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06_02_2025 DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

TOPICS COVERED (GS Paper I: History, Society and Geography)

1. **Night School for Kalbeliya Women Unlocks New Opportunities / कालबेलिया महिलाओं के लिए नाइट स्कूल ने नए अवसर खोले**
2. **Western Ghats: a living archive of culture, memory, and resilience / पश्चिमी घाट: संस्कृति, स्मृति और लचीलेपन का जीवंत संग्रह**
3. **'West Asia crisis must not be allowed to undermine IMEC' / 'पश्चिम एशिया संकट को आईएमईसी को कमजोर करने की अनुमति नहीं दी जानी चाहिए'**
4. **Amid a delay in holding Census, vital reports on births and deaths pending since 2020 / जनगणना में देरी के बीच, जन्म और मृत्यु पर महत्वपूर्ण रिपोर्ट 2020 से लंबित**
5. **Congress, Sikkim BJP oppose plan to rebuild Teesta dam / कांग्रेस, सिक्किम भाजपा ने तीस्ता बांध के पुनर्निर्माण की योजना का विरोध किया**

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Night school for Kalbeliya women unlocks new opportunities

GS Paper I: Society

Mohammed Iqbal
AJMER

Making a difference within the nomadic Kalbeliya tribal community, Sanju Devi runs an *atta chakki* (flour mill) at her modest home to grind fresh flour for 40 to 50 households in Bhairwai village of Ajmer district, ensuring that they have quality food staples. Ms. Devi manages the entrepreneurial venture herself, maintaining the bills, records and feedback of her customers.

The 28-year-old woman earlier could not read or even recognise letters and was confined mostly to home, doing household chores. Ms. Devi learnt to read and write in Hindi and sign her name at a unique night school, which has unlocked new opportunities for women and children belonging to the poor Kalbeliya community.

The Samata night school, established in the nondescript Bhairwai hamlet in Ajmer district's Kishangarh tehsil about a year ago, is imparting education through a community-designed curriculum which reflects the specific needs and aspirations of Kalbeliyas. The backward community is known for snake charming, folk songs and dances, which form part of its traditions.

Women at the Samata night school for Kalbeliya community in Ajmer district's Bhairwai village. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Lesson in life skills

Women, who attend the school at night after completing their daily chores, learn Hindi, mathematics, practical life skills, and enjoy songs and games that make learning engaging and relevant.

Bhairwai has long grappled with the absence of basic amenities such as electricity, clean water, and education. Home to about 50 households, the local community primarily relies on the traditional Kalbeliya art of dance and singing to make ends meet. In return for their performances, they receive rice and other essentials, which barely sustain them, while school education and good living standards are an unattainable dream for them.

Rameshwari Devi, 29, is among other beneficiaries of the education at the doorstep, as she received training in stitching and was given a sewing machine, which she now uses to earn by stitching clothes. She can read signboards while travelling and sign her name in the MGNREGS works register, where she would earlier put her thumb impression.

Another Kalbeliya woman, Sarju Devi, 32, said she could travel alone after becoming literate and was at present running a small shop, while managing its finances and keeping records. "The night school has been life-changing for me... I am excited to learn English in future to explore new opportunities," she said.

Tailored for women

The school was launched last year by Manthan Sanstha, a grassroots voluntary organisation based in Kotri village, which identified the pressing needs of the Kalbeliya community and tailored the "nocturnal institution" specifically for women. After an initial reluctance and hesitation, the women gradually warmed up to the idea of education.

The women, who once hesitated to step outside their homes, are now not just literate, they are aware of their health, cultural heritage, and the opportunities available through government schemes. "Women are playing a proactive role in sustaining the school and advocating for their children's education. They stand empowered today, ready to speak for their rights and make themselves heard," Tejaram Mali, founder-director of Manthan Sanstha, told *The Hindu*.

Manthan Sanstha's operations head Sanjay Malakar said the women, after getting education at Samata night school, had transformed their lives by supporting their families, earning a livelihood, and becoming role models in their community.

Night School for Kalbeliya Women Unlocks New Opportunities

कालबेलिया महिलाओं के लिए नाइट स्कूल ने नए अवसर खोले

Sanju Devi, a member of the Kalbeliya tribal community, runs an atta chakki (flour mill) at her home in Bhairwai village, Ajmer district, providing fresh flour to 40 to 50 households.

संजू देवी, जो कालबेलिया जनजाति समुदाय से हैं, भैरवाई गांव, अजमेर जिला में अपने घर पर एक आटा चक्की चलाती हैं, जिससे 40 से 50 घरों को ताजा आटा मिलता है।

- She manages all aspects of the business, including **bills, records, and customer feedback**.
  वह **बिल, रिकॉर्ड और ग्राहक प्रतिक्रिया** सहित व्यवसाय के सभी पहलुओं को संभालती हैं।
- At **28 years old**, she previously could not read or recognize letters and was confined to household chores.
  28 वर्ष की आयु में, वह पहले न तो पढ़ सकती थीं और न ही अक्षरों को पहचान सकती थीं, और घरेलू कामों तक ही सीमित थीं।

- She learned to **read, write in Hindi, and sign her name** at a **night school**, opening new opportunities for **women and children** in the **Kalbeliya community**.
  उन्होंने एक **नाइट स्कूल** में **हिंदी पढ़ना, लिखना और हस्ताक्षर करना** सीखा, जिससे **कालबेलिया समुदाय** की **महिलाओं और बच्चों** के लिए नए अवसर खुले।

Samata Night School: A Unique Initiative
समता नाइट स्कूल: एक अनोखी पहल

- **Samata Night School** was established **a year ago** in **Bhairwai village, Kishangarh tehsil, Ajmer district**.
  समता नाइट स्कूल को **एक वर्ष पहले भैरवाई गांव, किशनगढ़ तहसील, अजमेर जिला** में स्थापित किया गया था।
- It follows a **community-designed curriculum** tailored to the **specific needs and aspirations** of the **Kalbeliya community**.
  यह **समुदाय द्वारा डिज़ाइन किया गया पाठ्यक्रम** अपनाता है, जो **कालबेलिया समुदाय की विशेष आवश्यकताओं और आकांक्षाओं** पर आधारित है।
- The **Kalbeliya community** is traditionally known for **snake charming, folk songs, and dances**.
  कालबेलिया समुदाय पारंपरिक रूप से **सपेरों, लोक गीतों और नृत्य** के लिए जाना जाता है।

Lessons in Life Skills
जीवन कौशल की शिक्षा

- Women attend the school **at night** after completing daily chores.
  महिलाएं अपने **दैनिक कार्यों को पूरा करने के बाद रात में** स्कूल जाती हैं।
- They learn **Hindi, mathematics, practical life skills, and enjoy songs and games** that make learning engaging.
  वे **हिंदी, गणित, व्यावहारिक जीवन कौशल सीखती हैं और गाने व खेलों का आनंद लेती हैं**, जिससे सीखना रोचक बनता है।
- **Bhairwai village** lacks basic amenities like **electricity, clean water, and education**.
  भैरवाई गांव में **बिजली, स्वच्छ पानी और शिक्षा** जैसी बुनियादी सुविधाओं की कमी है।
- The **50 households** in the village rely on **traditional Kalbeliya dance and singing** to sustain themselves.
  गांव के **50 घरों** की आजीविका **पारंपरिक कालबेलिया नृत्य और गायन** पर निर्भर है।

Transforming Women's Lives
महिलाओं के जीवन में बदलाव

- **Rameshwari Devi, 29**, learned **stitching** and was provided with a **sewing machine**, which she now uses to earn a livelihood.

