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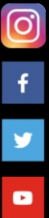
ISSUE - 39



SUPREME COURT UNVEILED

A NEW STATUE OF “LADY JUSTICE”

SPECIAL EDITION



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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 Supreme Court has unveiled a new ‘Lady Justice’ statue that is clothed in a sari, has shed the blindfold, holds scales in one hand and the Indian Constitution in the other. Delhi hosted a first-of-its-kind dialogue on the conservation, restoration and governance of common resources. Project Cheetah, which saw the introduction of the African sub-species of the wild cat in India, completed two years on September 17. Republican Donald Trump was elected as the 47th President of the United States after defeating Democrat Kamala Harris in the 2024 US Elections. All the Nobel Prize winners for 2024 have been announced from October 7 to 14. For more updates, keep reading.

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VAISHNAV BHATT

Our Top Achiever

AIR - 113th

CLAT 2024

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

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

Q. When did you think about doing law?

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

Q. When did you seriously start preparing for CLAT?

Ans. I started my preparation in March 2023.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Q. How to maintain mock scores?

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

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

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

Q. How many Mocks are sufficient for CLAT Preparation?

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

Q. What is your advice to CLAT Aspirants?

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

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QUICK BOOSTERS



SUPREME COURT UNVEILED A NEW STATUE OF "LADY JUSTICE"

WHY IN NEWS?

- The Supreme Court has unveiled a new statue of "Lady Justice", reimagining the image — typically a blindfolded woman holding a set of scales in one hand and a sword in the other — that is synonymous with legal practice around the world.

Key Changes

- The new, six-foot-tall statue in the judges' library is of a saree-clad woman with no blindfold, holding scales and, instead of the sword, a copy of the Constitution of India.
- The blindfold in the classic rendition has been popularly understood to represent the impartiality of justice, whereas the new statue with unimpeded vision is meant to signify that "Law is not blind; it sees everyone equally."
 - It conveys that the law is not blind and it 'sees' everyone equally.
 - More importantly our social diversity, the discrimination faced by underprivileged sections, constitutional provisions and laws made for their upliftment require a nuanced approach of 'viewing' every case appropriately and delivering justice.
- The saree replacing the Western attire brings the statue closer to Indian tradition.
- The sword being replaced with the Constitution symbolises the supremacy of the Constitution and its value in our jurisprudence.
- The preserving of the scales goes on to show that the courts will continue weighing evidence impartially and hearing both sides before delivering its final judgment.
- The new take on the statue, which has been designed by Vinod Goswami, a muralist who teaches at the College of Art in Delhi, comes in the wake of legal reforms such as the new criminal codes, and the stated aim of "decolonising" the legal framework in India.
- The new statue is an attempt at decoloniality, with an aim to shed colonial symbols.

Background

- It is believed that the origin of the modern-day 'lady justice' is Justitia, the goddess of Justice in Roman mythology.
- 'Lady Justice' is depicted with a blindfold, scales, and a sword.
- The blindfold was added during the Renaissance period (14th century) probably as a satire on the corrupt state of legal systems with judicial institutions turning a blind eye.
- It was only during the Enlightenment Period (17th-18th century) that it was reinterpreted as representing impartiality.
 - It signifies that justice should be administered without bias regardless of wealth, power and social status.
- The scales represent balance. It emphasises that courts must weigh both sides of an argument before delivering a judgment.
- The sword symbolises the power and authority of the law, signifying that the law can both protect and punish.

Lady Justice in India

- At the Calcutta High Court — first constructed in 1872 — images of Lady Justice were carved into the pillars supporting the building.
 - The depictions show Lady Justice blindfolded in some cases and with her eyes open in others.
- The Bombay High Court too, features a statue of Lady Justice at the top of one of its buildings, once again without a blindfold.
- The new statue at the Supreme Court is very similar to another piece of art featured on the premises.
 - A mural close to the judges' entrance shows Mahatma Gandhi and Lady Justice on either side of a chakra; Lady Justice in this depiction is wearing a saree, and holding scales and a book instead of a sword.





- In December 2016, a large statue of the goddess Themis was erected in the front plaza of Bangladesh's Supreme Court.
- The statue wore a sari and a blindfold, and held scales and a sword.
- The statue led to protests from the Muslim orthodoxy who objected to what they claimed was idol worship.
- In May 2017, the statue was removed to a location on the Supreme Court premises that was away from the public eye.
- In August 2024, after the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government, the statue was demolished.



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SC UPHELD THE VALIDITY OF THE UP MADRASA LAW

WHY IN NEWS?

- The Supreme Court (SC) recently upheld the constitutional validity of the Uttar Pradesh Board of Madarsa Education Act, 2004 (Madarsa Act), barring the provisions relating to higher education.
- In doing so, it overruled the Allahabad High Court's earlier ruling which struck down the entire Act for violating the principle of secularism.

Allahabad High Court had declared the Uttar Pradesh Board of Madarsa Education Act, 2004 "unconstitutional" on the ground that it violated "the principle of secularism" and fundamental rights guaranteed under Article 14 of the Constitution.

Key Highlights of the Judgement

- The SC upheld the constitutional validity of the Madarsa Act, except for its provisions allowing the Board to award higher degrees like Kamil (undergraduate studies) and Fazil (post-graduate studies).
- A three-judge Bench headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud opined that granting these degrees contravened the University Grants Commission (UGC) Act, 1956, rendering it unconstitutional.
- The court further opined that the State must strike a delicate balance between maintaining quality education and respecting the autonomy of minority education institutions.
- It underscored that the 2004 Act ought to be construed to be in consonance with Article 21A "to ensure that religious minority institutions impart secular education of a requisite standard without destroying the minority character".
 - However, the Chief Justice cautioned that in accordance with Article 28(3) of the Constitution, a student attending a minority institution recognised by the State or receiving aid out of public funds should not be compelled to take part in religious instruction or forced to attend religious worship.
- The unanimous verdict further noted that while madrasas offer religious instruction, their primary objective is to impart education thereby bringing them within the fold of Entry 25 of the Concurrent List.

The ruling may prompt the Centre to reconsider its substantial budget cuts for madrasa funding, which dropped from ₹10 crore in 2023-24 to ₹2 crore in 2024-25.

What in the Madarsa Act?

- The Madarsa Act provides a legal framework for these institutions in Uttar Pradesh (UP).
- The 2004 Act was enacted to regulate these madrasas with respect to curriculum, standard of education, conduct of examinations, and qualifications for teaching.
- It has established the Uttar Pradesh Board of Madarsa Education (the Board), which predominantly comprises members from the Muslim community.
 - Under Section 9 of the Act, the Board is responsible for preparing course material, granting degrees, and conducting examinations.
- The Act also gives power to the state government to create rules to regulate madrasa education.

What are Madrasas?

- The Arabic word "madrasah" denotes an educational institution.
- The earliest evidence of madrasas comes from Khorasan and Transoxania, corresponding to modern eastern and northern Iran, central Asia, and Afghanistan.
- The madrasa system has been in existence since the era of the Delhi Sultanate, receiving patronage from the Khilji and Tughlaq dynasties.
- Over time, it evolved into a distinct education system that provided both religious and secular learning.

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Categories

- There are two categories of madrasas in India —
 - i. Madrasa Darse Nizami, which is run as a public charity is not bound to follow the school education curriculum of the state.
 - ii. Madrasa Darse Aliya, which is affiliated to the state's madrasa education board (such as the Uttar Pradesh Board of Madrasa Education).
 - Some 1.69 lakh students sat for the UP madrasa education board examinations — equivalent to Class 10 and Class 12 — in 2023.
- Madrasa students study to be Maulvi (equivalent to Class 10), Alim (equivalent to Class 12), Kamil (Bachelor's degree), and Fazil (Master's).
- The medium of education in the charitable Madrasa Darse Nizami is Arabic, Urdu, and Persian.
- The Madrasa Darse Aliya use either textbooks published by the state textbook corporation or agency, or the curriculum and textbooks of the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT).
- Most madrasa boards in the country now follow the NCERT curriculum.

Funding

- The bulk of the funding for madrasas comes from the respective state governments.
- The central government has a 2009 Scheme for Providing Education to Madrasas/ Minorities (SPEMM), under which financial assistance is provided to madrasas and minority institutions across the country.
 - There are two sub-schemes under SPEMM — a Scheme for Providing Quality Education in Madrasas (SPQEM) and Infrastructure Development of Minority Institutes (IDMI).
- SPEMM was transferred from the Ministry of Minority Affairs to the Ministry of Education in April 2021.

DID YOU KNOW?

- As of 2018-19, there were 24,010 madrasas in India, 19,132 of which were recognised madrasas, and the remaining 4,878 were unrecognised.
- Recognised madrasas come under the state boards for madrasa education.
- The unrecognised ones follow the curriculum prescribed by the bigger seminaries such as the Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama (Lucknow) and Darul Uloom Deoband.
- As many as 60% of the country's madrasas were in Uttar Pradesh — 11,621 recognised, and 2,907 unrecognised madrasas.
- The second highest number of madrasas were in Rajasthan — 2,464 recognised, and 29 unrecognised madrasas.
- Several states and Union Territories, including Delhi, Assam, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana had no recognised madrasas.



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INDUS WATER TREATY

WHY IN NEWS?

- India has issued a notice to Pakistan seeking modification of the more than six-decade-old Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) that governs the sharing of waters of six rivers in the Indus system between the two countries.
- India said “fundamental and unforeseen” changes in the circumstances require a reassessment of the pact.

Key Points

- The notice was issued to Pakistan on August 30 under Article XII(3) of the Indus Water Treaty (IWT).
 - Article XII(3) says: The provisions of this Treaty may from time to time be modified by a duly ratified treaty concluded for that purpose between the two Governments.
- This is not the first time that India has issued such a notice to Pakistan.
 - In January 2023, New Delhi sought review of the IWT due to Islamabad's continued “intransigence” in implementing the treaty, by raising repeated objections to the construction of hydel projects on the Indian side.

History of the Dispute

- The notice appears to be a fallout of a longstanding dispute over two hydroelectric power projects that India is constructing – one on the Kishanganga river, a tributary of Jhelum, and the other on the Chenab.
- Pakistan has raised objections to these projects, and dispute resolution mechanisms under the Treaty have been invoked multiple times.
- In 2015, Pakistan asked that a Neutral Expert should be appointed to examine its technical objections to the Kishanganga and Ratle HEPs.
 - But the following year, Pakistan unilaterally retracted this request, and proposed that a Court of Arbitration should adjudicate on its objections.
- In August 2016, Pakistan had approached the World Bank, which had brokered the 1960 Treaty, seeking the constitution of a Court of Arbitration under the relevant dispute redressal provisions of the Treaty.
- India had argued that Pakistan's request for a Court of Arbitration violated the graded mechanism of dispute resolution in the Treaty.
- In March 2022, the World Bank decided to resume the process of appointing a Neutral Expert and a Chairman for the Court of Arbitration.
 - In October 2022, the Bank named Michel Lino as the Neutral Expert and Prof. Sean Murphy as Chairman of the Court of Arbitration.

What is the Dispute Redressal Mechanism under the Treaty?

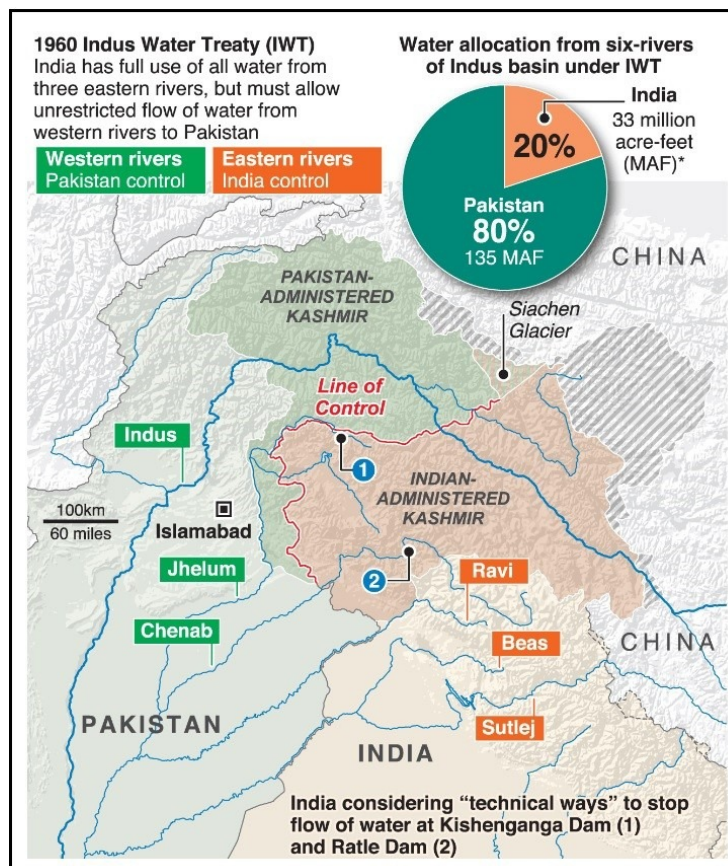
- The dispute redressal mechanism provided under Article IX of the IWT is a graded mechanism. It's a 3-level mechanism.
- So, whenever India plans to start a project, under the Indus Water Treaty, it has to inform Pakistan that it is planning to build a project.
 - Pakistan might oppose it and ask for more details.
 - That would mean there is a question — and in case there is a question, that question has to be clarified between the two sides at the level of the **Indus Commissioners**.
- If that difference is not resolved by them, then the level is raised.
 - The question then becomes a difference. That difference is to be resolved by another set mechanism, which is the **Neutral Expert**.
 - It is at this stage that the World Bank comes into the picture.
- In case the Neutral Expert says that they are not able to resolve the difference, or that the issue needs an interpretation of the Treaty, then that difference becomes a dispute.
 - It then goes to the third stage — the **Court of Arbitration**.
- To sum up, it's a very graded and sequential mechanism — **first the Commissioner, then the Neutral Expert, and only then the Court of Arbitration**.





What is the Indus Water Treaty?

- The treaty between India and Pakistan was signed on September 19, 1960, for the use of water available in the Indus and its tributaries.
 - The Indus river basin has six rivers- Indus, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas and Sutlej; originating from Tibet and flowing through the Himalayan ranges to enter Pakistan, ending in the south of Karachi.
- It was signed in Karachi by then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and then Pakistan President Mohammed Ayub Khan after nine years of negotiations arranged by the World Bank.
- The treaty allocated the three western rivers—Indus, Chenab and Jhelum—to Pakistan for unrestricted use, barring certain non-consumptive, agricultural and domestic uses by India and the three Eastern rivers—Ravi, Beas and Sutlej—were allocated to India for unrestricted usage.
 - This meant that 80% of the share of water or about 135 Million Acre Feet (MAF) went to Pakistan, leaving the rest 33 MAF or 20% of water for use by India.
- It also required both countries to establish a Permanent Indus Commission constituted by permanent commissioners on both sides.
 - The functions of the commission include serving as a forum for the exchange of information on the rivers, for continued cooperation and as a first stop for resolution of conflicts.
- While Pakistan has rights over the waters of Jhelum, Chenab and Indus, Annexure C of the IWT allows India certain agricultural uses, while Annexure D allows it to build 'run of the river' hydropower projects, meaning projects not requiring live storage of water.
 - It also provides certain design specifications which India has to follow while developing such projects.
- The treaty also allows Pakistan to raise objections over such projects being built by India, if it does not find them to be compliant with the specifications.
- India has to share information on the project design or alterations made to it with Pakistan, which is required to respond with objections, if any, within three months of receipt.
- Besides, India is allowed to have a minimum storage level on the western rivers – meaning it can store up to 3.75 MAF of water for conservation and flood storage purposes.



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CHINA'S CARBON MARKET

WHY IN NEWS?

- China is seeking public feedback on a plan to include cement, steel, and aluminium production in its carbon emissions trading scheme (ETS) by the end of the year, in a move it hopes will boost market liquidity.

What is China's Carbon Market?

- China's carbon market consists of a mandatory ETS and a voluntary greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction trading market, also known as the China Certified Emission Reduction (CCER) scheme, revamped earlier this year.
 - The ETS will eventually include eight major emitting sectors including power generation, steel, building materials, non-ferrous metals, petrochemicals, chemicals, paper and civil aviation, which together account for 75% of China's total emissions.
- The two schemes operate independently but are interconnected via a mechanism that allows firms to buy CCERs on the voluntary market to meet their compliance targets under the ETS.

What is the ETS?

- China's mandatory carbon market, the ETS, started trading in July 2021 on the Shanghai Environment and Energy Exchange.
- Under the scheme, firms are granted a quota of free certified emission allowances (CEAs).
- If actual emissions exceed a company's quota during a given compliance period, it must buy more allowances from the market to cover the gap. If its emissions are lower, it can sell its surplus CEAs.
- Allocations are decided not by absolute emission levels, but by industry carbon intensity benchmarks set by the government, which are reduced over time.
- Emitters are obliged to submit key parameters on a monthly basis and report emission data every year.
- Since its inception, it has become the world's largest emissions trading platform, covering about 5.1 billion tons of carbon dioxide equivalent, around 40% of China's total.
 - By the end of 2023, the trading volume on the national ETS had reached a cumulative total of 442 million tons, with a value of 24.92 billion yuan (\$3.50 billion), according to official data.
- The inclusion of three more sectors is expected to bring another 1,500 key emitters and 3 billion tons of emissions under the scope of the ETS, raising demand for credits and potentially pushing up prices.

What is CCER?

- Beijing relaunched its national voluntary GHG emission reduction trading market, known as the CCER, in January, allowing wider participation in the carbon market.
- The registration and issuance of CCERs was suspended in 2017 partly due to low trading volumes, although existing credits can still be traded.
- The addition of more sectors to the mandatory carbon market is expected to lift demand for CCERs, with key emitters allowed to use the voluntary market credits to offset 5% of their total emissions.





GOVERNANCE OF COMMONS

WHY IN NEWS?

- Delhi hosted a first-of-its-kind dialogue on the conservation, restoration and governance of common resources such as forests, community lands, and water bodies like lakes or rivers, all usually referred to just as Commons.

What are Commons?

- Commons is a term used to refer to resources that are not owned by any individual or group or the government, but belong to, and are shared by, the community as a whole.
 - Forests, local ponds, grazing lands, rivers, and sacred sites are all Commons. In the urban setting, parks and lakes are Commons.
- **Commons could be intangible too.**
 - Language, folk art or dance, local customs, and traditional knowledge are all shared resources and thus are Commons.
- At the international level, the polar regions, the Arctic and Antarctica, are considered **global Commons**.
 - No country is allowed to take ownership of these areas, even though everyone can use them for certain kinds of activities.
 - Outer space, the Moon, and other planetary bodies are also global Commons.
- In the digital age, most Internet and open-source software are Commons. Digital resources with Creative Commons licences are meant to be used freely by everyone.

