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AFFAIRS BOOSTER FOR LAW EXAMS

LawEx

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RAM TEMPLE CONSECRATION CEREMONY



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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

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 22, 2024, led the 'Pran Pratishtha' rituals as the Ram Mandir was inaugurated in Ayodhya. India celebrated its 75th Republic Day on 26th January 2024 and French President Mr Emmanuel Macron was the Chief Guest at 2024's Republic Day Parade. Rohan Bopanna on January 24 became the oldest-ever player to win a Grand Slam after he and Matthew Ebden beat the Italian pair of Simone Bolelli and Andrea Vavassori 7-6(0), 7-5 in the 2024 Australian Open men's doubles final. The Delhi High Court recently dismissed a plea moved by a 20-year-old unmarried woman seeking medical termination of her pregnancy of 28 weeks. Keep reading for more updated information.

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VAISHNAV BHATT

Our Top Achiever

AIR - 113th

CLAT 2024

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

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

Q. When did you think about doing law?

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

Q. When did you seriously start preparing for CLAT?

Ans. I started my preparation in March 2023.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Q. How to maintain mock scores?

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

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

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

Q. How many Mocks are sufficient for CLAT Preparation?

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

Q. What is your advice to CLAT Aspirants?

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



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AYODHYA RAM TEMPLE

WHY IN NEWS?

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 22, 2024, led the 'Pran Pratishtha' rituals as the Ram Mandir was inaugurated in Ayodhya.

Key Points

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi ended his 11-day fast on January 22 with the culmination of the historic consecration ceremony of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya.
 - The special ritual commenced on January 12 in the lead-up to the 'Pran Pratishtha' of Ram Lalla.
- After the consecration of Ram Lalla in Ayodhya, the PM completed his 11-day fast by taking 'Charanamrit' from the hands of Swami Govind Dev Giri Ji Maharaj.
 - The PM during this period of 11 days adhered to a disciplined routine, including sleeping on the floor and sustaining solely on coconut water.

What is Pran Pratishtha?

- Pran pratishtha is the act which transforms an idol into a deity, giving it the capacity to accept prayers and grant boons.
 - The basic meaning of pran pratishtha is giving life to the idol. The ceremony involves various rituals taken from the Vedas and Puranas, each with its own significance.
- The process of the pran pratishtha is mentioned in the Vedas and elaborated upon in various Puranas, such as Matsya Puran, Vaman Puran, Narad Puran, etc.

DETAILS OF THE RAM TEMPLE



Ahead of the January 22 consecration ceremony of the idol of Ram Lalla (child deity) at Ram Temple, the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra shared the key features of the temple on Thursday.



A 3D rendering of the Ram Temple complex in Ayodhya

380 Feet length (east-west) | **250** Feet Width | **161** Feet height

The temple is in the traditional Nagara style that comprises tall pyramidal towers called shikharas with a kalash (urn) at the top.

392
pillars

The 3-storeyed temple has ramps and lifts for differently abled and elderly.

44 Doors

The garbhagriha is the innermost sanctum of the temple, where the deity is enshrined. Main sanctum sanctorum has Ram Lalla's idol while the first floor has a Shri Ram Darbar.

A parkota (rectangular compound wall) surrounds the temple, with temples of lord Surya, goddess Bhagwati, lord Ganesh and lord Shiv located at each of the corners.

An ancient Shiv temple has been restored in southwestern part of the complex, and a well (Sita koop) is located nearby.

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Key Highlights of Ram Temple

- The 3-storey Mandir is built in the traditional Nagara style, pink sandstone from Mirzapur and the hills of Bansi-Paharpur area in the Bharatpur district of Rajasthan used in the construction of the temple.
- Chandrakant Sompura, 81, and his son Ashish, 51, have designed the complex in the Nagara style of temple architecture.
- The Nagara style of temple architecture emerged some time in the fifth century CE, during the late Gupta period, in northern India.
 - Nagara temples are built on a raised plinth, with the garbha griha (sanctum sanctorum) — where the idol of the deity rests — the most sacred part of the temple.
 - Towering over the garbha griha is the shikhara (literally 'mountain peak'), the most distinguishable aspect of Nagara style temples.
 - A typical Nagara style temple also comprises a circumambulatory passage around the garbha griha, and one or more mandapas (halls) on the same axis as it.
- The main temple area spans 2.67 acres. The temple has 390 pillars, 46 doorways and 5 mandaps.
 - The names of the five Mandaps are Nriitya Mandap, Rang Mandap, Sabha Mandap, Prarthna and Kirtan Mandaps.
- It has been built at an estimated cost of Rs 1,800 crore and has an overall area of 71 acres.
 - It has a length (east-west) of 380 feet, a width of 250 feet, and a height of 161 feet.
- Devotees will enter the temple after climbing 32 steps, scaling a height of 16.11 ft from the ground before entering through Singh Dwar.
- The temple complex will also have temples dedicated to Maharshi Valmiki, Maharshi Vashishtha, Maharshi Vishwamitra, Maharshi Agastya, Nishad Raj, Mata Shabri, among others, in subsequent phases.
- At noon on every Ram Navami, a system of mirrors and lenses will focus the rays of the sun on the forehead of Ram Lalla's idol.
 - The first such anointment by sunrays will occur on Ram Navami on March 29.
 - This mechanical system requires no electricity or battery and uses brass instead of iron or steel.
- Mysuru sculptor Arun Yogiraj crafted the idol of five-year-old Ram Lalla, now installed in the 'Garbh Griha'. The idol is 51 inches tall.
 - Yogiraj was among three sculptors shortlisted to carve idols depicting a five-year-old 51-inch-tall Ram Lalla (child Ram) in standing form.
 - While two idols, sculpted by Yogiraj and Ganesh Bhatt, were carved in dark stone, the third one by Satyanarayan Pandey is pure white.
 - Arun Yogiraj is popular for having carved the 30-foot statue of Subhas Chandra Bose, which is placed in the canopy behind Amar Jawan Jyoti near India Gate in New Delhi, and the 12-foot-tall statue of Adi Shankaracharya in Kedarnath, Uttarakhand.
- No iron has been used in the construction of the temple. The temple is built to last at least 1,000 years.
- The temple is surrounded by a rectangular parikrama called Parkota. Four temples stand on the periphery of the Parkota, of Goddess Bhagwati, Lord Shiva, Lord Surya & Lord Ganesha.
- A temple to Lord Hanuman is on the southern arm and one to Maa Annapurna on the northern arm.





Timeline of the Ram Janambhoomi-Babri Masjid Issue

- 1528: Babri Masjid was built by Mir Baqi, commander of Mughal emperor Babur.
- 1885: Mahant Raghuraj Das files a plea in Faizabad district court, seeking permission to build a canopy outside the disputed structure. The plea is rejected.
- 1949: Idols of Ram Lalla placed under central dome outside the disputed structure.
- In the 1980s, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) initiated a movement for the 'liberation' of Ram Janmabhoomi, Krishna Janmabhoomi, and Vishwanath shrine.
 - Feb 1, 1986: Local court orders the government to open the site for Hindu worshippers.
 - Aug 14, 1989: Allahabad HC orders maintenance of status quo in respect of the disputed structure.
 - The following years witnessed significant events, including the foundation-laying ceremony in 1989 and the Rath Yatra led by LK Advani in 1990, leading to widespread riots.
- December 6, 1992: The 16th-century Babri mosque, believed by many Hindus to be constructed on the site of Lord Ram's birthplace, was demolished by 'kar sevaks'.
- April 3, 1993: 'Acquisition of Certain Area at Ayodhya Act' passed for acquiring land by the Centre in the disputed area.
 - The Liberhan Commission, in 2009, highlighted the premeditated nature of the events in 1992.
- April 2002: Allahabad High Court begins hearing on determining the ownership of the disputed site.
- September 30, 2010: The High Court, in a 2:1 majority, rules for a three-way division of the disputed area between the Sunni Waqf Board, the Nirmohi Akhara, and Ram Lalla.
- May 9, 2011: Supreme Court stays the high court verdict on the Ayodhya land dispute.
- January 2019: Supreme Court sets up a five-judge Constitution bench to hear the case.
- August 6, 2019: Supreme Court begins day-to-day hearing on the land dispute.
- October 16, 2019: Supreme Court concludes the hearing and reserves the order.
- November 9, 2019: In a historic verdict, the Supreme Court grants the entire 2.77-acre disputed land in Ayodhya to the deity Ram Lalla, with the possession of the land remaining with the Central government receiver, thus ending the centuries-long dispute between the Hindus and Muslims.
 - The Supreme Court also told the Central government and the UP government to provide a "prominent and suitable" five-acre plot for Muslims to construct a mosque in Ayodhya.
 - The judges declared that the demolition of the 16th-century Babri Masjid on December 6, 1992, was "an egregious violation of the rule of law" and "a calculated act of destroying a place of public worship".
- February 5, 2020: PM Narendra Modi announces in Lok Sabha the formation of a trust to construct a Ram temple in Ayodhya.
 - The trust, Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra, created by the central government on the orders of the Supreme Court, is also overseeing the construction of the temple.
- August 5, 2020: Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone for the Ram Mandir.
- January 22, 2024: Ram Mandir inaugurated.



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75th REPUBLIC DAY 2024

WHY IN NEWS?

- India celebrated its 75th Republic Day on 26th January 2024.

Key Highlights of the Republic Day 2024

1. Chief Guest

- French President Mr Emmanuel Macron was the Chief Guest at 2024's Republic Day Parade.
 - A 95-member marching contingent and a 33-member band contingent from France took part in the parade.
 - Along with the aircraft of the Indian Air Force, one Multi Role Tanker Transport (MRTT) aircraft and two Rafale aircraft of the French Air Force also participated in the Fly-past.
 - It was the second time the French armed forces participated in India's Republic Day celebrations.
 - In 2016, French troops became the first foreign military contingent to participate in the Republic Day parade.

2. Theme

- Based on the twin themes of 'Viksit Bharat' and 'Bharat - Loktantra ki Matruka', this year's parade witnessed the participation of around 13,000 Special Guests.

3. Nari Shakti

- For the first time ever, the parade was heralded by over 100 women artists playing Indian musical instruments like Sankh, Naadswaram, Nagada, etc.
- For the first time, all-women contingent was led by Captain Sandhya, with three supernumerary officers Captain Sharanya Rao, Sub Lieutenant Anshu Yadav and Flight Lieutenant Shrishti Rao.
- For the first time ever on the Kartavya Path, an all-women contingent of the Armed Forces Medical Services marched in the Republic Day Parade 2024, led by Major Srishti Khullar with Captain Amba Samant from Army Dental Corps, Surgeon Lt Kanchana from Indian Navy, Flight Lieutenant Dhivya Priya from Indian Air Force.
- For the first time, the Indian Air Force (IAF) contingent was led by Squadron Leader Rashmi Thakur with Squadron leaders Sumita Yadav and Pratiti Ahluwalia and Flight Lieutenant Kirti Rohil marched along as supernumerary officers behind the contingent commander.
- The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) contingent was led by Assistant Commandant Chunauti Sharma with officers

of the guard Assistant Commandants Priya Dahiya, Hardik and Pallavi.

- During the 75th Republic Day Parade in 2024, the contingents of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) and Delhi Police were led by women personnel.
 - Border Security Force marching contingent was headed by Assistant Commandant Monika Lakra
 - Central Industrial Security Force by Assistant Commandant Tanmayee Mohanty
 - Central Reserve Police Force by Assistant Commandant Megha Nair
 - Indo-Tibetan Border Police by Assistant Commandant Moniya Sharma
 - Sashastra Seema Bal by Deputy Commandant Nancy Singla
 - Delhi Police by Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police Shweta K Sugathan
 - The Camel Contingent of Border Security Force was led by Deputy Commandant Manohar Singh Kheechee
 - Major Divya Tyagi made history on 26 January 2024 by becoming the first woman officer of the Indian Army to lead an all-men contingent of the Bombay Sappers, Bombay Engineer Group and Centre, at the 75th Republic Day parade.
- #### 4. NCC Contingents
- The National Cadet Corps (NCC) Directorate Maharashtra contingent secured the Prime Minister's Banner at the Republic Day Camp 2024 for the third consecutive year.
 - The Prime Minister's Banner is a prestigious award given to the best performing NCC state contingent at the Republic Day Camp, which is an annual event where NCC cadets from all over India showcase their skills and talents.
- #### 5. Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar
- Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar are conferred on children with exceptional abilities and outstanding achievement in the fields of bravery, art & culture, sports, science & technology, innovation and social service.

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6. Tableaux

- A total of 25 tableaux - 16 States/UTs and nine Ministries/Departments – rolled down the Kartavya Path during the parade.
 - The States/UTs were - Arunachal Pradesh, Haryana, Manipur, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Ladakh, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Meghalaya, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and Telangana.
 - The Ministries/Organisations were - Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways, Ministry of Culture, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), Centre For Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), Election Commission of India, and Central Public Works Department (CPWD).
- To address the concerns of some States/UTs over the non-inclusion of their tableau in the parade, the Ministry of Defence has devised a unique three-year roll-over plan, which ensures equitable participation on a rotational basis of all states and UTs over a period of three years.
- The tableau-themed 'Bharat: Mother of Democracy' has bagged the first prize among tableaux that were part of the 75th Republic Day parade.

7. Vande Bharat 3.0

- For the third consecutive year, the Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Culture presented a cultural extravaganza 'Vande Bharatam' on the theme 'Cultural expression of women power - accomplishment through resolve'.

8. Anant Sutra

- During the 75th Republic Day Parade, the Ministry of Culture installed a unique 'Anant sutra- The Endless Thread' textile showcase made of about 1,900 sarees and drapes from every corner of the country, mounted at a height with wooden frames along the Kartavya Path.
- Every saree had a QR code that guests could scan to discover more about the techniques used in the weaving, stitching and embroidery done in the sarees.

9. Commemorative Coin & Stamp

- The Ministry of Defence released a Commemorative Coin and Commemorative Stamp during the celebrations.