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29 वर्षीय रमेश्वरी देवी ने **सिलाई** सीखी और उन्हें एक **सिलाई मशीन** दी गई, जिससे अब वह आजीविका कमा रही हैं।

- She can now **read signboards while traveling and sign her name** in the **MGNREGS works register**, where she previously used her thumb impression.
  अब वह **यात्रा के दौरान साइनबोर्ड पढ़ सकती हैं और मनरेगा कार्य रजिस्टर में हस्ताक्षर कर सकती हैं**, जहां पहले वह **अंगूठे का निशान** लगाती थीं।
- **Sarju Devi, 32**, became literate and now **runs a small shop, manages its finances, and keeps records**.
  32 वर्षीय सरजू देवी साक्षर बन गईं और अब **एक छोटी दुकान चलाती हैं, उसकी वित्तीय व्यवस्था संभालती हैं और रिकॉर्ड रखती हैं।**
- She aspires to **learn English in the future** to explore new opportunities.
  वह भविष्य में **अंग्रेजी सीखने** और नए अवसरों को तलाशने की इच्छुक हैं।

Women's Empowerment Through Education

शिक्षा के माध्यम से महिलाओं का सशक्तिकरण

- Women are now **aware of their health, cultural heritage, and government schemes**.
  महिलाएं अब **अपने स्वास्थ्य, सांस्कृतिक विरासत और सरकारी योजनाओं** के प्रति जागरूक हो रही हैं।
- They are actively **advocating for their children's education** and playing a **proactive role in sustaining the school**.
  वे **अपने बच्चों की शिक्षा के लिए सक्रिय रूप से आवाज उठा रही हैं** और **स्कूल को बनाए रखने में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभा रही हैं।**
- **Tejaram Mali**, founder-director of **Manthan Sanstha**, stated that women are now **empowered, ready to speak for their rights, and make themselves heard**.
  तेजाराम माली, **मंथन संस्था** के संस्थापक-निर्देशक, ने कहा कि महिलाएं अब **सशक्त हो चुकी हैं, अपने अधिकारों के लिए बोलने और अपनी आवाज उठाने के लिए तैयार हैं।**
- **Sanjay Malakar**, operations head of **Manthan Sanstha**, mentioned that women have **transformed their lives** by supporting families, earning a livelihood, and becoming role models.
  संजय मलाकर, **मंथन संस्था** के संचालन प्रमुख, ने कहा कि महिलाओं ने **अपने परिवारों का समर्थन करके, आजीविका कमाकर और आदर्श बनकर अपने जीवन को बदल लिया है।**

A School Tailored for Women

महिलाओं के लिए विशेष रूप से बनाया गया स्कूल

- **Manthan Sanstha**, a **grassroots voluntary organization** based in **Kotri village**, launched the school **last year** after identifying the **needs of the Kalbeliya community**.

मंथन संस्था, जो **कोटड़ी गांव** में स्थित एक **स्वैच्छिक संगठन** है, ने **पिछले वर्ष** इस स्कूल को **कालबेलिया समुदाय की आवश्यकताओं** को ध्यान में रखकर शुरू किया।

- Initially, women were **hesitant** but gradually **embraced** the idea of education.
  प्रारंभ में, महिलाएं **झिझक रही थीं**, लेकिन धीरे-धीरे **शिक्षा के विचार को अपनाने लगीं**।

Kalbeliya Tribes
कालबेलिया जनजाति

- **Introduction**
  - The **Kalbeliya** are a nomadic tribe from the **Thar Desert** in **Rajasthan, India**, traditionally known for their expertise in snake charming.
  - **कालबेलिया** राजस्थान, भारत के **थार रेगिस्तान** की एक घुमंतू जनजाति है, जो पारंपरिक रूप से सांप पकड़ने में अपनी विशेषज्ञता के लिए जानी जाती है।
- **Historical Background**
  - Historically, Kalbelia men carried **cobras** in cane baskets from door to door in villages, while women sang and danced to earn a livelihood.
  - इतिहास में, कालबेलिया पुरुष गांवों में बेंत की टोकरी में **कोबरा** लेकर घर-घर जाते थे, जबकि महिलाएं गाकर और नृत्य करके आजीविका कमाती थीं।
  - They revere the **cobra** and advocate for the non-killing of such reptiles.
  - वे **कोबरा** की पूजा करते हैं और ऐसे सरीसृपों को न मारने की वकालत करते हैं।
- **Cultural Practices**
  - **Dance and Music**
    - The **Kalbeliya dance** is an integral part of their culture, performed by women in flowing black skirts who dance and twirl, replicating the movements of a serpent.
    - **कालबेलिया नृत्य** उनकी संस्कृति का एक अभिन्न हिस्सा है, जिसमें महिलाएं काले घाघरे पहनकर सांप की हरकतों की नकल करते हुए नृत्य करती हैं।
    - In **2010**, **UNESCO** recognized Kalbeliya folk songs and dances of Rajasthan as part of its **Intangible Cultural Heritage** list.
    - **2010** में, **यूनेस्को** ने राजस्थान के कालबेलिया लोक गीतों और नृत्यों को अपनी **अमूर्त सांस्कृतिक विरासत** सूची में शामिल किया।
  - **Beadwork**
    - Kalbeliya women are also known for their intricate **beadwork**, creating necklaces, earrings, bracelets, and other ornaments.
    - कालबेलिया महिलाएं अपनी जटिल **मनके के काम** के लिए भी जानी जाती हैं, जिसमें वे हार, झुमके, कंगन और अन्य आभूषण बनाती हैं।
    - This beadwork is a significant part of their identity and is traditionally worn during dance performances.
    - यह मनके का काम उनकी पहचान का एक महत्वपूर्ण हिस्सा है और पारंपरिक रूप से नृत्य प्रदर्शन के दौरान पहना जाता है।

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- **Socio-Economic Changes**
  - With the enactment of the **Wildlife Protection Act of 1972**, which prohibited snake charming, the Kalbeliyas had to shift from their traditional occupation to performing arts and handicrafts for livelihood.
  - **1972 के वन्यजीव संरक्षण अधिनियम** के लागू होने के साथ, जिसने सांप पकड़ने पर प्रतिबंध लगा दिया, कालबेलिया को अपनी पारंपरिक आजीविका से प्रदर्शन कला और हस्तशिल्प की ओर रुख करना पड़ा।
  - Despite gaining recognition, opportunities for performances are sporadic and often depend on tourism, leading many to seek alternative livelihoods such as agriculture or labor work.
  - मान्यता मिलने के बावजूद, प्रदर्शन के अवसर अनियमित होते हैं और अक्सर पर्यटन पर निर्भर करते हैं, जिसके कारण कई लोग कृषि या श्रम कार्य जैसी वैकल्पिक आजीविका की तलाश करते हैं।
- **Contemporary Challenges**
  - The younger generation is gradually moving away from traditional practices due to limited economic opportunities and the allure of urban life.
  - सीमित आर्थिक अवसरों और शहरी जीवन के आकर्षण के कारण युवा पीढ़ी पारंपरिक प्रथाओं से धीरे-धीरे दूर हो रही है।
  - Efforts are being made by various organizations and the government to preserve and promote Kalbeliya culture through workshops, festivals, and exhibitions.
  - विभिन्न संगठनों और सरकार द्वारा कार्यशालाओं, त्योहारों और प्रदर्शनियों के माध्यम से कालबेलिया संस्कृति को संरक्षित और बढ़ावा देने के प्रयास किए जा रहे हैं।