Governance of Commons

- As these resources are accessible to all, they face a greater threat of over-exploitation and damage. Commons have also come under increased stress due to climate change.
 - Since no one owns Commons, the responsibility of maintenance and upkeep often becomes a problem.
- Different kinds of governance mechanisms have evolved to manage Commons depending on the context.
- There are international agreements, for instance, for the use and management of polar regions, outer space, and high seas.
 - The **Paris Agreement** on climate change, which seeks to maintain a liveable planet for everyone, is an example.
- In urban areas, municipalities or other structures of local governance take care of the Commons.
- At rural levels, however, the governance of Commons is often not very well-defined or is non-existent.
 - Local communities do get involved but in most cases, lack the resources or the legal sanction to manage these common spaces.

Need for Community Leadership

- In the past, it was believed that Commons such as grazing lands or water bodies at the local level could not escape over-exploitation or destruction as everyone using it would tend to extract the maximum for oneself.
 - This used to be referred to as the **Tragedy of the Commons**, a term popularised by ecological economist Garrett Hardin in the 1960s.
- The only viable solution was to either get the government or the market involved in managing and regulating the use of these common resources.
- This view was later turned on its head by the landmark research of **Elinor Ostrom**.
 - Her field studies with several local communities across the globe provided plenty of evidence to show that community-led governance structures resulted in more sustainable management of common spaces.
 - She also found that interventions of the government or the markets were not the only way to deal with the Commons.
- Ostrom's work, which fetched her a **Nobel Prize in Economics in 2009**, the first for a woman, culminated in a book titled *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*.





- In India, the 2006 Forest Rights Act (FRA) is considered a good template for managing common forest resources.
 - The Act gives individual and community ownership rights to forest-dwellers to live in and carry out their livelihood in the forest areas.
 - Till then, the forest department used to be the sole custodian of forest areas, though practices such as setting up joint forest management committees, with representation from the local villages, had begun acknowledging the role of indigenous peoples in the conservation and restoration of natural resources.
 - The FRA is considered a turning point as it recognised the legal rights of the forest dwellers over the land.
- FRA is a good model for forest land but similar frameworks need to be developed for other common resources, particularly areas that are officially classified as wasteland.
 - Nearly one-fourth of India's landmass, about 205 million acres, is estimated to be Commons, comprising community forests, pastures or water bodies.
 - Almost 350 million rural people depend on these Commons for their livelihoods.
 - These Commons are estimated to generate economic value worth about Rs 6.6 lakh crore annually, through the provision of goods and ecological services.
- Schemes like NREGA, compensatory afforestation, and the green credits would become much more effective at governing Commons once the rights of the locals are acknowledged.
- NGOs wanted the Centre to legislate a model Commons Bill which can be replicated or adopted by the state governments for more effective governance of the Commons.

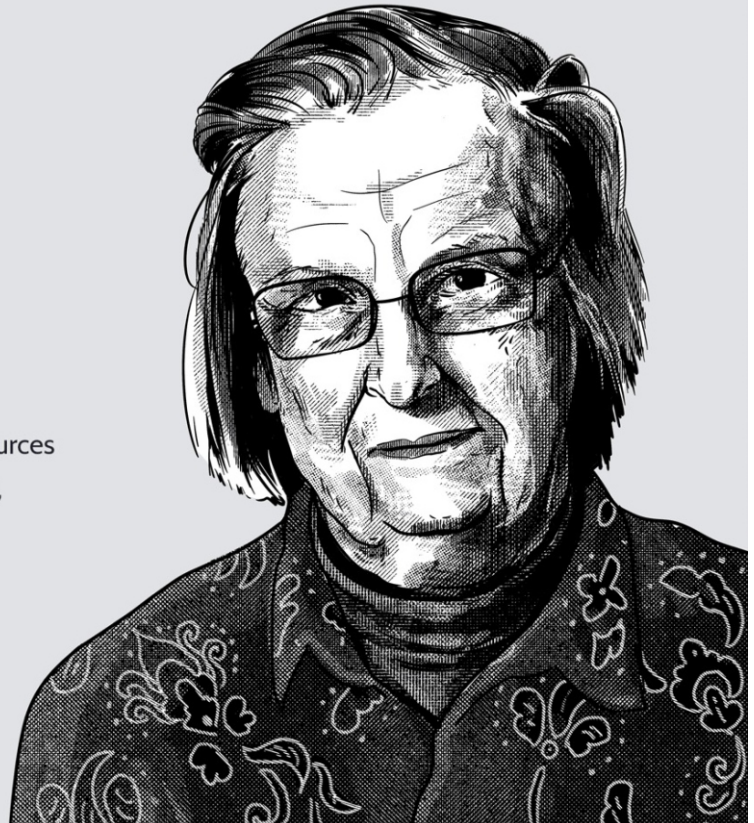
Elinor Ostrom

Born: August 7, 1933

Died: June 12, 2012

Political Economist

- First woman Nobel Prize recipient in Economic Sciences (2009)
- Demonstrated that common-pool resources can be effectively managed collectively, without government or private control





HARVEST FESTIVAL OF KARMA OR KARAM PARV

WHY IN NEWS?

- Tribal populations in Jharkhand, West Bengal, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Assam, and Odisha celebrated the harvest festival of Karma or Karam Parv.

Key Points

- At the heart of the Karma festival is the Karam tree — traditionally seen as a symbol of Karam Devta or Karamsani, the god of strength, youth, and vitality, and the object from which the festival takes its name.
- The festival is popular, especially among the Munda, Ho, Oraon, Baiga, Kharia, and Santhal peoples.
- It is traditionally celebrated on the Ekadashi tithi (eleventh day) of the lunar fortnight in the month of Bhado/ Bhadra, which corresponds to August-September in the Gregorian calendar.
- In 2024, the festival was celebrated on September 14-15.

The Sacred Karam Tree

- The Karam tree is the focus of the festival. The precise ways in which the tree is worshipped may differ slightly from region to region.
- About a week before the festival commences, young women bring clear sand from the river, in which they sow seven types of grains.
- On the day of the festival, a branch of the Karam tree is planted in the courtyard or 'akhra'.
- Devotees come with jawa (hibiscus) flowers, and the pahan (priest) worships the Karam Raja.
- The festival concludes with the immersion of the Karam branch in a river or pond, and the jawa is distributed among the devotees.
 - Towards the end of the Karam festival, branches from sal or bhelua trees are often planted in the fields with the hope that the Karam Raja/ Devta will protect their crops.

Culture and Farm Practices

- The origin of the festival can be traced to the beginning of agriculture by tribal communities.
- As the Oraon/ Kurukh community cleared the forest and started cultivating fields, they aligned their cultural practices with seasonal agricultural cycles.
 - They watered the fields in the autumn rains, and celebrated Karam, the festival of dhaan/ anaaj (grains).
- Along with the branch of a Karam tree, they also planted the stem of Chirchitti (chaff flower) and Sindwar (chaste tree) in their paddy fields, which acted as natural insecticides.



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SUPREME COURT'S LANDMARK RULING ON CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

WHY IN NEWS?

- On September 23, 2024, the Supreme Court delivered a landmark Judgement in Just Rights for Children Alliance v. S Harish, a case centred around the possession and viewing of 'child sexual exploitation and abuse material' (CSEAM).

The Madras High Court had previously quashed the criminal proceedings against the accused, holding that mere possession/ storage or viewing of pornographic material depicting children without any intention to transmit is not an offence under Section 67B of the Information Technology Act, 2000 (IT Act) and Section 15 of the Prevention of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 (POCSO Act).

Key Highlights of the Judgement

- The Supreme Court expanded the definition of “possession” in child pornography cases to include cases where the individual may not have physical possession of child pornographic material, but they have “the power to control the material in question and the knowledge of exercise of such control”.
- The court termed this “constructive possession” and held that “viewing, distributing or displaying” such material would still amount to it being in the accused's “possession” under Section 15.
- The penalty for not reporting is a fine “not less than five thousand rupees and in the event of second or subsequent offence, with fine which shall not be less than ten thousand rupees.”
- The court also held that the offence under Section 15 will apply even if the accused does not have physical possession of child pornography at the time when the FIR is filed.
 - Charges can be made if it is established that the accused possessed child pornographic material “at any point”.
- The court said that if a person “immediately after storing and watching child pornography in his mobile phone deletes the same before an FIR could be registered” could still be found liable under Section 15.
- The Bench expanded the interpretation of Section 15 of the POCSO Act, which deals with the “Punishment for storage of pornographic material involving a child”.

- Originally, the provision was restricted to cases where a person stored child pornographic material “for commercial purposes”.
- In 2019, the POCSO Act was amended to introduce three connected offences under Sections 15(1), (2) and (3) with increasing grades of punishment — from fines to a three to five year jail sentence.
- These punish
 - Any person, who stores or possesses pornographic material in any form involving a child, but fails to delete or destroy or report the same to the designated authority, as may be prescribed, with an intention to share or transmit child pornography;
 - Any person, who stores or possesses pornographic material in any form involving a child for transmitting or propagating or displaying or distributing in any manner at any time except for the purpose of reporting, as may be prescribed, or for use as evidence in court; and
 - Any person, who stores or possesses pornographic material in any form involving a child for commercial purpose.





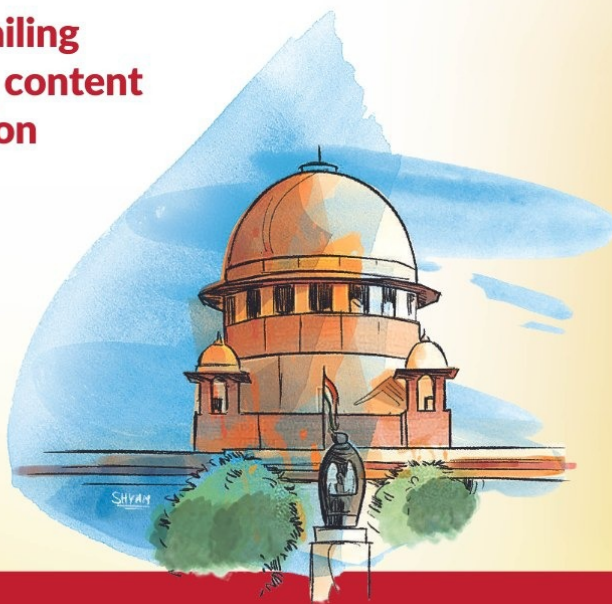
- The court's verdict, authored by Justice Pardiwala, refers to these as “inchoate” offences — offences that are in anticipation or preparation for committing a further criminal act.
- The court said that Section 15 was not limited to punishing the sharing or transmitting of child pornographic material, and could even be used to punish the “intent” to commit such an act.
- The court held that the intention of an accused can be determined based on the “manner in which such material is stored or possessed and the circumstances in which the same was not deleted, destroyed or reported”.
 - From these actions and circumstances, the court will determine the mens rea or the intention of the accused.
- The court also cautioned the police and courts from limiting their inquiry to one of the sub-sections under Section 15.
 - Even if an offence under one sub-section is not made out, the court held that the police and courts must not “jump to the conclusion” that there is no offence at all.
 - Instead, the police must see if an offence has been out in one of the other sub-sections.



Supreme Court has ruled that **viewing child pornography online, even without downloading it, is considered "possession"** under Section 15 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

Section 15 addresses the crime of storing or possessing such material with the intent to share it.

SC also clarified that **failing to delete or report the content can indicate an intention to transmit it.**



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TWO YEARS OF PROJECT CHEETAH

WHY IN NEWS?

- Project Cheetah, which saw the introduction of the African sub-species of the wild cat in India, completed two years on September 17.

What is Project Cheetah?

- Project Cheetah began with the intercontinental translocation of African cheetahs from Namibia and South Africa to the Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh in February 2023.
 - This translocation took place in two batches of 8 and then 12 cheetahs.

The ambitious project has two overarching objectives.

- First, to establish a stable, breeding population of cheetahs in central India.
- Two, to use cheetahs as an umbrella species to restore open natural ecosystems such as scrubs, savannahs, grasslands, and degraded forests.

- These cheetahs were initially kept in soft-release bomas, small enclosures inside the national park to get them adapted to the local environment.
- Mating within the translocated cohort of cheetahs led to the birth of 17 cubs.
- Of the 20 translocated cheetahs, eight (40 per cent) have died due to a variety of reasons, from attacks during mating to septicaemia caused by tick infestation under the cheetahs' radio collars.
- Of the 17 cubs, five (29 per cent) have also perished. As of today, 24 cheetahs (12 adults and cubs each) survive.
- The next batch of 6-8 African cheetahs will be translocated to the Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary, also in Madhya Pradesh.
- Cheetahs for the conservation breeding centre being built in Gujarat's Banni grasslands will also be brought from Kenya.

Review of Project Cheetah

- The project has seen marginal successes, mainly on two fronts.
 - First, with respect to the successful breeding of the African cheetahs in a new climate and ecology, and the survival of 12 out of the 17 cubs born.
 - Second, Pawan and Veera, who were released into the wild in December 2023 spent a considerable amount of time in a free range, and travelled to far-off distances north of Kuno, even entering Rajasthan.
- However, the project faced a significant setback in August 2024 when Pawan was found dead ostensibly due to drowning (the autopsy report has not yet been made public).
 - After this incident, all 24 surviving cheetahs have been put in enclosures.
 - This has raised questions about the spotted felines' capabilities to establish their own habitat in the wild.
- Barring the late Pawan and Veera, who is now in an enclosure, all the other cheetahs have been in enclosures for over a year now.
- This is contrary to the government's own Cheetah Action Plan which had said that cheetahs will be released in the wild after a 4-5 week quarantine period, followed by a 1-2 month acclimatisation period.





BOMBAY HIGH COURT AND CENTRE'S PROPOSED 'FACT-CHECKING' UNIT

WHY IN NEWS?

- On September 20, the Bombay High Court struck down as “unconstitutional” and “vague” the amended Information Technology (IT) Rules, 2021, which empowered the Centre to establish a “Fact Check Unit” (FCU) to identify “fake or false or misleading” online content about the government and its establishments.

Key Highlights

- Justice Patel opined that the amended rules promoted censorship and did not fall within the ambit of reasonable restrictions permitted under Article 19(2) of the Constitution.
 - He underscored that the absence of procedural safeguards or guidelines effectively made the Union government a “judge in its own cause”.
- In contrast, Justice Gokhale reasoned that the government is best positioned to provide accurate information about itself and that the rules were intended solely to combat misinformation, without restricting legitimate criticism or political satire.
- Following the split verdict, the Chief Justice of the High Court appointed Justice Chandurkar to hear the matter afresh and deliver a tie-breaking ruling, in accordance with the High Court rules.
 - Endorsing Justice Patel's view, Justice Chandurkar observed that the amended rules suffer from manifest arbitrariness and sought to impose restrictions on freedom of speech and expression beyond those defined under Article 19(2) of the Constitution.
 - Highlighting that there was no clarity on how the FCU would identify any information to be patently false or misleading, the judge asserted that the “exercise would result in an unilateral determination by the executive itself”.
 - Justice Chandurkar also refused to accept the Centre's claim that the ambit of the 2023 Rules would exclude political comments, debates and satire by reasoning that “any assurance from one Government even if carried out faithfully would not bind a succeeding Government.”
 - Justice Chandurkar observed that the mere ability of an aggrieved person to challenge FCU decisions in a constitutional court could not be regarded as an adequate safeguard.
 - He accordingly concluded that amended rules were liable to be struck down, as they created a “chilling effect” on intermediaries by jeopardising their safe harbour protection.

About the Law

- In April 2022, the Ministry of Electronics and IT (MEiTY) introduced the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Amendment Rules, 2023 (2023 Rules), amending the 2021 IT Rules.
 - This amendment vested the Union government with the authority to establish a fact-checking body empowered to classify any information “pertaining to the business of the Central government” as “fake, false, or misleading”.
- The amended Rule 3(1)(b)(v) specifically required social media intermediaries to make “reasonable efforts” to prevent users from uploading or transmitting any content flagged by the Centre's FCU as misinformation.
- Such flagged content would have to be taken down within 36 hours if the intermediaries wanted to retain their “safe harbour” protection — a form of legal immunity against any third-party content hosted by them.
- On March 20, 2024, the Centre notified the FCU under the Press Information Bureau (PIB).
 - However, the very next day, the Supreme Court stayed the operation of the notification until Justice Chandurkar took a final call on the validity of the amended rules.
- The Union government is likely to appeal the decision before the Supreme Court especially since the 2021 IT Rules are currently under challenge before the Delhi High Court and the Madras High Court.
- The ruling will also impact the legitimacy of similar fact-checking units established in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.

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LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY IS ALLOWED TO OPEN JOINT BANK ACCOUNTS

WHY IN NEWS?

- A recent Finance Ministry advisory, along with a Reserve Bank of India (RBI) circular, made it clear to all commercial banks that people from the LGBTQIA+ community and those in queer relationships cannot be prevented from opening joint bank accounts and nominating their queer partners as their beneficiaries.
- The advisory concerning the LGBTQ community was prompted by the Supreme Court order passed on October 17, 2023, in the case of Supriyo@Supriya Chakraborty and another vs Union of India.

Key Points

- LGBTQIA+ individuals are allowed to open joint bank accounts with their partners.
- Partners in queer relationships can be nominated as beneficiaries in joint accounts and other financial instruments.
- Banks must ensure that their policies do not discriminate against individuals based on sexual orientation or gender identity.
- The circular reinforces that the rights of LGBTQIA+ individuals to access financial services should be protected, aligning with broader legal and human rights frameworks.

Note: The RBI, in 2015, directed banks to include a separate column 'third gender' in all their forms and applications to help transgender persons open bank accounts and avail of related services.

Other Initiatives

- After the Supreme Court ruling on October 17, 2023, the Centre constituted a six-member committee in April 2024, chaired by the Cabinet Secretary, to examine the various issues relating to the LGBTQ+ community.
 - This six-member panel includes the Secretaries to the Ministries of Home Affairs, Social Justice and Empowerment, Law and Justice, Women and Child Development, and Health and Family Development.
 - The panel is tasked with addressing issues such as ration cards, medical decisions, jail visitation rights, succession rights, and other legal benefits.
- In its October 2023 judgment, the Supreme Court refused to recognise same-sex marriage, saying that judicial review must steer clear of matters that fall in the legislative domain.
 - However, it also noted that the Constitution protects the freedom of all persons including queer couples to enter into a union, adding that “the failure of the State to recognise the bouquet of entitlements which flow from a union would result in a disparate impact on queer couples who cannot marry under the current legal regime”.



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MISSION MAUSAM

WHY IN NEWS?

- Recently, the Cabinet cleared a Rs 2,000 crore programme called “Mission Mausam” to upgrade infrastructure used to make atmospheric observations.

