic constitutional right for voters.
- It allows people to take part in elections by giving them a real way to reject candidates they don't like.
- Essentially, NOTA lets citizens voice their dissatisfaction and pushes political parties to offer better candidates.

Constitutional Duty to Elect Representatives

- On the other hand, critics of NOTA contend that it may undermine the constitutional duty of citizens to elect representatives.
- Unlike casting a vote for a specific candidate, choosing NOTA does not directly contribute to the selection of an elected official.
- Some argue that by opting for NOTA, voters are abstaining from fulfilling their responsibility to elect representatives who will govern on their behalf.

Lok Sabha
ELECTIONS 2024



10 SEATS
WITH HIGHEST
NUMBER OF
NOTA VOTES

NOTA MAKES A MARK

In the 2024 Lok Sabha
elections, approximately 1% of
voters chose NOTA

Indore
(Madhya Pradesh)

NUMBER OF
NOTA VOTES:

2,18,674

NOTA VOTE
SHARE: **14%**

Dahod (Gujarat)
34,938 (3.12%)

Bastar (Chhattisgarh)
36,758 (3.65%)

Gopalganj (Bihar)
42,863 (4.03%)

Jhunjharpur (Bihar)
35,928 (3.28%)

Hajipur (Bihar)
36,927 (3.20%)

Kodarma (Jharkhand)
42,152 (3.08%)

Nabarangpur (Odisha)
43,268 (3.48%)

Koraput (Odisha)
37,131 (3.23%)

Araku (Andhra Pradesh)
50,470 (4.33%)

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CONCERN OVER EC'S VOTER TURNOUT DATA

WHY IN NEWS?

- The Supreme Court on May 24 refused to pass an interim order on a petition seeking a direction to the Election Commission to publish on its website the Form 17C data, or the voter turnout data per polling station, within 48 hours of the voting coming to an end.

Background

- The Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) filed a petition before the Supreme Court seeking a direction to the EC to publish the Form 17C data on its website within 48 hours of conclusion of polling.
- Additionally, the ADR has flagged a sizeable difference in the initial turnout figures released by the ECI soon after the conclusion of polling and the final voter percentages published subsequently.

The provisional polling percentages for the first phase released by the ECI at 7 pm on April 19 was about 60% and for the second phase on April 26 was 60.96%. However, the final figures released on April 30 for the first phase stood at 66.14% (an increase of more than 5.5%) and 66.71% for the second phase (an increase of more than 5.74%).

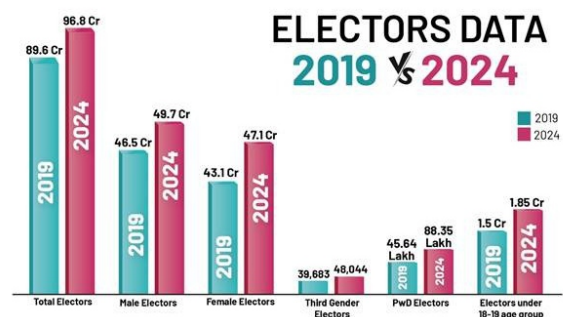
- Echoing similar concerns, a group of civil society members and former bureaucrats have also written to the ECI, urging it to “immediately disclose” the authenticated record of voter turnout of every polling station — as contained in Part I of Form 17C (Account of votes recorded)— via the ECI website.

DID YOU KNOW?

- As per the ECI, a voter turnout of 65.79 per cent was recorded in the just-concluded Lok Sabha elections, but the final figures may change as it does not include postal ballots.
- Voter turnout at polling station means votes polled in electronic voting machines.
- Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar had said a total of 64.2 crore voters had exercised their franchise.
- In 2019, India had 91.20 crore voters and out of these, 61.5 had exercised their franchise. In the 2024 polls, the size of the electorate grew to 96.88 crore voters.

What is Form 17C?

- As per the 1961 Rules, the ECI has to maintain two forms that have data on the number of electors and the votes polled — Forms 17A and 17C.
 - While Form 17A is used to record the details of every voter who comes into a polling booth and casts his or her vote, the Form 17C is an account of all the votes recorded.
- Under Rule 49S(2), a presiding officer is mandated to furnish a copy of the entries made in Form 17C to the polling agents of the candidates at the close of polling.
- Part I of Form 17C contains crucial information — the identification numbers of the EVMs used in the polling station, the total number of electors assigned to the polling station, the total number of voters as entered in the register for voters (Form 17A), the number of voters who decided not to record their votes after signing the register, the number of voters who were not allowed to vote, the total number of test votes and votes recorded per EVM.
- Part II of the same form contains the results of the counting carried out on the stipulated day.
- The data in Form 17C is used by candidates to verify the results on counting day by matching it with the EVM count.
- The candidates can challenge a result if there is a discrepancy between the data in Form 17C and the data emanating from the counting centre.
 - They can also file petitions in the high court challenging the election result on the basis of the mismatch between the counting data and the figures in Form 17C.



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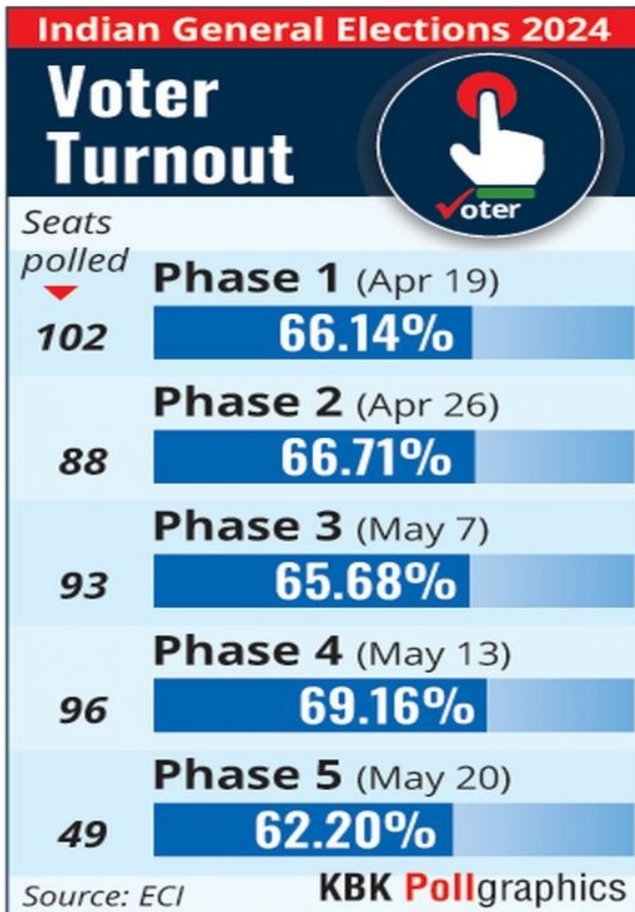


Why the demand to make public Form 17C data?