10. Veer Gatha 3.0

- The third edition of Project Veer Gatha, a collaboration of the Ministry of Defence with the Ministry of Education, was organised as a part of Republic Day Celebrations 2024 to inspire and spread awareness among children about the gallant deeds and sacrifices of the Armed Forces.

11. Beating Retreat Ceremony 2024

- The Beating Retreat ceremony took place on 29th January 2024 at Vijay Chowk in Delhi.
 - The ceremony is a military tradition that marks the end of Republic Day celebrations.
 - The ceremony features music bands from the Indian Army, Navy, Air Force, and Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) playing 31 Indian tunes.

Why was January 26 chosen to be India's Republic Day?

- Since 1950, January 26 has marked the day India's Constitution came into effect.
 - However, the Constitution was prepared way before the chosen date, adopted officially by the Constituent Assembly on November 26, 1949.
- On January 26, 1930, the historic "Poorna Swaraj" declaration was officially promulgated, beginning the final phase of India's freedom struggle where the goal would be complete independence from British rule.
 - The Lahore Session of the INC in December 1929 passed the historic "Poorna Swaraj" resolution, calling for total self-rule/sovereignty and complete independence from British rule.
- From 1930 till India finally won its independence in 1947, January 26 was celebrated as "Independence Day" or "Poorna Swaraj Day".
- India gained independence on 15th August 1947, leading to a reevaluation of the significance of Republic Day.
- The selection of 26th January for the promulgation of India's new constitution was ideal due to its existing nationalist significance and alignment with the "Poorna Swaraj" declaration.





WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM (WEF) 2024 ANNUAL MEETING

WHY IN NEWS?

- The latest edition of the World Economic Forum (WEF) annual meeting was held from January 15 to January 19, 2024, in Davos, Switzerland.
- Every year, leaders from various fields, such as business, politics, economics, etc., gather in the Swiss town to discuss challenges facing the world and explore the ways forward.

The WEF was founded on 24th January, 1971 by German engineer Klaus Schwab. headquartered in Geneva. Major reports of the WEF are - Global Competitiveness Report , Global Gender Gap Report, Energy Transition Index, Global Risk Report, Global Travel and Tourism Report.

Key Takeaways

- **Artificial Intelligence** - The one issue that took centre stage at this year's WEF meeting was Artificial Intelligence (AI).
 - While its many transformational abilities for human welfare were discussed, so were the need for regulation, fear of job losses, the risks of impersonation and misinformation, and the inequalities it can potentially worsen.
 - The overall mood, however, seemed to be that the positives outweigh the negatives, and human intelligence did not face a major threat from AI.
- **West Asia** - Gaza dominated the agenda of the WEF, but leaders failed to produce clear details on any practical pathway to Palestinian statehood, or a ceasefire between Israel and Gaza's Palestinian militant group Hamas.
 - Reuters reported that the head of the Palestine Investment Fund estimated at least \$15 billion would be needed to rebuild houses in Gaza alone, but Arab states said they would not fund reconstruction unless there was lasting peace.
- **Red Sea** – The issue of attacks by Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthi group on ships in the Red Sea was also discussed. The attacks would drive the cost of goods from Asia to Europe much higher.
 - CEOs at Davos said they were gaming out alternative supply routes. Yemen's vice president and Iran's foreign minister said the attacks would not stop until Israel ended the war in Gaza.
- **China** - Chinese Premier Li Qiang told Davos China's economy was open for business and highlighted its potential for foreign investment, but investors remained cautious amid sluggish post-pandemic recovery and tensions with the United States.
- **Economy** - Heads of global banks warned of inflationary pressures from increased shipping costs and the possibility of oil price rises.
 - Bank executives fear the market is mispricing interest rate cuts, and that geopolitical risks could cause volatility.
- **Climate** - The need for businesses to adapt to climate change and for countries to unite for action against it despite differences was another hot topic.

Global economic prospects

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61% expect the global economy to **weaken** in the coming year

Chief economists' expectations for the year ahead



Source: Chief Economists Outlook, World Economic Forum, September 2023



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India and WEF 2024

- India participated in the spirit of “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam”, ready to shape a common future marked by global cooperation, aligning with the overarching WEF theme for the year, 'Rebuilding Trust'.
- India made its presence felt in ways other than its economic potential.
 - One of the ideas discussed at WEF this year was how investment in women's health could boost the global economy by \$1 trillion annually by 2040.
- One of the key takeaways from the Forum meeting was the announcement of the launch of a Global Good Alliance for Gender Equity and Equality.
 - Supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Global Good Alliance for Gender Equity and Equality will be housed and anchored by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Centre for Women Leadership.
 - The WEF has come on board as a 'Network Partner' and Invest India as an 'Institutional Partner'.
- The idea of this alliance emerged from the G20 Leaders' Declaration and India's abiding commitment to the cause of women-led development as propounded by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- The objective of this Alliance is to bring together global best practices, knowledge sharing and investments in the identified areas of women's health, education, and enterprise.
- The Alliance seeks to build on the initiatives of the Engagement Group and frameworks like Business 20, Women 20, and G20 EMPOWER.
 - The G20 Alliance for the Empowerment and Progression of Women's Economic Representation (G20 EMPOWER) is an initiative that aims to increase women's leadership and empowerment in the private sector.

What is the World Economic Forum?

Held in Davos, Switzerland, the annual meeting brings together leaders from government, business and civil society to discuss the state of the world and priorities for the year ahead.



The Davos Congress Centre in the Alpine resort of Davos, Switzerland [Markus Schreiber/AP Photo]

1971: Founded by German economist Klaus Schwab

1987: Changed its name from the European Management Forum

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EXPANSION OF THE BSF JURISDICTION IN PUNJAB

WHY IN NEWS?

- The Supreme Court is set to hear the dispute over the expansion of the Border Security Force (BSF) jurisdiction in Punjab.

Background

- On October 11, 2021, the Ministry of Home Affairs issued a notification expanding the jurisdiction of the BSF in Punjab, West Bengal and Assam.
 - This was challenged by the Punjab government the following December (2021).

Why was the BSF Jurisdiction Extended?

- The BSF was created after the enactment of the Border Security Force Act in September 1968.
 - The BSF is meant to secure India's borders with its neighbouring nations and is empowered to arrest, search and seize under a number of laws, such as the Criminal Procedure Code, the Passports Act, the Passport (Entry into India) Act, and the NDPS Act, to name a few.
 - Section 139(1) of the BSF Act allows the central government, through an order, to designate an area “within the local limits of such area adjoining the borders of India” where members of the BSF can exercise powers to prevent offences under any Acts that the central government may specify.
- Prior to the notification issued in October 2021, the BSF could exercise its powers within 15 kilometres of the border in Punjab, West Bengal and Assam. The Centre expanded this to within 50 kilometres of the border.
- The notification states that, within this larger 50-kilometre jurisdiction, the BSF can only exercise powers under the Criminal Procedure Code, the Passport (Entry into India) Act and the Passports Act.
 - For other central legislations, the 15-km limit remains.
- In the states of Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, it extends to the entire area of the state.
- On December 7, 2021, the Ministry of Home Affairs clarified that this expansion was in response to the increased use of drones and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, which have long-range capabilities and enable surveillance and the smuggling of arms and fake currency.
- It also highlighted the 'menace of cattle smuggling' and pointed out that smugglers often seek refuge outside BSF jurisdiction.
- The notification makes the BSF jurisdiction uniform across states, as the 50-kilometre limit was already in place in Rajasthan.
 - The same notification reduced the jurisdiction in Gujarat from 80 km to 50 km.

Why was Punjab challenged this?

- The state of Punjab filed an 'original suit' against the central government in the Supreme Court in December 2021.
 - The Supreme Court has 'original jurisdiction' in disputes between the central government and states under Article 131 of the Constitution, which means cases of this kind can only be heard for the first time at the SC “to the exclusion of any other court”.
- The Punjab government claimed that expanding the jurisdiction of the BSF would compromise the state's exclusive powers to legislate on matters involving the police and public order.
 - These powers are provided in Entries 1 and 2 of the State List under Article 246 of the Constitution.
- They also claimed that the notification was issued without consulting with any of the states concerned.
- Some states view the extension of BSF's jurisdiction as a challenge to the principles of Federalism, which emphasize a distribution of powers between the central government and the states.

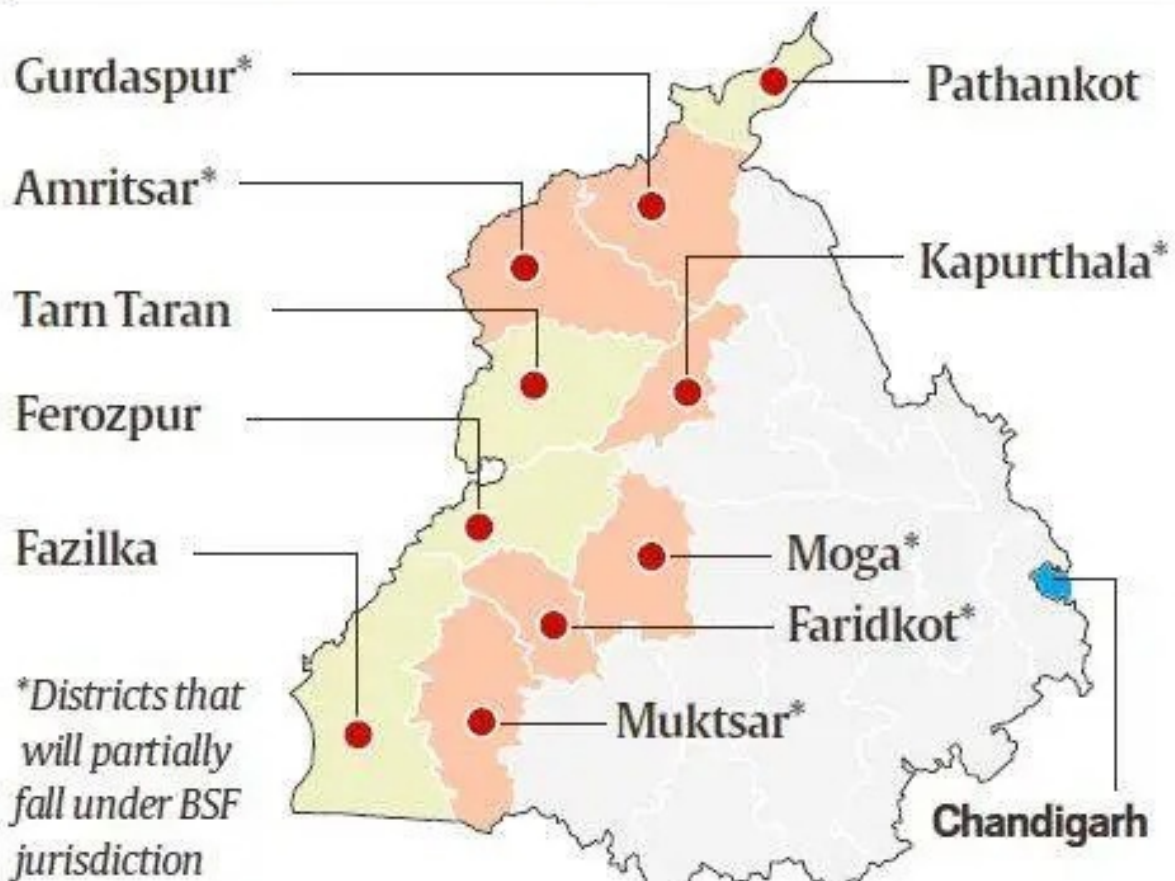




DID YOU KNOW?

- Articles 245 to 255 in Part XI of the Constitution deal with the legislative relations between the Centre and the states.
 - Article 246 - The Indian Constitution provides for a division of the subjects between the Centre and the states through three lists – List-I (Union), List-II (State) and List-III (Concurrent) in the Seventh Schedule.
- Articles 256 to 263 in Part XI of the Constitution deal with the administrative relations between the Centre and the states.
- Articles 268 to 293 in Part XII of the Constitution deal with financial relations between the Centre and the states.

PUNJAB DISTRICTS UNDER BSF JURISDICTION ACCORDING TO CENTRE'S ORDERS



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LEGAL DISPUTE OVER AMU'S MINORITY STATUS

WHY IN NEWS?

- A seven-judge Bench of the Supreme Court (SC) led by the Chief Justice of India (CJI) D.Y. Chandrachud is currently hearing the 57-year-long dispute over the minority character of the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU).

History

- 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.

Key Observations of the SC

- The Supreme Court on February 1 concluded the hearings and reserved its judgment in the case to decide if AMU can claim minority status.
- A Constitution bench of Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud and Justices Sanjiv Khanna, Surya Kant, J B Pardiwala, Dipankar Datta, Manoj Misra and Satish Chandra Sharma wrapped up the proceedings after eight days of marathon hearing.
- The apex court is addressing two issues — the criteria for determining the minority status of an educational institution and whether an institution established under a statute can enjoy such status.
- The SC highlighted that -
 - the regulation by statute doesn't diminish an institution's minority status, emphasising that Article 30 of the Constitution doesn't mandate exclusive administration by the minority community
 - a minority institution need not exclusively offer religious courses and can have a secular administration, admitting students from diverse communities
 - the presence of office-bearers from a majority community in some administrative wings of educational institutions does not necessarily dilute their minority character.

Background of the Dispute

- 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 1967, in *S Azeez Basha v Union of India*, the Supreme Court held that AMU was “established” through the enactment of a law, the Aligarh Muslim University Act, 1920.
 - This meant, according to the court, that AMU did not qualify for minority status as it was not established by the Muslim community.
- This ruling, led to the amendment of the AMU Act in 1981, affirming the university's minority status.
 - The 1981 amendment was intended to undo the effect of the 1967 judgment. But in 2006, the Allahabad High Court struck down the 1981 amendment holding it “unconstitutional”.