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Shifting landscapes: What was once a symphony of chirping birds is now being gradually replaced by the relentless roar of heavy machinery in many places. GETTY IMAGES

Western Ghats: a living archive of culture, memory, and resilience

Through old and contemporary works, writers have sought to capture the alarming changes sweeping through the Sahyadri; they serve as a wake-up call to save the ecosystem, scarred by encroachment, displacement of tribal people, and skewed policies, from further ruin

GS Paper I: Geography

K.S. Swati

The Western Ghats, also known as the Sahyadri, meaning benevolent mountains, stretches along the western coast of the Indian peninsula, spanning six States: Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu. Known as one of the world's most biodiverse regions, the Western Ghats were once celebrated for their breathtaking natural beauty – cascading waterfalls, lush greenery, and a dazzling array of flora and fauna. Today, however, this idyllic landscape faces a stark transformation. Climate change, deforestation, the decline of traditional livelihoods, land encroachment, and the displacement of tribal communities have left the region in peril.

For years, writers in various regional languages have sought to capture and preserve the narrative of these alarming changes, believing in the transformative power of words. What was once a symphony of chirping birds is now being gradually replaced by the relentless roar of heavy machinery in many places.

The novella, *Chronicle of an Hour and a Half*, by Saharu Nusaiba Kannanari, which was shortlisted for the JCB Prize for Literature 2024, explores powerful themes such as the effects of rumours, mob mentality, social media – and nature, especially, relentless rain – hinting that something ominous awaits. Set against a fictional village in the foothills of the Western Ghats, the novella, which begins as a harmless exchange between two individuals, spirals into chaos through social media. Within an hour, the community descends into mass hysteria. In the background, nature reflects the emotions of the community, mirroring the escalating tension and chaos.

The inter-personal relationship between humans and nature is poignantly highlighted in Kuvempu's *Malegalalli Madumagalu* (1967), translated by Vanamala Viswanatha as *Bride of the Hills* (2024). Set in the Malnad region in the Western Ghats, where people are closely tied to the land, relying on its fertile soil, forests, and rivers for their livelihood, nature is revered not only for its practical role in sustenance but also for its spiritual significance, with rituals and local deities tied to agricultural cycles. Yet the novel reflects the growing tension between traditional harmony with nature and the pressures of modernisation and exploitation.

An exploitative cycle

Development, coupled with human greed, makes the lives of tribal communities difficult. In *Kocharethi: The Araya Woman* written by Narayan in Malayalam, which won the Kerala Sahitya Academy Award in 1998 and was translated into English by Catherine Thankamma in 2011, the theme of exploitation and marginalisation is vividly portrayed through the struggles of the Adivasi community. As industrial development, moneylenders, and land grabbers encroach on their ancestral territories, people are pushed into deeper poverty and displacement. The novel focuses on how outside forces often exploit the land's natural resources, disregarding the community's cultural and spiritual connection to it.

In *Ringaan*, written in Marathi by Krushnat Khot, who won the Sahitya Academy Award in Marathi in 2023, and translated into English by Maya Pandit, the protagonist, uprooted from his village, returns home to rescue a buffalo. He reminisces about his childhood and the harmonious life he once lived. The book highlights important aspects of migration, struggles of displaced victims when large-scale development projects are carried out, and the persistent man-animal conflict.

Loss of traditional occupations

Rampant quarrying, deforestation, illegal mining, and poorly planned construction projects have destabilised the fragile ecosystem. Through meticulous reporting, accounts from affected individuals, interviews, and a critical examination of policies, B. Viju's *Flood and Fury: Ecological Devastation in the Western Ghats* (2019) connects these activities to increased occurrences of landslides, floods, and soil erosion. The book delves into the historical and cultural significance of the Western Ghats while critiquing the apathy of governments, corporations, and society toward environmental conservation.

The Nilgiri Hills – A Kaleidoscope of People, Culture and Nature (2023) by Paul Hockings brings together stories and articles from writers, scholars, such as ecologists, filmmakers, local writers, etc to highlight various aspects of the Western Ghats. The book sheds light on several topics such as ancient metallurgy, music, the making of honey, and the degradation of the ecosystem.

Resistance and resilience

When livelihood, land, culture, and identity are at stake, resistance, and resilience are the only means of safeguarding them. In *Valli*, written by Sheela Tomy in Malayalam in 2019 and translated into English in 2022 by Jayashree Kalathil, we learn of a tribal community's deep connection to the forest, which sustains them both physically and spiritually. As outsiders encroach upon their land, Valli's family and others in the community resist, clinging to their heritage and traditions. At the same time, Valli grapples with her personal growth, relationships, and changing social dynamics. The novel highlights the strength and perseverance of the Adivasi people as they navigate the complexities of modern life while fighting to preserve their heritage and connection to the land.

Through old and contemporary works on the Western Ghats, authors have stressed that the Ghats are more than just a landscape – they are a living archive of culture, memory, and resilience. Yet, this fragile ecosystem is scarred by encroachment, where tribal people are uprooted, natural resources are destroyed, and policies fail to protect what matters most. To save the Ghats is to do more than preserve their beauty; it is to respect the land and the lives entwined with it, to stand against their erasure, and to recognise that in their survival lies something far greater than us.

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Website : patrioticias.in

Western Ghats: a living archive of culture, memory, and resilience

पश्चिमी घाट: संस्कृति, स्मृति और लचीलेपन का जीवंत संग्रह

Through old and contemporary works, writers have sought to capture the alarming changes sweeping through the Sahyadri; they serve as a wake-up call to save the ecosystem, scarred by encroachment,displacement of tribal people, and skewed policies, from further ruin

पुरानी और समकालीन रचनाओं के माध्यम से लेखकों ने सह्याद्री में हो रहे भयावह परिवर्तनों को पकड़ने की कोशिश की है; वे अतिक्रमण, आदिवासी लोगों के विस्थापन और विषम नीतियों से क्षतिग्रस्त पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र को और अधिक बर्बाद होने से बचाने के लिए एक चेतावनी के रूप में काम करते हैं।

The Western Ghats, also known as the Sahyadri, meaning benevolent mountains
पश्चिमी घाट, जिसे सह्याद्री भी कहा जाता है, जिसका अर्थ है 'दयालु पहाड़'

- The Western Ghats stretches along the western coast of the Indian peninsula, spanning six States: **Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu**.
  पश्चिमी घाट भारतीय उपमहाद्वीप के पश्चिमी तट पर फैला हुआ है, जो छह राज्यों **गुजरात, महाराष्ट्र, गोवा, कर्नाटका, केरल, और तमिलनाडु** में फैला हुआ है।
- Known as one of the world's most **biodiverse regions**, the Western Ghats were once celebrated for their **breathtaking natural beauty** — cascading **waterfalls, lush greenery**, and a dazzling array of **flora and fauna**.
  पश्चिमी घाट को दुनिया के सबसे **जैव विविध क्षेत्रों** में से एक माना जाता है, और इसे कभी अपनी **शानदार प्राकृतिक सुंदरता** के लिए सराहा जाता था – झरने, हरी-भरी हरियाली, और जीवों और पौधों की एक अद्वितीय विविधता।
- Today, however, this idyllic landscape faces a stark **transformation**. **Climate change, deforestation, the decline of traditional livelihoods, land encroachment**, and the **displacement of tribal communities** have left the region in **peril**.
  आज, हालांकि, यह आदर्श दृश्य एक तीव्र **परिवर्तन** का सामना कर रहा है। **जलवायु परिवर्तन, वन विनाश, पारंपरिक आजीविका का पतन, भूमि अतिक्रमण**, और **आदिवासी समुदायों का विस्थापन** इस क्षेत्र को **संकट** में डाल चुके हैं।