- The ECI has come under scrutiny for not releasing the absolute number of votes polled in any constituency in this general election (2024), unlike in 2019.
- Only voting percentages have been published, that too after significant delay — after 11 days of the first phase of polling held on April 19 and four days after the second phase of polling held on April 26.
- Opposition parties and civil society have objected to the Commission only releasing voting percentage, and not the total number of votes polled in a constituency.
- They have demanded that the Form 17C data be made public to allay concerns regarding data on the total number of voters and the total number of voters who have cast their vote.

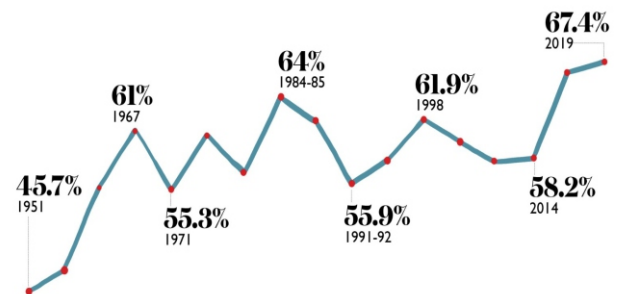
The Election Commission's Response

- The ECI maintained there is no legal mandate for it to make public the total number of votes cast in each polling station.
- It says copies of Form 17C are shared with the polling agents present immediately upon the close of polling.
- It says candidates are aware and in possession of the exact voter turnout data in absolute numbers even before it is known to the Commission.
- On the issue of significant difference between the initial voter turnout percentage and the final figures, the Commission said voters continue to vote even after 6pm due to long queues at polling stations and that is added to the figures later.



Are you the missing voter?

Poll Participation (%) in General elections to Lok Sabha (1951-2019)



Almost 297 million eligible voters did not vote in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. Low voter turnout has been an issue this year too. But it is not just a 2024 problem.

Source: Firstpost Votematics

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INDIA HOSTED THE ANTARCTIC PARLIAMENT

WHY IN NEWS?

- India successfully concluded hosting of the 46th Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM-46) and the 26th Committee on Environmental Protection (CEP-26) from May 20th to May 30th, 2024 in Kochi, Kerala.
- Located in the southern hemisphere, Antarctica is a no man's land whose governance holds special importance among the Antarctic Treaty members.

Key Discussions

- Key discussions at the ATCM included the operation of the Antarctic Treaty System, liability, biological prospecting, exchange of information, education issues, multi-year strategic work plan, safety, inspections, science issues, future science challenges, scientific cooperation, climate change implications, and tourism management.
- The Parties emphasised the importance of education and outreach activities as an essential element of cooperation enshrined in the Antarctic Treaty and the Environmental Protocol.
- A significant outcome was the adoption of a decision on development of an ambitious, comprehensive, flexible and dynamic framework for regulating tourism and non-governmental activities in Antarctica.
- Parties also discussed consultative status requests from Canada and Belarus, but no consensus was reached.
- Saudi Arabia was awarded to become a Treaty member taking the total Antarctic Treaty parties now to 57.
- Following the advice of the CEP, the Parties adopted 17 revised and new management plans for ASPAs (Antarctic Specially Protected Areas) and several modifications /additions to the list of Historic and Monument Sites (HSMs).
- The ATCM also encouraged efforts to increase renewable energy use, and to ensure robust implementation of biosecurity measures to minimise the risks of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI).
- The CEP elected a new Chair, Ms Ceisha Poirot from New Zealand.

About ACTM

- ACTM is an annual meeting that encourages international collaboration on scientific research and sustainable resource management in the icy continent, along with discussing the principles and objectives of the Antarctic Treaty.
- From 1961 to 1994 the ATCM generally met once every two years, but since 1994 the meetings have occurred annually.

- The Antarctic Treaty was signed by all the 12 countries in 1959 and came into force in 1961.
 - Twelve countries — Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Chile, France, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, the USSR, the United Kingdom, and the United States.
- Currently, 57 countries are part of the treaty — 29 of which, including all 12 original signatories, are 'Consultative Parties', which are part of the decision making process.

About Committee on Environments Protection

- The CEP was established under the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty (the Madrid Protocol) in 1991.
- The CEP advises the ATCM on environmental protection and conservation in Antarctica.
- ATCM and CEP are pivotal in the international community's ongoing efforts to safeguard Antarctica's fragile ecosystem and promote scientific research in the region.
- 26th CEP Agenda focused on evaluating the Antarctic environment, assessing impacts, managing and reporting; responding to climate change; developing area protection and management plans, including marine spatial protection; and conserving Antarctic biodiversity.



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India's Participation

- India, which joined the treaty in 1983, is also a Consultative Party.
- India, as a Consultative Treaty Party since 1983, has been regularly sending scientific expeditions to Antarctica. India operates two active research stations - Maitri and Bharati, both in summer and winter months.
- The first research station, Dakshin Gangotri, set up in 1983. The station operated till 1990.
- In 1989, India set up its second Antarctica research station, named Maitri.
- In 2012, India inaugurated Bharati, its third Antarctica research station, located around 3,000 km east of Maitri.
- India is planning to open a new station, Maitri II, a few kilometres from the ageing Maitri station. Operations are set to begin by 2029.
- In 2022, India enacted the Antarctic Act, reaffirming its commitment to the Antarctic Treaty.
- India's scientific and strategic endeavours in the polar regions (the Arctic and Antarctic), the Himalayas, and the Southern Ocean are under the National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR) in Goa.
- For the first time in the history of ATCMs, India introduced the third working group of nations and tasked them to frame policies and regulations which will help practice responsible and sustainable tourism in Antarctica.
- India had, for the first time, tabled concerns pertaining to tourism in Antarctica at the ATCM meet in New Delhi in 2007.



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GOPI THOTAKURA BECOMES THE FIRST INDIAN SPACE TOURIST

WHY IN NEWS?

- Indian expatriate Gopi Thotakura made history as he became the first Indian space tourist and the second Indian to venture into space as part of the crew for Amazon founder Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin's NS-25 mission.

Wing Commander Rakesh Sharma, a former Indian Air Force pilot, was the first Indian citizen to fly to space in 1984.