- In 2005, AMU reserved 50% of postgraduate medical seats for Muslim candidates. The Allahabad High Court struck down the reservation policy in *Dr Naresh Agarwal vs UOI (2005)* holding the 1981 amendment ultra vires.
- Consequently, in 2006, the UOI and the University appealed to the SC. However, in 2016, the UOI withdrew from the appeal, refusing to acknowledge the University's minority status. The University is now pursuing the case alone.
- In 2019, a three-judge Bench presided by the then CJI Ranjan Gogoi referred the matter to a seven-judge Bench.



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What Constitutes 'Minority Character'?

- Article 30(1) in Part III of the Indian 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.
- Notably, these institutions enjoy exemptions from the implementation of SC, ST, and OBC reservations in both admissions and employment.
- Additionally, they can reserve up to 50% of seats for students from their community and exercise greater control over employees compared to other institutions.
- 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?

- Initially, five religious communities, viz., Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Zoroastrians (Parsis) were notified as minority communities by the Union Government.
 - In 2014, Jains were also notified as another minority community.
- The National Commission for Minorities (NCM), an autonomous body, was established in 1992 under the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992.
- Article 26 of the Indian Constitution provides every religious denomination (or any section of it) the right to establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes.

Chronicling the case



ALLAHABAD HC RULING (2006)

Allahabad high court rules that AMU is not and has never been a minority institution

UPA'S CHALLENGE (2006)

The Congress-led UPA govt files a petition in the SC, challenging the HC order. AMU separately moved SC

NDA LOOKS TO WITHDRAW

APPEAL (2016): NDA govt informs the SC that it wishes to withdraw the UPA appeal

PARAMETERS FOR MINORITY TAG (2019)

The issue was referred to a larger bench to define the parameters for the granting of minority status to educational institutions



The stand taken to file an SLP (special leave petition against the 2006 high court ruling) was also against the public policy of reservation... as applicable to central universities, and therefore, was against public interest."

– Centre in its submission through solicitor general (SG)
TUSHAR MEHTA

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ANNUAL STATUS OF EDUCATION REPORT (ASER) 2023

WHY IN NEWS?

- The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) titled 'ASER 2023: Beyond Basics', based on a survey led by the Pratham Foundation, was released on January 17, 2024.

Key Findings

- The ASER 2023 survey focused on an older group of 14-to-18-year-old children, specifically on their ability to apply reading and math skills to everyday situations, and their aspirations.
- It also sought to capture their access to digital technology, and whether they possess the skills to use it.
- Overall, 86.8% of 14-18-year-olds are enrolled in an educational institution. There are small gender gaps in enrolment, but notable differences are visible by age.
- The percentage of youth not enrolled is 3.9% for 14-year-old youth and is 32.6% for 18-year-olds.
- Most of the people in this age group were enrolled in the Arts/Humanities streams.
- In Class XI or higher, more than half are enrolled in the Arts/Humanities stream (55.7%) and females are less likely to be enrolled in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics stream (28.1%) than males (36.3%).
- Only 5.6% of surveyed youth taking vocational training or other related courses currently. Youth at the college level are the most likely to be taking vocational training (16.2%).
- Most youth are taking short-duration courses of six months or less.
- A higher percentage of males (40.3%) than females (28%) report doing work other than household work for at least 15 days during the preceding month.
- Among both males and females, most youth who are working in activities other than household work tend to be working on family farms.
- About 25% of the youth cannot read a Class II level text fluently in their regional language.
- Over half struggle with division problems (3-digit by 1-digit), with only 43.3% of 14-18-year-olds able to solve such problems correctly. This skill is usually expected in Std III/IV.
- While females (76%) do better than males (70.9%) in reading a Standard II level text in their regional language, males do better than females in arithmetic and English reading.
- Only 57.3% can read sentences in English, and of those, almost three-quarters understand their meanings (73.5%).
- Close to 90% of all youth have a smartphone in the household and know how to use it, and 43.7% of males have their own smartphone compared to 19.8% of females.
- Across all tasks using mobile phones, males outperformed females.

A REPORT CARD FROM THE CLASSROOM

% of children who can do everyday calculations

	Time	Weights	Length (easy)	Length (hard)	Unitary method
Male	50.5	65.8	87.5	45.7	55.9
Female	41.1	45.4	82.1	33.3	42.0
All youth	45.4	54.8	84.6	39.0	48.4

% of children at different arithmetic levels on the ASER test

Arithmetic level	Male	Female	All
Division	45.0	41.8	43.3
Subtraction	20.2	21.6	21.0
Number recognition*	34.8	36.6	35.8

*(11-99 or below)

About ASER

- The ASER is a nationwide citizen-led household survey that provides a snapshot of the status of children's schooling and learning in rural India.
- First implemented in 2005, the 'basic' ASER survey was conducted annually until 2014 and switched to an alternate-year cycle in 2016.
- The ASER 2023 covers four aspects of 14-18-year-old youths' lives in rural India - their educational and career pathways, their ability to apply foundational skills to daily life situations, their digital access and skills, and their aspirations for the future.

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OLDEST WORLD NO. 1 IN MEN'S DOUBLES - ROHAN BOPANNA

WHY IN NEWS?

- Rohan Bopanna on January 24 became the oldest-ever player to win a Grand Slam after he and Matthew Ebden beat the Italian pair of Simone Bolelli and Andrea Vavassori 7-6(0), 7-5 in the 2024 Australian Open men's doubles final.

Key Points

- Rohan Bopanna broke the record established by USA's Rajeev Ram, becoming the oldest player to achieve the World No. 1 ranking.
- Rohan Bopanna is the fourth Indian, following in the footsteps of Leander Paes, Mahesh Bhupathi, and Sania Mirza, to attain the top spot in the world doubles rankings.
- He is also the oldest player to claim a men's doubles title at a Masters 1000 event, achieving this feat at the age of 43 with Ebden at the Indian Wells tournament.
- For Rohan Bopanna it is his second Grand Slam title, having won the French Open mixed doubles trophy with Canada's Gabriela Dabrowski in 2017.

- So far, Sania Mirza, Rohan Bopanna, Leander Paes and Mahesh Bhupathi, are the only four Indian tennis players to have won a Grand Slam in their careers.
- With 18 Grand Slam titles, Leander Paes is India's most successful tennis player and is regarded as one of the best doubles players of all time.
- Mahesh Bhupathi became the first Indian to win a Grand Slam tournament in the 1997 French Open mixed doubles with Japan's Rika Hiraki.
 - He won a total of 12 Grand Slam titles including eight mixed doubles titles, and four men's doubles titles, three of which came alongside Paes.
 - He also went on to represent India at five Olympics, three Asian Games, and one Commonwealth Games before retiring in 2014.
- Sania Mirza has won six tennis Grand Slam titles – three in women's doubles and three in mixed doubles.
- Sumit Nagal, by defeating Kazakhstan's Alexander Bublik in the opening round of the Australian Open 2024 became the first Indian since 1989 to defeat a seeded player at a Grand Slam, following Ramesh Krishnan's victory over Mats Wilander at the Australian Open.

Four Grand Slam Tournaments

- Tennis has four Grand Slam tournaments, also called majors, the Australian Open, French Open, Wimbledon and US Open.
 - The Australian Open takes place in mid-January at Melbourne Park in Melbourne and began in 1905.
 - The French Open started in 1925 and takes place at the Roland Garros in Paris around late May to early June.
 - Wimbledon, which dates to 1877, is the oldest major and is held at the All-England Club in London in June–July.
 - The US Open, which began in 1968, takes place in August–September at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in New York City.
- The Australian and United States tournaments are played on hard courts, the French on clay, and Wimbledon on grass.
- Most Men's Grand Slam Singles Titles
 - Novak Djokovic - 24
 - Rafael Nadal - 22
 - Roger Federer - 20
- Most Women's Grand Slam Singles Titles
 - Margaret Court - 24
 - Serena Williams - 23
 - Steffi Graf - 22

Key Results of Australian Open 2024

- Men's Singles** – Italy's Jannik Sinner defeated Daniil Medvedev
- Women's Singles** – Belarus's Aryna Sabalenka defeated China's Zheng Qinwen
- Men's Doubles** – India's Rohan Bopanna and Australia's Matthew Ebden defeated Italian duo Simone Bolelli and Andrea Vavassori
- Women's Doubles** – Chinese Taipei's Hsieh Su-wei and Belgium's Elise Mertens defeated Ukraine's Lyudmyla Kichenok and Latvia's Jeļena Ostapenko
- Mixed Doubles** – Chinese Taipei's Hsieh Su-wei and Poland's Jan Zieliński defeated United States's Desirae Krawczyk and United Kingdom's Neal Skupski

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19TH SUMMIT OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT 2024

WHY IN NEWS?

- The 19th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was held in Kampala, Uganda.
 - Uganda has taken over as chair from Azerbaijan, to run until 2027.

Key Points

- The theme of the Summit was "Deepening Cooperation for Shared Global Affluence".
- The NAM leaders have adopted the 'Kampala Declaration' and agreed to strengthen the unity and cohesion of the movement as a political force in the international political arena to push back against unilateral actions made against international law.
- The NAM leaders were gravely concerned at the continued deterioration of the situation on the ground and the humanitarian crisis being endured by Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip, where the population, more than half of which are children, are suffering immense loss of life.
- The leaders welcomed the admission of the African Union as a Permanent member to the G20 at the summit held in New Delhi under the Presidency of India, in order to advocate for a more inclusive and equitable global economic order.
- The External Affairs Minister (EAM) of India led the Indian delegation at the 19th NAM Summit, and called for a sustainable solution to the Gaza crisis.
 - He emphasised the need for immediate relief in the humanitarian crisis and urged the prevention of the conflict's spread in the West Asian region.

- During the Summit, nearly 52 years after Ugandan dictator Idi Amin expelled the Indian community of his country, President of Uganda Yoweri Museveni called that move a "mistake" and expressed gratitude to the Indian community of Uganda for the service that they rendered over the decades.
- In August 1972, Idi Amin ordered the expulsion of Indians and other South Asians who were an integral part of the Ugandan life till that point.
- At the end, around 80,000 Indians and thousands of Pakistanis and Bangladesh citizens were expelled from Uganda prompting them to seek refuge in other countries, including the U.K., Canada, Kenya and India.
- In recent years, several Indians who traced their roots to Uganda under Idi Amin have come into prominence that includes former U.K. Home Secretary Priti Patel.



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What is NAM?

- The NAM was established in 1961 in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, through the initiative of five leaders of newly independent countries: Josip Broz Tito of Yugoslavia, Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, Jawaharlal Nehru of India, Sukarno of Indonesia, and Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana.
 - It was formed during the Cold War as an organisation of States that did not seek to formally align themselves with either the United States or the Soviet Union but sought to remain independent or neutral.
- At present, the Movement has 121 Member States, 17 Observer Countries and 10 Observer organizations.
- South Sudan applied and joined the Movement to become the 121st member of NAM.
- NAM does not have a permanent secretariat or a formal founding charter, act, or treaty.
 - The 18th NAM Summit was held in Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan on 25 – 26 October 2019.

3rd South Summit

- The 3rd South Summit was held in Kampala, Uganda in January 2024 to promote South-South cooperation in the fields of trade, investment, sustainable development, climate change, poverty elimination and digital economy.
- The theme of the summit was “Leaving No One Behind.”
- The Summit brought together the 134 members of the Group of 77 (G77) and China.
 - The Chinese government does not consider itself a member, but rather a partner that provides political and financial support to the group.
- The South Summit is the supreme decision-making body of the G77, which was established in June 1964.
- The G77 is the largest intergovernmental organization of developing countries in the United Nations.
- The Chairmanship of G77 rotates on a regional basis (between Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean) and is held for one year in all the Chapters.
 - Uganda, the current chairman, acts as the spokesperson and coordinates the actions of the G77 on behalf of the member countries within the African Chapter.
- The chapters of the G77 are in Geneva (UN), Rome (FAO), Vienna (UNIDO), Paris (UNESCO), Nairobi (UNEP) and the Group of 24 in Washington, D.C. (IMF and World Bank).
- The First and the Second South Summits were held in Havana, Cuba, in 2000 and in Doha, Qatar, in 2005, respectively.

THIRD SOUTH SUMMIT
KAMPALA, UGANDA 2024
"LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND"

The Group of 77 has risen to the challenge of change and responded without losing sight of its mission and clear vision of the need to create a more fair and equitable international economic order.

21ST - 22ND JANUARY 2024

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THIRD SOUTH SUMMIT
KAMPALA, UGANDA 2024
"LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND"

PURPOSE:

- 1 Articulating and promoting collective economic interests.
- 2 Joint negotiating capacity.
- 3 Promoting cooperation for development.

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ASIAN BUDDHIST CONFERENCE FOR PEACE

WHY IN NEWS?

- Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar inaugurated the 12th General Assembly of the Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace (ABCP) on January 17 in New Delhi.

Key Highlights

- The theme of the 12th General Assembly of ABCP was “Buddhist Voice of the Global South.”
- The 12th General Assembly of ABCP unanimously declared His Holiness the Dalai Lama to be a “Universal Supreme Leader of the Buddhist World” in recognition of his lifelong contributions in bringing closer the Buddhist communities and strengthening a sense of oneness of humanity.
- The Conference also proclaimed 6 July, the day of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama's birthday, as the “Universal Day of Compassion.”
- The conference further acknowledged in its resolution the importance of the continuation of Gaden Phodrang Institution and rejected any interference from governments or individuals in the recognition of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama's reincarnation.

About ABCP

- ABCP was founded in 1970 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia as a voluntary movement of followers of Buddhism with both monastic (monks) and lay members.
- It was jointly established by Nomch Mergen Khamba Lama Gabju S. Gombojav, Abbot of Gandan Tegchenling Monastery, the Centre of Mongolian Buddhists, Bandida Khamba Lama Gomboev from Buryatia, Russia and Kushok Bakula Rinpoche from India, and religious leaders from Sri Lanka and Nepal.
- It is currently headquartered at the GandantheGchenling Monastery in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia and the Supreme Head of Mongolian Buddhists, Gabji Demberel Choijamts is the ABCP President.
- Recognising the pioneering work of ABCP, the United Nations granted it the status of an accredited non-governmental organisation with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).
- ABCP was awarded the title “Peace Messenger” by the United Nations Organization for its contribution to the cause of peace and harmony.
- ABCP has also instituted an award called the ABCP-Medal of Honour, granted to individuals for their contributions to world peace and support for the aims, objectives, and ideals of the organization.
- ABCP is also affiliated with the Korean Buddhist Association in Japan and the Council for Religious and Cultural Affairs of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in India.