For years, writers in various regional languages have sought to capture and preserve the narrative of these alarming changes, believing in the transformative power of words
वर्षों से विभिन्न क्षेत्रीय भाषाओं के लेखक इन चौंकाने वाले परिवर्तनों की कथा को संजोने और संरक्षित करने का प्रयास कर रहे हैं, शब्दों की रूपांतरकारी शक्ति में विश्वास करते हुए।

- What was once a **symphony of chirping birds** is now being gradually replaced by the relentless **roar of heavy machinery** in many places.
  जो कभी **चहचहाती चिड़ियों की संगति** थी, अब कई स्थानों पर लगातार **भारी मशीनरी की गर्जना** से धीरे-धीरे बदल रही है।

The novella, Chronicle of an Hour and a Half, by Saharu Nusaiba Kannanari, which was shortlisted for the JCB Prize for Literature 2024, explores powerful themes such as the effects of rumours, mob mentality, social media, and nature, especially, relentless rain — hinting that something ominous awaits.

सहरु नुसैबा कन्नारी द्वारा लिखी गई उपन्यास, 'क्रॉनिकल ऑफ़ एन आवर एंड अ हाफ', जिसे **जेसीबी पुरस्कार 2024 के लिए चुना गया था, शक्तिशाली विषयों का अन्वेषण करती है जैसे अफवाहों का प्रभाव, उन्मादी मानसिकता, **सोशल मीडिया**, और **प्रकृति**, विशेष रूप से, निरंतर **बारिश** — यह संकेत देती है कि कुछ **अशुभ** प्रतीक्षारत है।

- Set against a fictional village in the foothills of the **Western Ghats**, the novella begins as a harmless exchange between two individuals and spirals into chaos through **social media**.
  पश्चिमी घाट के तलहटी में एक काल्पनिक गांव में स्थापित, यह उपन्यास दो व्यक्तियों के बीच एक निर harmless शिल्प के आदान-प्रदान के रूप में शुरू होता है और **सोशल मीडिया** के माध्यम से उथल-पुथल में बदल जाता है।
- Within an hour, the community descends into **mass hysteria**.
  एक घंटे के भीतर, समुदाय **जन हंगामे** में डूब जाता है।
- In the background, **nature** reflects the emotions of the community, mirroring the escalating **tension** and chaos.
  पृष्ठभूमि में, **प्रकृति** समुदाय की भावनाओं को दर्शाती है, बढ़ती हुई **तनाव** और उथल-पुथल को परिलक्षित करती है।

The inter-personal relationship between humans and nature is poignantly highlighted in Kuvempu's Malegalalli Madumagalu (1967), translated by Vanamala Viswanatha as Bride of the Hills (2024).

कुवेंपु के 'मालेगलाली मडुमगलू' (1967) में मानव और प्रकृति के बीच अंतर-संवेदनशील संबंध को गहराई से उजागर किया गया है, जिसे वानमाला विश्वनाथ द्वारा 'ब्राइड ऑफ़ द हिल्स' (2024) के रूप में अनुवादित किया गया है।

- Set in the **Malnad region in the Western Ghats**, where people are closely tied to the land, relying on its fertile soil, forests, and rivers for their livelihood, nature is revered not only for its **practical role** in sustenance but also for its **spiritual significance**, with rituals and **local deities** tied to agricultural cycles.
  यह उपन्यास **पश्चिमी घाट के मालनाड क्षेत्र** में स्थित है, जहां लोग ज़मीन से गहरे जुड़े होते हैं, अपनी आजीविका के लिए इसकी उर्वर मिट्टी, वन और नदियों पर निर्भर होते हैं, और प्रकृति को

न केवल **सामान्यत: उपयोगी भूमिका** के लिए बल्कि इसके **आध्यात्मिक महत्व** के लिए भी पूजा जाता है, जिसमें कृषि चक्रों से जुड़ी **रिवाजें** और **स्थानीय देवताएँ** होती हैं।

- Yet the novel reflects the growing tension between **traditional harmony with nature** and the pressures of **modernisation and exploitation**.
  फिर भी यह उपन्यास **प्राकृतिक संतुलन** और **आधुनिकीकरण एवं शोषण** के दबावों के बीच बढ़ते तनाव को दर्शाता है।

An exploitative cycle
शोषणकारी चक्र

- **Development**, coupled with **human greed**, makes the lives of **tribal communities difficult**.
  विकास, **मानव लालच** के साथ मिलकर **आदिवासी समुदायों** के जीवन को कठिन बना देता है।
- In **Kocharethi: The Araya Woman** written by **Narayan** in **Malayalam**, which won the **Kerala Sahitya Academy Award in 1998** and was translated into English by **Catherine Thankamma in 2011**, the theme of **exploitation** and **marginalisation** is vividly portrayed through the struggles of the **Adivasi community**.
  कोचरैठी: द अरया वुमन, जिसे **नारायण** ने **मलयालम** में लिखा, जो **1998 में केरल साहित्य अकादमी पुरस्कार** से सम्मानित हुआ और **कैथरीन थांकम्मा** द्वारा **2011 में अंग्रेजी** में अनुवादित हुआ, में **शोषण** और **बहिष्करण** के विषय को **आदिवासी समुदाय** के संघर्षों के माध्यम से स्पष्ट रूप से चित्रित किया गया है।
- As **industrial development**, **moneylenders**, and **land grabbers** encroach on their **ancestral territories**, people are pushed into deeper **poverty** and **displacement**.
  जैसे ही **औद्योगिक विकास**, **साहूकार** और **भूमि हड़पने वाले** उनके **पारंपरिक क्षेत्रों** में घुसपैठ करते हैं, लोग गहरे **गरीबी** और **विस्थापन** की ओर धकेल दिए जाते हैं।
- The novel focuses on how outside forces often exploit the land's **natural resources**, disregarding the community's **cultural** and **spiritual connection** to it.
  उपन्यास इस पर केंद्रित है कि कैसे बाहरी ताकतें अक्सर भूमि के **प्राकृतिक संसाधनों** का शोषण करती हैं, इसके साथ-साथ समुदाय के **सांस्कृतिक** और **आध्यात्मिक संबंध** की अनदेखी करती हैं।

In Ringaan, written in Marathi by Krushnat Khot, who won the Sahitya Academy Award in Marathi in 2023, and translated into English by Maya Pandit, the protagonist, uprooted from his village, returns home to rescue a buffalo.
'रिंगान', जिसे कृष्णात खोत ने 2023 में मराठी में लिखा और माया पंडित द्वारा अंग्रेजी में अनुवादित किया गया, में नायक, जो अपने गांव से विस्थापित होता है, एक भैंस को बचाने के लिए घर लौटता है।

- He reminisces about his **childhood** and the **harmonious life** he once lived.
  वह अपने **बचपन** और वह **सामंजस्यपूर्ण जीवन** याद करता है, जो उसने कभी जिया था।
- The book highlights important aspects of **migration**, struggles of **displaced victims** when **large-scale development projects** are carried out, and the persistent **man-animal conflict**.