Key Points

- The Blue Origin successfully completed its seventh human spaceflight and the 25th flight for the New Shepard program.
- Besides Gopi Thotakura, the astronaut crew included Mason Angel, Sylvain Chiron, Kenneth L. Hess, Carol Schaller, and former Air Force Captain Ed Dwight, who was selected by President John F. Kennedy in 1961 as the nation's first black astronaut candidate but never had the opportunity to fly.
- From take off to landing, the whole journey lasted only about ten minutes, during which the spacecraft attained a maximum height of about 105 km from the Earth.
- Thotakura's journey was what is called a sub-orbital space flight.

Sub-orbital Trips

- The spacecraft did not get into an orbit around the Earth.
- It crossed the Karman line, stayed there for some time, and then descended back to Earth, similar to how most space tourism flights operate.
- Space travel begins at about 100 km altitude from Earth, after crossing the so-called Karman line, which is generally considered to be the boundary between the Earth's atmosphere and outer space.
- Anything flying below this altitude is called an aircraft while those crossing this line get classified as a spacecraft.



Longer Journeys - Orbital Trips

- Longer joy rides in space are also available.
- The orbital spacecraft takes passengers much further than the Karman line.
- Space tourists have orbited around the Earth, and even spent a few days on the International Space Station, the permanent space laboratory that goes around the Earth at an altitude of about 400 km.

- The first space tourist was Dennis Tito, an American who paid to travel on a Russian Soyuz spacecraft in 2001.
 - He spent over seven days on the International Space Station. Between 2001 and 2009, the Russians took seven tourists to the space station with one of them, Charles Simonyi, travelling twice.
- In September 2021, Space X's Falcon 9 took four passengers to an altitude of 160 km where they spent three days orbiting the Earth.

Key Players

- Three of the leading players in private space tourism — Virgin Galactic, Blue Origin, and SpaceX — executed their first missions in 2021.
- Within 10 days of each other in July 2021, Virgin Galactic and Blue Origin launched their respective bosses — Richard Branson and Jeff Bezos — into space.
- In 2021, Japanese billionaire Yusaku Maezawa, and two others, boarded the Russian Soyuz spacecraft to reach the ISS where they spent 12 days.
- SpaceX did not have a mission of its own, but its Crew Dragon spacecraft was chartered by billionaire Jared Issacman to go into space.
- Issacman and his three co-passengers circled the Earth for three days, becoming the first set of people to orbit the Earth without the help of professional astronauts.

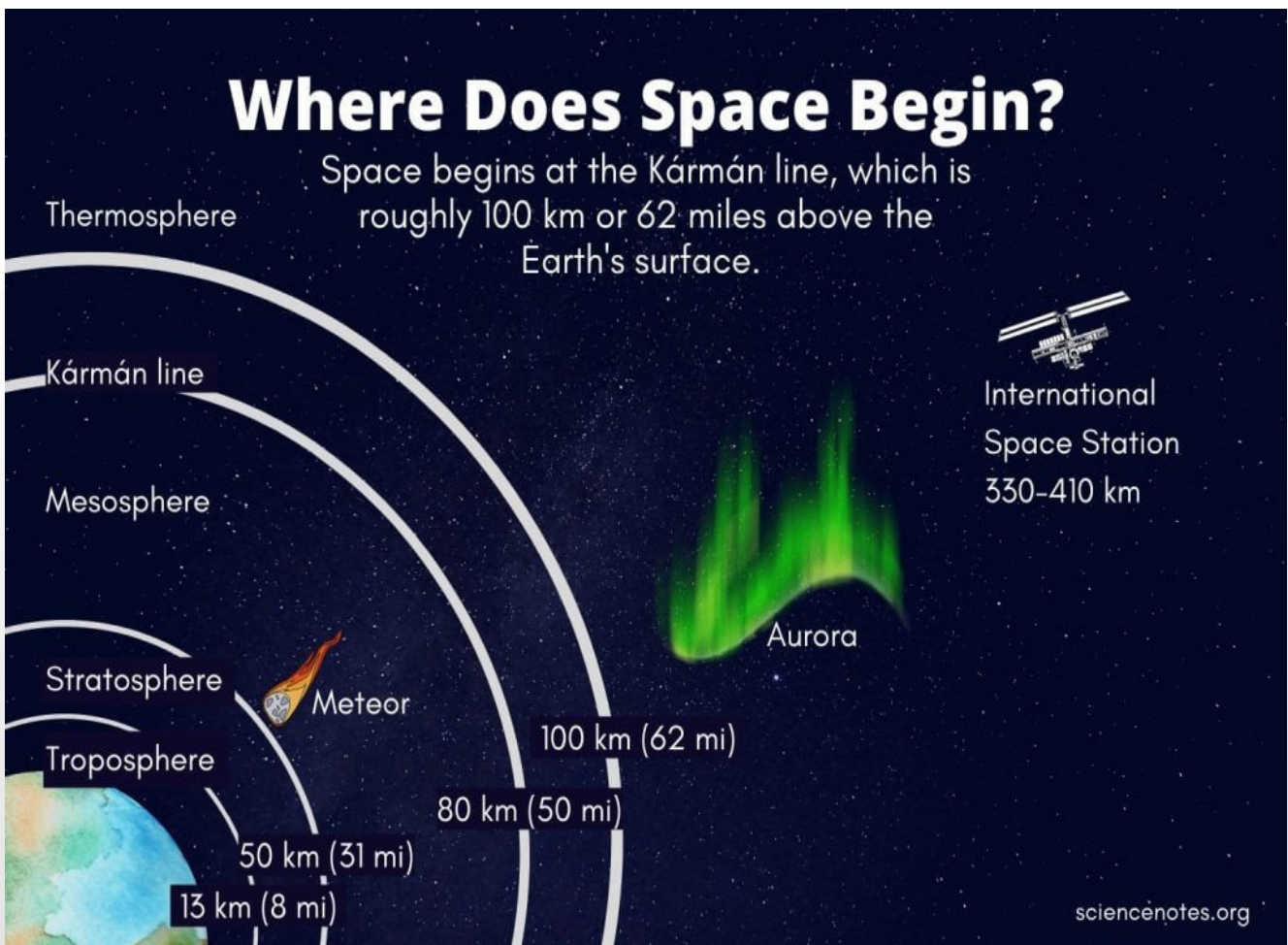
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What is Space Tourism?

- Space tourism is essentially a section of the aviation sector which seeks to provide tourists with the opportunity to become astronauts and experience space travel for recreational, leisure, or business purposes, according to the book 'Air Transport: A Tourism Perspective', edited by Anne Graham, Frederic Dobruszkes.
- There are two main types of space tourism, sub-orbital and orbital.
- In recent years, space tourism has grown by leaps and bounds.
- According to media reports, in 2023, the space tourism market was valued at \$848.28 million.
 - It is expected to grow to \$27,861.99 million by 2032.
- However, there are several challenges, such as high cost, and environmental concerns, that may limit the industry's growth.