Key Points

- The mission's focus is on accuracy, modelling, radars, satellites, and accurate agromet forecasts.
- Critical elements of the mission include—
 - deploying 'next-generation radars' and satellite systems with advanced sensors and high-performance supercomputers,
 - developing improved earth-system models, and
 - a GIS-based automated Decision Support System for real-time data dissemination.
- The mission will also involve a major upgrade of instruments used by the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the National Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasting, and the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology.
- The nodal agency involved in executing the mission is the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) through three key institutions - India Meteorological Department (IMD), the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, and the National Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasting.
- The mission will be supported by other MoES bodies – Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services, the National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research and the National Institute of Ocean Technology.
- In the first tranche of the mission until 2026, the MoES hopes to procure and install up to 60 weather radars, 15 wind profilers, and 15 radiosondes.
 - These instruments give regular updates on the changing parameters of wind speeds, atmospheric pressure, humidity, and temperature at various elevations of the atmosphere.

Dynamical Models

- Since 2004, meteorologists and climate scientists have been working on a different approach to forecasting that relies on high-performance computing machines, or supercomputers.
- They sought to simulate the weather on a particular day and, via physics equations, make a map of how each day's weather would pan out over the next few days, weeks, and even months.
- These weather models, called dynamical models, are now the standard approach to weather forecasts and climate studies.
- This can give more accurate 'medium range' forecasts and often this is what consumers of weather information find useful.
- The Monsoon Mission eventually succeeded in developing a general-purpose dynamical model that can be tweaked to generate forecasts on multiple timescales — from daily forecasts to seasonal monsoon predictions.
- Beyond the monsoon, such a model could be customised for heatwaves, cold waves, and local forecasts.



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BRAZIL'S SUPREME COURT SUSPEND X

WHY IN NEWS?

- Brazil's Supreme Court on August 30 ordered the “immediate, complete and total suspension of X's operations” in the country.
 - Justice Alexandre de Moraes took the decision after X failed to appoint a legal representative in Brazil within the stipulated time.
 - Mr. Moraes also ordered that anyone found accessing X using a VPN (Virtual Private Network) would have to pay a fine of 50,000 reals per day.

Background of the Case

- For nearly two years, Mr. Moraes has been probing what he calls “digital militias” — far-right groups and backers of Brazil's erstwhile President Jair Bolsonaro.
- When Bolsonaro lost the 2022 elections, these groups used X and other platforms to cast doubt on the integrity of the elections and incite violence, leading to the January 8, 2023 riots in the capital Brasilia when Bolsonaro's supporters attacked federal buildings, including the Supreme Court, with the aim of triggering a military coup.
 - The Court viewed this as a direct attack on Brazilian democracy and asked Justice Moraes to investigate it.
- As his probe progressed, Justice Moraes ordered X to suspend scores of accounts for spreading disinformation and hand over information about them, including IP addresses, to aid in prosecution.
- Elon Musk, the billionaire owner of X, refused to comply with Justice Moraes's demands and even said that accounts suspended earlier would be reactivated.
 - However, on August 17, Musk announced on X that rather than comply with the judicial orders, he had decided to close our operation in Brazil, effective immediately.
- In the face of X's continued defiance, and as the fines remained unpaid, Justice Moraes gave an ultimatum of 24 hours for X to appoint a legal representative — a requirement for any company operating in Brazil.
 - X ignored this demand, and once the deadline passed, Justice Moraes ordered the suspension of X until all court orders are complied.
- Clearing the air on whether the ban was an individualistic act of one radical judge, five justices of the Supreme Court have voted to endorse the ban.

Implications

- The refusal by X, a foreign company in Brazil, to obey local laws have raised important questions about regulatory sovereignty, the right mechanisms for curbing disinformation, free speech rights versus censorship, and cross-border internet governance.
- It has also flagged how social media can be weaponised for political purposes — with earlier Facebook in the U.S., and now X in Brazil coming under investigations for promoting incendiary far-right disinformation.

- Starlink, another Musk-owned company that provides satellite internet service in large parts of Brazil, initially refused to block X, but caved in subsequently after the Supreme Court ordered its bank accounts to be frozen.
- As for ordinary Brazilians, a great number of them migrated to Bluesky, which claimed that it had gained 2.6 million new users within five days of X going offline.





ASSET DECLARATION OF JUDGES

WHY IN NEWS?

- A Right to Information reply showed that details of assets of only 13% of the total High Court judges are available in the public domain.

Key Points

- Of the 749 judges currently shown as posted in the 25 High Courts across the country, the assets of only 98 (13% of the total number) are available in the public domain through declarations posted on the official websites of these institutions.
 - These declarations list the movable and immovable assets of the judges, their spouses, and dependents, and include details of property ownership and investment in shares, mutual funds, fixed deposits, bonds and insurance policies, and liabilities such as bank loans.
- Of these, three High Courts constitute over 80 per cent of the asset declarations, the Kerala High Court (37 out of 39 judges); the Punjab and Haryana High Court (31 of 55 judges); and the Delhi High Court (11 of 39 judges).
- The Supreme Court released the names of 27 of its 33 judges who had declared their assets to the Chief Justice of India, but asset details were not disclosed.

Key Provisions Related to the Declaration of Assets of Judges

- Rule 16(1) of the All India Services (Conduct) Rules, 1968 mandates that every person who is a member of the service must submit a return of their assets and liabilities which should apply to judges too.
- On May 7, 1997, the Supreme Court adopted a resolution at a meeting chaired by the then Chief Justice of India, Justice J S Verma, which stated: "Every judge should make a declaration of all assets in the form of real estate or investment held in their names, in the name of their spouses or any other person dependent on them, to the Chief Justice."
- On September 8, 2009, the full bench of the Supreme Court resolved to declare the judges' assets on its official website on or before October 31, 2009, adding that it was "purely on a voluntary basis".
- On August 28, 2009, a resolution passed by the full court of Delhi High Court stated: "All the judges are agreeable to make their assets public."
- Constitutional authorities such as the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) and Council of Ministers, are already declaring their assets and making them publicly available. This sets a precedent for judges to also disclose their assets regularly and publicly.
- The Parliamentary Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, and Law and Justice recommended legislation for the mandatory disclosure of assets and liabilities of judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts.
- A bill titled "The Judicial Standards and Accountability Bill, 2010" was prepared to address the need for judicial transparency, including mandatory asset declarations by judges.
 - The bill, however, lapsed following the dissolution of the 15th Lok Sabha and was never reintroduced.

Key Provisions Related to the Declaration of Assets of Judges

- Allahabad High Court, which is the country's largest currently with 84 judges, and the Bombay High Court said they were not covered under the definition of "information" under the RTI Act.
- The Gujarat High Court stated that it "does not find any larger public interest for disclosure" of the "personal information".
- The Andhra Pradesh High Court and Telangana High Court responded that "as the declaration of Assets is confidential, the said information cannot be furnished".
- The Gauhati High Court stated, "As per the resolution of the Hon'ble Supreme Court it's not mandatory to reflect the declaration of assets & liabilities of Hon'ble Judges in the official website of the High Court."
- The Uttarakhand High Court provided a copy of a resolution it passed on March 6, 2012, which stated that it "strongly objects to bring disclosure of assets by Judges under the purview of Right to Information Act. The Court is not averse to disclosure of assets by judges in the Court website."

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ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY MINORITY STATUS CASE

WHY IN NEWS?

- A seven-judge Constitution bench of the Supreme Court (SC) delivered a split verdict (4:3) to nullify a significant 1967 ruling concerning the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), which had previously stripped its minority designation.
 - The final determination regarding the reinstatement of minority status has been delegated to a standard three-judge bench which is yet to be formed.
 - However, the ruling essentially cleared the decks for AMU to secure its minority institution status.

Background of the Case

- In 1877, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, a Muslim reformer, founded the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College (MAO College) at Aligarh to address Muslim educational backwardness while protecting Islamic values.
- The Aligarh Muslim University Act, 1920 (AMU Act) was passed to incorporate the MAO College and the Muslim University Association into AMU.
- In 1951, the AMU Act was amended, removing compulsory religious education for Muslims and the exclusive Muslim representation mandate in the University Court.
- The Act was further amended in 1965, and the powers of the Court were redistributed among other bodies including the executive, with the President of India nominating members to the governing body.
- The legal dispute began in 1967 when the SC in *S. Azeez Basha versus Union of India (UOI)*, reviewed the 1951 and 1965 amendments.
 - In this case, a five-judge SC bench upheld the amendments and ruled that AMU was neither established nor administered by the Muslim minority — it came into existence through an Act of the central legislature — and did not, therefore, qualify as a minority institution under Article 30 of the Constitution.
- In 1981, the government amended the AMU Act, 1920, to say that the institution was established by the Muslim community to promote the cultural and educational advancement of Muslims in India.
- In 2005, AMU provided 50% reservation for Muslims in postgraduate medical programs.
- In 2006, the Allahabad HC struck down both the university order and the 1981 amendment on the ground that AMU was not a minority institution as per *Azeez Basha*.
- This judgment was challenged at the SC, and in 2019 the matter was referred to a seven-judge Bench.

Key Highlights of the Verdict

- The majority opinion said that the regulation of minority educational institutions is permissible under Article 19(6), however, those regulations should not impinge upon the minority character of the institution.
- Regulations, which may be justified on grounds stipulated under Articles 19(6) and 26, may fall foul to Article 30 if they infringe upon the minority character of the institution.
 - This is a special right/protection that the Constitution guarantees to minority educational institutions.
- The court further said, “An educational institution established by any citizen can be regulated under Article 19(6).
 - An educational institution established by a religious denomination without any element of profit can be regulated on grounds of public order, morality and health.
 - As opposed to these two provisions, Article 30 does not circumscribe the right on any grounds. However, the right guaranteed under Article 30 is not absolute.”
- Meanwhile, Justice Surya Kant said the five-judge bench of the top court in the *Aziz Basha* case had correctly decided that AMU was not a minority institution, which has attained finality, and that there is no need to reopen the inquiry into the character of AMU.



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What Constitutes 'Minority Character'?

- Article 30(1) in Part III of the Constitution empowers all religious and linguistic minorities with a fundamental right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.
 - Clause 2 ensures that the State maintains 'equality of treatment' in granting aid to all educational institutions, irrespective of their minority status.
 - This includes educational institutions at all levels, from primary schools to professional education.
- Under Article 15(5), minority educational institutions (MEIs) are exempt from providing reservations for SCs, STs, and OBCs in both admissions and employment.
- Minority status also allows educational institutions to exercise greater control over their day-to-day administration — from student admissions (they can reserve up to 50% seats for minority students) to the hiring of teaching and non-teaching staff.
- In the T.M.A Pai Foundation (2002) case, the SC clarified that a 'minority' is to be determined by the concerned State's demography, not the national population.

DID YOU KNOW?

- In the government's National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) rankings, AMU has remained in the top 20 in the universities category.
 - It stood at rank 8 in 2024 — its best performance since the rankings were instituted in 2016.
 - In overall rankings as well, AMU's best ranking was in 2024 at number 16.
- In the QS World University Rankings 2025, AMU was in the 1001-1200 rank.
 - In comparison, Delhi University was at a rank of 328, while Jamia Millia Islamia stood at a rank of 851-900.



Students at AMU's main gate on Friday morning. *Abhinav Saha*

KEY DATES IN AMU'S HISTORY, LEGAL CASE

1877: Syed Ahmad Khan establishes Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental (MAO) College for uplifting Muslims.

1920: The MAO College becomes AMU after the AMU Act is enacted.

1950: Parliament declares AMU an institution of national importance.

1951: AMU Act is amended, allowing non-Muslims to be members of the AMU Court, its supreme governing body at the time.

1965: Another amendment expands powers of AMU's Executive Council; University Court is no longer the supreme governing body.

1967: SC rules on challenge to the amendments; says AMU cannot be classified as a minority institution (*Azeez Basha* case).

1981: Indira Gandhi's government amends the AMU Act, declaring AMU was established for the educational, cultural advancement of Muslims.

2005: AMU introduces 50% reservation for Muslim students in postgraduate medical courses.

2006: Allahabad HC quashes the policy and the 1981 amendment. The UPA government and AMU move SC against the verdict.

2016: The central government withdraws from the appeal, saying the UPA government's stand was "against the public policy of reservation for SCs/STs/OBCs/EWSs as applicable to central universities".

2019: Three-judge SC Bench refers the issue to a seven-judge Bench.





SUPREME COURT'S VERDICT ON PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS

WHY IN NEWS?

- In an 8:1 majority ruling in the matter of the Property Owners Association & Ors. v. State of Maharashtra & Ors about private property rights, a nine-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court held that not all private property can be deemed “material resource of the community” under Article 39(b) of the Constitution for acquisition and redistribution by the government.

Chief Justice of India (CJI) D.Y. Chandrachud authored the lead majority opinion for himself, and Justices Hrishikesh Roy, J.B. Pardiwala, Manoj Misra, Rajesh Bindal, Satish Chandra Sharma and Augustine George Masih. Justice B.V. Nagarathna partially concurred with it while Justice Sudhanshu Dhulia dissented.

Key Highlights of the Judgement

- The majority opinion underscored that not all private property would fall within the ambit of Article 39(b) for government acquisition to serve the “common good”.
- Notably, the majority rejected Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer's interpretation in State of Karnataka v. Shri Ranganatha Reddy (1977), which held that “material resources of the community” under Article 39(b) encompassed both public and private resources.

- Part IV of the Constitution, which outlines the “Directive Principles of State Policy” (DPSP), includes Article 39(b), which mandates the State to adopt policies ensuring that “the ownership and control of the material resources of the community are so distributed as best to subserve the common good.”
- DPSP are meant to be guiding principles for the enactment of laws, but are not directly enforceable in any court of law.

- The judges asserted that these rulings reflected a “particular economic ideology” premised on the notion that prioritising state acquisition of private property would best serve the nation's interests.
- The Chief Justice further clarified that assessment of whether a privately owned resource holds communal significance must be done on a “case-by-case basis.”
- Addressing the question of whether laws enacted to implement Article 39(b) are shielded by Article 31C from constitutional challenges, the judges affirmed that such immunity does exist.

- In 1971, in a bid to insulate Emergency-era economic policies from judicial review, the Parliament introduced a new provision — Article 31C through the 25th Amendment.
- The provision outlined that any law giving effect to clauses (b) and (c) of Article 39 — which respectively urged the state to frame laws to secure the material resources of the community and to establish an economic system that prevents the concentration of wealth — could not be deemed void on grounds that they contravened Articles 14 (right to equality) and 19 (freedom of speech and expression).
- Additionally, it barred courts from assessing whether a law genuinely advanced the objectives outlined in Articles 39(b) and (c).

- They further clarified that the unamended Article 31C, to the extent held valid in Kesavananda Bharati, remains operative.
- However, the Chief Justice cautioned that any acquisition of private property for public use must adhere to constitutional guarantees, including Articles 14 and 300A (right to property).

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US ELECTIONS 2024

WHY IN NEWS?

- Republican Donald Trump was elected as the 47th President of the United States after defeating Democrat Kamala Harris in the 2024 US Elections.

Key Points

- Donald Trump will assume office in January 2025 for a 4-year term for the second time.
- James David Vance of the Republican party will be the new Vice-President of the US.
- The symbol of the Republican party is an elephant, and the party's colour is red.
- Trump served his first term as US president from 2016 to 2020 after defeating Democratic rival Hillary Clinton.

- A person can be elected President of the United States for two 4-year terms.
- Franklin Roosevelt was the only American president to be elected four times from 1933 to 1945

How do the US Elections Differ from Indian Elections?

1. In India, citizens directly vote for Members of Parliament (MPs), and the party with the majority in the Lok Sabha selects the Prime Minister.
 - In the US, the process to choose a President involves the Electoral College.
 - American citizens don't vote directly for a President. Instead, they choose electors—representatives who cast the actual vote for the President.
 - There are 538 electors, and to win, a candidate needs at least 270 votes from these electors.
2. In the US, when citizens vote, they're essentially voting for electors pledged to their candidate, not the candidate directly.
 - In most states, the candidate who wins the majority in that state gets all of that state's electoral votes. This means a candidate can win the presidency without winning the national popular vote.
 - Compare this to India's first-past-the-post system, where each constituency elects an MP directly, and the party with the majority of MPs takes control of the government.
 - This way, power directly reflects the people's vote in India.
3. After the electors are chosen in the US, they meet 41 days later in December to formally cast the official votes, which Congress counts in January to declare the next president.
 - In India, however, the Election Commission announces the results right after the count.
 - The President then invites the majority party or coalition leader to become the Prime Minister.
 - This makes India's transition of power more direct, while the US relies on the Electoral College to make the final decision.

- Since the mid-nineteenth century, the US has had its Election Day on the first Tuesday after the first Monday of November — a choice dictated by the nature of the US economy, the Christian faith of most of its citizens, and criticisms of the previous system.
- This was to prevent Election Day from falling on November 1, when Christians observed All Saints' Day and merchants typically settled their books from the previous month.
- November was chosen as the month of voting because it did not coincide with the busy spring planting season or the autumn harvest. And the harsh winter was a month or more away.



DID YOU KNOW?

- Swing states, also known as battleground states, are states that could “swing” to either Democratic or Republican candidates depending on the election.
 - In 2024, there were seven swing states were there. These are Pennsylvania (19 Electoral College votes), Georgia and North Carolina (16 each), Michigan (15), Arizona (11), Wisconsin (10), and Nevada (6).
- The donkey and elephant, representing Democrats and Republicans, owe their iconic status to 19th-century cartoonist Thomas Nast.
 - His satirical work transformed these animals into symbols of these two parties.
- California, with 54 electors, has the largest allocation in the Electoral College.
- Six states — Alaska, Delaware, North Dakota, South Dakota, Vermont, and Wyoming — and the District of Columbia are allocated three electors each, the smallest delegations in the college.

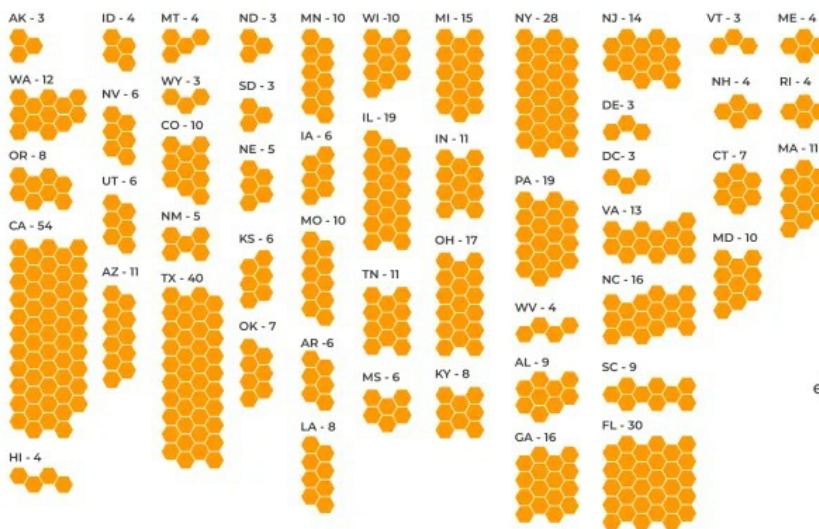
UNITED STATES ELECTIONS 2024

What is the Electoral College?