पुस्तक में **प्रवासन**, **विस्थापित पीड़ितों** के संघर्षों, जब **वृहद विकास परियोजनाएं** लागू की जाती हैं, और निरंतर **मानव-प्राकृतिक संघर्ष** के महत्वपूर्ण पहलुओं को उजागर किया गया है।

Loss of traditional occupations
पारंपरिक व्यवसायों की हानि

- **Rampant quarrying, deforestation, illegal mining**, and **poorly planned construction projects** have destabilised the fragile **ecosystem**.
  बेतहाशा खनन, वन कटाई, अवैध खनन और **खराब रूप से योजनाबद्ध निर्माण परियोजनाओं** ने नाजुक **पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र** को अस्थिर कर दिया है।
- Through meticulous **reporting**, accounts from affected individuals, **interviews**, and a critical examination of **policies**, **B. Viju's Flood and Fury: Ecological Devastation in the Western Ghats (2019)** connects these activities to increased occurrences of **landslides**, **floods**, and **soil erosion**.
  सटीक **रिपोर्टिंग**, प्रभावित व्यक्तियों के **खाता**, **साक्षात्कार** और **नीतियों** की आलोचनात्मक जांच के माध्यम से, **बी. विजु की 'फ्लड एंड फ्योरी: इकोलॉजिकल डेवास्टेशन इन द वेस्टर्न घाट्स (2019)** इन गतिविधियों को बढ़ती हुई **भूस्खलन**, **बाढ़** और **मिट्टी का कटाव** से जोड़ती है।
- The book delves into the **historical** and **cultural significance** of the **Western Ghats** while critiquing the **apathy** of governments, corporations, and society toward **environmental conservation**.
  पुस्तक **पश्चिमी घाटों** के **ऐतिहासिक** और **सांस्कृतिक महत्व** में गहराई से प्रवेश करती है, जबकि सरकारों, कंपनियों, और समाज की **पर्यावरणीय संरक्षण** के प्रति **उदासीनता** की आलोचना करती है।

The Nilgiri Hills — A Kaleidoscope of People, Culture and Nature (2023) by Paul Hockings
नीलगिरी हिल्स – लोगों, संस्कृति और प्रकृति का कैलिडोस्कोप (2023) पॉल हॉकिंग्स द्वारा

- Brings together stories and articles from writers, scholars, such as **ecologists, filmmakers, local writers**, etc. to highlight various aspects of the **Western Ghats**.
  यह **लेखकों, विद्वानों, जैसे **पारिस्थितिकीविदों, फिल्मकारों, स्थानीय लेखकों** आदि से कहानियों और लेखों को एकत्र करता है, ताकि **पश्चिमी घाटों** के विभिन्न पहलुओं को उजागर किया जा सके।
- The book sheds light on several topics such as **ancient metallurgy**, **music**, the making of **honey**, and the **degradation of the ecosystem**.
  पुस्तक कई विषयों पर प्रकाश डालती है जैसे **प्राचीन धातुकर्म**, **संगीत**, **शहद** का निर्माण, और **पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र का अवनति**।

Resistance and resilience
प्रतिरोध और सहनशीलता

- When **livelihood**, **land**, **culture**, and **identity** are at stake, **resistance**, and **resilience** are the only means of safeguarding them.

जब **आजीविका**, **भूमि**, **संस्कृति**, और **पहचान** दांव पर होती हैं, तो **प्रतिरोध** और **सहनशीलता** इन्हें सुरक्षित रखने के एकमात्र तरीके होते हैं।

- In **Valli**, written by **Sheela Tomy** in **Malayalam** in **2019** and translated into English in **2022** by **Jayashree Kalathil**, we learn of a tribal community's deep connection to the **forest**, which sustains them both physically and spiritually.
  'वाली', जिसे **शीला टोमी** ने **मलयालम** में **2019** में लिखा और **2022** में **जयश्री कालथिल** द्वारा अंग्रेजी में अनुवादित किया गया, में हम एक आदिवासी समुदाय के **जंगल** से गहरे संबंध के बारे में जानते हैं, जो उन्हें शारीरिक और आध्यात्मिक रूप से बनाए रखता है।
- As outsiders encroach upon their **land**, **Valli's family** and others in the community resist, clinging to their **heritage** and **traditions**.
  जैसे ही बाहरी लोग उनके **भूमि** में घुसपैठ करते हैं, **वाली का परिवार** और समुदाय के अन्य लोग विरोध करते हैं, अपनी **धरोहर** और **परंपराओं** से चिपके रहते हैं।
- The novel highlights the strength and perseverance of the **Adivasi people** as they navigate the complexities of modern life while fighting to preserve their heritage and connection to the land.
  उपन्यास में **आदिवासी लोगों** की ताकत और धैर्य को उजागर किया गया है क्योंकि वे आधुनिक जीवन की जटिलताओं को समझते हुए अपनी **धरोहर** और भूमि से अपने **संपर्क** को बनाए रखने के लिए संघर्ष करते हैं।
- Through old and contemporary works on the **Western Ghats**, authors have stressed that the **Ghats** are more than just a **landscape** — they are a **living archive** of **culture, memory**, and **resilience**.
  पश्चिमी घाटों पर पुराने और समकालीन कार्यों के माध्यम से, लेखकों ने यह जोर दिया है कि **घाट** केवल एक **दृश्य** नहीं हैं – वे **संस्कृति, स्मृति** और **सहनशीलता** का एक **जीवित अभिलेख** हैं।
- Yet, this fragile **ecosystem** is scarred by **encroachment**, where **tribal people** are uprooted, **natural resources** are destroyed, and **policies** fail to protect what matters most.
  फिर भी, यह नाजुक **पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र अतिक्रमण** से आहत है, जहां **आदिवासी लोग** उखाड़े जाते हैं, **प्राकृतिक संसाधन** नष्ट होते हैं, और **नीतियाँ** सबसे महत्वपूर्ण चीज़ों की रक्षा करने में विफल रहती हैं।
- To save the **Ghats** is to do more than preserve their **beauty**; it is to respect the **land** and the **lives** entwined with it, to stand against their **erasure**, and to recognise that in their **survival** lies something far greater than us.
  घाटों को बचाना उनका केवल **सौंदर्य** संरक्षित करना नहीं है; यह **भूमि** और उससे जुड़े **जीवन** का सम्मान करना है, उनके **नष्ट होने** का विरोध करना है, और यह पहचानना है कि उनके **जीवित रहने** में कुछ ऐसा है जो हमसे कहीं अधिक महान है।

'West Asia crisis must not be allowed to undermine IMEC'

GS Paper I: IMEC

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

Greece fully supports the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) as a "project for peace", Minister of Foreign Affairs George Gerapetritis has said, admitting that the project's planning has been delayed since its launch in September 2023 due to the conflict in West Asia, and the Israel-Gaza war in particular.

In an exclusive interview to *The Hindu*, Mr. Gerapetritis, who has arrived in Delhi for Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Thursday, said his visit to India follows a series of meetings in Qatar, Israel, Ramallah, and Jordan, which will be discussed during the talks.

He said Greece is working towards doubling trade and investment initiatives with India and plans to open two new consulates in Mumbai and Bengaluru. It also wants direct flights to begin and more visas to be issued.

"The ongoing crisis in the Middle East has delayed the project's planning, but it must not be allowed to undermine the powerful rationale behind IMEC. It is our resolve - that of India, Greece, and our partners in between - that we will bring this project of peace and prosperity to pass," Mr. Gerapetritis said in written responses to questions from *The Hindu* about the viability of the IMEC that was launched on the sidelines of the G-20 Summit in Delhi.