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QUICK FACTS

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



1. The **seventh edition of the India- France Joint Military Exercise SHAKTI** concluded recently, at the Umroi Joint training node in **Meghalaya**. It is a biennial training event conducted alternatively in both India and France. The last edition was conducted in France in November 2021.
2. **Sunil Chhetri**, the **Indian football captain**, has announced his retirement from international football after playing his last match against Kuwait on 6 June 2024. He is currently 3rd among active players in terms of goals scored, behind only Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi. He also ranks 4th on the all-time list of international goal-scorers.
3. The **Indian Army** has started receiving the **Russian AK-203 assault rifles** after the deal with Russia saw back-to-back delays, partly due to the war in Ukraine and payment delays. As many as 27,000 rifles have been handed over to the Army so far by the **Indo-Russian joint venture established at Korwa in Uttar Pradesh**.
4. **Venezuela** has likely become the **first country** — it certainly won't be the last — in modern history to **lose all its glaciers**. The last remaining glacier, Humboldt, has shrunk significantly and is now classified as an ice field. Venezuela used to be home to six glaciers, located at about 5,000 metres above sea level in the Andes mountains. By 2011, five of them had vanished.
5. The **International Day for Biological Diversity (IDB)** is celebrated every year on 22 May to raise awareness about the importance of biodiversity for sustaining life on Earth. The **theme for 2024, Be Part of the Plan**, emphasises the need for a collective and coordinated approach to address and reverse the loss of biodiversity and supporting the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. In 2000, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) officially proclaimed 22nd May as IDB. Originally marked on December 29th, the UN General Assembly opted to shift the observance to May 22nd in 2000.
6. The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** on May 22 approved a **Rs. 2.11 lakh crore dividend** payout to the central government for 2023-24, more than double the amount it paid for the previous 2022-23 financial year. The RBI normally pays the dividend from the surplus income it earns on investments and valuation changes on its dollar holdings and the fees it gets from printing currency, among others. The rupee's depreciation against the dollar also weighs on the surplus transfer.
7. Serum Institute of India (**SII**), the world's largest manufacturer of vaccines by number of doses, marked a significant milestone with the shipment of the first set of **R21/Matrix-M malaria vaccine** to several countries in Africa. This vaccine has been developed by the University of Oxford and the Serum Institute of India.
8. Doing away with yet another colonial vestige, the **Indian Navy** has changed the names of **'Jackstaff'** and **'Jack'** on board ships to **'National Flag Staff'** and **'National Flag'**. 'Jack' refers to a flag in naval parlance, usually the national flag, and 'Jackstaff' is a short pole on the bow of a ship from which it is flown. Both terms have their origins in British naval traditions.
9. **DD Kisan** deployed two Artificial Intelligence anchors as part of the initiative to present the television channel in a new avatar. The anchors have been named as **'AI Krish'** and **'AI Bhoomi'**, and can speak in 50 Indian and foreign languages. DD Kisan, which comes under the Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, was launched in 2015 to cater to the farming and rural community.
10. **Spain** has become the **99th member of the International Solar Alliance (ISA)**. At present, 119 countries are signatories to the ISA Framework Agreement, 119th being Malta, of which 98 countries have submitted the necessary instruments of ratification to become full members of the ISA. India and France jointly launched the International Solar Alliance (ISA) during COP21 in Paris.
11. IIT Madras-incubated startup **Agnikul Cosmos** test launched the indigenously designed and developed **world's first rocket with a single-piece 3D printed engine** from Sriharikota. **Agnibaan - SOrTeD** (sub-orbital technology demonstrator) was launched from India's first private launchpad, Dhanush, established by the startup.
12. The Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (**IIT-Bombay**) has entered a strategic partnership with Tata Consultancy Services (**TCS**) to develop **India's first Quantum Diamond Microchip Imager**. This advanced sensing tool will hold the potential to unlock new levels of precision in the examination of semiconductor chips, reduce chip failures and improve the energy efficiency of electronic devices.

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13. **India** has climbed to the **39th position** in the **World Economic Forum's Travel & Tourism Development Index 2024**, while the US topped the list. India also ranks the highest in South Asia among the lower-middle-income economies. Earlier, India was ranked 54th in the 2021 published index.
14. **Delhi** placed **350** in the **Oxford Economics Global Cities Index 2024**, making it the highest-ranked Indian city. The ranking compares the world's 1000 cities. Bengaluru, India's IT hub, stood at 411, higher than the country's financial capital Mumbai, which stood at 427. On the other hand, Sultanpur in Uttar Pradesh ranked last in the index, at 1000th place.
15. **India** logged **116 instances of internet shutdowns in 2023**, accounting for 41% of the 283 globally, according to data analysed by Access Now, a not-for-profit group that focuses on digital rights. As a result, **India now leads the world** in such crackdowns for the sixth year in a row. Of the 1,458 shutdowns Access Now has recorded since 2016, India has accounted for 773 (53%) of them. In 2023, the number of internet shutdowns rose by 41% from 201 in 2022 to 283 in 2023.
16. The **Indian Army** has set up two armoured **vehicle maintenance and repair facilities** near the China border in Nyoma and the DBO Sector in that region to at altitudes of over 14,500 feet in the area, which is the world's highest battlefield for tanks and infantry combat vehicles along the LAC in Eastern Ladakh.



India: 116
Myanmar: 37
Iran: 34
Palestine: 16**
Ukraine: 8**
Pakistan: 7
Iraq: 6
Azerbaijan: 5
Ethiopia: 4
Senegal: 4

Bangladesh: 3 **Russia: 3** **Jordan: 3**
Libya: 3 **China: 2** **Guinea: 2** **Mauritania: 2**
Oman: 2 **Tanzania: 2** **Turkmenistan: 2**
Sudan: 2 **Syria: 2** **Türkiye: 2** **Algeria: 1**
Brazil: 1 **Cuba: 1** **Gabon: 1** **Indonesia: 1**
Kenya: 1 **Lebanon: 1**
Mozambique: 1 **Nepal: 1** **Qatar: 1**
Saudi Arabia: 1
Somaliland: 1 **Suriname: 1**
United Arab Emirates: 1
Uganda: 1 **Venezuela: 1**