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FCRA REGISTRATION FOR SEVERAL NGOs CANCELLED

WHY IN NEWS?

- The Foreign Contribution Regulation Act, 2010 (FCRA) registration of two prominent non-governmental organisations (NGOs) — Centre for Policy Research (CPR) and World Vision India (WVI) have been cancelled this month.

What is the FCRA?

- The FCRA was enacted during the Emergency in 1976 amid apprehensions that foreign powers were interfering in India's affairs by pumping money into the country through independent organisations.
 - The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) monitors the implementation of the FCRA.
- The 1976 Act was repealed and replaced with new legislation in 2010. It was further amended in 2020.
- It is mandatory for all such NGOs to register under the FCRA, initially valid for five years and can be renewed if it complies with all norms.
 - Registered groups can receive foreign contributions for social, educational, religious, economic and cultural programmes.
- The Act prohibits the receipt of foreign funds by candidates for elections, journalists or newspaper and media broadcast companies, judges and government servants, members of the legislature and political parties or their office-bearers, and organisations of a political nature.
- In 2015, the MHA mandated NGOs to operate accounts in banks with core banking facilities for real-time security access.
- In July 2022, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), effected changes to FCRA rules through two gazette notifications.
- The key changes were –
 1. exemption from intimation to the government for contributions less than Rs 10 lakh – the earlier limit was Rs 1 lakh – received from relatives abroad and an increase in the time limit for intimation of the opening of bank accounts.
 2. political parties, legislature members, election candidates, judges, government servants, journalists and media houses among others – all barred from receiving foreign contributions – will no longer be prosecuted if they receive foreign contributions from relatives abroad and fail to intimate the government within 90 days.
- In 2023, the MHA amended rules for FCRA-registered NGOs, now necessitating the disclosure of assets created using foreign funds in their annual returns.

NGOs - Accused of Violating FCRA Provisions

- Since 2015, the FCRA registration of more than 16,000 NGOs have been cancelled on account of “violation.”
- As of January 22, there were 16,989 FCRA-registered NGOs active in the country. The FCRA registration of nearly 6,000 NGOs ceased to operate on January 1, 2022, as the MHA either refused to renew their application or the NGOs did not apply.
- According to the MHA, a total of 13,520 associations received ₹55,741.51 crore foreign contributions in the financial years 2019-2020, 2020-21 and 2021-22.
- The MHA alleged that CPR diverted foreign donations to fund “protests and legal battles against developmental projects” and misused funds to “affect India's economic interests.”
 - It alleged that the think tank engaged in the production of current affairs programmes which violated FCRA norms.
 - CPR had furnished a report on air pollution — “Overview on the Commission for Air Quality Management Act 2021, policy challenges for the new government etc.”
 - The MHA said the publishing of current affairs programmes using foreign funds is prohibited under Section 3 of the FCRA.
- The registration of WVI was cancelled for alleged FCRA violations from 2012-13 to 2020-21.
 - WVI is the recipient of the highest amount of foreign donations among all NGOs registered under the Act in 1986.





MADHIKA LANGUAGE

WHY IN NEWS?

- Madhika, a language spoken by the Chakaliya community that migrated from Karnataka centuries ago, is fast becoming extinct with the younger generation opting for Malayalam.

About Language

- Madhika language has no script. It is a blend of Telugu, Tulu, Kannada, and Malayalam.
- Though Madhika is a blend of different languages, it is largely influenced by Havyaka Kannada, an old form of Kannada.
- Like many native languages that perished, Madhika too is pushed into oblivion by a dominating language, Malayalam.
- Due to the lack of documentation (no script) and the passing of older speakers, there is a significant risk that Madhika may not survive beyond individuals.

DID YOU KNOW?

- There are major language families in India, including Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, Austric, Tibeto-Burman, and others.
- In 1991, the Census of India listed 1576 mother tongues' with separate grammatical structures and 1796 speech varieties that are classified as other mother tongues'.
- As per an analysis of 2011 linguistic census data in 2018, more than 19,500 languages or dialects are spoken in India as mother tongues.
- According to the 2011 linguistic census, Hindi is the most widely spoken mother tongue, with 52.8 crore people or 43.6 per cent of the population declaring it as the mother tongue.
 - The next highest is Bengali, the mother tongue of 9.7 crore individuals, accounting for 8 per cent of the population.
- International Mother Language Day is observed on February 21st each year to promote linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism.

About the Chakaliya Community

- The Chakaliya community was nomadic and worshippers of Thiruvekatramana and Mariamma.
- The community migrated from the hilly regions of Karnataka to northern Malabar centuries ago.
- Initially recognised as a Scheduled Tribe, the community was later included in the Scheduled Caste category in Kerala.

Constitutional Provisions Related to Languages in India

- The Eighth Schedule recognizes 22 official languages.
 - These are Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu, Bodo, Santhali, Maithili and Dogri.
- Currently, six languages enjoy the 'Classical' status in India. All the Classical Languages are listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution.
 - Tamil (declared in 2004), Sanskrit (2005), Kannada (2008), Telugu (2008), Malayalam (2013), and Odia (2014).
- Part XVII of the Indian Constitution deals with the official languages in Articles 343 to 351.
 - Article 344 - Provides for the constitution of a Commission by the President on the expiration of five years from the commencement of the Constitution.
 - Article 350A - Provides that every state must provide primary education in the mother tongue.
 - Article 350B - Provides for the appointment of a "Special Officer" for linguistic minorities.
 - Article 351 - Provides for the spread of the Hindi language to develop it so that it may serve as a medium of expression for all the elements of the composite culture of India.
- Article 29 - Protects the interests of minorities, ensuring that all citizens have the right to preserve their distinct language, script, or culture.

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BHARAT RATNA 2024

WHY IN NEWS?

- The recent decision to award the Bharat Ratna to former Bihar chief minister Karpoori Thakur (Posthumous), BJP veteran L K Advani, Former Prime Ministers P.V. Narasimha Rao (Posthumous) and Chaudhary Charan Singh (Posthumous) along with agricultural scientist M. S. Swaminathan (Posthumous) has taken the number of recipients of the country's highest civilian award to 53.
- For the first time in the history of Independent India, the Bharatiya Janata Party-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government became the first government to confer the Bharat Ratna to five people in one single year i.e., in 2024.
- Before this, it was the year 1999 that saw Bharat Ratna was awarded to four dignitaries. Back then, those who were awarded Bharat Ratna included Jayaprakash Narayan (Posthumous), Professor Amartya Sen, Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi (Posthumous) and Pandit Ravi Shankar.

Who was Karpoori Thakur?

- Karpoori Thakur will be the 49th recipient and 15th to be accorded posthumously.
- January 24, 2023, is the birth centenary year of Karpoori Thakur.
- Karpoori Thakur, also known as 'Jannayak', or the leader of the people, was born in 1924 in one of the most backward sections of society — the Nai Samaj.
- He participated in the freedom struggle and was also jailed for it. In independent India, he was voted in as an MLA in 1952. He remained an MLA till his death in 1988.
 - He was the education minister of Bihar from March 5 1967 to January 28, 1968.
 - He served as the 11th Chief Minister of Bihar twice, from 1970-71 and 1977-79.
- Karpoori Thakur is known for many of his decisions — removing English as a compulsory subject for the matriculation examinations; prohibition of alcohol; preferential treatment for unemployed engineers in government contracts; and a layered reservation system.
- In June 1970, during his Chief Ministership, the Bihar government appointed the Mungeri Lal Commission, which in its report of February 1976 named 128 “backward” communities, 94 of which were identified as “most backward”.
 - The 'Karpoori Thakur Formula' provided 26% reservation, of which OBCs got a 12% share, the economically backward classes among the OBCs got 8%, women got 3%, and the poor from the “upper castes” got 3%.
- This reclassification was also seen as a percussor of the Mandal Commission report, advocating for 27% reservations for Other Backward Classes.

About Bharat Ratna Award

- Bharat Ratna is the highest civilian Award of the country.
- The Government of India instituted two civilian awards - Bharat Ratna and Padma Vibhushan -- in 1954.
 - The latter had three classes namely Pahela Varg, Dusra Varg and Tisra Varg.
 - These were subsequently renamed as Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri through a presidential notification on January 8, 1955.
- The Bharat Ratna is awarded in recognition of exceptional service/performance of the highest order in any field of human endeavour.
- The award was originally limited to achievements in the arts, literature, science, and public services.
 - But in December 2011, the government expanded the criteria to include any field of human endeavour.
- The recommendations for Bharat Ratna are made by the Prime Minister to the President. No formal recommendations for Bharat Ratna are necessary.
- It is not mandatory that Bharat Ratna be awarded every year.

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Who is Lal Krishna Advani?

- Lal Krishna Advani will be the 50th recipient of the highest civilian award since its inception.
- Born in Karachi, in present-day Pakistan, on November 8, 1927, Advani, through the years, had served as the President of the Bharatiya Janata Party for the longest period since its inception in 1980.
- Capping a parliamentary career of nearly three decades, he was, first, the Home Minister and, later, the Deputy Prime Minister in the cabinet of Late Atal Bihari Vajpayee (1999-2004).
- It was Advani as BJP Chief when the party adopted the Mandir pledge in 1989, and then his 'Rath Yatra' in 1990 from Somnath in Gujarat to Ayodhya in UP to build the Ram temple changed the course of Indian politics.
 - The Ram Mandir resolution reaped dividends, and the BJP's seat tally under Advani skyrocketed from two to 86.
 - In 1989, Rajiv Gandhi lost power, and the National Front formed the Government under Vishwanath Pratap Singh, with BJP extending support.
 - The Party position moved up to 121 seats in 1992 and 161 in 1996; making the 1996 elections a watershed in Indian democracy.
 - For the first time since independence, the Congress was dethroned from its pre-eminent position, and the BJP became the single largest party in the Lok Sabha.

Who was P.V. Narasimha Rao?

- Pamulaparti Venkata Narasimha Rao served as the 10th Prime Minister of India from June 21, 1991, to May 16, 1996, for a total of 1,791 days.
- Rao previously served as a minister in the Andhra Pradesh government and held a number of portfolios including law, education and health until 1971, when he took over as the Chief Minister. He remained the CM till 1973.
- In 1991, when India was facing a foreign reserves crisis, Narasimha Rao's government brought about three big-ticket economic reforms -- globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation, which paved the way for the end of the notorious license raj.
- PV Narasimha Rao was the first person from South India to become the Prime Minister of India.
- He was also the first Congress PM outside the Nehru-Gandhi family.

Who was Chaudhary Charan Singh?

- Chaudhary Charan Singh served as the fifth Prime Minister of India, albeit for a brief period of time, from July 28, 1979, to January 14, 1980.
- He also served as the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh twice, first in 1967 and then in 1970.
- Charan Singh's three landmark pieces of legislation in Uttar Pradesh — dismantling the zamindari system of intermediaries between the cultivator and the state, enabling consolidation of fragmented holdings, and enforcing land ceiling — transformed the agricultural economy of northern India during the 1950s and 1960s.
- It helped create a new socially and politically empowered middle peasant class in the region.

Who was M.S. Swaminathan?

- Known as the 'Father of the Green Revolution', Dr Swaminathan played a major role in the set of changes introduced in farming in the 1960s and '70s that helped India achieve food security.
- Dr Swaminathan made extraordinary contributions to Indian agriculture, earning him the title "Father of Economic Ecology."
- For his contributions, Swaminathan was awarded the first World Food Prize Laureate in 1987, for "developing and spearheading the introduction of high-yielding wheat and rice varieties into India during the 1960s when that country faced the prospect of widespread famine.
- As the head of the National Commission on Farmers from 2004-06, he recommended that the Minimum Support Price at which farmers sell their crops to the government should be at least 50 per cent more than the weighted average cost of production.






DID YOU KNOW?

- In the first year, the coveted award was conferred upon C Rajagopalachari, Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan and Chandrasekhara Venkata Raman.
- The award has been awarded to a naturalized Indian citizen, Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu, better known as Mother Teresa (1980) and to two non-Indians - Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Nelson Mandela (1990).
- The number of Bharat Ratna awards is restricted to a maximum of three in a particular year. However, it was given to four persons in 1999.
- Since assuming power in 2014, the present government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi awarded seven Bharat Ratna.
 - In 2015, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the first Prime Minister of the BJP, and Madan Mohan Malaviya, the founder of the Banaras Hindu University, were conferred the Bharat Ratna.
 - In 2019, the Bharat Ratna award was conferred upon Pranab Mukherjee and was posthumously awarded to Bhupendra Kumar Hazarika and Nanaji Deshmukh.
 - The award was not given to anyone between 2020 and 2023.