Americans choose a president and vice president indirectly by voting for electors, who represent them in the Electoral College. Electors directly elect the US president and vice president in mid-December. The winning candidate needs a majority of electoral votes, 270, to win.

Cartogram represents total electoral votes for each state



Each state has a number of electors equal to the number of seats it has in the House of Representatives and Senate

535

electors for 50 US states

3

electors for capital, District of Columbia

538

TOTAL NUMBER OF ELECTORS WHO WILL VOTE FOR THE PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT

HOW ELECTORS VOTE

In 48 states, there is a "winner takes all" system in which the presidential and vice presidential candidates who get the most popular votes win every elector's vote in that state



Nebraska and Maine use a different method in which the overall popular-vote winner gets two electoral votes with the rest allocated to the winner of each congressional district



Source: Statista | October 28, 2024



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NOBEL PRIZE 2024

WHY IN NEWS?

- All the Nobel Prize winners for 2024 have been announced from October 7 to 14.
- Alfred Nobel, a Swedish chemist, engineer, industrialist, and the inventor of dynamite, in his last will in 1895, gave the largest share of his fortune to a series of prizes in Physics, Chemistry, Physiology/Medicine, Literature, and Peace, to be called the "Nobel Prizes".
- Formally known as the Bank of Sweden Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel, the economics prize was established by the Sweden's central bank in 1968.

2024 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine

- The 2024 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine was awarded to Victor Ambros and Gary Ruvkun by the Nobel Assembly at Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm, Sweden, on October 7, 2024, for the discovery of microRNA and its role in post-transcriptional gene regulation.
 - Both Victor Ambros and Gary Ruvkun are American biologists.
- Their research revealed how genes, which contain the instruction manual for life, give rise to different types of cells within the human body, a process known as gene regulation.
- The discovery of gene regulation by microRNA – a family of molecules that helps cells control the sort of proteins they make that has been at work for hundreds of millions of years – was the result of decades of work by Ambros, a professor of natural science at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, and Ruvkun, a professor of genetics at Harvard Medical School.
- This is the fifth instance of a Nobel Prize being awarded for RNA research: mRNA vaccines won in 2023; RNA interference in 2006; RNA's role as enzymes in 1989; and the discovery of mRNA in 1965.
- Indeed, scientists are slowly understanding that RNA, not DNA, is at the core of the delicate balance cells must maintain in order to sustain life.

- Har Gobind Khorana, an Indian American biochemist, was awarded the Nobel Prize in Medicine along with Marshall W. Nirenberg and Robert W. Holley in 1968.
- He was awarded the prestigious prize for his discovery that the order of nucleotides in DNA determines which amino acids are built.
- Nucleotides are subunits of DNA or RNA and consist of bases made of nitrogen.



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2024 Nobel Prize for Physics

- On October 8, John Hopfield and Geoffrey Hinton won the 2024 Nobel Prize for Physics “for foundational discoveries and inventions that enable machine learning with artificial neural networks”.
 - Their work lies at the roots of a large tree of work, the newest branches of which we see today as artificially intelligent (AI) apps like ChatGPT.
- Artificial Neural Networks (ANNs) are collections of neurons, or more broadly nodes capable of processing data, connected to each other in specific ways.
 - A connection between two neurons allows information to flow between them. In a recurrent neural network, information can flow both ways.
- John J. Hopfield, born in 1933 in Chicago, Illinois, United States, earned his PhD from Cornell University in 1958. He is currently a Professor at Princeton University in New Jersey, USA.
 - He invented a network, the Hopfield network, a type of recurrent neural network.
 - Its neurons learn and process information based on Hebbian learning — an idea in neuropsychology that if one neuron repeatedly triggers a second, the connection between the two becomes stronger.
- Geoffrey E. Hinton, born in 1947 in London, UK, received his PhD from the University of Edinburgh in 1978. He is currently a Professor at the University of Toronto, Canada.
 - He adapted another network called the Boltzmann machine to perform cognitive tasks, building on the principles of the Hopfield network among others.
 - He made a breakthrough in the 2000s by developing a learning algorithm for a modified ANN called a restricted Boltzmann machine (RBM).
 - A layer of neurons could be trained as an RBM and multiple layers could be stacked, creating the first ANNs capable of deep learning.

- In 2018, Hinton was awarded the Turing Prize, the most prestigious award in computer science.
- This is not the first time that the Nobel Committee had picked a computer science breakthrough for the Nobel Prize in Physics.
 - In 2007, the Physics Nobel was awarded for work that related to data storage devices like hard drives.

2024 Nobel Prize in Chemistry

- The 2024 Nobel Prize for Chemistry was awarded to David Baker “for computational protein design” and Demis Hassabis and John Jumper “for protein structure prediction” on October 9, 2024.
- Baker led a team that in 2003 designed a new protein using bespoke software methods. They and others have since refined these methods to be able to point the way to 'designer' proteins intended for specific applications.
- Hassabis and Jumper received the other half of the prize for their hand in developing an artificial intelligence model called AlphaFold 2 that could predict the structures of millions of proteins.
 - Human scientists had done that for only around 1.7 lakh proteins until then, although the structures and patterns therein were used to train AlphaFold.
- Baker works at the University of Washington in Seattle and Demis Hassabis is the CEO of Google DeepMind, London, UK while John M. Jumper is a Senior Research Scientist at the same organisation.
- In 2023, the Nobel Prize for Chemistry was jointly awarded to Mounir G. Bawendi, Louis E. Brus and Alexei I. Ekimov for the discovery and synthesis of quantum dots.

2024 Nobel Prize in Literature

- The 2024 Nobel Prize for literature was awarded to South Korean author Han Kang for her intense poetic prose that confronts historical traumas and exposes the fragility of human life on October 10, 2024.
- Han Kang is the first South Korean writer to win the award and just the 18th woman out of the 117 prizes awarded since 1901.
- The Nobel Prize in Literature is awarded by the Swedish Academy, Stockholm, Sweden. Only four times in the history of the literature prize has it been shared between multiple people.
- Notably, last year, Jon Fosse won the prestigious honour. The Nobel Literature Committee hailed the Norwegian author of plays, novels, and children's books for giving “voice to the unsayable”.
- Previously, the prize has been awarded to French author Annie Ernaux (2022), Tanzanian novelist Abdulrazak Gurnah (2021), American poet and essayist Louise Glück (2020) and Austrian writer Peter Handke (2019).

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2024 Nobel Peace Prize

- The Nobel Peace Prize 2024 was awarded to Nihon Hidankyo, a grassroots movement of atomic bomb survivors from Hiroshima and Nagasaki, also known as Hibakusha on October 11, 2024.
 - Nihon Hidankyo received the Peace Prize for its efforts to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons and for demonstrating through witness testimony that nuclear weapons must never be used again.
 - Nihon Hidankyo is the only nationwide organization of A-bomb survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (Hibakusha).
 - It has member organizations in all 47 Japanese prefectures, thus representing almost all organized Hibakusha. Hidankyo is cooperating with those organizations in their work for the defence of the living and rights of these people.
- One of the main objectives of Hindankyo is the prevention of nuclear war and the elimination of nuclear weapons, including the signing of an international agreement for a total ban and elimination of nuclear weapons.
- Last year, the 2023 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Iranian activist Narges Mohammadi, who is currently imprisoned.
- In 2014, India's Kailash Satyarthi won the award jointly with Pakistan's Malala Yousafzai.

- Till now, at least 10 Nobel Peace Prizes have been awarded for nuclear disarmament and arms control since 1901. For example, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) won in 2017, etc.
- Latin America has been a nuclear-weapons-free zone since 1967. Alfonso García Robles played a defining role in shaping the Treaty of Tlatelolco signed by 14 countries and was awarded the peace prize in 1982.
- Mahatma Gandhi was nominated five times for the Nobel Peace Prize but was never awarded the prize.
- On August 6, 1945, the US dropped a bomb named "Little Boy" on Hiroshima.
- On August 9, 1945, the US dropped a bomb named "Fat Man" on Nagasaki.

2024 Nobel Prize in Economic Science, also known as Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel 2024

- Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson, and James Robinson won the 2024 Nobel Prize in Economic Science, also known as Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel 2024 for their studies on how institutions are formed and affect prosperity on October 14, 2024.
 - Their work examines the reasons for the differences in prosperity between countries, one of them being institutions introduced through colonisation.
- It focuses on extractive and inclusive colonial institutions that have reversed the fortunes of colonies, making poor colonies richer and rich colonies poorer.
- Acemoglu and Johnson work at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Robinson conducts his research at the University of Chicago.
- The economics prize is formally known as the Bank of Sweden Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel.
- The central bank established it in 1968 as a memorial to Nobel, the 19th-century Swedish businessman and chemist who invented dynamite and established the five Nobel Prizes.
- Though Nobel purists stress that the Economics Prize is technically not a Nobel Prize, it is always presented together with the others on December 10, the anniversary of Nobel's death in 1896.

- The Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences of 2019 was awarded to Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo, and Michael Kremer "for their experimental approach to alleviating global poverty." Abhijit Banerjee was second after Amartya Sen to receive the recognition in economic sciences.
- Amartya Sen won the 1998 Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences for his contributions to welfare economics, social choice theory, and his interest in the problems of society's poorest members.





INDIA'S 5 NEW CLASSICAL LANGUAGES

WHY IN NEWS?

- The Union Cabinet accorded classical language status to Marathi, apart from Assamese, Bengali, Pali, and Prakrit on October 3, 2024, thus bringing the total number of classical languages to 11.
- Other than 6 languages, Marathi, Pali, Prakrit, Assamese, and Bengali have been included in the prestigious category.

Concept of Classical Languages

- In 2004, the Indian government began designating languages as "Classical Languages" to acknowledge and preserve their ancient legacy.
- The 11 classical languages of India serve as custodians of the nation's rich cultural heritage, representing key historical and cultural milestones for their communities.
- On October 12, 2004, Tamil was notified as a classical language.
- Sanskrit was declared a classical language on November 25, 2005. Subsequently, classical language status was conferred upon Telugu (2008), Kannada (2008), Malayalam (2013), and Odia (2014).

Criteria

- In 2004, the Ministry of Culture set up a Linguistic Experts Committee (LEC) under the Sahitya Akademi to examine proposals for the status of classical language.
- In November 2005, the criteria were revised.
 - The new criteria pushed back the antiquity of early texts/ recorded history in the language to 1,500-2000 years from the earlier threshold of 1,000 years.
- In July 2024, the LEC unanimously revised the criteria for classical status. The criteria now includes:
 - High antiquity of its early texts/recorded history over a period of 1500- 2000 years.
 - A body of ancient literature/texts, which is considered a heritage by generations of speakers.
 - Knowledge texts, especially prose texts in addition to poetry, epigraphical and inscriptional evidence.

Under which "Knowledge Texts: Presence of an original literary tradition not borrowed from another speech community" was replaced by "Knowledge texts, especially prose texts in addition to poetry, epigraphical and inscriptional evidence".

- The Classical Languages and literature could be distinct from its current form or could be discontinuous with later forms of its offshoots.
- Following this, the committee recommended the addition of five new classical languages.

Initiatives to Promote Classical Languages

- The Ministry of Education takes steps to promote classical languages.
- Three Central Universities were established in 2020 for the promotion of Sanskrit.
- The Central Institute of Classical Tamil was set up in 2008 to facilitate the translation of ancient Tamil texts, and offer courses in Tamil.
- Similar Centres of Excellence have also been set up for the study of Kannada, Telugu, Malayalam, and Odia.

Benefits

- Languages designated as 'classical' receive various government benefits aimed at promoting their study and preservation.
- Two international awards are given annually to scholars who have made notable contributions to the research, teaching, or promotion of classical Indian languages.
 - These are the Presidential Award of Certificate of Honour and the Maharshi Badrayan Samman Award.
- The University Grants Commission (UGC) supports the creation of Professional Chairs in central universities and research institutions to focus on classical Indian languages.

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QUICK FACTS

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



1. Recently, at the **7th Assembly of the International Solar Alliance (ISA)**, the 3rd edition of the World Solar Report Series was released. This year's series comprises four key reports: the World Solar Market Report, the World Investment Report, the World Technology Report, and the Green Hydrogen Readiness Assessment for African Countries.
2. Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah has released the **documentary film "200 Not Out"**, which chronicles the remarkable 200-year journey of Asia's oldest newspaper, Mumbai Samachar.
3. The Union Health Ministry has approved the **introduction of "BPaLM"**, a new treatment regimen for drug-resistant tuberculosis in India. The BPaLM regimen consisting of 4 drugs - Bedaquiline, Pretomanid, Linezolid & Moxifloxacin - has proven to be a safe, more effective and quicker treatment option than the previous Multidrug-Resistant Tuberculosis (MDR-TB) treatment procedure. India is working towards TB elimination by 2025, five years ahead of the global target for eliminating the disease under the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3.
4. Ministry of Information and Broadcasting recently organized the **1st edition of "Khel Utsav 2024"** at Major Dhyan Chand Stadium and Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, New Delhi, to mark the birth anniversary of Major Dhyan Chand. In its maiden edition, the Ministry organized tournaments in 4 sports - Cricket, Hockey, Badminton and Table Tennis.
5. The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry, launched the **"Bharat Startup Knowledge Access Registry (BHASKAR)" initiative**, under the 'Startup India' program, to build the world's largest digital registry for stakeholders within the startup ecosystem.
6. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the **4th "Global Renewable Energy Investor's Meet and Expo (RE-INVEST) 2024"** at Mahatma Mandir, Gandhinagar, Gujarat. The Prime Minister said India is the first G20 nation to achieve the climate commitments set in Paris, that too 9 years before the deadline. He also outlined the nation's goals to achieve the target of 500 GW of renewable energy by 2030. Gujarat is the host state of RE-INVEST 2024, and Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Telangana and Uttar Pradesh are participating as Partner States. Germany, Australia, Denmark and Norway are taking part in the event as partner countries.
7. The **4th edition of "Global Bio-India 2024"** successfully concluded in New Delhi. The global event was organized by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), under the Ministry of Science & Technology, along with the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi. Global Bio-India 2024 theme highlighted the potential and opportunities in 'Biotech Innovation' and 'Bio-manufacturing' and its impact on the Bioeconomy.
8. India jumped to 'Tier 1', the highest of the 5 tiers, in the **"Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI) 2024"**, released by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). The "GCI 2024" used a new five-tier analysis – 'T1 (Role-modelling)', 'T2 (Advancing)', 'T3 (Establishing)', 'T4 (Evolving)' and 'T5 (Building)' - a shift that allows a greater focus on each country's advances with cybersecurity commitments.
9. The upcoming **'Durgesh Aranya Zoological Park'** at Bankhandi in Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh is set to become India's 1st zoo to receive certification from the Indian Green Building Council (IGBC) for its sustainable and eco-friendly initiatives, which will validate the park's adherence to high environmental standards.
10. Assam's **Kaziranga National Park**, famous for its one-horned rhino population, has also earned the distinction of being the second-largest hub for butterfly diversity, after Namdapha National Park in Arunachal Pradesh. The research was carried out by Dr Monsoon Jyoti Gogoi, a young scientist from Kaziranga.
11. 3 years, 8 months, and 19 days old, **Anish Sarkar from Kolkata**, has made history as the **youngest-rated FIDE chess player ever**. He is born on January 26, 2021. Anish's competitive debut came in October 2024 at the West Bengal state Under-9 Open, where he scored 5.5 points from 8 rounds. He soon competed in the state Under-13 Open. This match met the FIDE requirement of playing five rated players, securing him an initial FIDE rating of 1555.
12. The Maharashtra government has decided to rename the Maharashtra State Skills University after the late industrialist and philanthropist Ratan Tata. The varsity will now be called **"Padma Vibhushan Ratan Tata Skills University"**. The proposed Udyog Bhavan at Charni Road in Mumbai will also be named after him, christened as "Ratan Tata Udyog Bhavan". Earlier, the state government had renamed the Udyog Ratna Award as the "Ratan Tata Udyog Ratna Award". Ratan Tata was the first recipient of this award in 2023.





13. Aerospace startup, Space Kidz India, has launched its global initiative, “**ShakthiSAT**”, a mission that aims to inspire and empower 12,000 young girls from 108 countries through space exploration. It paves the way forward in the global movement to foster STEM education among young women. So far, the company has launched 18+ NSLVs (BalloonSats), 3 suborbital payloads, and 4 orbital satellites. Srimathy Kesan, Founder and CEO of Space Kidz India, is the Mission Lead of ShakthiSAT.
14. Indian professional boxer **Mandeep Jangra**, who made his professional boxing debut in 2021, won the World Boxing Federation's super featherweight world title after defeating Britain's Conor McIntosh in the Cayman Islands. The 31-year-old Mandeep Jangra, who trains under former Olympic silver medallist Roy Jones Jr, has won 11 out of his 12 fights in his professional career with 7 being knockout victories.
15. Andhra Pradesh has become the 1st state in India to introduce the “**Foundation Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) Training Program**” for Grade 1 and Grade 2 teachers in government schools. The six-day FLN Training Program was organized under the auspices of the School Education Department and Samagra Shiksha. The FLN training, designed in alignment with the 'National Education Policy' and 'Nipun Bharat', aims to provide quality education to children aged from 3 to 8 years. Under the program, 34,000 teachers in the Grade 1 and Grade 2 categories across the state would participate in 14 spells.
16. Indian Space Research Organisation (**ISRO**) has started **India's first analog space mission** at Leh in Ladakh, where the space agency will simulate life in an interplanetary habitat. The mission includes a compact, inflatable habitat named 'Hab-1', which is equipped with essentials like a hydroponics farm, kitchen, and sanitation facilities. Ladakh has been chosen for such a mission as the geographical features of the area are considered to closely resemble Martian and lunar landscapes. It is lying at an elevation over 3,000 metres above sea level. This analog space mission at Leh is a collaborative effort by Human Spaceflight Centre, ISRO, AAKA Space Studio, University of Ladakh, IIT Bombay, and supported by Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council.
17. Kerala has secured first rank in the “**Urban Governance Index (UGI)**”, a two-year-long study conducted across several cities in India by the Praja Foundation. The State scored 59.31 out of a possible score of 100 in various metrics, while Odisha came second with 55.10. In fiscal empowerment, Kerala managed to have a high score of 23.22 out of 30, with Maharashtra coming second with 21.15. Kerala is the only State to give the Mayor the authority to write an 'Annual Confidential Report' of the Commissioner. Only four States (Chhattisgarh, Kerala, Mizoram, and Odisha) mandate that every councillor should be part of at least one deliberative committee.
18. The government of India launched “**Gram Panchayat-Level Weather Forecasting**” which was developed in collaboration between the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) and the India Meteorological Department (IMD), Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), marks a major step forward in climate preparedness at the grassroots level.
19. Former Indian cricket captain **Mahendra Singh Dhoni** has been appointed as the brand ambassador for the upcoming Jharkhand election by the Election Commission. MS Dhoni will work towards increasing awareness among voters under the SWEEP (Systematic Voters Education and Electoral Participation) program.
20. The Army Chief, General Upendra Dwivedi, has officially launched “**Agniastra**,” a portable multi-target detonation device, during the Army Commanders Conference in Gangtok, Sikkim. This device was developed by Major Rajprasad RS from the Indian Army's Corps of Engineers and is seen as a major advancement in both conventional and counter-terrorism operations. The new system is a microprocessor-based electronic device that can operate in both wired and wireless modes with a much-improved range of 2.5 kilometres.
21. Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sport has announced the discontinuation of the “**Dhyan Chand Award for Lifetime Achievement**” from this year onwards and the introduction of the “Arjuna Award (Lifetime)” in its place in a bid to rationalise the various sporting honours of the country. It was instituted in 2002. In 2023, the award was given to former shuttler Manjusha Kanwar, ex-hockey exponent Vineet Kumar and kabaddi player Kavitha Selvaraj.
22. The Union Cabinet has approved a new Central Sector Scheme, “**PM Vidyalaxmi**”, which seeks to provide financial support to meritorious students in their pursuit of higher education. Under the scheme, a student who secures admission in any of the top 860 Quality Higher Education Institutions (QHEIs), both government and private, will be eligible to get collateral-free, guarantor-free loans from banks and financial institutions to cover the full amount of tuition fees and other expenses related to the course.