** Shutdowns were imposed by external parties in Palestine and Ukraine.



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 Internet shutdowns in 2023

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QUICK FACTS

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS



1. Recently, the **United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)** released its Global Trade Update 2024, which highlights that, after facing declines over several quarters, international trade is poised for a rebound in 2024. Recently, UNCTAD has officially rebranded as "**UN Trade and Development**" as part of its 60th-anniversary celebrations.
2. **China's** latest scientific milestone, the **High Energy Photon Source (HEPS)**, set to be the first fourth-generation synchrotron light source in Asia, will begin operations by the end of this year.
3. The **UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)** has recently released the 3rd edition of a report titled the **World Wildlife Crime Report 2024**. It provided a comprehensive analysis of the illegal wildlife trade from 2015 to 2021. This development places China among a select group of nations capable of producing some of the brightest X-rays in the world.
4. The **University of Tokyo Atacama Observatory (TAO)** has recently been inaugurated. It is now the highest astronomical observatory (altitude of 18,500 feet) in the world, even surpassing the famous Atacama Large Millimeter Array (ALMA), which stands at 16,570 feet.
5. **World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD)** is observed annually on **May 17th** to honour the founding of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) on May 17, 1969. This year's World Telecommunications and Information Society Day 2024 focuses on the theme, "**Digital Innovation for Sustainable Development**," underlying how digital innovation may help link everyone and create sustainable prosperity for all.
6. **India** observed a day's '**state mourning**' on **May 21** after the death of Iranian President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi in an apparent helicopter-related incident. As part of the state mourning, the national tricolour will be flown at half-mast at all public buildings across the country as a mark of respect for the late Iranian president, and no official entertainment will take place during this period. State mourning in India is observed under specific guidelines provided by the Ministry of Home Affairs.
7. **Maldives** will soon launch **India's RuPay service** in its country. RuPay, developed by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), is India's first global card payment network and is widely accepted at ATMs, POS devices, and e-commerce websites across the country. Over the last few years, multiple banks and payment companies from across various countries have partnered with NPCI International Payments Ltd (NIPL), the international arm of NPCI, to accept UPI and RuPay in one form or the other.
8. An **Earth-sized, potentially habitable planet** has been discovered just 40 light years away, US space agency NASA has announced. Named '**Gliese 12 b**', it is a super Earth exoplanet that orbits a M-type star. It resembles an exo-Venus in size and solar energy absorption.
9. **World Menstrual Hygiene Day** is an annual awareness day held on **28 May**. Established in 2014 by the German-based NGO WASH United, the day seeks to address the taboos and stigmas associated with menstruation and promote access to menstrual products, education, and sanitation facilities. The **theme** for World Menstrual Hygiene Day 2024 is **#PeriodFriendlyWorld**.
10. **Twelve nations** - Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Estonia, Germany, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden and the United Kingdom - have signed the **Zero Debris Charter** at the European Space Agency (ESA) /EU Space Council. The Zero Debris Charter is a world-leading effort to become debris neutral in space by 2030 that was unveiled at the ESA Space Summit in Seville meeting in November 2023.
11. The **Government of India** has granted **\$1 million** as immediate assistance for **Papua New Guinea**, which has been hit by a devastating flood and landslide that has so far killed 2,000 people. Papua New Guinea is a close friend of India and a partner under the Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC). FIPIC is a platform launched in 2014 to strengthen India's ties with 14 Pacific Island Countries (PICs).
12. **Japanese researchers** have built the **world's first wooden satellite, LignoSat**, crafted from magnolia wood, with each side measuring merely 10 centimetres. The satellite will be launched on a SpaceX rocket from the Kennedy Space Center in September 2024 to the International Space Station (ISS), where it will be deployed from the Japanese ISS experiment module to assess its strength and durability.





13. **Six NATO countries** - Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Finland, and Norway - neighbouring Russia are joining forces to build a “**drone wall**” to protect their borders. This is a completely new thing, a drone wall stretching from Norway to Poland, and the goal is to use drones and other technologies to protect our borders.
14. **Zimbabwe** rolled out a new gold-backed currency called the **ZiG, or Zimbabwe Gold**, in an effort to mitigate the currency instability and hyperinflation that has plagued the country for decades. Zimbabwe has long struggled with high inflation, with inflation rates exceeding 500% in recent years. In March 2024, the annual rate of price increases at 55.3%, a seven-month high.
15. The **G7 nations** have called on major economies, such as India and China, to make a commitment to achieve **net zero emissions by 2050** and reach the peak of their emissions by 2025. Net zero refers to a state wherein the emissions of greenhouse gases by a country are offset by absorption, or removal, through futuristic technologies, so that the net emissions from the country are zero. India has said it would turn net zero only by 2070 while China has set a target of 2060.
16. The **2027 FIFA Women’s World Cup** will be held in **Brazil**. Brazil, home of women's football great Marta, scored higher than its European rival in FIFA's evaluation report. Unlike their male counterparts, who have won five World Cups, Brazil's women have never lifted the trophy and made a group-stage exit in 2023.
17. In an attempt to promote the culture of sustainability and environmental protection, the **United Arab Emirates** Cabinet led by Prime Minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid, has announced a **10-year Blue Residence Visa** for those who are making exceptional contributions to environmental protection.
18. The **inaugural Summit on Clean Cooking in Africa** held in **Paris, France on May 14, 2024**, garnered significant attention and commitment. With more than 1,000 delegates from nearly 60 countries, this gathering aimed to address the critical health and climate impacts associated with traditional cooking methods prevalent in Africa. Over a billion people in Africa currently rely on fuels like charcoal and wood for cooking. Unfortunately, these traditional methods pose serious risks to health and the environment.