THE 5 BHARAT RATNAS OF 2024



CHAUDHARY CHARAN SINGH

(1902-1987)

Served as the fifth Prime Minister of India from July 1979 and January 1980

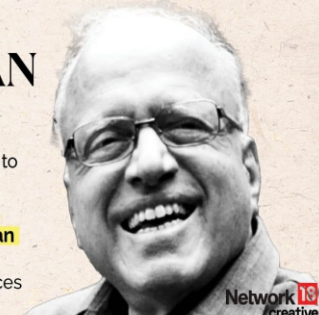
Chief architect of land reforms in UP. Popularly referred to as the **'Champion of Farmers'**

DR MS SWAMINATHAN

(1925-2023)


Known for his pivotal contribution to **India's Green Revolution**

His initiatives **introduced Mexican semi-dwarf wheat to India**, promoting modern farming practices



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THE 5 BHARAT RATNAS OF 2024



LAL KRISHNA ADVANI

(Born Nov 1927)

Served as Deputy Prime Minister of India from 2002 to 2004


Deeply influenced the politics of his time and, along with Atal Bihari Vajpayee, built the BJP into a national political force

PV NARASIMHA RAO

(1921-2004)


Served as Prime Minister of India from 1991 to 1996

Known for playing a key role in **India's economic liberalisation**



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THE 5 BHARAT RATNAS OF 2024



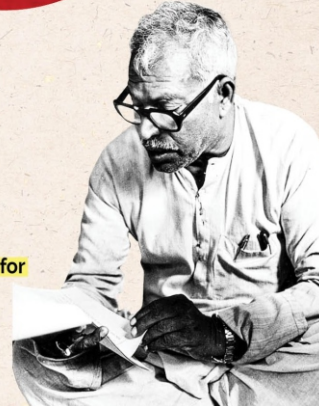
KARPOORI THAKUR

(1924-1988)

Socialist icon and former CM of Bihar

Popularly known as **Jan Nayak** for his pro-poor approach

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PROHIBITION ON 'SAPINDA MARRIAGES'

WHY IN NEWS?

- The Delhi High Court has recently upheld the validity of Section 5(v) of the Hindu Marriage Act (HMA), which prohibits marriages between “sapindas”, which are parties related to each other through ancestors from their parents' side unless their custom or usage governing each of them allows them to do so.

Background

- In 2007, the woman's marriage was declared void after her husband successfully proved that they had entered into a sapinda marriage and that the woman was not from a community where such marriages could be considered a custom.
- This ruling was challenged before the Delhi HC, which dismissed the appeal in October 2023.
- The woman then approached the HC again, challenging the constitutional validity of the prohibition on sapinda marriages and arguing that sapinda marriages are prevalent even when there is no proof of custom.
 - Hence, Section 5(v) which prohibits sapinda marriages unless there is an established custom, violates the right to equality under Article 14 of the Constitution.
- The petitioner also argued that the marriage had received the consent of both families, which proved the legitimacy of the marriage.

Delhi High Court's View

- A Bench of Acting Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Manmeet Pritam Singh Arora held that the petitioner did not provide “stringent proof” of an established custom, which is necessary to justify a sapinda marriage.
- The Delhi HC also held that the choice of a partner in a marriage can be subject to regulation.
 - With this in mind, the court held that the woman did not present any “cogent legal ground” to show that the prohibition against sapinda marriages was violative of the right to equality.

What is a Sapinda Marriage ?

- A sapinda marriage is one between individuals who are related to each other within a certain degree of closeness. Sapinda relationships for the purposes of the HMA are defined in Section 3 of the Act.
- Two persons are said to be sapindas of each other if one is a lineal ascendant of the other within the limits of sapinda relationship, or if they have a common lineal ascendant who is within the limits of sapinda relationship with reference to each of them.
- Line of Ascent - Under the provisions of the HMA, on the mother's side, a Hindu individual cannot marry anyone who is within three generations of them in the “line of ascent”.
 - On the father's side, this prohibition applies to anyone within five generations of the individual.
- In practice, this means that on their mother's side, an individual cannot marry their sibling (first generation), their parents (second generation), their grandparents (third generation), or an individual who shares this ancestry within three generations.
 - On their father's side, this prohibition would extend up to their grandparents' grandparents, and anyone who shares this ancestry within five generations.
- If a marriage is found to violate Section 5(v) for being a sapinda marriage, and there is no established custom that allows such a practice, it will be declared void.
 - This would mean that the marriage was invalid from the very beginning, and will be treated as though it never took place.



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Various Decisions of the Supreme Court

- The right to marry is not expressly recognised as a fundamental right under the Indian Constitution.
 - Although the institution of marriage is regulated by various statutes in India, its recognition as a fundamental right or a constitutional right has only developed through various decisions of the Supreme Court.
- **Lata Singh v. State of UP (2006)** concerning an inter-caste marriage.
 - The Supreme Court held that since the petitioner was a major (above 18 years of age), she had the freedom to choose whomever she wanted to marry and that no law prohibits an inter-caste marriage.
 - Although the ratio specifically applied to the facts of the case, the Court expressly recognised the right to choose a partner of one's choice.
- **In 2014**, the Supreme Court took suo motu cognizance of newspaper reports of the gang rape of a 20-year-old Indian woman on the orders of a village court.
 - Such a punishment was meted out because the woman was in a relationship with a man from a different community.
 - The Court categorically ruled that an inherent aspect of Article 21 of the Constitution (right to life and personal liberty) would be the freedom of choice in marriage.
- **In Shakti Vahini v. Union of India (2018)**, the Court observed that when two adults consensually choose each other as life partners, it is a manifestation of their freedom of choice guaranteed under Articles 19 and 21 of the Constitution.
- **In Shafin Jahan v. K.M. Asokan, (popularly known as the “Hadiya case”)**, the Court outlined that the right to marry a person of one's choice is integral to Article 21 and that such a right cannot be taken away except through a law that is just and reasonable.

DID YOU KNOW?

- In several European countries, the laws on relationships that are considered incestuous are less stringent than in India.
- Incest is the crime of sexual relations or marriage taking place between a male and female who are closely linked by blood.
- In France, the crime of incest was abolished under the Penal Code of 1810, so long as the marriage was between consenting adults.
- This Code was enacted under Napoleon Bonaparte, and was also enforced in Belgium. A new Penal Code was introduced in Belgium in 1867 to replace the French code, but incest remains legal.
- Portuguese law also does not criminalise incest.
- The Republic of Ireland recognised same-sex marriages in 2015, but the law on incest has not been updated to include individuals in same-sex relationships.
- Under Italian law, incest is a crime only if it causes a “public scandal”.
- In the United States, incestuous marriages are banned in all 50 states, though incestuous relationships between consenting adults are allowed in New Jersey and Rhode Island.



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CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX 2023

WHY IN NEWS?

- The 2023 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) has been released recently by Transparency International.

Key Highlights

- The 2023 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) shows that corruption is thriving across the world.
- The CPI ranks 180 countries and territories around the globe by their perceived levels of public sector corruption, scoring on a scale of 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean).
- Over two-thirds of countries score below 50 out of 100, which strongly indicates that they have serious corruption problems.
- The global average is stuck at only 43, while the vast majority of countries have made no progress or declined in the last decade.
- Only 28 of the 180 countries measured by this index have improved their corruption levels over the last twelve years, and 34 countries have significantly worsened.
- For the sixth year in a row, Denmark heads the ranking, with a score of 90.
- Finland (ranked 2) and New Zealand (ranked 3) follow closely with scores of 87 and 85, respectively.
 - Due to well-functioning justice systems, these countries are also among the top scorers in the Rule of Law Index.
- Norway 84 (ranked 4), Singapore 83 (ranked 5), Sweden 82 (ranked 6), Switzerland 82 (ranked 6), the Netherlands 79 (ranked 8), Germany 78 (ranked 9) and Luxembourg 78 (ranked 9) complete the top 10 this year.
- Somalia 11 (ranked 180), Venezuela 13 (ranked 177), Syria 13 (ranked 177) and South Sudan 13 (ranked 177) are at the bottom of the index.
- Yemen 16 (ranked 176), Nicaragua 17 (ranked 172), North Korea 17 (ranked 172), Haiti 17 (ranked 172), Equatorial Guinea 17 (ranked 172), Turkmenistan 18 (ranked 170) and Libya 18 (ranked 170) are the next lowest performers.

India's Performance

- In the Asia-Pacific (APAC) region, the average CPI score remained stagnant at 45 for five consecutive years. India's score of 39 fell below this regional average.
- India ranked 93 out of 180 countries on the CPI 2023 as its overall score remained largely unchanged.
 - In 2023, India's overall score was 39 while in 2022, it was 40. India's rank in 2022 was 85.
- Notable scores in the Asia-Pacific region include New Zealand at rank three with a score of 85, while Singapore and Australia secured ranks five and fourteen with scores of 83 and 75, respectively.
- India's neighbours, Pakistan and China, scored 29 (rank 133) and 42 (rank 76), respectively.
 - Bangladesh (ranked 149) emerges from the Least Developed Country (LDC) status, with economic growth supporting a continued reduction in poverty and improving living conditions.

DID YOU KNOW?

- The Rule of Law Index is published by the World Justice Project (WJP), an independent organization that works to advance the rule of law globally.
 - India ranked 79 out of 140 countries, with a score of 0.49 in the 2023 Rule of Law Index.
- The United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) is a legally binding international instrument adopted by the UN in 2003 and ratified by 187 states, including Lebanon who became a member in 2009.
- The United Nations designated 9 December as International Anti-Corruption Day, to raise awareness of corruption and of the role of the Convention in combating and preventing it.

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DELHI HC REJECTED WOMAN'S PLEA TO ABORT THE 28-WEEK FOETUS

WHY IN NEWS?

- The Delhi High Court recently dismissed a plea moved by a 20-year-old unmarried woman seeking medical termination of her pregnancy of 28 weeks.

Background

- In her plea, the woman submitted she was in a consensual relationship and had come to know of her pregnancy only recently.
- Her advocate said she learnt about it on January 25 when she was already 27 weeks pregnant.
 - She consulted doctors in order to terminate the pregnancy since she was not in a condition to bear the child, but they refused as it was beyond the 24-week period allowed under the MTP Act.
- The lawyer said nobody in her family knew about her pregnancy, and since she was unmarried, her case should be considered for MTP.
 - He urged the court to direct the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi to medically examine the woman to ascertain her mental and physical condition as well as how the foetus was doing.
- The court, however, refused to consider the prayer.

Medical Termination of Pregnancy in India

- The Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act, 1971 was enacted on the recommendations of the Shantilala Shah Committee to protect women's health and decrease maternal mortality.
- The MTP Act, 1971 permits licensed medical professionals to perform safe and legal abortions in specific predetermined situations (as provided under the legislation), to protect women's health and decrease maternal mortality.
- It underwent subsequent amendments through the MTP Amendment Act, 2021.



Key Points of the Judgment

- The Court observed that the “foeticide would neither be ethical nor legally permissible” since the foetus is “normal and viable” and there is “no danger” to the woman to carry on with the pregnancy.
- Based on the report, a single-judge bench of Justice Subramonium Prasad said that there is no congenital abnormality in the foetus or any danger to the mother to carry on with the pregnancy that will mandate termination of the foetus.
- The HC further said the woman's case is also not covered under the August 6, 2018, guidelines as per which medical termination of pregnancy beyond 24 weeks is permitted only in cases of “minor girls who are rape victims or when there are congenital abnormalities in the foetus”.
 - Justice Prasad said since the present case does not fall under any of the categories, therefore, the court is not inclined to accept the woman's prayer.
- The HC said if the woman wants to approach AIIMS for delivery and future course of action, she is free to do so. It further observed that it is certain that AIIMS, “being a premier institute”, would render all facilities and advise her.
- It also said that if the woman is inclined to give her newborn child for adoption, then she is free to approach the Union of India.
 - The court thereafter directed the Union of India to “ensure the process of adoption takes place at the earliest and in a smooth fashion”.

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MTP Act, 2021

- The 2021 Act increased the upper gestation limit from 20 to 24 weeks for special categories of women, including survivors of rape, victims of incest and other vulnerable women like differently abled and minors.
- According to the 2021 Act, the opinion of only one registered medical practitioner will be required for the abortion of a foetus up to 20 weeks of gestation and of two for the termination of pregnancy from 20 to 24 weeks of gestation.
- The opinion of a state-level medical board is required for abortions over 24 weeks, in case of suspected foetal abnormalities.
- A confidentiality clause was added which said that the name and other particulars of a woman whose pregnancy has been terminated cannot be revealed except to a person authorised by law.
- It also extended MTP services, under the clause of failure of contraceptive, to unmarried women to provide access to safe abortion based on a woman's choice, irrespective of marital status.
- The 2021 Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act permits abortion beyond 24 weeks only in cases of substantial foetal abnormalities, or when there are serious threats to the pregnant woman's life or well-being.

Global Trends on Abortion Laws

- Globally, there has been a trend towards liberalisation of abortion laws and increased access to abortion services.
- Since the early 1990s, nearly 60 countries across the world have eased abortion laws to expand the grounds under which abortion is legal.
- Only four countries, namely the U.S., El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Poland have removed legal grounds for abortion during this time period.
- Most notably, the U.S. Supreme Court eliminated the constitutional right to abortion in 2022.
 - In June 2022, the Supreme Court of the United States overturned the landmark 1973 Roe v. Wade decision that institutionalised the right to abortion nationwide.
 - The 6-3 ruling of the US Supreme Court eliminated the constitutional right to choose abortion that existed for almost 50 years, clearing the deck for the states to severely restrict or completely ban the practice.
- Mexico's supreme court has decriminalised abortion nationwide in September 2023. Latin America has seen a trend towards loosening abortion restrictions that have been referred to as a "green wave".

Cannot Undo the Law: SC

SC bench held that medical termination of pregnancy could not be permitted as it had crossed outer limit of 24 weeks

Cannot undo the law disallowing medical termination of pregnancy once it crosses 24 weeks: SC

MTP after this period is permissible only in case of foetal abnormalities or to save the life of the pregnant woman

The case did not fall under either of the

"Permitting termination of pregnancy would violate sections 3 and 5 of the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act since there is no immediate threat to the mother in the matter and this is not a case of foetal abnormality"

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Woman firm on termination

SC has called for a fresh medical report to indicate foetal health and medical condition of the 27-year-old petitioner

ON 'GENUINENESS OF PRESCRIPTIONS'

"Are such prescriptions to be believed by the court or have they come up only for these proceedings? Even the handwritten prescription does not mention when she was diagnosed, what the symptoms or the nature of ailments were. It casts doubt on the genuineness of these prescriptions."

ON NEW MEDICAL REPORT

"The report [from AIIMS board] shall indicate whether the continuance of pregnancy to full term by the petitioner would be jeopardised by the drugs prescribed to her."