George Gerapetritis

No meeting yet

Despite the memorandum of understanding stipulating that the stakeholders would meet "within 60 days", they have been unable to meet even once more than 16 months later due to the West Asia conflict.

"The ceasefires in Gaza and Lebanon and the opening of the crossing in Rafah, combined with the new conditions in Syria, represent a significant turning point and leave room for hope that the conflicts will subside," Mr. Gerapetritis said, adding that Greece would pursue "peaceful settlement of disputes" during its current two-year elected term as a member of the United Nations Security Council.

During a visit to India in February 2024, Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis had pitched Greece as the "gateway to Europe" for Indian trade over the IMEC. Initial IMEC project proposals had mentioned Greek's Piraeus port, along with Italy's Messina and France's Marseille, as possible ports on the IMEC route.

More recent reports have also suggested that the Adani Group, which runs other ports on the proposed IMEC route, including Mundra port in Gujarat and the Haifa port in Israel, was seeking terminals in Greek ports like Kavala and Volos.

Trade between India and Greece stood at $1.9 billion in 2022-23. Both countries have committed to "doubling it by 2030". Greece is particularly interested in Indian commerce in the areas of "construction materials, food & beverages, renewable energy", Mr. Gerapetritis said, indicating that trade would pick up at a faster pace if the long-pending India-European Union Free Trade Agreement talks are concluded.

Asked about the issue of illegal immigration, with thousands of undocumented Indian migrants using the sea route to reach Greece each year, he said that Greece and India are negotiating a memorandum of understanding on migration and mobility.

"Overall, we apply a strict but fair migration policy. What we are trying to do is to turn irregular migration into legal and orderly pathways of human mobility," Mr. Gerapetritis said.

(Interview is available at newsth.live/greekminister)

'West Asia crisis must not be allowed to undermine IMEC'

'पश्चिम एशिया संकट को आईएमईसी को कमजोर करने की अनुमति नहीं दी जानी चाहिए'

Greece fully supports the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) as a "project for peace"

गreece भारत-मध्य पूर्व-यूरोप आर्थिक गलियारा (IMEC) को "शांति के परियोजना" के रूप में पूरी तरह से समर्थन करता है

- **Minister of Foreign Affairs George Gerapetritis** has said that Greece fully supports the **India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)** as a **"project for peace"**.
  विदेश मंत्री जॉर्ज गेरापेट्रिटिस ने कहा कि ग्रीस पूरी तरह से **भारत-मध्य पूर्व-यूरोप आर्थिक गलियारा (IMEC)** को **"शांति के परियोजना"** के रूप में समर्थन करता है।
- He admitted that the project's **planning** has been delayed since its launch in **September 2023** due to the **conflict in West Asia**, and the **Israel-Gaza war** in particular.
  उन्होंने स्वीकार किया कि परियोजना की **योजना** को **सितंबर 2023** में इसकी शुरुआत के बाद से **पश्चिम एशिया संघर्ष**, और विशेष रूप से **इज़राइल-गाज़ा युद्ध** के कारण देरी हुई है।

No meeting yet

अब तक कोई बैठक नहीं

- Despite the **memorandum of understanding** stipulating that the stakeholders would meet **"within 60 days"**, they have been unable to meet even once more than **16 months later** due to the **West Asia conflict**.
  इसके बावजूद, **समझौते के ज्ञापन** में यह निर्धारित किया गया था कि हितधारक **"60 दिनों के भीतर"** मिलेंगे, वे **पश्चिम एशिया संघर्ष** के कारण **16 महीने बाद भी** एक बार भी नहीं मिल पाए हैं।
- **The ceasefires** in **Gaza** and **Lebanon** and the **opening of the crossing in Rafah**, combined with the new conditions in **Syria**, represent a significant turning point and leave room for hope that the conflicts will subside.
  गाज़ा और **लेबनान** में **सीजफायर** और **राफा में क्रॉसिंग खोलने** के साथ-साथ **सीरिया** की नई परिस्थितियाँ एक महत्वपूर्ण मोड़ का प्रतिनिधित्व करती हैं और आशा का स्थान छोड़ती हैं कि संघर्ष कम होंगे।
- Greece would pursue **"peaceful settlement of disputes"** during its current **two-year elected term** as a member of the **United Nations Security Council**.
  ग्रीस अपने वर्तमान **दो साल के चुने हुए कार्यकाल** में **संयुक्त राष्ट्र सुरक्षा परिषद** के सदस्य के रूप में **"विवादों का शांतिपूर्ण समाधान"** करेगा।

Plans for IMEC
IMEC के लिए योजनाएं

- During a visit to India in **February 2024**, **Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis** pitched Greece as the **"gateway to Europe"** for Indian trade over the **IMEC**.
  फरवरी 2024 में भारत की यात्रा के दौरान, **ग्रीक प्रधानमंत्री क्यारीकोस मित्सोटाकिस** ने ग्रीस को **IMEC** के माध्यम से भारतीय व्यापार के लिए **"यूरोप का द्वार"** के रूप में प्रस्तुत किया।
- **Initial IMEC project proposals** had mentioned **Greek's Piraeus port**, along with **Italy's Messina** and **France's Marseille**, as possible ports on the IMEC route.
  प्रारंभिक IMEC परियोजना प्रस्तावों में **ग्रीक का पीरियस बंदरगाह**, **इटली के मेस्सिना** और **फ्रांस के मार्से** को IMEC मार्ग पर संभावित बंदरगाहों के रूप में उल्लेख किया गया था।
- **Recent reports** have also suggested that the **Adani Group**, which runs other ports on the proposed IMEC route, including **Mundra port** in Gujarat and **Haifa port** in Israel, was seeking terminals in **Greek ports** like **Kavala** and **Volos**.
  हालिया रिपोर्ट्स में यह भी सुझाव दिया गया है कि **अदानी समूह**, जो प्रस्तावित IMEC मार्ग पर अन्य बंदरगाहों को संचालित करता है, जिसमें **गुजरात के मुंद्रा बंदरगाह** और **इज़राइल के हैफा बंदरगाह** शामिल हैं, **ग्रीक बंदरगाहों** जैसे **कावला** और **वोलोस** में टर्मिनल्स की तलाश कर रहा था।

Trade Relations
व्यापार संबंध

- **Trade between India and Greece** stood at **$1.9 billion in 2022-23**. Both countries have committed to **"doubling it by 2030"**.
  भारत और ग्रीस के बीच व्यापार 2022-23 में **$1.9 बिलियन** था। दोनों देशों ने **"2030 तक इसे दोगुना करने"** का वादा किया है।

- Greece is particularly interested in **Indian commerce** in the areas of **"construction materials, food & beverages, renewable energy"**, Mr. Gerapetritis said, indicating that trade would pick up at a faster pace if the long-pending **India-European Union Free Trade Agreement** talks are concluded.
  ग्रीस विशेष रूप से **"निर्माण सामग्री, खाद्य और पेय पदार्थ, नवीकरणीय ऊर्जा"** के क्षेत्रों में **भारतीय वाणिज्य** में रुचि रखता है, श्री गेरापेट्रिटिस ने कहा, यह संकेत देते हुए कि यदि लंबित **भारत-यूरोपीय संघ मुक्त व्यापार समझौता** वार्ता पूरी होती है तो व्यापार तेज़ी से बढ़ेगा।