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QUICK FACTS

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



1. **Alice Munro**, a Canadian author who was revered worldwide as a master of the short story and who won the **Nobel Prize for Literature in 2013**, died at the age of 92. The prolific author leaves behind a strong literary legacy — along with many Canadian authors who were inspired by her and her work. Alice Munro also won the Man Booker International Prize in 2009 and the Giller Prize - Canada's most high-profile literary award, twice.
2. **German author Jenny Erpenbeck and translator Michael Hofmann** won the **International Booker Prize 2024 for fiction for "Kairos,"** the story of a tangled love affair during the final years of East Germany's existence. The International Booker Prize, formerly known as the Man Booker International Prize, established in 2005, is awarded annually for a single book translated into English and published in the United Kingdom or Ireland.
3. As **Buddha Purnima**, commemorates the birth of Lord Buddha, the President of India, Droupadi Murmu on **May 23**, conveyed her congratulations and best wishes to citizens and followers of Lord Buddha worldwide. Siddhartha Gautama, popularly known as the Buddha, the founder of Buddhism rejected a life of wealth and comfort and chose to pursue a path of spiritual and intellectual improvement. In his pursuit of enlightenment, he rejected notions of caste, privilege etc.
4. The Archaeological Survey of India (**ASI**) is set to begin restoration work on the collapsed temple's pavilion or the '**saalu mantap**' (a type of Mandapa) at the iconic **Virupaksha temple**. A portion of the Virupaksha temple in Karnataka collapsed following torrential rains on May 21. A nationally protected monument and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the temple is believed to have its origins in the 7th century.
5. **Srinivas R Kulkarni**, an Indian-origin American scientist and professor at California Institute of Technology (Caltech), has been awarded the **2024 Shaw Prize in astronomy**. The Shaw Prize, known as the 'Nobel of the East', honours Kulkarni's discoveries on millisecond pulsars, gamma-ray bursts, supernovae, and other transient astronomical phenomena.
6. **Sultana's Dream**, the utopian novel of a world without men **written by Bengali author Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain in 1905** British India, has been **recognised by UNESCO as part of its 'Memory of the World' register**. Hossain's work, the Ramacharitmanas by Tulsidas, Panchatantra and Sahridayaloka Lochana by Anandavardhana are among 20 items recognised during the 2024 cycle of the Memory of the World Regional Register.



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TEST ZONE



PASSAGE - 1

Payal Kapadia has scripted history by becoming the first Indian filmmaker to win the Grand Prix award at the Cannes Film Festival for her film [1]. The film bagged the award, the second-most prestigious prize of the festival after the Palme d'Or, which went to American director Sean Baker for *Anora* at the closing ceremony on Saturday (May 25) night.

Kapadia's movie, which screened on May 23 night, is the first Indian film in 30 years and first ever by an Indian female director to be showcased in the main competition. The last Indian movie to be selected for the main competition was Shaji N Karun's 1994 movie *Swaham*.

Kapadia received the Grand Prix from American actor Viola Davis. In her speech, the filmmaker thanked the three leading ladies of the film—Kani Kusruti, Divya Prabha and Chhaya Kadam—and said the film would not have been possible without them. "I'm very

nervous, so I wrote something down. Thank you to the Cannes Film Festival for having our film here. Please don't wait 30 years to have another Indian film. This film is about friendship, about three very different women. Oftentimes, women are pitted against each other. This is the way our society is designed and it is really unfortunate. But for me, friendship is a very important relationship because it can lead to greater solidarity, inclusivity and empathy," said Kapadia, who was accompanied by the three actors on the stage.

The director also gave a shout out to the festival workers who had protested at the opening night gala, demanding better wages and acknowledgement.

[Extracted, with edits and revisions, from: "'[1]' by Payal Kapadia scripts history with groundbreaking Grand Prix win at Cannes 2024", Frontline]

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

- A All We Imagine as Light
- B Grand Tour
- C The Seed of the Sacred Fig
- D Kind of Kindness

Q.2 Cannes International Film Festival was the brainchild of which French writer/art critic?

- A Jean-Luc Godard
- B Francois Truffaut
- C Philippe Erlanger
- D Jacques Demy

Q.3 Which Indian short film bagged the first prize of La Cinef for Best Short at Cannes 2024?

- A Sunflowers Were the First Ones to Know
- B The Chaos She Left Behind
- C Out the Window Through the Wall
- D Bunnyhood

Q.4 Director Payal Kapadia faces a court hearing next month stemming from her involvement in protests against the appointment of Gajendra Chauhan, as chairman of which organisation?

- A National School of Drama
- B JNU
- C Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute
- D Film and Television Institute of India

Q.5 Which Indian actress bagged the Best Actress award in the Un Certain Regard category at Cannes 2024?

- A Kani Kusruti
- B Anasuya Sengupta
- C Divya Prabha
- D Chhaya Kadam

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

Answers

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PASSAGE - 2

An Indian peacekeeper who lost his life serving under the UN flag is among over 60 military, police and civilian peacekeepers to be honoured posthumously with a prestigious medal for their service and supreme sacrifice in the line of duty.

[1], who served with the UN Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO), will be honoured posthumously with the Dag Hammarskjöld medal during a solemn ceremony on May 30 when the UN commemorates the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers.

India is the second largest contributor of uniformed personnel to UN Peacekeeping. It currently deploys more than 6,000 military and police personnel to the UN operations in Abyei, the Central African Republic, Cyprus, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lebanon, the Middle East, Somalia, South Sudan, and Western

Sahara. Nearly 180 Indian peacekeepers have made the supreme sacrifice in the line of duty, the highest number by far from any troop-contributing country.

During formal ceremonies at the United Nations Headquarters on May 30, Secretary-General António Guterres will lay a wreath at the Peacekeepers Memorial Site on the North Lawn to honour all UN peacekeepers who have lost their lives since 1948. He will also preside over a ceremony during which the Dag Hammarskjöld Medals will be awarded posthumously to 64 military, police, and civilian peacekeepers, who lost their lives serving under the UN flag, including 61 who died last year.

[Extracted, with edits and revisions, from: "Indian peacekeeper to be honoured posthumously with prestigious U.N. medal for sacrifice in line of duty", The Hindu]

Q.1 Whose name has been replaced with '[1]' in the passage above?

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| A Major Radhika Sen | C Naik Dhananjay Kumar Singh |
| B Colonel Waibhav Anil Kale (Retd) | D Lt Gen Shailesh Tinaikar |

Q.2 _____ was honoured with the UN 'Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award' recently.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| A Major Radhika Sen | C Major Shakti Devi |
| B Major Suman Gawani | D Major Seema Dhundia |

Q.3 International Day of United Nations (UN) Peacekeepers is observed on _____ of each year.

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| A 28 May | C 30 May |
| B 29 May | D 31 May |

Q.4 What is the theme of the 2024 International Day of United Nations (UN) Peacekeepers?

- | | |
|---|---|
| A Peace begins with Me | C Fit for the Future, Building Better Together |
| B People Peace Progress: The Power of Partnerships | D The Road to a Lasting Peace |

Q.5 The first UN peacekeeping mission was established in _____ to monitor the Armistice Agreement between Israel and its Arab neighbours.

- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| A 1944 | C 1947 |
| B 1949 | D 1948 |

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

Answers

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PASSAGE - 3

India is hosting the 46th Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM 46), also known as the Antarctic Parliament, from May 20-30 in Kochi. The National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research, Goa, through the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), has organised the meeting, which will be attended by the 56 member countries of the Antarctic Treaty. India last hosted the ATCM in New Delhi in [1].