Next date of hearing
OCT 16

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

QUICK FACTS



1. The **National Highway Authority (NHA)** of India has undertaken '**One Vehicle, One FASTag**' initiative to discourage use of single FASTag for multiple vehicles or linking multiple Fastags to a particular vehicle. NHA is also encouraging FASTag users to complete the 'Know Your Customer' (KYC) process of their latest FASTag by updating KYC as per RBI guidelines. FASTag is a device that employs Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology for making toll payments directly while the vehicle is in motion.
2. **Gujarat** retained its position as the '**Best Performer**' startup state in the country, according to the 2022 States Startup Ranking released by the Commerce Ministry commemorating National Startup Day 2024. Other states in the best performer category following Gujarat were Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The results encompass five categories including Best Performers, Top Performers, Leaders, Aspiring Leaders, and Emerging Startup Ecosystems. The top performer category was topped by Maharashtra followed by Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan and Telangana while Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand were categorised Leaders.
3. National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (**NHPC**) Limited, a Mini Ratna Category-I Public Sector Undertakings (PSU) and India's premier hydropower company achieved a significant milestone by being honoured with the **Standing Conference of Public Enterprises (SCOPE's) 'Commendation Certificate'** for its effective implementation of the Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005.
4. The Government of India has directed all **schools and higher educational institutions** to provide **digital study material in Indian languages** within the next three years. The decision is announced in line with the National Education Policy (NEP 2020) that promotes multilingualism in education at every level. Study material for all courses under school and higher education will be made available digitally in Indian languages included in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution.
5. A **nine-member committee** headed by former Principal Scientific Advisor to the government, **K Vijay Raghavan**, submitted a comprehensive report addressing concerns about the functioning of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). The nine-member VijayRaghavan panel was set up by the Ministry of Defence to review the functioning of the DRDO.
6. The **Indian Space Research Organisation** developed an indigenous technological solution for fishermen at sea to send emergency messages from fishing boats. The **second-generation Distress Alert Transmitter (DAT-SG)** is an upgrade on DATs that have been operational since 2010. The distress messages are sent through a communication satellite and received at a central control station, where the alert signals are decoded for the boat's identity and location. The extracted information is forwarded to the Indian Coast Guard's Maritime Rescue Coordination Centres which coordinate the search and rescue operations.
7. Two **Arogya Maitri Disaster Management Cube - BHISHM**, revolutionary mobile hospitals equipped with cutting-edge technology, were deployed in Ayodhya to bolster medical readiness and response capabilities during the 'Pran Pratishtha' ceremony. These cubes are part of the broader initiative named "**Project BHISHM**" – **Bharat Health Initiative for Sahyog, Hita and Maitri**. BHISHM is equipped with several innovative tools designed to enhance disaster response and medical support during emergencies. It integrates Artificial Intelligence (AI) and data analytics to facilitate effective coordination, real-time monitoring, and efficient management of medical services in the field.
8. **National Girl Child Day**, an initiative of the Ministry of Women and Child Development, is celebrated every year on **January 24** to spread awareness about the challenges that girls face. The initiative acknowledges the unique challenges faced by girls, including child marriage, and gender-based violence.
9. Prime Minister Narendra Modi participated in **Parakram Diwas** celebrations at Red Fort to mark the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose on **January 23**. He also launched Bharat Parv, a nine-day event to showcase the country's rich diversity and exhibit different cultures. On the Occasion of Parakram Diwas, the Centre has announced **Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar-2024**, to honour the invaluable contribution rendered by individuals and organisations in the field of Disaster Management.

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10. The Election Commission of India celebrated its **14th National Voters' Day on 25th January 2024**. Dedicated to the voters, the theme for 2024 - '**Nothing Like Voting, I Vote For sure**' is a continuation of last year's theme. Since 2011, National Voters' Day has been celebrated on January 25 every year, across the country to mark the foundation day of the Election Commission of India, i.e. 25th January 1950. The main purpose of the NVD celebration is to create electoral awareness amongst citizens and encourage them to participate in the electoral process.
11. The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) recently stressed on the need to implement the **Idate Commission report** that has recommended for setting up a permanent commission for Nomadic, Semi Nomadic, and De-Notified Tribes (NTs, SNTs, and DNTs) in India. The commission also maintained that the government must act to repeal the Habitual Offenders Act, 1952 and if not, the appointment of a representative of De-notified Tribe community with the nodal officers as stipulated in the Act. It also suggested the non-inclusion of DNTs/NTs/SNTs under the SC/ST/OBC and the formulation of specific policies for the former, among many others.
12. The government of **Maharashtra** state issued a gazette notification with a draft of rules that aims to ease and expand the scope for offering **Kunbi OBC** (Other Backward Class) certification to Marathas after the demand for reservation. This will entitle them to apply for government jobs and educational institutions as OBCs, who are entitled to 27 per cent reservation in the state.
13. The **Digital University of Kerala** designed the State's first silicon-proven artificial intelligence (AI) chip – the **Kairali AI Chip**. The chip leverages unique features to deliver capabilities such as speed, power efficiency and scalability. It is touted to contribute its edge intelligence (or edge AI) in a wide array of areas including agriculture, aerospace, mobile phone and automobile industries, drones and security.
14. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on **January 22** announced the '**Pradhan Mantri Suryodaya Yojana**', a government scheme under which one crore households will get rooftop solar power systems. This isn't the first scheme for promoting the installation of rooftop solar power systems, though. In 2014, the government launched the Rooftop Solar Programme which aimed to achieve a cumulative installed capacity of 40,000 megawatts (MW) or 40 gigawatts (GW) by 2022. However, this target couldn't be achieved. As a result, the government extended the deadline from 2022 to 2026. The Pradhan Mantri Suryodaya Yojana seems to be a new attempt to help reach the target of 40 GW rooftop solar capacity.
15. The '**rarest**' **golden tiger** was captured on camera in **Assam's Kaziranga National Park** and Tiger Reserve (KNPTR) after three years by a Coimbatore-based tourism professional. Golden tigers (also known as golden tabby tigers) are a colour form, not a separate subspecies, like white and black tigers. The "golden tiger" is an example of unusual colour aberration, and it could be due to excessive inbreeding, one of the main reasons for population decline among tigers in the wild.
16. Eminent scientists and scientific administrators recently gathered at the S.N. Bose National Centre for Basic Sciences (SNBNCBS) in Kolkata to celebrate the **100th anniversary of Satyendra Nath Bose's** last of the four revolutionary publications that led to new quantum mechanics, traced the evolution of quantum mechanics through the years. SNBNCBS is an Autonomous Research Institute established under the Department of Science and Technology (DST) in 1986 to honour the life and work of S. N. Bose.
17. The **6th edition of the Khelo India Youth Games 2024** (KIYG) concluded on January 31, 2024. The four cities of Tamil Nadu hosted the 6th edition Chennai, Trichy, Madurai, and Coimbatore. **Maharashtra topped** the KIYG 2024 medal table with 57 gold medals. Tamil Nadu came second with 38 golds. Haryana, who have won two KIYG titles, came third with 35 gold, 22 silver and 46 bronze medals. Veera Mangai was the Mascot of the games. Rani Velu Nachiyar, fondly called Veera Mangai, was an Indian queen who waged a war against British colonial rule.
18. The central government recently launched a framework to promote **voluntary carbon markets** in the **agriculture sector** on January 29, 2024. Carbon markets are systems designed to place a price on carbon emissions and create economic incentives for emission reduction, also known as 'carbon credits'.





19. The **first part of the Khelo India Winter Games 2024**, a mouth-watering event for winter sports athletes, will be held in the Union Territory of Ladakh for the first time from February 2-6. The second portion is scheduled in Gulmarg, Jammu & Kashmir from February 21-25. In keeping with the tradition and biodiversity of the region, the mascot of the Khelo India Winter Games 2024 is a snow leopard. It has been named 'Sheen-e She' or Shan in Ladakh region.
20. The **Odisha government** announced the establishment of a melanistic **tiger safari** – a groundbreaking initiative that will be the first of its kind globally. The safari is set to be located near Baripada in the Mayurbhanj district of the state. The chosen site is approximately 15 km away from the Similipal Tiger Reserve, featuring a similar landscape. Notably, Similipal Tiger Reserve stands as the sole habitat for melanistic tigers worldwide, as per the last All India Tiger Estimation Report released by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) in 2018.
21. The **Central Building Research Institute (CBRI)** has identified **14 high-risk zones in subsidence-hit Joshimath** and recommended that the administration should ask the residents in these areas of the town to either take compensation or get relocated. Located in the higher reaches of Chamoli district, Joshimath is a bustling tourist town and the gateway to the Himalayan temple of Badrinath, the famous Sikh shrine Hemkund Sahib, skiing destination Auli and the Valley of Flowers- a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
22. In a significant move towards enhancing the green hydrogen economy, the International Financial Services Centre (**IFSC**) at **GIFT City** has entered into a strategic alliance with the Indian Gas Exchange (**IGX**) and Gujarat State Petroleum Corporation (**GSPC**). This collaboration aims to establish a pioneering Global Hydrogen Trading Mechanism, marking GIFT City as a frontrunner in the global green hydrogen market. This alliance is set to introduce the **Global Hydrogen Price Index**, a benchmark designed for price discovery and market information in the rapidly growing green hydrogen sector in India.





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INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

QUICK FACTS



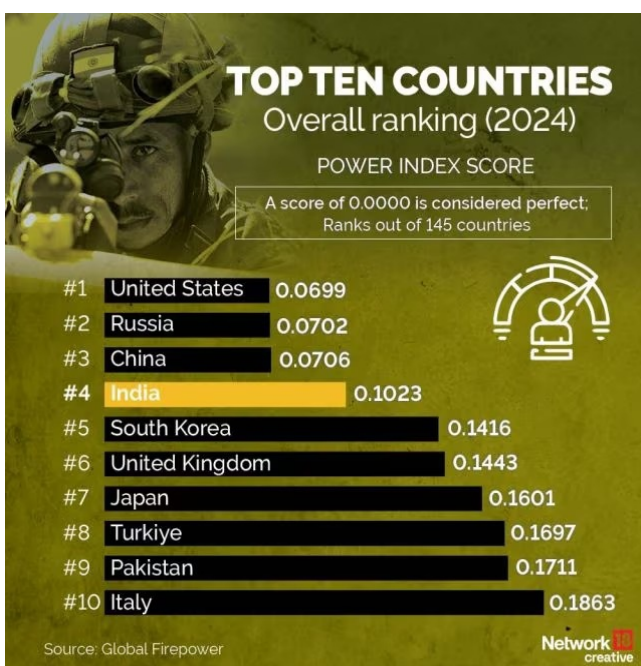
1. Recently, the **World Health Organization (WHO)** has certified **Cabo Verde** as a **malaria-free country**, marking a significant achievement in global health. Cabo Verde is the third country to be certified in the WHO African region, joining Mauritius and Algeria which were certified in 1973 and 2019 respectively. Malaria burden is the highest on the African continent, which accounted for approximately 95% of global malaria cases and 96% of related deaths in 2021.
2. The Indian Army contingent comprising 25 personnel participated in the **2nd edition of India-Egypt Joint Special Forces Exercise CYCLONE**. The Exercise was conducted at Anshas, Egypt from 22nd January to 1st February 2024. The first edition of the exercise was conducted last year in India.
3. The **11th edition of India-Kyrgyzstan Joint Special Forces Exercise KHANJAR** was conducted at the Special Forces Training School in Bakloh, Himachal Pradesh. The aim of the exercise is to exchange experiences and best practices in Counter Terrorism and Special Forces Operations in Built-up Areas and Mountainous Terrain under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.
4. Scientists have mapped the **largest coral reef deep in the ocean**, stretching hundreds of miles off the **Atlantic coast of the United States**. While researchers have known since the 1960s that some coral were present off the Atlantic, the reef's size remained a mystery until new underwater mapping technology made it possible to construct 3D images of the ocean floor.
5. As per the Bloomberg report, the **Indian stock market** has pipped **Hong Kong** to become the **fourth-highest equity market globally**. The combined value of shares listed on Indian exchanges reached USD 4.33 trillion, versus USD 4.29 trillion for Hong Kong, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. India's stock market capitalization crossed USD 4 trillion for the first time on December 5, 2023, with about half of that reportedly coming in the past four years. The top three stock markets are the U.S., China, and Japan.
6. **Indian Air Force (IAF)** recently conducted '**Exercise Desert Knight**' with the French Air and Space Force (FASF) and United Arab Emirates (UAE) Air Force over the Arabian Sea. The main focus of 'Exercise Desert Knight' was on enhancing synergy and interoperability between the three Air Forces. The exercise came amid increasing attacks on commercial vessels by Houthi militants in the Red Sea.
7. The **World Health Organization (WHO)** has released **comprehensive guidance** on the ethical use and governance of large multi-modal models (**LMM**) in **healthcare**. This fast-growing generative artificial intelligence (AI) technology, capable of processing diverse data inputs like text, videos and images, is revolutionising healthcare delivery and medical research.
8. NITI Aayog, the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations jointly launched the '**Investment Forum for Advancing Climate Resilient Agrifood Systems in India**' in New Delhi. This initiative aims to develop an investment and partnership strategy to advance climate-resilient agrifood systems among the government, private sectors, farmers' organizations and financial institutions in India.
9. The inaugural edition of the **India-Saudi Arabia Joint Military Exercise 'SADA TANSEEQ'** was conducted in Rajasthan from 29th January to 10th February 2024. The Exercise aims to train troops of both sides for Joint Operations in Semi Desert terrain under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. The Exercise will enable both sides to share their best practices in the tactics, techniques and procedures of conducting operations in the sub-conventional domain.
10. UN officials on January 28 urged countries to reconsider their decision to suspend the funding for the **United Nations Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA)**, assuring that it would take strict action against any staff member found to be involved in Hamas' October 7 attack on Israel. Earlier, the US and eight other Western countries, which together provided more than half of UNRWA's 2022 budget, cut the money after Israel accused some of the agency's staff members of involvement in the October 7 attack.
11. **NASA's rover Perseverance** has gathered data confirming the existence of ancient lake sediments deposited by water that once filled a giant basin on Mars called **Jezero Crater**. The findings from ground-penetrating radar observations conducted by the robotic rover substantiate previous orbital imagery and other data leading scientists to theorize that portions of Mars were once covered in water and may have harbored microbial life.