23. The International Solar Alliance (ISA), in a global collaboration with the Ministry of New & Renewable Energy, the Asian Development Bank, and the International Solar Energy Society, organised the **3rd edition** of the “**High-level Conference on New Technologies for Clean Energy Transition**” on the sidelines of the 7th Session of the 'ISA Assembly' in New Delhi. This year's series comprises four key reports: the World Solar Market Report, the World Investment Report, the World Technology Report, and the Green Hydrogen Readiness Assessment for African Countries.
24. **Ahmedabad University** has launched the “**Climate Institute**” to address the challenge of climate change and environmental degradation in the Global South, focusing on 3 key aspects of research, education and impact. The Institute is developing India's 1st comprehensive Climate, Energy, and Environmental education programme, preparing future leaders to tackle global climate issues. The Institute operates across 3 verticals: 'Energy and Climate Change', 'Cities and Settlements', and 'Air and Water'.
25. Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (**BSNL**) has revealed its **new logo** and introduced seven digital services, focusing on secure, affordable, and reliable connectivity across India. The new logo incorporates green and white arrows surrounding India against an orange backdrop, emphasizing nationwide coverage and inclusivity. The company's tagline, “Connecting Bharat,” underscores its mission to bridge the digital divide between urban and rural areas.
26. **India's 4th nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine** (SSBN), referred to as S4*, was launched into water at the Ship Building Centre in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. India currently has two SSBNs operational. INS Arihant was quietly commissioned into service in August 2016. The 2nd SSBN, INS Arighaat (S3) was commissioned in August 2024. The 3rd SSBN Aridhman (S4) is currently undergoing sea trials and is expected to be commissioned, into service in 2025.
27. **Karnataka** secured the overall title with an impressive 392 points at the 24th “**National Para-Swimming Championships**” which concluded in Panaji, Goa. Maharashtra finished second with 378 points, while Rajasthan took the third spot with 248 points.
28. India ranks among the top six globally in filing patents related to 6G technology. Data from **MaxVal**, a global IP management firm, places India at 6th with 188 6G-related patents. China remains the dominant player with 6,001 patents, followed by the US (3,909), South Korea (1,417), Japan (584), and the European Union (214). Another analysis by UK-based U Switch ranked India 4th in April 2023, attributing 265 6G patents to the country, behind China (4,604), the US (2,229), and South Korea (760).
29. In **Madhya Pradesh**, a first of its kind of initiative, “**Pink Alarms**”, have been installed at the government-run district hospital and medical college in Datia for the safety of women staff at public hospitals, following the incident of rape and murder of a trainee doctor at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata.
30. **Vijaya Rahatkar** has taken charge as **Chairperson of the National Commission for Women** (NCW). She is the 9th Chairperson of the NCW and succeeds Rekha Sharma. The NCW, a statutory body, is empowered to work towards the advancement of women's rights. Its mandate includes reviewing the constitutional and legal safeguards provided to women. Dr. Archana Majumdar has also been appointed as a Member of the National Commission for Women.
31. The 23-year-old actor Nikita Porwal from Madhya Pradesh has been crowned as the “**Femina Miss India 2024**”. She was followed at the second position by Rekha Panday who represented Union Territories and the second runner-up was Gujarat's Ayushi Dholakia. The Miss India event took place on October 16, 2024, at Famous Studios in Mumbai, marking the 60th edition of the beauty pageant. The Femina Miss India 2024 crown will allow Nikita to represent India at the Miss World pageant.
32. **Odisha** won the 1st prize in the '**Best State Category**' of the 5th “**National Water Awards 2023**”, announced by Union Minister of Jal Shakti, CR Patil, in New Delhi, followed by Uttar Pradesh (2nd) and Gujarat and Puducherry (jointly 3rd). President Droupadi Murmu will confer these awards to 38 winners, including joint winners in 9 categories on October 22 in New Delhi. The National Water Awards was instituted by the Department of Water Resources, River Development, and Ganga Rejuvenation under the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti.
33. **Noel Tata**, the half-brother of Ratan Tata, has been appointed as the new Chairman of Tata Trusts, the powerful and influential philanthropic arm of Tata Group. Tata Trusts has a 66% ownership of Tata Sons. Noel Tata, who is half-French, is also Chairman of Tata's retail fashion brand, Trent, as well as Vice-Chairman of Tata Steel.

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34. The World Health Organisation (**WHO**) has declared that the Government of India has **eliminated Trachoma as a public health problem** becoming the third country in the South-East Asia Region to achieve this milestone. Trachoma is a bacterial infection that affects the eyes. It is caused by the bacterium 'Chlamydia Trachomatis'. The Government of India launched the National Trachoma Control Program in 1963.
35. The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) has announced that the **38th 'National Games'** will be held in Uttarakhand from January 28 to February 14, 2025. The Games will feature competitions in 38 sports and over 10,000 athletes. The previous edition of the Games was organised in Goa where Maharashtra claimed the top spot. The next National Winter Games would also be held simultaneously in Uttarakhand. The Winter Games will be held outside Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh for the first time.
36. The **12th "International Film Festival and Forum on Environment and Wildlife", known as "CMS Vatavaran"**, was inaugurated at Paryavaran Bhawan in New Delhi under the theme "Wetlands for Life". CMS Vatavaran is a pioneering international film festival and forum on the environment and wildlife.
37. **India** was elected to the 15-member GlobE Steering Committee of the Global Operational Network of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities (**Globe Network**) during its 5th plenary session held in Beijing, China. The Globe Network is a vital platform for international cooperation, and India's participation will strengthen its efforts to combat cross-border financial crimes and corruption. GloBE Network was an initiative of G-20, supported by India in 2020.
38. The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved the proposal of India to become a member country of the "**International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)**", a coalition of 95 big cat range countries, by signing and ratification of the Framework Agreement on the establishment of the IBCA. So far 4 countries have become members of IBCA including India, Nicaragua, Eswatini and Somalia. On the occasion of commemorating 50 years of India's 'Project Tiger' on April 9, 2023, the Prime Minister launched an IBCA with headquarters in India with a one-time budgetary support of Rs 150 crore for a period of 5 years from 2023-24 to 2027-28.
39. **Madhya Pradesh** State Election Commission has successfully conducted a paperless voting process as a pilot project for the Panchayat by-election at Polling Station-295 in Ratua Ratanpur village, Berasia tehsil in Bhopal for the first time in India. The State Election Commission conducts panchayat and civic body polls in the state whose office has already been made paperless in the past.
40. **Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)** is collaborating with Tata Electronics Pvt Ltd to develop **India's first domestically produced chips by 2026**. Tata Electronics aims to have the first chips from the Assam facility available by late 2025 or early 2026, targeting industries such as automotive, electronics, power, consumer goods, and healthcare. In February, the India Semiconductor Mission (ISM) approved the establishment of 3 semiconductor manufacturing facilities to advance this sector.
41. AAP leader **Atishi** has taken oath as **Delhi's 3rd woman Chief Minister** after Sheila Dikshit & Sushma Swaraj and became the youngest of all 3 to hold the top office in the National Capital. She also became the 17th woman to hold the post of Chief Minister in independent India. The senior AAP leader, however, will have a brief tenure in office as Assembly elections in the National Capital are due in February 2025. She is only the second woman chief minister in the country at present, alongside West Bengal's Mamata Banerjee.
42. In a major push to transform India's dairy cooperative sector, Union Minister Amit Shah has unveiled "**White Revolution 2.0**", a comprehensive initiative aimed at empowering women farmers and creating job opportunities. The programme focuses on 4 key areas - 'empowering women farmers', 'enhancing local milk production', 'strengthening dairy infrastructure', and 'boosting dairy exports'. Under "White Revolution 2.0", the government aims to increase milk procurement by dairy cooperative societies by 50% over the next 5 years.
43. The '**Make in India**' initiative, launched on September 25, 2014, has **completed its 10 years** of implementation which aims to facilitate investment, foster innovation, enhance skill development, protect intellectual property & build best-in-class manufacturing infrastructure. The 'Make in India' has 3 objectives - (i) to increase the manufacturing sector's growth rate to 12-14% per annum; (ii) to create 100 million additional manufacturing jobs in the economy by 2022; and (iii) to ensure that the manufacturing sector's contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is increased to 25% by 2022 (later revised to 2025). 'New Processes', 'New Infrastructure', 'New Sectors' and 'New Mindset' are the 4 key pillars of the 'Make in India' initiatives.





44. The “**Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY)**” scheme, introduced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on September 23, 2018, completed its 6 years of implementation. As of September 9, 2024, more than 35.4 crore Ayushman cards have been issued under the “AB PM-JAY” in 33 States and Union Territories, except NCT Delhi, West Bengal, and Odisha. The “AB PM-JAY” has led to a remarkable 21% reduction in out-of-pocket healthcare expenditures and an 8% decrease in the incidence of emergency loans taken for health-related expenses. “AB PM-JAY” is the world's largest publicly funded health assurance scheme, which provides health cover of Rs 5 lakh per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalisation. Earlier on September 11, 2024, the Union Cabinet had approved health coverage for all senior citizens aged 70 years and above, irrespective of their socio-economic status, under the “AB PM-JAY”.
45. The Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud has re-constituted the **Supreme Court Gender Sensitisation and Internal Complaints Committee**. Justice **BV Nagarathna** has been appointed as the Chairperson of the committee, following the retirement of Justice Hima Kohli. The September 18 order also states that the Committee is formed as per the “Gender Sensitisation & Sexual Harassment of Women at the Supreme Court of India (Prevention, Prohibition & Redressal) Regulations, 2013”.
46. Ram Meghwal, Minister of State (I/C) for the Ministry of Law & Justice, has launched the new “**Notary Portal**” in a function organised by the Department of Law & Justice in New Delhi. The Notary Portal, launched in association with the National Informatics Centre (NIC), provides an online interface between the notaries and the Government for various services like submission of applications for appointment as notaries, issuance and renewal of Certificates of Practice, change of practice area, submission of annual returns, etc.
47. Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched 3 “**PARAM Rudra**” **supercomputers**, developed indigenously by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) Pune with impressive 1-petaflop processing capability, under the National Supercomputing Mission (NSM). These 3 supercomputers, built at a cost of Rs 130 crore, have been deployed in Pune, Delhi, and Kolkata to facilitate pioneering scientific research.
48. **India** secured the **39th position** out of a total of 133 economies with a score of 38.3 in the recently released World Intellectual Property Organization's (WIPO) “**Global Innovative Index (GII) 2024**” - a slight improvement of 1 rank from last year when the country was placed at the 40th rank with a score of 38.1. India has climbed 42 positions in the GI from its 81st position in 2015, now ranking 1st among 38 lower-middle-income economies, 1st among 10 economies in Central & Southern Asia and 4th in the WIPO Science and Technology (S&T) Cluster Ranking. Major cities like Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru, and Chennai are listed among the world's top 100 S&T clusters, which are hubs for research, development, and technological advancements.
49. The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India, **Girish Chandra Murmu**, has assumed the Chairmanship of the **Asian Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions (ASOSAI) for 2024-2027**. Set up in 1979 in New Delhi with 11 members, ASOSAI has grown to accommodate 48 SAIs and emerged as an important regional group under the umbrella of the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI) with its secretariat in Beijing, China.
50. The Commission for Scientific and Technical Terminology (CSTT), under the aegis of the Ministry of Education, has launched “**Shabd**”, a **unique website which provides technical terms in all 22 official Indian languages**. The web portal 'shabd.education.gov.in' aims to be a central repository for all the terminologies prepared for Indian languages. Besides all the glossaries of CSTT, other institutions or agencies having such dictionaries are also able to host their work in digital form on this platform. As of now, a total of 322 glossaries with around 22,00,000 words are currently available on search in the portal.
51. The Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO), in collaboration with researchers of IIT Delhi, has developed **lightweight bulletproof jackets**, named “**ABHED (Advanced Ballistics for High Energy Defeat)**”, which offer 360-degree protection. The jackets meet the highest threat levels. With a minimum possible weight of 8.2 kgs and 9.5 kgs for different Bureau of India Standards (BIS) Levels, these modular-design jackets have been developed at the DRDO Industry Academia Centre of Excellence (DIA-CoE) at IIT Delhi.
52. **Rhea Singha** from Gujarat has been crowned “**Miss Universe India 2024**” in the grand finale of the pageant held in Jaipur, Rajasthan, and she will now represent India at the global 'Miss Universe 2024' pageant to be held in Mexico in November. 'Miss Universe India 2015', Urvashi





Rautela, who served as a judge at the event, crowned Rhea with a special 'Taj Mahal crown'. Pranjal Priya, Chhavi Verg, Sushmita Roy and Ruopfuzhano Whiso secured the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th runner-up positions, respectively.

53. The government of India is set to launch the '**INDIAsize**' initiative to create standardized measurements for Indian body types, addressing fitting issues with current US (United States) and UK (United Kingdom) size standards. Presently, international and domestic brands available in India use measurements from the US or the UK for garments, having 'small', 'medium' and 'large' sizes.
54. Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has presented the “**National Clean Air City**” Awards during the **Swachh Vayu Survekshan 2024** held at a national workshop celebrating the “International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies” in Jaipur, Rajasthan. Surat has been ranked as the top major city in India for air quality improvements. While Surat, Jabalpur and Agra secured the top three positions among cities with a population of over 10 lakh, Firozabad (UP), Amravati (Maharashtra) and Jhansi (UP) were recognized as the best among cities with a population between three lakh and 10 lakh. Raebareli (UP), Nalgonda (Telangana) and Nalagarh (Himachal Pradesh) topped the list among the cities with populations under three lakh.
55. Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (**MoSPI**) has dissolved the 14-member **Standing Committee on Statistics (SCoS)**, led by former chief statistician of India Pronab Sen, amid concerns raised by some members of the panel over the delay in conducting the census. Now, the new committee is headed by National Statistical Commission (NSC) Chairman Rajeeva Laxman Karandikar and at least four members of the SCoS have been included in it.
56. The Union Cabinet cleared the new moon mission “**Chandrayaan-4**” and approved the development of the “**Venus Orbiter Mission (VOM)**” as part of the government's vision to explore and study the Earth's closest planet and the construction of the 1st unit of the “**Bharatiya Anatriksh Station (BAS)**”. The **VOM**, scheduled to launch in March 2028, will focus on scientific exploration to better understand Venus's atmosphere and geology, generating extensive scientific data by probing its thick atmosphere.



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QUICK FACTS

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS



1. **Mexico** has become the **world's first country** to allow voters to elect judges at all levels after protesters invaded the upper house and suspended debate on the issue. The reform was approved with 86 votes in favour and 41 against, garnering the two-thirds majority needed to amend the constitution. Around 1,600 judges would have to stand for election in 2025 or 2027.
2. India's emerging talent **Anmol Kharb** secured her maiden international title at the senior level by winning the "**Belgian International 2024**" badminton women's singles event in Leuven, Belgium. The 17-year-old Indian badminton player, 222nd in the BWF rankings, defeated Denmark's world No. 80 Amalie Schulz in a hard-fought final round.
3. The Pakistan Cricket Board has announced that **Saleema Imtiaz** has become the first Pakistani woman to be nominated to the ICC International Panel of Development Umpires. Imtiaz's nomination on the panel makes her eligible to officiate in women's bilateral international matches and ICC women's events.
4. The Indian Army special contingent of 25 personnel is participating in the 9th edition of the India - Indonesia **joint exercise "Garud Shakti"**, which is scheduled to be conducted from November 1st to 12th in Jakarta, Indonesia. The Indian contingent is being represented by troops from The Parachute Regiment (Special Forces) and the Indonesian contingent of 40 personnel is being represented by Indonesian Special Forces Kopassus.
5. The Indian Army contingent of 45 personnel from the Special Forces Units is participating in the 15th edition of India - US joint Special Forces **Exercise "VAJRA PRAHAR"**. The exercise is scheduled to be conducted from 2nd to 22nd November 2024 at Orchard Combat Training Centre in Idaho, the US. The last edition of the exercise was conducted at Umroi, Meghalaya in December 2023. This is the 2nd exercise of the year between the Indian and the US Army, the previous being Exercise 'YUDH ABHYAS 2024', conducted in Rajasthan in September 2024.
6. The Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) has announced that key sports such as hockey, badminton, table tennis, squash, wrestling, cricket, shooting, and road racing, among other major sports, have been dropped from the "**Commonwealth Games 2026**" to be hosted by Glasgow, Scotland, from July 23, 2026 to August 2, 2026. The objective is to limit the cost and streamline logistics given that only 4 venues will host the entire showpiece. The Birmingham edition (2022) featured 19 sports. For Glasgow, just 10 sports disciplines have been picked - athletics and para-athletics (track & field), swimming and para-swimming, artistic gymnastics, track cycling and para-track cycling, netball, weightlifting and para powerlifting, boxing, judo, bowls and para bowls and 3x3 basketball and 3x3 wheelchair basketball.
7. The International Cricket Council (ICC) appointed Sri Lanka's **Sumathi Dharmawardena** as the new Independent Chairman of its Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU). Dharmawardena replaced Sir Ronnie Flanagan.
8. The 5th edition of Vietnam-India Bilateral Army **Exercise "VINBAX 2024"** commenced at Ambala. The exercise will be held from November 4 to 23 at Ambala and Chandimandir in Haryana. The Indian Army contingent comprising 47 personnel is being represented by a Regiment of the Corps of Engineers.
9. **India** has been re-elected as the **President of the International Solar Alliance (ISA)** for another two-year term from 2024 to 2026, during the 7th session of the ISA Assembly. India was re-elected unopposed as the President of the ISA, while France was elected as the Co-President, defeating Grenada. Besides, the Assembly also established a diverse leadership structure with 8 Vice Presidents representing various regions. Ghana and Seychelles were appointed as Vice Presidents for Africa, while Australia and Sri Lanka took the positions for Asia and the Pacific. Germany and Italy will represent Europe and the Others region, with Grenada and Suriname representing Latin America and the Caribbean. Moreover, Ashish Khanna of India was chosen as the 3rd Director General for a 4-year term.
10. Tennis legends Maria Sharapova, Bob Bryan and Mike Bryan were selected for the "**International Tennis Hall of Fame's Class of 2025**". Sharapova is a five-time Grand Slam champion and is also a former world No. 1. Meanwhile, the Bryan brothers are the most successful men's doubles pair in history.
11. Minister of External Affairs S Jaishankar has inaugurated **India's new consulate in the Australian city of Brisbane**, Queensland's state capital. The consulate in Brisbane will be headed by consul general Neetu Bhagotia. Besides Brisbane, India has consulates in Melbourne, Perth and Sydney. Brisbane, the city of Ipswich and Hyderabad have been tripartite sister cities since 2010.