Illegal Immigration
अवैध प्रवासन

- Asked about the issue of **illegal immigration**, with thousands of **undocumented Indian migrants** using the sea route to reach Greece each year, he said that **Greece** and **India** are negotiating a **memorandum of understanding** on **migration and mobility**.
  अवैध प्रवासन के मुद्दे पर पूछे जाने पर, जिनमें **हजारों अवैध भारतीय प्रवासी** हर साल समुद्री मार्ग से ग्रीस पहुंचते हैं, उन्होंने कहा कि **ग्रीस** और **भारत प्रवासन और गतिशीलता** पर एक **समझौते के ज्ञापन** पर बातचीत कर रहे हैं।
- **"Overall, we apply a strict but fair migration policy,"** Mr. Gerapetritis said, adding that Greece was trying to turn **irregular migration into legal and orderly pathways of human mobility**.
  "कुल मिलाकर, हम एक सख्त लेकिन उचित प्रवासन नीति लागू करते हैं," श्री गेरापेट्रिटिस ने कहा, साथ ही यह जोड़ा कि ग्रीस **अवैध प्रवासन को कानूनी और व्यवस्थित मानव गतिशीलता के मार्गों में बदलने** की कोशिश कर रहा है।

non-permanent members (Algeria, Denmark, Greece, Guyana, Pakistan, Panama, the Republic of Korea, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, and Somalia)

PATRIOTIC IAS

Amid a delay in holding Census, vital reports on births and deaths pending since 2020

GS Paper I: Population

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

With the decadal Census exercise pending since 2021 and unlikely to be conducted this year, at least two other key reports on births and deaths had not been released by the Union Home Ministry for the past five years.

The "Vital Statistics of India Based on the Civil Registration System" and "The Report on Medical Certification of Cause of Death" were last released for the year 2020. The annual "Crime in India" report by the National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB) for the year 2023 is also yet to be released.

According to the 2020 Civil Registration System report, Vital Statistics is a compilation of the "occurrence and characteristics of vital events such as births, deaths and stillbirths" recorded across the country, and is "invaluable for planning, monitoring and evaluating various programmes related to primary healthcare, family planning, maternal and child health, and education", and others. The States send data to the Registrar-General of India.

Stalled count: A Census operation in Bangalore on March 1, 2011. India has not conducted the next decadal count. K. MURALI KUMAR

In 2023, the Centre enacted the Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment) Act, 2023, which mandated that all births and deaths in the country occurring from October 1, 2023 were to be digitally registered through the Central portal crsorgi.gov.in. The Centre hence has access to real-time data.

According to publicly available information, the States and Union Territories such as Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Delhi, Chandigarh, Mizoram, Goa, and Arunachal Pradesh have published reports till the year 2022. The last published Vital Statistics report for Kerala was for 2021 and Mizoram was the only State to have the report for 2023.

The Census, which was to be conducted in 2020-21, was initially delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic but persistent demands from Opposition parties for caste enumeration appears to have held up the exercise now.

According to a senior government official, while deliberations on ways and measures to count caste numbers were held for the past few months, the BJP-led NDA government was not in a hurry to roll out the Census. Other than that of the Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST), caste-wise population had not been enumerated in Independent India.

In 2011, the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) conducted the first caste count under the Socio Economic and Caste Census (SECC), separate from the Census exercise, but the findings were never made public.

According to an affidavit submitted by the Union government in 2021, the SECC data, fraught with "mistakes and inaccuracies", had thrown up more than 46 lakh caste names, while the 1931 Census recorded only 4,147 such names.

"For the Census to happen this year, the government should have issued the notification by November 2024. The 10-month period for conducting Census in two phases usually starts from April 1 and since it will be the first digital Census, more than 30 lakh enumerators would require fresh training, which takes three or four months," said a former Census official.

No separate allocation for conducting the Census was made in the Union Budget.

Another official said though a final decision was awaited, nearly 24 lakh enumeration blocks were already finalised and training would not require much time as enumerators were trained in 2019 before the first phase of the Census that was to begin from April 1, 2020.

Amid a delay in holding Census, vital reports on births and deaths pending since 2020

जनगणना में देरी के बीच, जन्म और मृत्यु पर महत्वपूर्ण रिपोर्ट 2020 से लंबित

Decadal Census Exercise Pending Since 2021

2021 से डेकाडल जनगणना कार्य लंबित

- The **decadal Census exercise** has been **pending since 2021** and is unlikely to be conducted this year.

  डेकाडल जनगणना कार्य 2021 से लंबित है और इस साल इसे किए जाने की संभावना नहीं है।
- At least two other key reports on **births and deaths** had not been released by the **Union Home Ministry** for the past **five years**.

पिछले **पाँच वर्षों** से **जन्म और मृत्यु** पर दो अन्य महत्वपूर्ण रिपोर्टों को **केंद्रीय गृह मंत्रालय** द्वारा जारी नहीं किया गया है।

- The reports **"Vital Statistics of India Based on the Civil Registration System"** and **"The Report on Medical Certification of Cause of Death"** were last released for the year **2020**.
  रिपोर्ट्स **"भारत के जीवन सांख्यिकी नागरिक पंजीकरण प्रणाली पर आधारित"** और **"मृत्यु के कारण का चिकित्सा प्रमाणपत्र पर रिपोर्ट"** को आखिरी बार **2020** में जारी किया गया था।
- The annual **"Crime in India"** report by the **National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB)** for the year **2023** is also yet to be released.
  राष्ट्रीय अपराध रिकॉर्ड ब्यूरो (NCRB) द्वारा **2023** के लिए वार्षिक **"भारत में अपराध"** रिपोर्ट भी अभी तक जारी नहीं की गई है।

Vital Statistics of India Based on the Civil Registration System
नागरिक पंजीकरण प्रणाली पर आधारित भारत की जीवन सांख्यिकी

- According to the **2020 Civil Registration System report**, **Vital Statistics** is a compilation of the **"occurrence and characteristics of vital events such as births, deaths and stillbirths"** recorded across the country.
  2020 नागरिक पंजीकरण प्रणाली रिपोर्ट के अनुसार, **जीवन सांख्यिकी** देशभर में रिकॉर्ड किए गए **"महत्वपूर्ण घटनाओं जैसे जन्म, मृत्यु और मृत जन्मों के होने और विशेषताओं"** का संकलन है।
- It is **invaluable for planning, monitoring, and evaluating various programmes** related to **primary healthcare, family planning, maternal and child health, and education**, and others.
  यह **प्राथमिक स्वास्थ्य देखभाल, परिवार नियोजन, मातृत्व और बाल स्वास्थ्य, और शिक्षा** से संबंधित विभिन्न कार्यक्रमों की **योजना, निगरानी और मूल्यांकन** के लिए **अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण** है।
- The **States** send data to the **Registrar-General of India**.
  राज्य डेटा **भारत के रजिस्ट्रार जनरल** को भेजते हैं।

Recent Legislation for Digital Registration
डिजिटल पंजीकरण के लिए हाल की विधायी कार्रवाई

- In **2023**, the Centre enacted the **Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment) Act, 2023**, mandating that all births and deaths in the country occurring from **October 1, 2023** must be digitally registered through the **Central portal crsorgi.gov.in**.
  2023 में, केंद्र ने **जन्म और मृत्यु (संशोधन) अधिनियम, 2023** पारित किया, जिसमें यह अनिवार्य किया गया कि **1 अक्टूबर 2023** से देश में होने वाले सभी जन्म और मृत्यु को **केंद्रीय पोर्टल crsorgi.gov.in** के माध्यम से डिजिटल रूप से पंजीकृत किया जाए।
- The Centre thus has access to **real-time data**.
  इस प्रकार, केंद्र को **रियल-टाइम डेटा** तक पहुंच है।
- According to publicly available information, the **States and Union Territories** such as **Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Delhi, Chandigarh, Mizoram, Goa, and Arunachal**