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12. The military regimes in **three Sahel nations Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger** announced recently their immediate withdrawal from the West African bloc ECOWAS. All three were suspended from ECOWAS with Niger and Mali facing heavy sanctions.
13. In a historic ruling, the **International Court of Justice (ICJ)** said it had jurisdiction to rule in the case filed by South Africa accusing Israel of committing genocide in Gaza. The interim ruling issued by the court ordered six provisional measures, including for Israel to take all measures to prevent genocidal acts, prevent and punish the direct and public incitement to genocide, and take immediate and effective steps to ensure the provision of humanitarian assistance to civilians in Gaza. The court also ordered Israel to preserve evidence of genocide and to submit a report to the court within a month regarding its compliance with the order.
14. **Kenneth Smith** was executed in **Alabama state** of the **United States** on January 25 by **nitrogen hypoxia**, marking the United States' first execution using the method, and the first time in over four decades that a new method of execution was introduced since lethal injection was first used in 1982.
15. On 24 January, the **European Union** launched the **European Ports Alliance** and its Public-Private Partnership to step up the **fight against drug trafficking** and organised crime. This partnership aims to bring all relevant stakeholders together, to form solutions to protect ports. The European Ports Alliance is a flagship initiative of the EU Roadmap to fight drug trafficking and organised crime, adopted by the Commission on 18 October 2023.
16. **Cameroon** became the **first country to routinely give children a new malaria vaccine** as the shots are rolled out in Africa. The campaign started on January 22, was described by officials as a milestone in the decades-long effort to curb the mosquito-spread disease on the continent, which accounts for 95% of the world's malaria deaths. Cameroon will use the first of two recently approved malaria vaccines, known as Mosquirix.
17. To address housing concerns and target problematic institutions, the **Canadian** government announced a cap on the number of student visas to be issued over the next two years. The cap will be effective for two years, with a reassessment planned for 2025.
18. The **United States** maintains its position as the **world's most powerful military force**, as per the **Global Firepower rankings for 2024**. In a global context, Russia and China follow closely behind, securing the second and third positions. Notably, **India claims the fourth spot**, reflecting its robust military prowess. The top 10 countries with the most powerful militaries include the United States, Russia, China, India, South Korea, the United Kingdom, Japan, Turkiye, Pakistan, and Italy. Conversely, the countries with the least powerful militaries, as per the rankings, are Bhutan, Moldova, Suriname, Somalia, Benin, Liberia, Belize, Sierra Leone, Central African Republic, and Iceland.

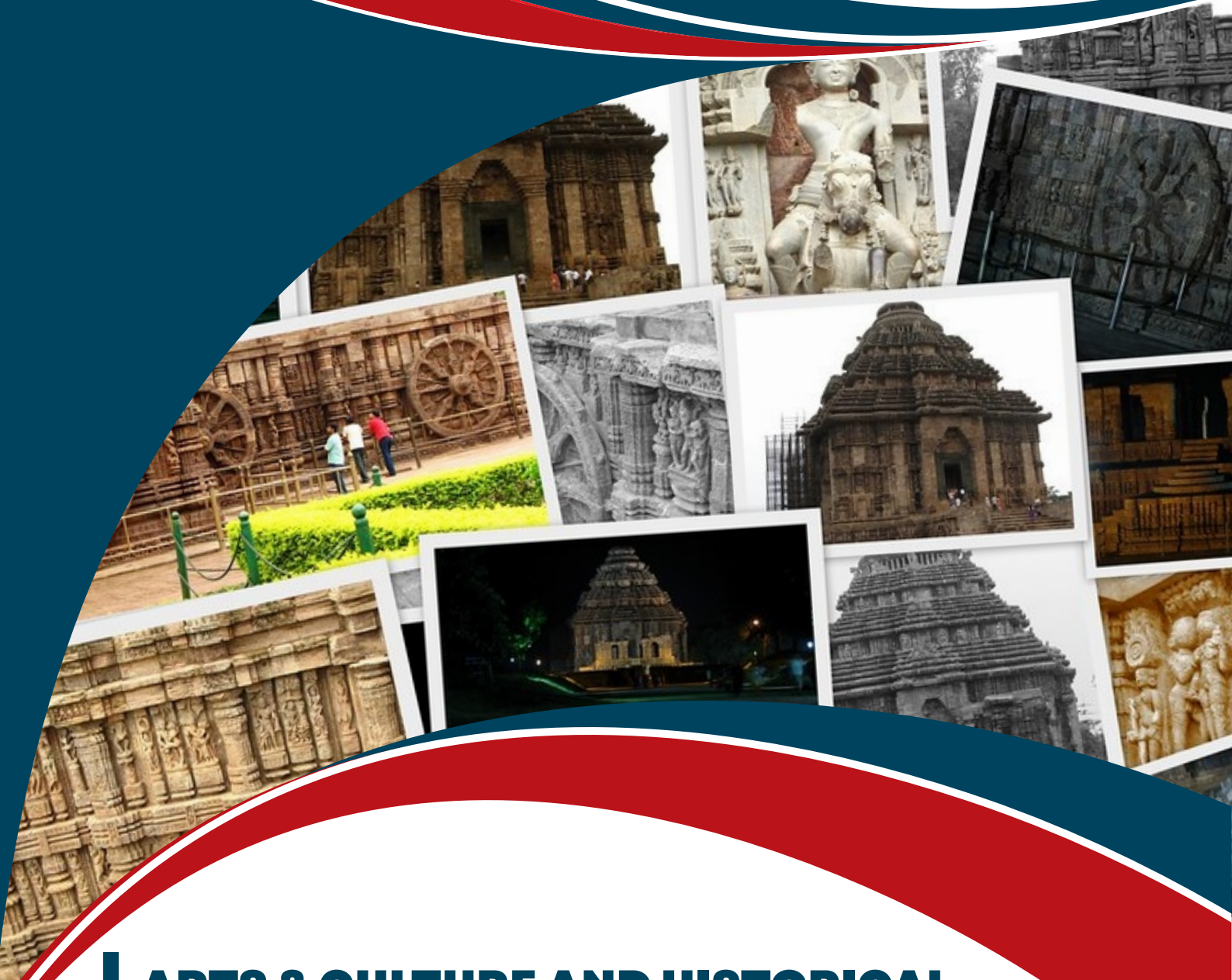


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ARTS & CULTURE AND HISTORICAL EVENTS OF CONTINUING SIGNIFICANCE

QUICK FACTS



1. **Thiruvalluvar Day** was celebrated on **16th January** as part of Pongal to commemorate the Tamil sage for his contributions to literature. Thiruvalluvar, also known as Valluvar, holds a significant place in Tamil culture, standing as one of its most distinguished literary figures. Living during the Sangam era of Tamil classical culture, Thiruvalluvar is revered as a poet and philosopher. **Thirukkural**, his masterpiece, consists of couplets covering various aspects of life, including morality, politics, the economy, and love.
2. Recently, **Tamil Nadu** Chief Minister M K Stalin inaugurated the newly constructed **Jallikattu arena in Keelakarai**, Madurai District. Jallikattu is celebrated with much fervour in several parts of Tamil Nadu, especially in Madurai, Sivaganga, and Pudukkottai districts, during the Tamil month of Thai (mid-January to mid-February). Jallikattu is a bull-taming sport in which contestants attempt to tame a bull for a prize, if they fail, the bull owner wins the prize. It is celebrated as a part of the Pongal (harvest) festival. In **May 2023**, the Supreme Court of India upheld the validity of Jallikattu.
3. Prime Minister Narendra Modi released **commemorative postage stamps on the Ram temple** before the consecration ceremony at the Ayodhya temple on January 22, along with a book of stamps on the Ramayana from around the world. The book covers stamps issued by more than 20 countries, including the US, New Zealand, Singapore, Canada, Cambodia, and organisations like the UN.
4. Prime Minister of India paid tribute to **Mahayogi Vemana** on the occasion of Jayanti on **19th January 2024**. Mahayogi Vemana, popularly known as Yogi Vemana, was an Indian philosopher and poet in the Telugu language. His poems are known for their use of simple language and native idioms. They discuss the subjects of yoga, wisdom and morality.
5. Recently, the **Sri Sri Auniati Satra**, a more than **350-year-old Vaishnavite monastery in Assam's Majuli district**, is seen in the news. The Sri Sri Auniati Satra was established in 1663 in Majuli. It has a history of over 350 years, making it one of the oldest Satras in the region. A Satra is an institutional centre for Assamese Vaishnavism, a bhakti movement that emerged in the 15th century. The largest inhabited river island in the world, Majuli is renowned as a site of Vaishnavite learning.
6. The **Arambai Tenggol (AT)**, a Meitei radical group, has garnered support from Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) in Manipur's Imphal Valley, extracting a commitment to convey the concerns of the people to the Centre. Arambai Tenggol started in 2020 as a cultural outfit but soon transformed into a radical organization.
7. The ASI report suggests that a total of 55 stone sculptures were found in **the Gyanvapi mosque** complex during the **survey conducted by the Archaeological Survey of India**, including 15 "Shiva linga", three sculptures of "Vishnu", three of "Ganesha", two of "Nandi", two of "Krishna", and five of "Hanuman", the ASI report states.
8. **Martyrs' Day**, also known as Shaheed Diwas, is observed on **January 30th** each year in India to pay homage to the brave souls who sacrificed their lives for the freedom and welfare of the nation. One of the most significant events associated with this day is the Punyatithi (death anniversary) of Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation. Also, Martyrs' Day is also commemorated on 23rd March to remember the sacrifice of three extraordinary revolutionaries of India – Bhagat Singh, Shivaram Rajguru, and Sukhdev Thapar.
9. For the year **2024**, the President approved the conferment of **132 Padma awards**, up from 106 such awards last year. The list comprises **five Padma Vibhushan, 17 Padma Bhushan** and **110 Padma Shri** awards. While 30 awardees are women, the list also includes nine persons from the category of "Foreigners/NRI/PIO/OCI" and nine posthumous awardees. Padma Awards are given in various disciplines/fields of activities, viz.- art, social work, public affairs, science and engineering, trade and industry, medicine, literature and education, sports, civil service, etc. The awards are announced on the occasion of Republic Day every year.
10. Once a year a special '**Surya Tilak**' will adorn the forehead of **Ram Lalla**. On **every Ram Navami**, or birthday Ram Lalla the incarnate will get a gift of a special surya tilak designed by Indian scientists. Scientists from a top government institution have designed a special mirror- and lens-based apparatus which will ensure that every Ram Navami day at noon, there is a ray of sunlight that falls directly on the forehead of the 'achal Ram Lalla' idol. It is officially called the 'Surya Tilak mechanism'.
11. **Kim Chil-su from South Korea**, a member of the **Queen Heo dynasty** attended the inauguration ceremony of **Ram Temple in Ayodhya**. According to Korean legend, a teenage princess from Ayodhya crossed the ocean in a boat some 2,000 years ago, sailed 4,500 kilometres to Korea and married King Kim Suro who founded the Gaya Kingdom in





the north Asian country. The princess, Suriratna, then became Queen Heo Hwang-ok. Many members of the Karak clan visit Ayodhya every year to pay tributes at the memorial of Queen Heo Hwang-ok at the Queen Heo Memorial Park, which was set up on the banks of the Sarayu River in Ayodhya in 2001 in a partnership between the Uttar Pradesh government and the Gimhae city in South Korea.

12. **Odisha** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik unveiled the **Shree Mandir Parikrama Prakalpa (SMPP)**, a massive peripheral development project around Puri's 12th-century Shree Jagannath Temple. The 75-metre-wide space encircling the temple, known as the heritage corridor, has now been named the SMPP and divided into nine different zones.
13. The **9th edition of the Pakke Paga Hornbill Festival (PPHF)**, a state festival of **Arunachal Pradesh** took place at Seijosa in the Pakke Kessang district from January 18-20, 2024. The festival focuses on wildlife conservation, with a particular emphasis on hornbills. Four species of
- the birds — Wreathed, Great Indian, Oriental Pied and the endangered Rufous-necked — are found in the Pakke Tiger Reserve (PTR) of Arunachal Pradesh. The area is also home to the Nyishi, the largest tribal group in Arunachal Pradesh.
14. **Assam government** conferred **Assam Baibhav**, the State's Highest Civilian award, to Member of Parliament and former **Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi**. Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi led the five-judge bench that pronounced the Ram temple verdict in 2019. The previous two recipients of this award were - Ratan Tata (first) and Tapan Saikia (Second).
15. After almost nine years **Moh-Juj (buffalo) fights** were held in Ahatguri. In December 2023, the **Assam** cabinet gave in-principle approval to the issue of detailed procedure/SOP for permitting traditional buffalo and bull fights to be organised during Magh Bihu at Ahatguri, Morigaon district, Nagaon district or in any other part of Assam.

Who are the awardees?



5 PADMA VIBHUSHAN

Vyjayanthimala Bali

Konidela Chiranjeevi

M Venkaiah Naidu

Bindeshwar Pathak*

Padma Subrahmanyam

17 PADMA BHUSHAN

M Fathima Beevi*, Public Affairs

Hormusji N Cama, Literature & Education

Mithun Chakraborty, Art

Sitaram Jindal, Trade & Industry

Young Liu, Trade & Industry

Ashwin Balachand Mehta, Medicine

Satyabrata Mookherjee*, Public Affairs

Ram Naik, Public Affairs

Tejas Madhusudan Patel, Medicine

Olanchery Rajagopal, Public Affairs

Dattatray Ambadas Mayaloo, Art

Togdan Rinpoche*, Spiritualism

Pyarelal Sharma, Art

Chandreshwar Prasad Thakur, Medicine

Usha Uthup, Art

Vijaykanth*, Art

Kundan Vyas, Journalism

*Posthumous

110 PADMA SHRI AWARDEES

30 Women awardees

9 Posthumous

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TEST ZONE



PASSAGE - 1

The Supreme Court is set to hear the dispute over the expansion of the Border Security Force (BSF) jurisdiction in Punjab. Final hearings in this case will commence next week.