12. **Singapore** has retained its title as the world's most powerful passport, offering visa-free access to 195 countries, according to the latest **"Henley Passport Index"** released in **October 2024**. France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and Spain tied for 2nd place with access to 192 countries. Austria, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, South Korea, and Sweden shared the 3rd place, granting their citizens visa-free access to 191 countries. Belgium, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom tied for 4th place with access to 190 countries, while Australia and Portugal tied for 5th place with access to 189 countries. The United States ranked 8th, giving its citizens visa-free entry to 186 countries. Meanwhile, India ranked 83rd, sharing the position with Mauritania, Senegal, and Tajikistan, providing its citizens with visa-free access to 58 countries. Afghanistan (105th), Syria (104th), Iraq (103rd), Yemen & Pakistan (shared 102nd) and Somalia (101st) are the least powerful indexes in the world.
13. **India and Pakistan** have agreed to renew their agreement to operate the **Kartarpur Corridor** to facilitate pilgrims from India to visit the Kartarpur Sahib Gurudwara for another 5 years, until 2029. The Agreement, originally signed on 24 October 2019 to facilitate the visit of pilgrims from India to Gurudwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur, Narowal, Pakistan through the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor, was valid for a period of 5 years. This site is the final resting place of Guru Nanak Dev, the founder of Sikhism, and first of the 10 Sikh gurus.
14. The **3rd edition of the high-level virtual interaction "MAHASAGAR"** was conducted by the Indian Navy on November 5, 2024. The interaction's theme was "Training Cooperation to Mitigate Common Maritime Security Challenges in IOR". MAHASAGAR is the Indian Navy's flagship outreach for high-level virtual interaction between "Maritime Heads for Active Security and Growth for All in the Region". The initiative, started by the Indian Navy, is conducted bi-annually.
15. **Japan** launched **"LignoSat", the world's first wooden satellite**, aboard a SpaceX rocket from NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida, US. Developed by Kyoto University and Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA), the satellite aims to test the viability of using wood as a sustainable alternative to metals in satellite construction. Its primary mission is to evaluate the durability of magnolia wood in the extreme conditions of space, with the goal of reducing space debris. Designed to orbit Earth for 6 months, LignoSat will be exposed to harsh conditions, including cosmic radiation, extreme temperature fluctuations, and microgravity.
16. **Indian Army** has signed a contract with QuNu Labs for procurement of **'Generation of Quantum Secure Key (Quantum Key Distribution)'**. It is the 8th procurement contract through Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX). iDEX was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on April 12, 2018 during Defence Expo India 2018.
17. The **first 'Make in India' C295 transport aircraft** is set to roll out of the newly built Vadodara facility, Gujarat, in September 2026. This plant will see 18,000 components of this military aircraft (except aircraft engines) being manufactured indigenously. This factory will strengthen India-Spain relations and will also drive the Make-in-India Make-for-the-world initiative. Under this deal, 16 aircraft will be delivered in a fly-away condition from Spain within 48 months, while the remaining 40 will be manufactured in India by Tata Advanced Systems Limited (TASL) at the new facility in Vadodara.
18. The 6th edition of the annual apex-level international conference of the Indian Navy, the **"Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue (IPRD) 2024"**, was held in New Delhi. The National Maritime Foundation (NMF) is the Indian Navy's knowledge partner and chief organiser of each edition of the IPRD. The 2024 edition of the IPRD focused on the theme, "Resource-Geopolitics and Security in the Indo-Pacific". IPRD-2024 would explore and elaborate upon the several dimensions of two vital pillars of the IPOI Web, namely, "Marine Resources" and "Resource Sharing". The first edition of the IPRD was held in 2018.
19. The World Health Organisation (**WHO**) has approved **Bavarian Nordic's "MVA-BN"** as the first vaccine against 'mpox', adding it to its prequalification list for expanded access in communities with urgent need. The global mpox outbreak was declared a public health emergency in 2022. Mpox, first identified in humans in 1970 in the Democratic Republic of Congo, was mistakenly linked to monkeys because it was initially found in lab monkeys. However, the actual animal host remains unknown, with rats being a likely source. The renewed focus on Mpox is due to a new strain, 'Clade I Mpox'.
20. **Indian Navy and German Navy** have undertaken a **"Maritime Partnership Exercise (MPX)"** in the Indian Ocean. The maiden 'IN-GN Maritime Partnership Exercise' in the Bay of Bengal is aimed at further strengthening the maritime connection between the two nations and interoperability between the navies. INS Delhi represented India in this exercise. INS Delhi is the lead ship of her class of





guided missile destroyers and is part of the Eastern Fleet of the Indian Navy.

21. The International Cricket Council (ICC) has announced **equal prize money for men and women** in World Cups, starting with the 'ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024' in the UAE. The winners of the Women's T20 World Cup will be rewarded with \$2.34 million, a 134% increase on the \$1 million awarded previously. The runners-up will get \$1.17 million, an increase of 134%.
22. Zimbabwe hit 344-4 in a 'T20 World Cup Qualifier' on October 24, 2024, and set a **world-record international score in the T20 format** against the Gambia in an African sub-regional qualifier at the Ruaraka Sports Club Ground in Nairobi, Kenya. As per the International Cricket Council (ICC), the previous high score was 314-3 set by Nepal against Mongolia in 2023. Zimbabwe's record-breaking innings included 27 sixes, the most ever in a men's T20I.
23. **India** with an abysmal score of 45.5 (out of 100) has been ranked **176th in the first-ever "Global Nature Conservation Index (NCI), 2024"**. The NCI, developed by Goldman Sonnenfeldt School of Sustainability and Climate Change at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev and BioDB.com, a non-profit website dedicated to maintaining biodiversity data, evaluates conservation efforts using 4 markers – (i) land management, (ii) threats to biodiversity, (iii) capacity and governance, and (iv) future trends.
24. The United States (US), France, and Armenia have emerged as the **top 3 destinations for Indian defence exports**, with Armenia, in particular, being the biggest client of finished Indian weapons and equipment (like 155mm artillery guns and the Akash air defence missile and Pinaka multi-launch rocket systems). This comes at a time when India's defence exports have touched a record Rs 21,083 crore (approximately \$2.63 billion) in the financial year 2023-2024 (FY24), amounting to a growth of 32.5% over Rs 15,920 crore in FY23. India's annual defence production hit a record high of almost Rs 1.27 trillion in FY24, up 16.7% over Rs 1.09 trillion in FY23. The government has set an ambitious target for it to touch Rs 3 lakh crore by 2028-29, along with arms exports of Rs 50,000 crore.
25. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has released a report titled **"Emissions Gap Report 2024: No more hot air ...please!"**. According to the UNEP report, the world is on pace to hit 3.1°C (5.6°F) of warming since pre-industrial times, which is more than twice the goal, set in the 2015 Paris Agreement i.e., to limit global temperature to 1.5°C (2.7°F) since pre-industrial times.
26. According to the latest update of the global **"Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)"**, released by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) based at the University of Oxford, India has 234 million people living in poverty, which is the medium Human Development Index (HDI), placing the country among 5 globally with the largest number of people living in poverty. The other 4 countries are Pakistan (93 million), Ethiopia (86 million), Nigeria (74 million) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (66 million), all low HDI. Together, these 5 countries account for nearly half (48.1%) of the 1.1 billion poor people.
27. Nima Rinji Sherpa, 18-year-old Nepalese mountaineer, has set a new record becoming the **youngest climber to conquer all 14 of the highest peaks on Earth**. With this accomplishment, he joined an elite group of mountaineers who have successfully climbed all 14 of the world's "eight-thousanders," or mountains recognised by the International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation (UIAA) for being more than 8,000 meters above sea level.
28. **Egypt** has been **declared malaria-free** by the World Health Organisation (WHO), a significant milestone for a disease that has afflicted the region since ancient times. Genetic evidence of malaria has been found in Tutankhamun and other ancient Egyptian mummies; with this, the disease can be traced back as far as 4000 BC. Egypt designated malaria as a notifiable disease in 1930 after its prevalence rose to 40%. Egypt has joined 43 other countries to get certified as malaria-free. It is the 3rd country to be awarded a malaria-free certification in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region following the United Arab Emirates and Morocco, and the 1st since 2010.
29. Five trailblazing women - Sister Rosita Milesi of Brazil, Maimouna Ba of Burkina Faso, Jin Davod from Europe, Nada Fadol of Sudan, and Deepti Gurung of Nepal - will be honoured as winners of the **"2024 UNHCR Nansen Refugee Award"** from UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency. In addition, the people of Moldova will receive honourable mention for acting as a beacon of humanity. The awards were presented at a ceremony in Geneva, Switzerland.
30. According to the **"Poverty, Prosperity and Planet: Pathways out of the Polycrisis"** report released by the **World Bank**,

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almost 129 million Indians are living in extreme poverty in 2024, on less than \$2.15 (about Rs 181) a day, down from 431 million in 1990. However, with a higher poverty standard of \$6.85 (about Rs 576) per day - the poverty threshold for middle-income countries - more Indians are living below the poverty line in 2024 than in 1990, primarily driven by population growth.

31. **New Zealand women's** national cricket team, nicknamed 'White Ferns', secured their **first-ever "ICC Women's T20 World Cup"** title, defeating South Africa cricket team, nicknamed 'Proteas', at Dubai International Stadium in Dubai on 20 October 2024. New Zealand became only the 4th team to win the Women's T20 World Cup. Australia have won 6 of the 9 editions of the tournament, while England (2009) and West Indies (2016) are the other teams to win the trophy.
32. As of October 2024, Global SWF has crowned **Abu Dhabi** with the title of the **world's richest city**, in terms of its sovereign wealth funds (SWFs). The city is estimated to boast a staggering \$1.7 trillion in capital, closely followed by Oslo (home of the world's largest SWF, NBIM), Beijing, Singapore, Riyadh and Hong Kong. Collectively, these 6 cities account for two-thirds of the capital managed by sovereign wealth funds worldwide, totalling \$12.5 trillion as of October 1, 2024.
33. IPS Pritpal Kaur, Superintendent of Police of Phek district in Nagaland, has been selected as the **"2024 IACP 40 Under 40"** awardee by the US-based International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP). She is the lone winner of the '2024 IACP 40 Under 40' award from India this year.
34. **NASA** has launched a \$5.2 billion mission, **"Europa Clipper,"** to investigate Jupiter and its moon, 'Europa', one of the prime locations in the search for life beyond Earth and the study of the moon's icy surface and the subsurface ocean believed to exist beneath, aboard a SpaceX Falcon Heavy rocket from NASA's Kennedy Space Center.
35. The Council of Europe awarded its **"2024 Václav Havel Human Rights Prize"** to Venezuelan opposition figure Maria Corina Machado for her struggle for democracy under President Nicolas Maduro's iron-fisted rule. Maria Corina is the first Latin American to win the award, named after the late Czech dissident, playwright and post-communist president Vaclav Havel.
36. The **"Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2024"**, a tool used by international humanitarian agencies to measure and track hunger levels with GHI scores based on under-nourishment and child mortality indicators across 127 countries, has ranked India at 105th place with a score of 27.3. This ranking places it under the "serious" category of the analysis.
37. The **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** elected 18 members, including Benin, Bolivia, Colombia, Cyprus, Czechia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Gambia, Iceland, Kenya, Marshall Islands, Mexico, North Macedonia, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Spain, Switzerland and Thailand, to the 47-member Human Rights Council for the 2025-2027 term by a secret ballot. The elected members will serve 3-year terms beginning on January 1, 2025, replacing members whose terms of office are set to expire on 31 December 2024.
38. **India** has issued a notice to Pakistan seeking modification of the more than 64-year-old **Indus Waters Treaty (IWT)** that governs the sharing of waters of 6 rivers in the Indus system between the two countries. The latest notice appears to be a fallout of a longstanding dispute over two hydroelectric power projects that India is constructing - one on the Kishanganga River (a tributary of Jhelum), and the other on the Chenab River. World Bank brokered the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty.
39. Spain's tennis legend **Rafael Nadal** has announced his retirement from professional tennis. The 38-year-old will make his final appearance for Spain at Davis Cup in Malaga, Spain. Nadal has won 22 grand slam singles titles and a record 14 French Open titles, earning him the nickname of 'King of Clay', followed by 4 US Open, 2 Wimbledon and 2 Australian Open. He also won a gold medal in the singles at the 2008 Beijing Olympics and gold in the men's double at the 2016 Rio Olympics.
40. The National Space Commission (NSC), India's apex body on space missions, has approved the 5th lunar mission, **"Lupex" (Lunar Polar Exploration Mission)**. The mission, which aims to explore water and more valuable resources on the lunar surface, will be a collaborative effort between the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and Japan's space agency JAXA. This mission will be able to live for up to 100 days on the lunar surface, a stay that would be over 5 times the duration of Chandrayaan-3's mission life.
41. **Britain (UK)** has become the **first G7 country** to end coal-fired power production with the closure of its last plant, Uniper Ratcliffe-on-Soar, in Nottinghamshire. It will end over 140 years of coal power in Britain. In 2015 Britain announced plans to close coal plants within the next decade as part of





- wider measures to reach its climate targets. At that time almost 30% of the country's electricity came from coal but this had fallen to just over 1% last year. Britain, which has a target to reach net zero emissions by 2050, also plans to decarbonise the electricity sector by 2030.
42. In September 2024, U.S. President Joe Biden hosted PM Narendra Modi, Anthony Albanese (PM of Australia) and Kishida Fumio (then PM of Japan) for the **4th in-person "Quad Leaders' Summit"**. This year's Quad summit was originally scheduled to be held in India, but the venue was shifted to the US. The Leaders welcomed India as the host of the '2025 Quad Leaders' Summit', and the US as the host of the '2025 Quad Foreign Ministers Meeting'. Also, India will host the inaugural symposium of the new regional "Maritime Initiative for Training in the Indo-Pacific (MAITRI)" in 2025. Moreover, the Coast Guards of all four countries have planned to launch the 1st-ever "Quad-at-Sea Ship Observer Mission", a joint coast guard exercise, in 2025 in the Indo-Pacific.
 43. Switzerland has again topped the "**World Talent Ranking 2024**" published by the Switzerland-based Institute for Management Development (IMD). Switzerland topped for the 11th consecutive year, with an overall score of 100 this year. Singapore (85.65) claims the second position, followed by Luxembourg (81.69), Sweden (81.02), Denmark (78.49), Iceland (77.94), Norway (77.92), Netherlands (77.88) Hong Kong SAR (77.22), & Austria (77.17). India finds itself ranked 58th globally, with a talent score of 40.47, a decline from last year's 56th position.
 44. The **United Kingdom (UK)** and Mauritius have reached a political agreement under which the UK will return the **Chagos Islands and the atoll of Diego Garcia to Mauritius**. Under the agreement, Mauritius will now assume sovereignty over the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT) and is free to implement a programme of resettlement on the islands of the Chagos Archipelago, other than Diego Garcia. For an initial period of 99 years, the UK will be authorised to exercise with respect to Diego Garcia the sovereign rights and authorities of Mauritius required to ensure the continued operation of the base well into the next century.
 45. **Shigeru Ishiba**, head of the governing Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), is officially elected as the **102nd Prime Minister of Japan**, as the former PM Fumio Kishida stepped down after a successful vote by lawmakers on the first day of an extraordinary session of Parliament.
 46. According to "**Bloomberg's Billionaire Index**", Mark Zuckerberg, CEO of Meta, has officially reached a new financial milestone of \$201 billion, making him the 4th-richest person in the world. He is now positioned just behind Amazon founder Jeff Bezos (\$211 billion), LVMH Chairman Bernard Arnault (\$207 billion), and Tesla's Elon Musk, who holds the title of the world's richest person with a staggering \$272 billion.
 47. **World Bank** has released a report titled, "**Unlocking the Power of Healthy Longevity: Demographic Change, Non-communicable Diseases and Human Capital**". The report presents the findings and recommendations for life course investments to improve health, reduce poverty, address gender inequity, enhance productivity, and increase overall well-being. Investing in healthy longevity could save 150 million lives in low- and middle-income countries and extend millions more by 2050, generating significant economic benefits. By 2050 at least one-third of the world population will be over 60 years of age, as per the report.
 48. Under a transformative collaboration with the **U.S., India** will get its first-ever '**National Security Semiconductor Fabrication Plant**' that will produce chips for use in military hardware in both the countries as well as in critical telecommunication networks and electronics. The project will be enabled by support from the India Semiconductor Mission (ISM) and will be part of a strategic technology partnership among Bharat Semi, 3rdiTech, and the U.S. Space Force.
 49. **Harini Amarasuriya**, a 54-year-old first-time lawmaker & university professor, has been elected as **Sri Lanka's 16th Prime Minister**. She is a leader of the National People's Power (NPP), who completed her undergraduate degree in sociology from Hindu College in Delhi. Amarasuriya is only the third woman prime minister of Sri Lanka. She was administered the oath of office by the island nation's new President Anura Kumar Dissanayake in the capital Colombo.
 50. Australia-based Lowy Institute, in its "**2024 Asia Power Index**", has placed India as the 3rd most powerful nation in Asia with a score of 39.1, just behind the US (81.7) and China (72.7). This year, India overtook Japan (38.9), while Australia (31.9) is the 5th most powerful nation in Asia. The report highlights India's remarkable improvement in various categories, particularly in diplomatic Influence. The 2024 index ranks 27 countries and territories. For the first time, the Southeast Asian country of Timor Leste has been included in the Report.