The ATCM is meant to facilitate a global dialogue on law, logistics, governance, science, tourism, and other aspects of the southern continent. During the conference, India will seek to promote the idea of peaceful governance in Antarctica and underline that geopolitical tensions elsewhere in the world should not interfere with the protection of the continent and its resources.

Dr M Ravichandran, Secretary, MoES, told The Indian Express that India would also introduce a new working group for

regulating tourism on the continent. "While India has expressed concerns regarding tourism-related activities in Antarctica since 2016, this is for the first time a dedicated working group will work to formulate regulations, track tourist activities, and lay down rules," Ravichandran said.

The Netherlands, Norway, and some other European countries that share India's views on formulating regulations for tourism in Antarctica, will be part of this working group, which hopes to come to a consensus regarding some actionable guidelines. Currently, tourism to Antarctica is driven by tour operators, and little is known about the threat tourists may pose to Antarctica's fragile ecosystem.

[Extracted, with edits and revisions, from: "Antarctic Parliament meets in Kochi: What's on the table?", by Anjali Marar, The Indian Express]

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

- A** 2007
- B** 2009

- C** 2011
- D** 2013

Q.2 During ATCM 46, _____ was awarded to become a Treaty member taking the total Antarctic Treaty parties now to 57.

- A** Canada
- B** Belarus

- C** Saudi Arabia
- D** Turkiye

Q.3 The Antarctic Treaty was signed by all 12 countries in _____ and came into force in _____.

- A** 1959, 1960
- B** 1959, 1961

- C** 1960, 1961
- D** 1960, 1962

Q.4 India, as a Consultative Treaty Party since _____, has been regularly sending scientific expeditions to Antarctica.

- A** 1960
- B** 1995

- C** 1975
- D** 1983

Q.5 India operates two active research stations in Antarctica _____ and _____.