On October 11, 2021, the Ministry of Home Affairs issued a notification expanding the jurisdiction of the BSF in Punjab, West Bengal and Assam. This was challenged by the Punjab government the following December.

The BSF was created after the enactment of the Border Security Force Act in September 1968. The BSF is meant to secure India's borders with its neighbouring nations and is empowered to arrest, search and seize under a number of laws, such as the Criminal Procedure Code, the Passports Act, the Passport (Entry into India) Act, and the NDPS Act, to name a few.

Prior to the notification issued in October 2021, the BSF could exercise its powers within 15 kilometres of the border in Punjab,

West Bengal and Assam. The Centre expanded this to within 50 kilometres of the border.

The notification states that, within this larger 50-kilometre jurisdiction, the BSF can only exercise powers under the Criminal Procedure Code, the Passport (Entry into India) Act and the Passports Act. For other central legislations, the 15-km limit remains.

On December 7, 2021, the Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai clarified in writing that this expansion was in response to the increased use of drones and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, which have long-range capabilities and enable surveillance and the smuggling of arms and fake currency.

[Extracted, with edits and revisions, from: "Why Punjab govt moved Supreme Court against the expansion of BSF jurisdiction", by Ajoy Sinha Karpuram, The Indian Express]

Q.1 The state of Punjab filed an 'original suit' against the central government in the SC in December 2021. The SC has 'original jurisdiction' in disputes between the central government and states under –

A Article 143

B Article 131

C Article 140

D Article 135

Q.2 During the 75th Republic Day Parade on January 26, who among the following headed the women contingent of the Border Security Force consisting of 144 Mahila Praharis?

A Assistant Commandant Tanmayee Mohanty

B Assistant Commandant Megha Nair

C Assistant Commandant Moniya Sharma

D Assistant Commandant Monika Lakra

Q.3 _____ of the Indian Constitution provides for a division of the subjects between the Centre and the states through three lists – List-I (Union), List-II (State) and List-III (Concurrent) in the Seventh Schedule.

A Article 246

B Article 247

C Article 248

D Article 249

Q.4 The 2021 notification of the Ministry of Home Affairs regarding the expansion of the jurisdiction of the BSF reduced the jurisdiction from 80 km to 50 km in –

A Rajasthan

B Himachal Pradesh

C Gujarat

D Uttarakhand

Q.5 BSF, one of the seven Central Armed Police Forces in India under the authority of Ministry of Home Affairs, was established in –

A 1969

B 1939

C 1965

D 1962

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

Answers

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PASSAGE - 2

In the remote colony of Kookanam, near Karivellur grama panchayat, the Chakaliya community is grappling with the imminent loss of its unique language Madhika. K.P. Narayanan, 87, and his niece Rajputhri, the last fluent speakers of Madhika, fear that after them, the language, which has no script, will be lost to the world.

Despite sounding similar to Kannada, Madhika can still bewilder listeners due to its diverse influences. It is a blend of Telugu, Tulu, Kannada, and Malayalam. The younger generation, drawn to mainstream languages like Malayalam, shows little interest in learning this linguistic relic.

Retired Malayalam teacher N.P. Vijayan, who studied the community as part of his doctoral research, says the community was nomadic and worshippers of Thiruvengkaramana and

Mariamamma. The community in northern Malabar migrated from the hilly regions of Karnataka centuries ago, he says.

Several members of the community still live in small numbers in areas such as Palakunnu, Kookanam, Pranthanchal, and Ezhilode. Initially recognised as a Scheduled Tribe, it was later included in the Scheduled Caste category in Kerala.

Though Madhika is a blend of different languages, it is largely influenced by Havyaka Kannada, an old form of Kannada. Since no documentation has been done, the language may not survive people like Narayanan and Rajputhri, he adds.

[Extracted, with edits and revisions, from: "With just two speakers, a language in Kannur is on the brink", by C.P. Sajit, The Hindu]

Q.1 International Mother Language Day is observed on _____ each year to promote linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism.

A January 21

B February 21

C March 21

D April 21

Q.2 Which of the following mother tongue is the second most widely spoken mother tongue after Hindi as per the 2011 linguistic census?

A Marathi

B Telugu

C Tamil

D Bengali

Q.3 Which of the following Articles protects the interests of minorities, ensuring that all citizens have the right to preserve their distinct language, script, or culture?

A Article 27

B Article 28

C Article 29

D Article 30

Q.4 _____ of the Indian Constitution deals with the official languages in Articles 343 to 351.

A Part XVII

B Part XV

C Part XVI

D Part XVIII

Q.5 Currently, _____ languages enjoy the 'Classical' status in India. All the Classical Languages are listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution.

A Five

B Six

C Seven

D Eight

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

Answers

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PASSAGE - 3

India slipped on the corruption perceptions index (CPI) for 2023 to [1] as against 85 it scored for 2022, a Transparency International report released on Tuesday revealed as it said that fluctuation in two years was low preventing any conclusion on significant change. India's overall score was 39 in 2023 while it was 40 in 2022.

The index prepared by Transparency International ranks 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption drawn from experts and business people. On a scale of 0 to 100 on which countries are judged, 0 is highly corrupt and 100 is very clean.

Seventy-one per cent of the countries across Asia and the Pacific have a CPI score below the regional average score of 45 and the global average of 43 out of 100, observed the report. "These weak scores reflect the lack of delivery by elected officials on anti-

corruption agendas, together with crackdowns on organised civil society and attacks on freedoms of press, assembly and association," said Transparency International.

However, India's ranking is better than its neighbours. In South Asia, both Pakistan (133) and Sri Lanka (115) grapple with their respective debt burdens and ensuing political instability, the report explained.

The report said as Bangladesh (149) emerged from the least developed country (LDC) status, with economic growth supporting a continued reduction in poverty and improving living conditions, the flow of information on the public sector is hindered amidst an ongoing crackdown against the press.

[Extracted, with edits and revisions, from: "India slips 8 places on Transparency International's corruption perception index", businessline]

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

A 90

B 91

C 92

D 93

Q.2 Which country topped the 2023 Corruption Perceptions Index for the sixth year in a row?

A New Zealand

B Denmark

C Finland

D Norway

Q.3 Which of the following countries ranked 180 i.e., the last-ranked country in the 2023 Corruption Perceptions Index?

A Yemen

B Afghanistan

C Somalia

D Syria

Q.4 The United Nations designated _____ as International Anti-Corruption Day, to raise awareness of corruption.

A December 9

B February 12

C June 12

D September 16

Q.5 Where is the Transparency International based?

A Washington, D.C., United States

B Berlin, Germany

C Rome, Italy

D Paris, France

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

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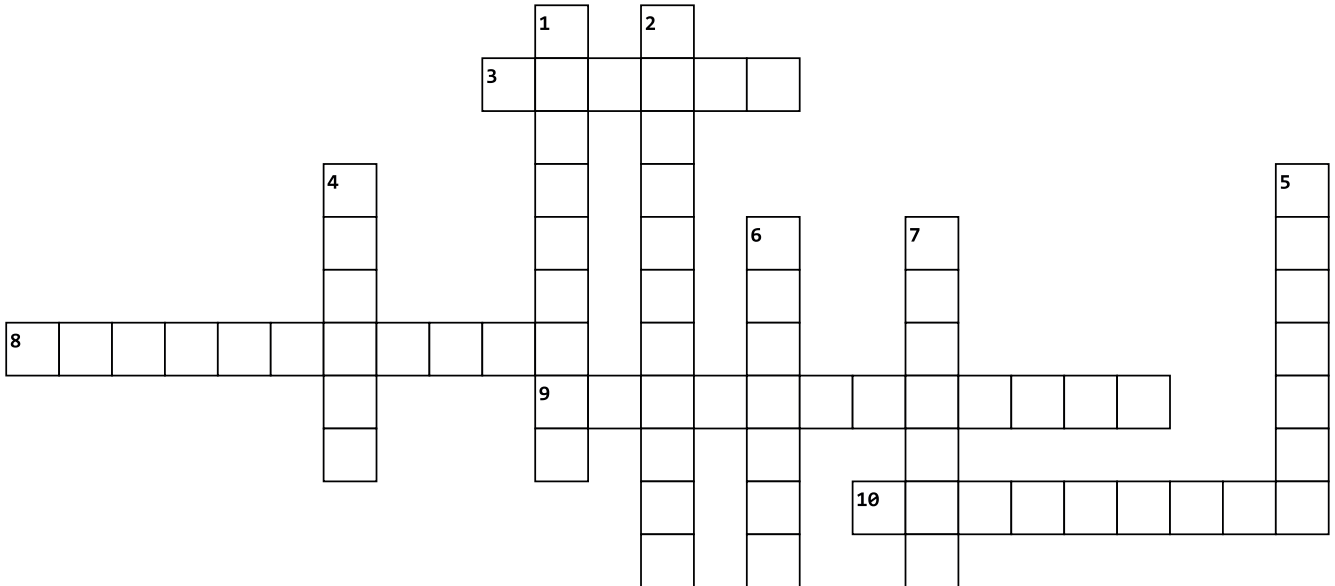
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CROSSWORD CORNER



CROSSWORD - 1



Across

- 3.** First part of the Khelo India Winter Games 2024
- 8.** State offered Kunbi OBC certification to Marathas
- 9.** Air force exercise of India, France and UAE
- 10.** Country declared as malaria-free by WHO

Down

- 1.** 6th edition of the Khelo India Youth Games 2024
- 2.** India-Saudi Arabia Joint Military Exercise
- 4.** State established a tiger safari, first of its kind globally
- 5.** India-Egypt Joint Special Forces Exercise
- 6.** AI Chip designed by the Digital University of Kerala
- 7.** India-Kyrgyzstan Joint Special Forces Exercise

Answers

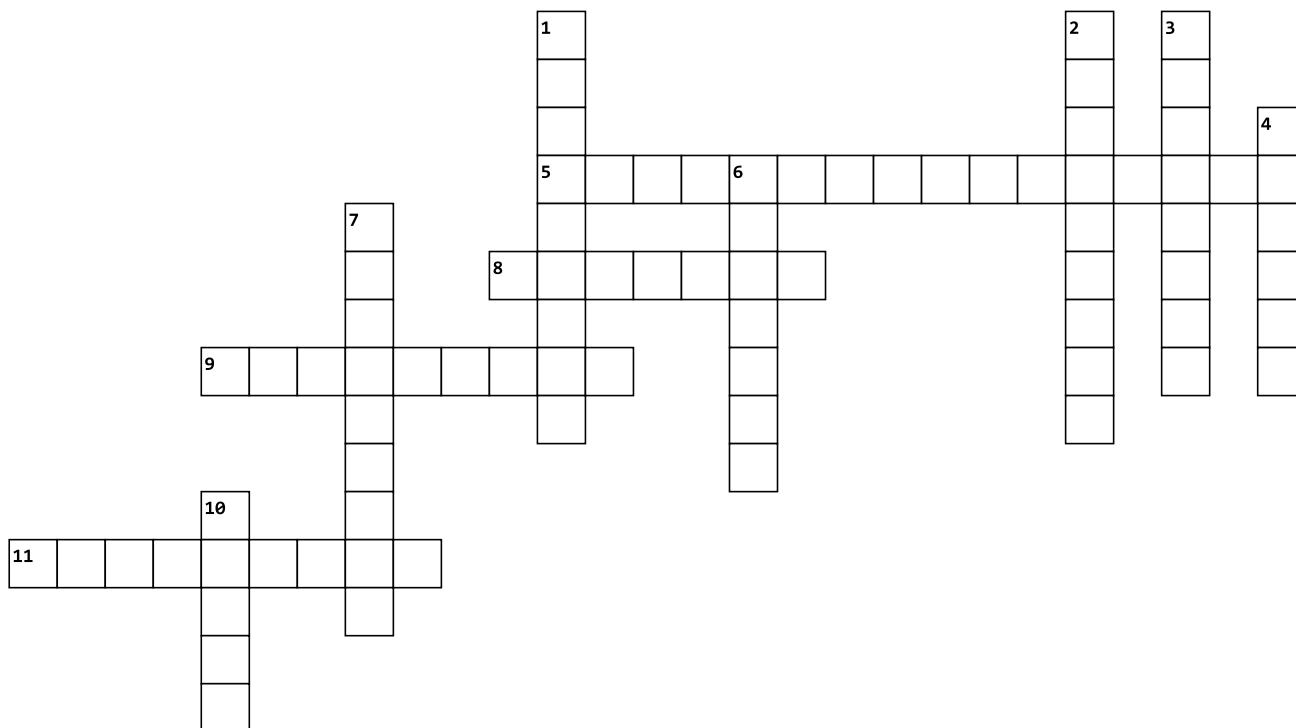
10	CaboVerde	5	CYCLONE
9	Desertknigh	4	Odisha
8	Maharashtra	3	Ladakh
7	KHANJAR	2	SADATANSEEQ
6	Kairali	1	TamilNadu

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CROSSWORD - 2



Across

- 5. 9th edition of the Pakke Paga Hornbill Festival
- 8. 'Best Performer' startup state in the country
- 9. Parakram Diwas
- 11. Martyrs' Day, also known as Shaheed Diwas

Down

- 1. National Voters' Day
- 2. Thiruvalluvar Day
- 3. First country to routinely give children a new malaria vaccine
- 4. Arogya Maitri Disaster Management Cube
- 6. American state used nitrogen hypoxia as a new method of execution
- 7. National Girl Child Day
- 10. Fourth most powerful military force in the world

Answers

11. 30 January

10. India

9. 23 January

8. Gujarat

7. 24 January

6. Alabama

5. Arunachal Pradesh

4. BHISHM

3. Cameroon

2. 16 January

1. 25 January

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