51. **India** signed and exchanged the **first-of-its-kind agreements focused on the Clean Economy, Fair Economy, and the IPEF Overarching Arrangement under the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF)**. They also aim to strengthen anti-corruption measures and promote tax transparency within member countries. The IPEF, a US-led strategic partnership involving 14 member countries, focuses on building economic cooperation through its 4 key pillars - Trade, Supply Chain Resilience, Clean Economy, and Fair Economy.
52. The World Health Organization (**WHO**) has announced that **Jordan has become the 1st country in the world** to be officially verified as having **eliminated leprosy**. Jordan has not reported any autochthonous cases of leprosy for over two decades. World Leprosy Day' is observed every year on the 'last Sunday of January'. In India, it is observed on '30th January' every year, coinciding with the death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. The theme for World Leprosy Day 2024 is "Beat Leprosy".
53. **Anura Kumara Dissanayake** was sworn in as **Sri Lanka's 9th President** at a ceremony in Colombo. Dissanayake, 56, was sworn in for a 6-year term by Chief Justice Jayantha Jayasuriya at the Presidential Secretariat. Dissanayake replaced Ranil Wickremesinghe who was appointed as the President of Sri Lanka to lead a transition government. This was the first time in the history of the Sri Lankan Presidential election that a second round of counting was necessitated.
54. Indian-origin engineering student Dhruvi Patel won the title of "**Miss India Worldwide 2024**". The 'Miss India Worldwide Pageant', known as the longest-running Indian pageant outside of India, took place in Edison, New Jersey. It is hosted annually by the 'India Festival Committee', led by Indian-Americans Neelam and Dharmatma Saran.
55. **Google is the title sponsor** of the "**FIDE World Chess Championship 2024**" match between China's Ding Liren and India's D. Gukesh, beginning in Singapore on November 23, 2024. The game's governing body FIDE in a release said the technology leader Google's sponsorship would set a new standard for the game's reach and influence.
56. **Scotland's Glasgow** has officially stepped in to **host the "2026 Commonwealth Games"** after the Australian state of Victoria withdrew due to rising costs. This will be a return for the Scottish city, which last hosted the Games in 2014. 6 of the last 7 editions of the Commonwealth Games have been hosted in either Great Britain (which includes Scotland, England, and Wales) or Australia. The '2026 Games' will feature only 10 sporting events compared to the 17 events held at the 2022 Birmingham Games.
57. According to a report by Informa Connect Academy titled "**2024 Trillion Dollar Club**," Elon Musk, the visionary behind Tesla, SpaceX, and X (formerly Twitter), is on track to become the world's 1st trillionaire by 2027. Gautam Adani, the richest individual in India, is expected to reach trillionaire status by 2028. Jensen Huang, the CEO and co-founder of Nvidia, and Prajogo Pangestu, an influential Indonesian business tycoon, are also anticipated to achieve this milestone by 2028. Bernard Arnault, the French businessman leading LVMH, the world's largest luxury conglomerate, is projected to join the trillionaire ranks by 2030.
58. **India** has launched "**Operation Sadbhav**" to provide aid and urgent supplies to Vietnam, Laos, and Myanmar, which are grappling with the devastating effects of '**Typhoon Yagi**', which originated from the South China Sea. 'Typhoon Yagi,' the most powerful tropical cyclone Asia has encountered this year and the 2nd strongest storm worldwide after 'Hurricane Beryl', has caused severe damage across Southeast Asia. "Operation Sadbhav" is part of India's broader effort to contribute to Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region, in line with its longstanding 'Act East Policy'.
59. In September 2024, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) unanimously adopted **Bangladesh's Resolution** proclaiming **6 July** as "**World Rural Development Day**" with an overwhelming number of co-sponsorships. The Resolution urges all member states, organisations of the United Nations, and other international and regional organisations to observe World Rural Development Day. The date has been chosen in commemoration of the establishment of the 'Centre for Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP)' on 6 July 1979. The Resolution initiated by Bangladesh was tabled by a core group composed of Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Peru, the Philippines and Thailand. A total of 43 countries co-sponsored the Resolution.
60. For the 2nd time this year, the "**76th Primetime Emmy Awards 2024**" ceremony took place at the Peacock Theater in downtown Los Angeles, the United States. FX's Drama Series "**Shogun**" emerged as a major winner with 18 awards, while "**Hacks**" won 9 awards including Outstanding

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Comedy Series. The 'Emmy Awards' are the most renowned accolades given to television and emerging media performances. The 'Emmy Awards' were conceived in 1948 and the first ceremony took place on January 25, 1949.


61. In a world-first move, the **Australian government** has announced **plans to introduce legislation that will ban children under the age of 16 from using social media**. Australia is testing a new age-verification system aimed at preventing children from accessing social media platforms. The new legislation, which is expected to be introduced this year, is a direct response to the increasing harm social media platforms are believed to inflict on children and teenagers.
62. According to the World Intellectual Property Organisation's (WIPO) annual **"World Intellectual Property Indicators Report 2024"**, a strong growth in the number of patents filed in India pushed the global patenting activity to a new high in 2023. **India, which came 6th** in the global list, reported a 15.7% growth in the number of patents filed in 2023 at 64,480. This is the first time India made into the top 10 across the three main intellectual property (IP) rights included in the WIPI, i.e., patent, industrial design & trademark. China topped the list with 1.64 million applications, the US came in 2nd with 5,18,364, while Japan filed 4,14,413. Republic of Korea was 4th with 2,87,954 applications and Germany 5th with 1,33,053.

RAFA NADAL


Nadal won **92** ATP-level titles, including **63** on clay - earning him the title King of Clay 


Nadal was born on June 3, **1986** in Manacor, Majorca, Spain 


Nadal has been ranked No1 in the world for **209** weeks 

His uncle Miguel Angel Nadal was a football star with Barcelona who won **62** caps for Spain 

He won **22** Grand Slam singles titles - **14** French Opens, **4** US Opens, **2** Wimbledons, and **2** Australian Opens

One of three men to have won Career Golden Slam (including Olympics gold medal) 

He married Maria Perello in 2019 and they welcomed their first child, a boy called Rafael, in 2022 

They live in a stunning beachfront Majorcan mansion, which he paid around **£3m** for in 2013 

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QUICK FACTS

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



1. Jyotiraditya M. Scindia, Union Minister for Communications and Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), launched the official website for “**Ashtalakshmi Mahotsav**”. The Mahotsav, to be held from December 6th to 8th, 2024, at Bharat Mandapam, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi, is set to be a landmark celebration. The festival draws inspiration from the 8 Northeastern states - Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, and Tripura - collectively known as the “Ashtalakshmi,” representing 8 forms of prosperity.
2. During the '**All India Official Language Conference**' organized on the occasion of Hindi Diwas at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) has been conferred with the “**Rajbhasha Kirti Puraskar**” by the Department of Official Language, Ministry of Home Affairs for the year 2023-24.
3. The **2 Guinness World Records** - the most people performing 'aarti' simultaneously and the largest display of oil lamps - were set at the 8th edition of Deepotsav in Ayodhya on October 30, 2024. The 2 records were set on 55 ghats, including Ram ki Paidi on the banks of the Saryu River in the holy city. Over 25 lakh (25,12,585) earthen lamps (diyas) were lit together, and 1,121 vedacharyas (teachers of religious texts), performed 'aarti' simultaneously. The diyas were counted using drones. For the largest display of oil lamps, the previous record was 22,23,676, achieved during the Deepotsav in 2023.
4. The Government of India, in collaboration with the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC), is holding the **1st “Asian Buddhist Summit (ABS)”** in New Delhi. The summit themed “Role of Buddha Dhamma in Strengthening Asia” is a manifestation of India's Act East Policy, which is principled on the collective, inclusive and spiritual development of Asia.
5. The European Parliament has announced that the “**2024 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought**” will be awarded to María Corina Machado and President-elect Edmundo González Urrutia. The two are being recognised for their efforts to restore democracy and freedom in Venezuela. The award ceremony for the 2024 Sakharov Prize will be held on December 18, in Strasbourg, during the Parliament's plenary session.
6. Ministry of Information & Broadcasting has announced that **Australia** has been nominated as the “**Country of Focus**” at the 55th edition of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI), to be held in Goa from November 20-28, 2024. Founded in 1952, the International Film Festival of India is one of Asia's most significant film festivals, serving as a platform for filmmakers worldwide to present their works. It is held annually in Goa.
7. Film star Chiranjeevi Konidela was honoured with the award of the '**Most Prolific Film Star in Indian Cinema**' in the actor/dancer category by the **Guinness World Records** in a special ceremony held in Hyderabad on September 22, which coincides with the day he made his big screen debut in 1978.
8. The Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting Ashwini Vaishnaw announced that veteran film actor and three-time National Award winner **Mithun Chakraborty** has been named as the recipient of the “**Dadasaheb Phalke Lifetime Achievement Awards for 2022**”. He will be the 54th recipient of the Dada Saheb Phalke Award, which was instituted in 1969 in honour of Dadasaheb Phalke, who is known as the father of Indian cinema and directed India's first feature film 'Raja Harishchandra' in 1913. In 2023, Waheeda Rehman received the Dadasaheb Phalke Lifetime Achievement Awards for 2021.
9. As per Times Travel, the world's top **10 most photogenic UNESCO World Heritage sites in Asia** are - Angkor Wat, Cambodia; Taj Mahal, India; Great Wall of China, China; Bagan, Myanmar; Borobudur, Indonesia; Halong Bay, Vietnam; Kyoto's Historic Monuments, Japan; Petra, Jordan; Rice Terraces of the Philippine Cordilleras, Philippines; & Hampi, India. Cambodia's incredible Angkor Wat tops the list. Angkor Wat was built in the early 12th century and is the largest religious monument in the world. Originally dedicated to the Hindu god Vishnu, it later became a Buddhist site. Hampi or Vijayanagara, known as kishkindha in the Ramayana age is a town in the Vijayanagara district of Karnataka. It is located along the Tungabhadra River.
10. An Indian delegation led by Arunish Chawla, Secretary in the Ministry of Culture, has participated in the “**Special Session of G7 Ministers Meeting on Culture**” in Naples, Italy. During the session, the Naples Statement was signed on 'Culture for the Sustainable Development of Africa and the World'. It is aimed at working with African governments to leverage culture as a driver of sustainable development.
11. The Ministry of Tourism announced the winners of the “**Best Tourism Villages Competition 2024**”, on the occasion of the





- '2024 World Tourism Day (27 September 2024)'. The 'Best Tourism Villages Competition' was introduced in 2023 to promote tourism and to identify and recognize villages which preserve and promote cultural and natural assets through community-based values and commitment to sustainability in all aspects. Aru Village was declared the 'Best Tourism Village' in the "Adventure Tourism Category".
12. The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has received the prestigious "2024 @UN Inter-Agency Task Force Award" for achievements in advancing multi-sectoral action on the prevention and control of Non-communicable Diseases (NCDs) and mental health and the broader NCD-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
 13. The Ministry of Tourism launched a national responsible tourism initiative by the name of "Paryatan Mitra and Paryatan Didi" on 'World Tourism Day (September 27)' to elevate the overall experience for tourists in destinations, by having them meet 'tourist-friendly' people who are proud ambassadors & storytellers for their destination.
 14. The "BRICS Literature Forum 2024" commenced in Kazan, Russia. The Conference was officially inaugurated by Ilur Metshin, Mayor of Kazan. The theme of the forum was, "World literature in the new reality. Dialogue of traditions, national values and cultures". India was represented by **Madhav Kaushik**, President of Sahitya Akademi and Dr K. Sreenivasarao, Secretary of Sahitya Akademi.
 15. Kiran Rao's film "Laapataa Ladies" has been selected as India's official entry for the 'International Feature Film Category' at the 97th Academy Awards 2025. The committee reviewed 30 films nominated to represent India at the 97th Oscar Awards. The 13-member committee was chaired by Assamese filmmaker Jahnu Barua. Last year, the superhit Malayalam film "2018: Everyone's a Hero" was India's official entry for the 96th Oscar Award 2024. India was last nominated for 'Best International Feature' at the Academy Awards for 'Lagaan' (2001). The 97th Academy Awards are scheduled for 2025 in Hollywood, Los Angeles, US.
 16. The Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) has confirmed that **India's ancient sport, Yogasana**, was included as a **demonstration event at the '2026 Asian Games'** to be held in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan. The decision was unanimously passed at the 44th General Assembly of the Olympic Council of Asia, where India's Randhir Singh was elected unopposed as the OCA president for a term of 4 years from 2024 till 2028.
 17. The International Hockey Federation (FIH) has announced Indian hockey stars **Harmanpreet Singh and PR Sreejesh as the "Men's Player of the Year" and "Men's Goalkeeper of the Year"**, respectively. Harmanpreet, captain of the Indian men's team, earned the Player of the Year award for the third time, having previously won in 2020-21 and 2021-22. He was the top scorer at the Paris 2024 Olympics, leading India to a bronze medal. Sreejesh, who retired after the Paris Olympics, received his third Goalkeeper of the Year award. The Netherlands' Yibbi Jansen won the Women's Player of the Year award, while China's Ye Jiao won the Women's Goalkeeper of the Year award. Other awardees are mentioned below.



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TEST ZONE



PASSAGE - 1

India has issued a notice to Pakistan seeking modification of the more than six-decade-old Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) that governs the sharing of waters of six rivers in the Indus system between the two countries. New Delhi said “fundamental and unforeseen” changes in the circumstances require a reassessment of the pact.

The notice was issued to Pakistan on August 30 under Article XII(3) of the Indus Water Treaty (IWT), government sources told Press Trust of India (PTI) on Wednesday (September 18). Article XII(3) says: The provisions of this Treaty may from time to time be modified by a duly ratified treaty concluded for that purpose between the two Governments.

This is not the first time that India has issued such a notice to Pakistan. In January 2023, New Delhi sought review of the IWT due to Islamabad's continued “intransigence” in implementing the treaty, by raising repeated objections to the construction of hydel projects on the Indian side.

The notice appears to be a fallout of a longstanding dispute over two hydroelectric power projects that India is constructing – one on the Kishanganga river, a tributary of Jhelum, and the other on the Chenab.

[Extracted, with edits and revisions, from: "India issues notice to Pakistan seeking review of Indus Waters Treaty: What to know", The Indian Express]

Q.1 When was the treaty between India and Pakistan signed for the use of water available in the Indus and its tributaries?

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| A August 15, 1947 | C September 19, 1960 |
| B January 26, 1950 | D October 2, 1965 |

Q.2 Who were the signatories of the Indus Water Treaty, signed in Karachi after nine years of negotiations arranged by the World Bank?

- | | |
|--|---|
| A Jawaharlal Nehru and Mohammed Ayub Khan | C Indira Gandhi and Zia-ul-Haq |
| B Lal Bahadur Shastri and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto | D Rajiv Gandhi and Ghulam Ishaq Khan |

Q.3 Which rivers were allocated to Pakistan for unrestricted use under the treaty between India and Pakistan?

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| A Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej | C Ganges, Yamuna, and Brahmaputra |
| B Indus, Chenab, and Jhelum | D Godavari, Krishna, and Mahanadi |

Q.4 Under the treaty between India and Pakistan, which rivers were allocated to India for unrestricted usage?

- | | |
|--|---|
| A Indus, Chenab, and Jhelum | C Godavari, Krishna, and Cauvery |
| B Brahmaputra, Yamuna, and Ganges | D Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej |

Q.5 Where does the Kishenganga river, also known as Neelum, a tributary of the Jhelum, originate before joining the river in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir?

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| A Jammu & Kashmir | C Punjab |
| B Himachal Pradesh | D Uttarakhand |

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

Answers

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PASSAGE - 2

The Free Narges Coalition said in a statement on October 24, 2024 that Mohammadi was sentenced on October 19 to an additional six months in prison on the charge of "disobeying and resisting orders." According to the statement, the charge was brought after Mohammadi staged a protest against the execution of another political prisoner in the women's ward of Evin Prison on August 6, 2024. Mohammadi is the 19th woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize and the second Iranian woman after human rights activist Shirin Ebadi in 2003. Mohammadi (52) has kept up her activism despite numerous arrests by Iranian authorities and years behind bars.

She is being held at Iran's notorious Evin Prison, which houses political prisoners and those with Western ties. She already had been serving a 30-month sentence, to which 15 more months were added in January. Iran's Government has not acknowledged her additional sentencing. The latest order reflects the Iranian theocracy's anger that she was awarded the Nobel prize in October 2023 for years of activism despite a decades-long government campaign targeting her.

[Extracted, with edits and revisions, from: "Iran's imprisoned Nobel Peace Prize laureate sentenced to another 6 months in prison", The Hindu]

Q.1 Who won the 2024 Nobel Prize for Physics for foundational discoveries and inventions that enable machine learning with artificial neural networks on October 8, 2024?

- A** Alain Aspect and John Clauser
- B** Roger Penrose and Reinhard Genzel

- C** Arthur Ashkin and Gérard Mourou
- D** John Hopfield and Geoffrey Hinton

Q.2 Who were awarded the 2024 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for their discovery of microRNA and its role in gene regulation?

- A** Victor Ambros and Gary Ruvkun
- B** David Julius and Ardem Patapoutian

- C** Emmanuelle Charpentier and Jennifer Doudna
- D** James P. Allison and Tasuku Honjo

Q.3 Who was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 2024 for their intense poetic prose that confronts historical traumas and exposes the fragility of human life?

- A** Olga Tokarczuk
- B** Kazuo Ishiguro

- C** Han Kang
- D** Annie Ernaux

Q.4 Which Japanese organization, a grassroots movement of atomic bomb survivors from Hiroshima and Nagasaki, also known as Hibakusha, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2024?

- A** Nihon Hidankyo
- B** Peace Boat

- C** Mayors for Peace
- D** Soka Gakkai

Q.5 Who won the 2024 Nobel Prize in Economic Science "for studies of how institutions are formed and affect prosperity" on October 14?

- A** Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson, James Robinson
- B** Paul Milgrom, Robert Wilson, Peter Diamond

- C** Jean Tirole, Oliver Hart, Bengt Holmström
- D** Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo, Michael Kremer

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

Answers

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PASSAGE - 3

The Supreme Court, by a 4-3 majority, overruled the [1] judgment in *S. Azeez Basha vs. Union Of India* that became the basis for denying the minority status to the Aligarh Muslim University. It, however, left it to a three-judge bench to determine afresh the minority status of the AMU, based on the principles evolved in this judgment.