- A** Himadri, Maitri
- B** Maitri, Bharati

- C** Bharti, Himadri
- D** Maitri, Dakshin Gangotri

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

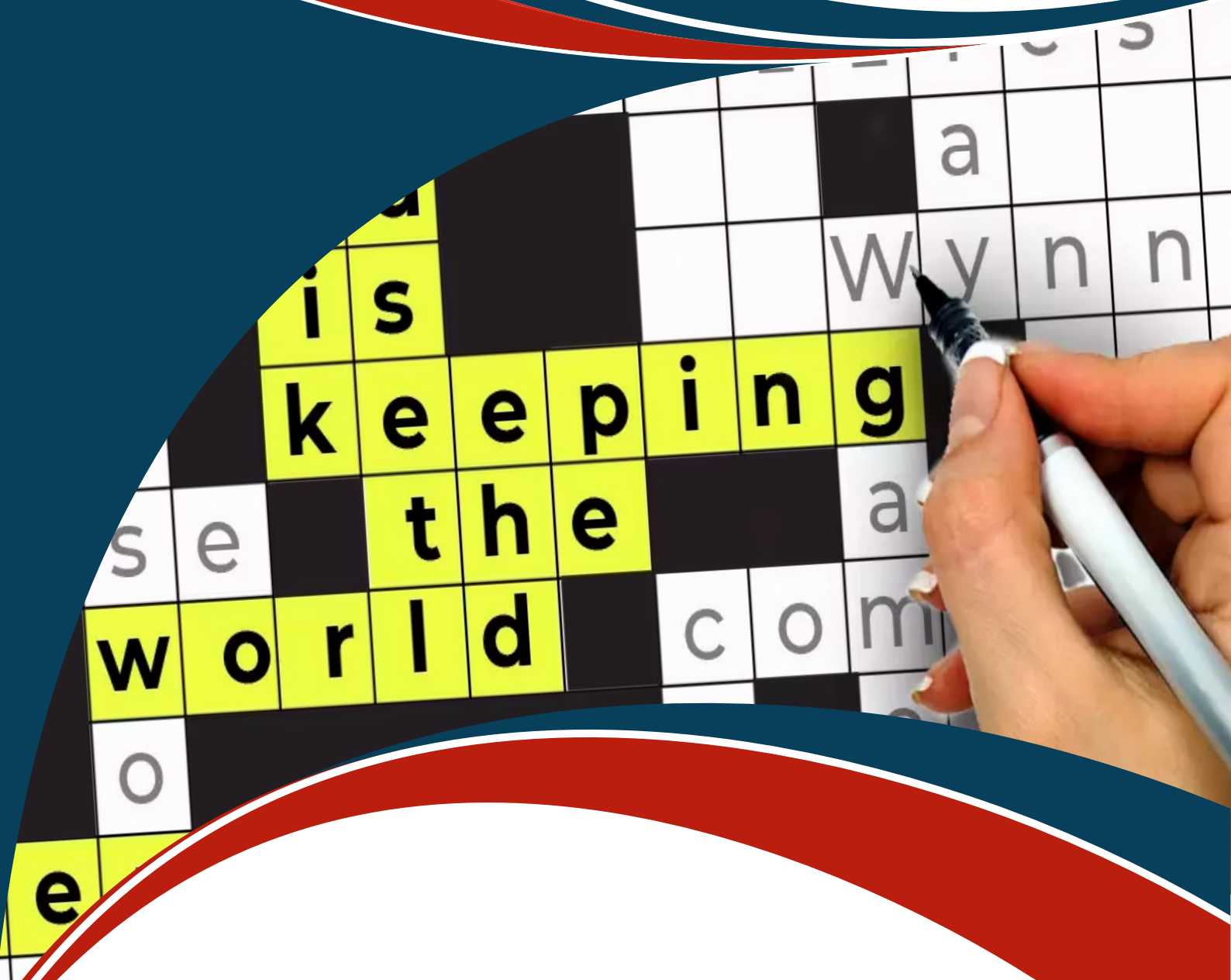
Answers

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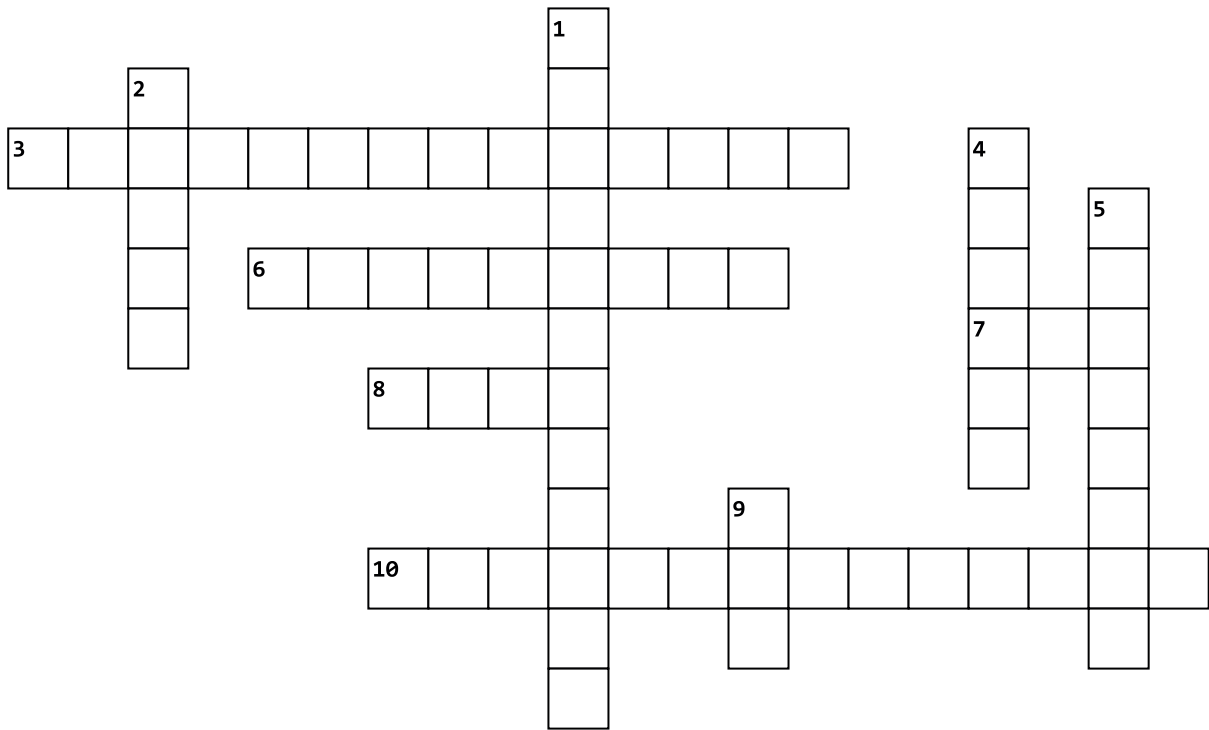
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CROSSWORD CORNER



CROSSWORD - 1



Across

3. Won International Booker Prize 2024 for Kairos
6. Place where 7th edition of Exercise SHAKTI held
7. Zimbabwe's new gold-backed currency
8. India's rank in the Travel & Tourism Development Index 2024
10. Recognised by UNESCO as part of its 'Memory of the World' register

Down

1. 4th highest international goal-scorers in football
2. Leads in internet shutdowns for the sixth year in a row
4. Host country of 2027 FIFA Women's World Cup
5. Japan built the world's first wooden satellite
9. Announced a 10-year Blue Residence Visa

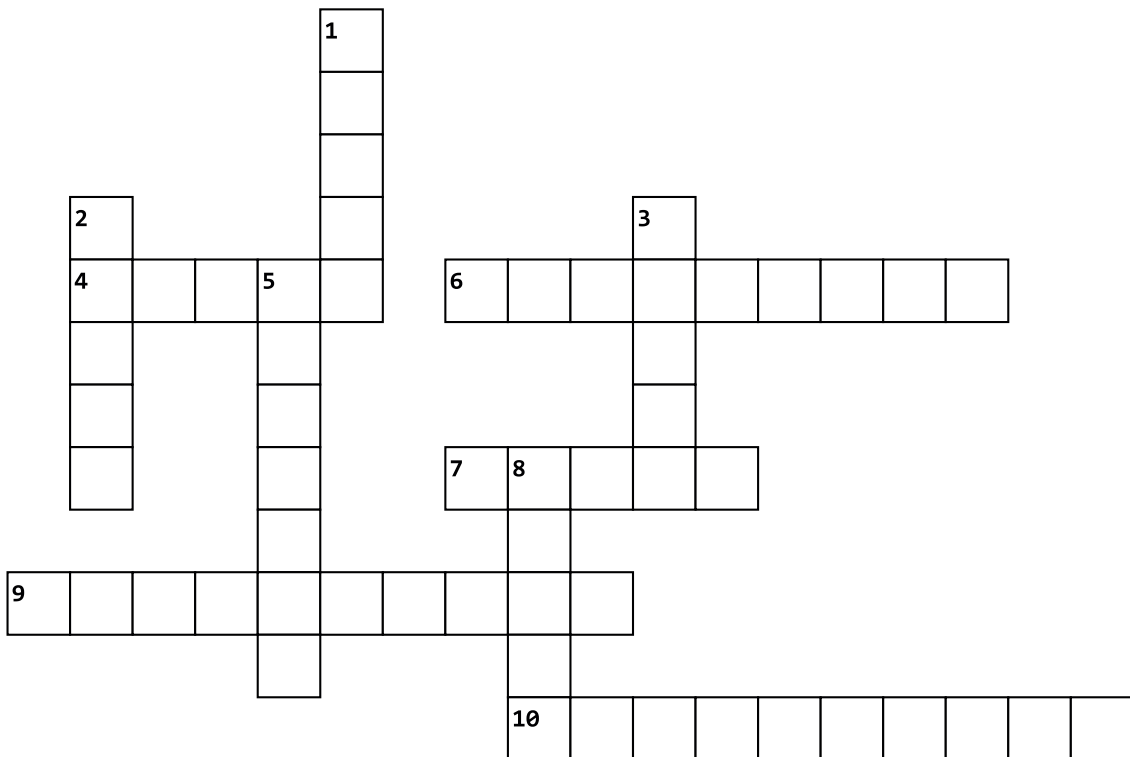
Answers

10	Sultana's Dream	5	Lignosat
9	UAE	4	Brazil
8	39th	3	Jenny Erpenbeck
7	ZIG	2	India
6	Meghalaya	1	Sunil Chhetri





CROSSWORD - 2



Across

4. World Menstrual Hygiene Day
6. World's first country to lose all its glaciers
7. 99th member of the International Solar Alliance
9. Won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2013
10. 2024 Shaw Prize in astronomy

Down

1. World Telecommunication and Information Society Day
2. International Day for Biological Diversity
3. Placed at 350th in the Oxford Economics Global Cities Index 2024
5. World's first 3D-printed rocket engine
8. Hosted inaugural Summit on Clean Cooking in Africa

Answers

10	SRKulkarni	5	Agnilet
9	AliceMunro	4	28May
8	Paris	3	Delhi
7	Spain	2	22May
6	Venezuela	1	17May

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