A seven-judge Constitution bench of the Supreme Court delivered four separate judgments in the Aligarh Muslim University minority status case. Chief Justice DY Chandrachud, who headed the bench, said there were four separate opinions, including three dissenting verdicts. The CJI said he has written the majority verdict for himself and Justices Sanjiv Khanna, JB Pardiwala, Manoj Misra. Justice Chandrachud said Justices Surya

Kant, Dipankar Datta and Satish Chandra Sharma had penned their separate dissenting verdicts.

The bench had reserved its verdict on the question on February 1 after hearing arguments for eight days. On February 1, grappling with the intractable issue of the AMU's minority status, the top court said the 1981 amendment to the AMU Act, which effectively accorded it a minority status, only did a "half-hearted job" and did not restore to the institution the position it had prior to 1951.

[Extracted, with edits and revisions, from: "Aligarh Muslim University minority status case: Supreme Court overrules [1] judgment", Hindustan Times]

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

A 1987

B 1967

C 1977

D 1957

Q.2 Who founded the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College (MAO College) at Aligarh in 1877 to address the educational needs of Muslims while preserving Islamic values?

A Maulana Abul Kalam Azad

B Dr. Zakir Husain

C Allama Iqbal

D Sir Syed Ahmed Khan

Q.3 In which year was the AMU Act, which incorporated the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College and the Muslim University Association into AMU, passed?

A 1920

B 1935

C 1947

D 1915

Q.4 In which year did the Allahabad High Court strike down both the AMU Act order and the 1981 amendment on the grounds that AMU was not a minority institution?

A 2006

B 1981

C 1967

D 2010

Q.5 Which Article in Part III of the Indian Constitution grants religious and linguistic minorities the fundamental right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice?

A Article 29

B Article 25

C Article 30(1)

D Article 21

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

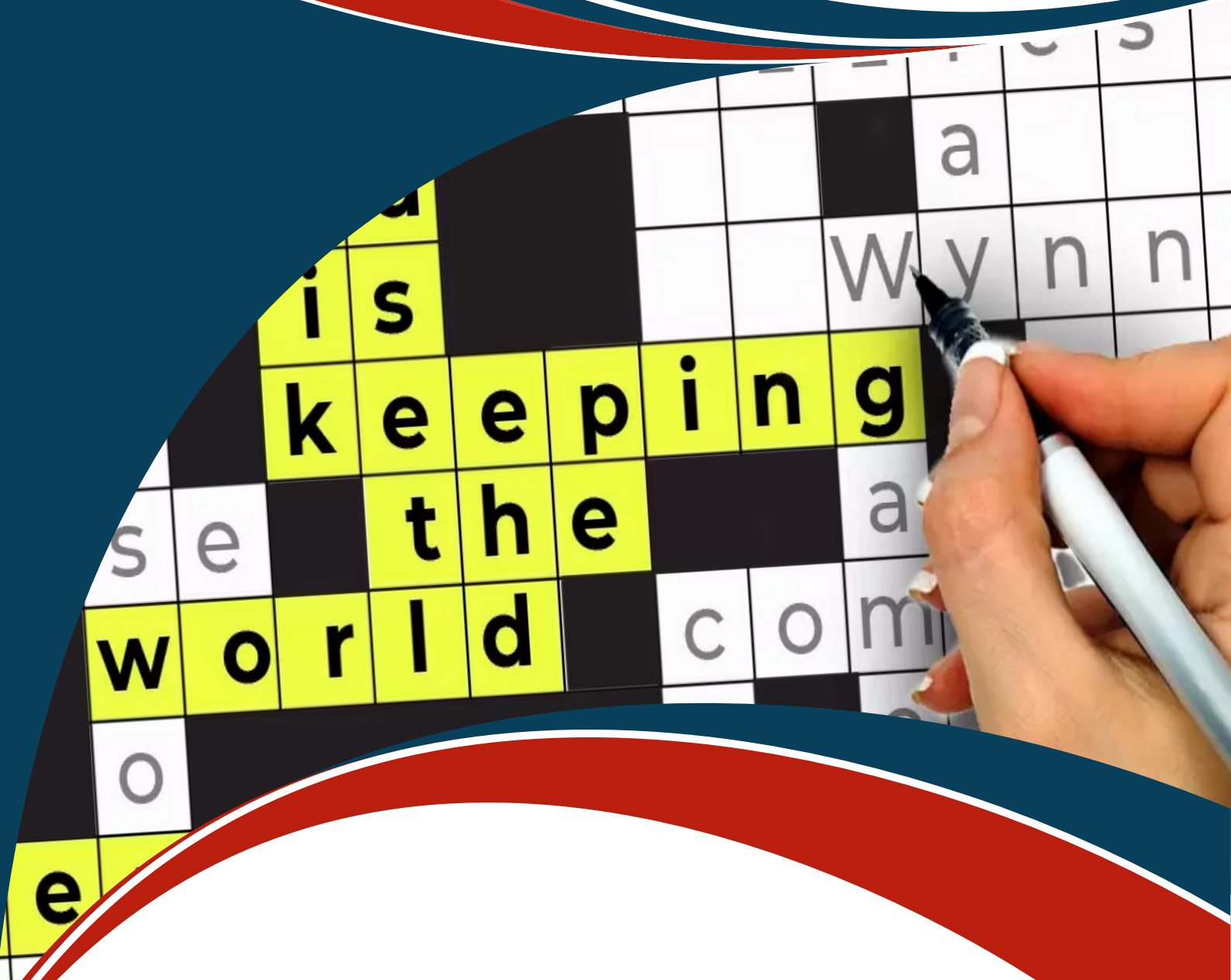
Answers

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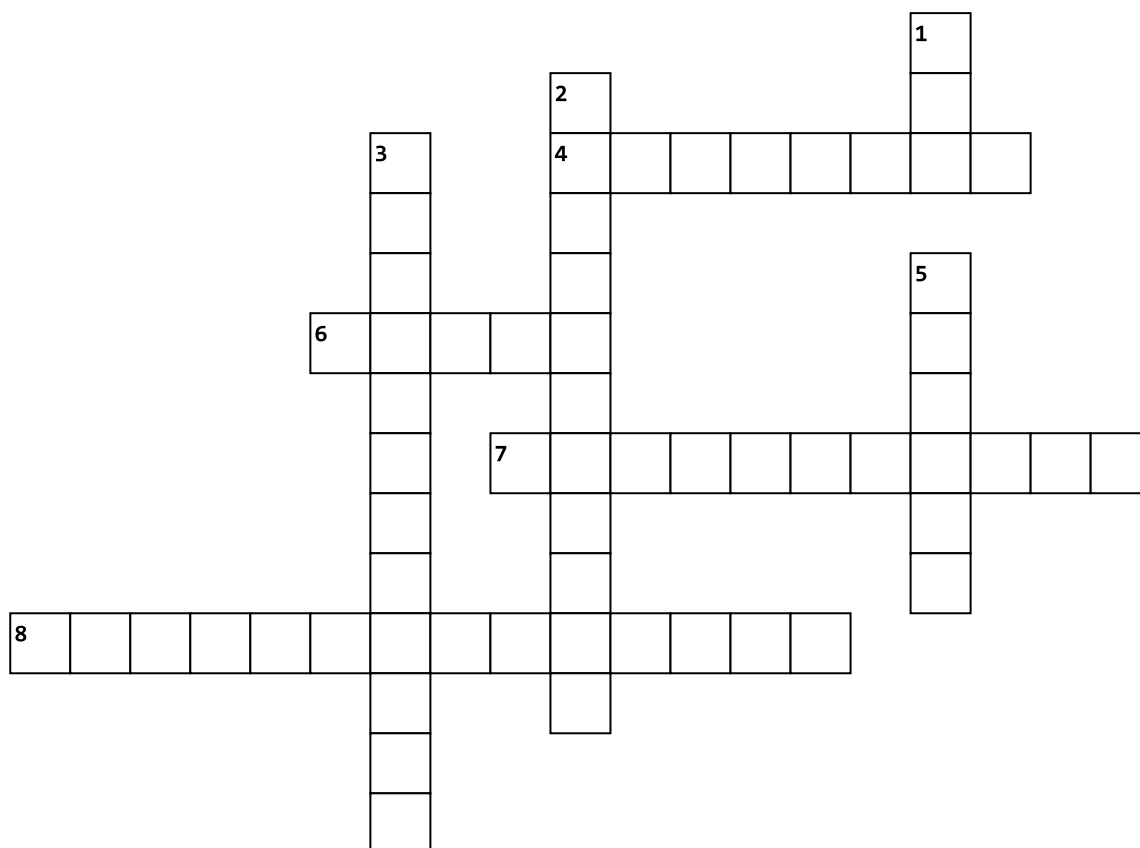
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CROSSWORD CORNER



CROSSWORD - 1



Across

4. Place where the 1st edition of "Khel Utsav 2024" was held
6. India's rank globally in filing patents related to 6G technology
7. Place where the 4th RE-INVEST 2024 was held
8. Appointed as 9th Chairperson of the NCW

Down

1. Place where ISRO has started India's first analog space mission
2. Youngest-rated FIDE chess player ever
3. Femina Miss India 2024
5. State secured 1st rank in the Urban Governance Index

Answers

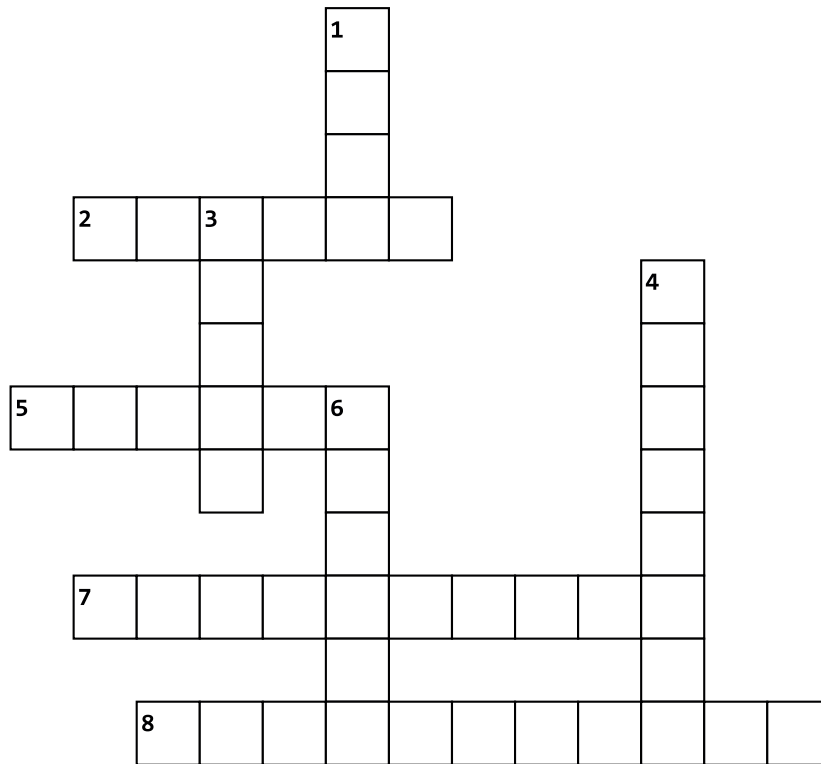
8 VijayaRahatkar
7 Gandhinagar
6 Sixth
5 Kerala

4 NewDelhi
3 NikitaPorwal
2 AnishSarkar
1 Leh





CROSSWORD - 2



Across

2. Delhi's 3rd woman Chief Minister
5. World's 1st country to allow voters to elect judges at all levels
7. Miss Universe India
8. State where the 38th 'National Games' will be held

Down

1. India's rank in the WIPO's Global Innovative Index 2024
3. Country elected to the 15-member GlobE Network
4. Appointed as the new Chairman of Tata Trusts
6. Won 'Best State Category' of the 5th "National Water Awards 2023"

Answers

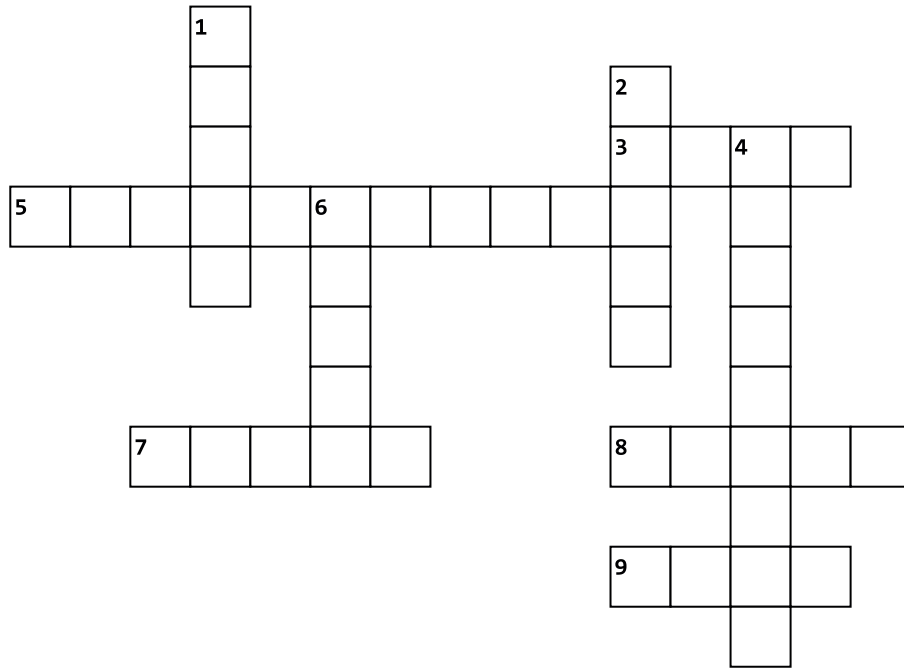
8 Uttarakhand
7 Rhea Singha
6 Odisha
5 Mexico

4 NoelTata
3 India
2 Atishi
1 39th





CROSSWORD - 3



Across

3. Space agency launched "Europa Clipper" to Jupiter
5. Country topped the "World Talent Ranking 2024"
7. India's rank in the Global Hunger Index 2024
8. Country launched "LignoSat", the world's 1st wooden satellite
9. India's rank in the 2024 Henley Passport Index

Down

1. India's rank in the first-ever "Global Nature Conservation Index, 2024"
2. Country re-elected as the President of the ISA for 2024 to 2026
4. World's most powerful passport as per 2024 Henley Passport Index
6. Country has been declared malaria-free by the WHO

Answers

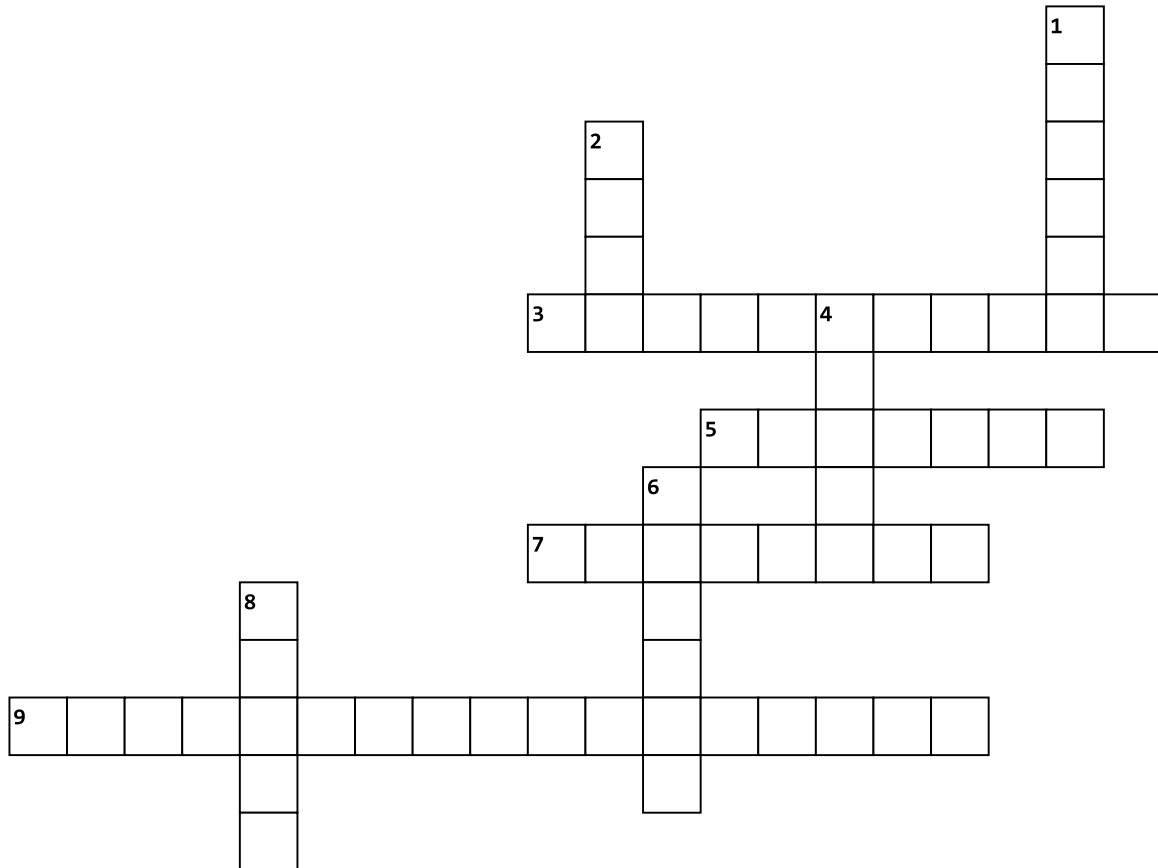
3	NASA	6	Egypt	9	83rd
2	India	5	Switzerland	8	Japan
1	176th	4	Singapore	7	105th

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CROSSWORD - 4



Across

3. Miss India Worldwide 2024
5. Operation launched by India to Vietnam, Laos, and Myanmar after 'Typhoon Yagi'
7. Host country of the 2026 Commonwealth Games
9. Winner of "Dadasaheb Phalke Lifetime Achievement Awards for 2022"

Down

1. Title sponsor of the FIDE World Chess Championship 2024
2. India's rank in the "World Talent Ranking 2024"
4. Country as the 3rd most powerful nation as per the "2024 Asia Power Index"
6. Country has been declared leprosy-free by the WHO
8. World Rural Development Day

Answers

3	DhruviPatel	6	Jordan	9	MithunChakraborty
2	58th	5	Sadbhav	8	6 July
1	Google	4	India	7	Scotland



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