Pradesh have published reports till the year **2022**.
सार्वजनिक रूप से उपलब्ध जानकारी के अनुसार, **हिमाचल प्रदेश, कर्नाटका, दिल्ली, चंडीगढ़, मिजोरम, गोवा, और अरुणाचल प्रदेश** जैसे **राज्य और संघ शासित प्रदेश** ने **2022** तक रिपोर्ट प्रकाशित की हैं।

- The last published **Vital Statistics** report for **Kerala** was for **2021**, and **Mizoram** was the only State to have the report for **2023**.
  केरल के लिए आखिरी प्रकाशित **जीवन सांख्यिकी** रिपोर्ट **2021** की थी, और **मिजोरम** वह एकमात्र राज्य था जिसके पास **2023** के लिए रिपोर्ट थी।

Census Delay
जनगणना में देरी

- The **Census**, which was to be conducted in **2020-21**, was initially delayed by the **COVID-19 pandemic**.
  जनगणना, जो **2020-21** में की जानी थी, को शुरू में **COVID-19 महामारी** के कारण देरी हुई।
- Persistent demands from **Opposition parties** for **caste enumeration** appears to have held up the exercise now.
  विपक्षी दलों द्वारा **जाति गणना** की निरंतर मांगें अब इस कार्य को रोक रही हैं।
- According to a senior government official, deliberations on ways and measures to count **caste numbers** were held for the past few months, but the **BJP-led NDA government** was not in a hurry to roll out the **Census**.
  एक वरिष्ठ सरकारी अधिकारी के अनुसार, **जाति संख्या** गिनने के तरीकों और उपायों पर पिछले कुछ महीनों से विचार-विमर्श किया गया था, लेकिन **बीजेपी-नेतृत एनडीए सरकार जनगणना** को शुरू करने में जल्दबाजी में नहीं थी।
- Other than that of the **Scheduled Castes (SC)** and **Scheduled Tribes (ST)**, **caste-wise population** had not been enumerated in **Independent India**.
  अनुसूचित जातियों (SC) और **अनुसूचित जनजातियों (ST)** के अलावा, **स्वतंत्र भारत** में **जाति-वार जनसंख्या** की गिनती नहीं की गई थी।
- In **2011**, the **Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA)** conducted the first caste count under the **Socio Economic and Caste Census (SECC)**, separate from the **Census exercise**, but the findings were never made public.
  2011 में, **कांग्रेस-नेतृत संयुक्त प्रगतिशील गठबंधन (UPA)** ने **सामाजिक-आर्थिक और जाति जनगणना (SECC)** के तहत पहली जाति गिनती की, जो **जनगणना कार्य** से अलग थी, लेकिन इसके परिणाम कभी सार्वजनिक नहीं किए गए।
- According to an affidavit submitted by the **Union government in 2021**, the **SECC data**, fraught with **"mistakes and inaccuracies"**, had thrown up more than **46 lakh caste names**, while the **1931 Census** recorded only **4,147** such names.
  2021 में केंद्रीय सरकार द्वारा प्रस्तुत शपथ पत्र के अनुसार, **SECC डेटा**, जो **"गलतियों और अशुद्धियों"** से भरा हुआ था, ने **46 लाख** से अधिक जाति नामों को सामने लाया, जबकि **1931 की जनगणना** में केवल **4,147** ऐसे नाम रिकॉर्ड किए गए थे।

Census Notification and Training
जनगणना नोटिफिकेशन और प्रशिक्षण

- For the Census to happen this year, the government should have issued the **notification by November 2024**.
  इस साल जनगणना होने के लिए, सरकार को **नवंबर 2024 तक नोटिफिकेशन जारी करना चाहिए था**।
- The **10-month period** for conducting **Census** in two phases usually starts from **April 1**, and since it will be the first **digital Census**, more than **30 lakh enumerators** would require fresh training, which takes **three or four months**.
  दो चरणों में जनगणना करने के लिए 10 महीने की अवधि सामान्यत: **1 अप्रैल** से शुरू होती है, और चूंकि यह **पहली डिजिटल जनगणना** होगी, तो **30 लाख से अधिक एनुमरेटरों** को **तीन या चार महीने** का ताजगी प्रशिक्षण चाहिए होगा।
- No separate allocation for conducting the **Census** was made in the **Union Budget**.
  केंद्रीय बजट में **जनगणना** आयोजित करने के लिए कोई अलग से आवंटन नहीं किया गया।
- Another official said though a final decision was awaited, nearly **24 lakh enumeration blocks** were already finalised, and training would not require much time as enumerators were trained in **2019** before the first phase of the **Census** that was to begin from **April 1, 2020**.
  एक अन्य अधिकारी ने कहा कि हालांकि अंतिम निर्णय का इंतजार किया जा रहा था, लगभग **24 लाख एनुमरेशन ब्लॉक्स** पहले ही अंतिम रूप से तय हो चुके थे, और प्रशिक्षण में अधिक समय नहीं लगेगा क्योंकि एनुमरेटरों को **2019** में पहले चरण की जनगणना से पहले प्रशिक्षित किया गया था जो **1 अप्रैल 2020** से शुरू होने वाली थी।

PATRIOTIC IAS

Congress, Sikkim BJP oppose plan to rebuild Teesta dam

Threat of disaster persists at the dam site, says Jairam Ramesh; approval granted despite concerns related to environmental safety, structural integrity, and public consultation, says Sikkim BJP chief

GS Paper I: Geography

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Wednesday said it disapproved of a recent decision by an expert committee of the Environment Ministry to allow the reconstruction of the Teesta-3 hydropower project in Sikkim that was destroyed in October 2023.

"The Indian National Congress also opposes this thoughtless clearance. The threat of disaster persists at the dam site. There are also cascading and multiplying effects on habitations downstream," Rajya Sabha member Jairam Ramesh said in a post on X on Wednesday. He appended a letter from August 2024, in which the Congress had criticised the government for not allocating enough money for irrigation and flood control in the July 2024 Budget.

Earlier this week, D.R. Thapa, the president of the Bharatiya Janata Party's Sikkim unit, had written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav demanding withdrawal of the clearance given to the project.

BJP chief D.R. Thapa in his letter to the Centre said that the Teesta river is the lifeline of Sikkim. RITU RAJ KONWAR

"This approval was granted on January 10, 2025, despite unresolved concerns related to environmental safety, structural integrity and public consultation," the letter read.

The BJP leader demanded that the clearance accorded by the Environment Appraisal Committee (EAC) be put on hold until all pending scientific studies and a revised Probable Maximum Flood (PMF) assessment were completed and independently verified. He also demanded a fresh environmental impact assessment incorporating updated climate data, Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF) risks, and evolving hydrological conditions in the region. He also called for a fresh public hearing on the issue.

Lifeline of Sikkim

"The Sikkim BJP believed that while development and infrastructure are essential, they must be pursued with scientific integrity, environmental responsibility, and public participation. The Teesta river is the lifeline of Sikkim, and any decision regarding its future must prioritise the safety, sustainability, and ecological well-being of the region," the letter read.

"We urge the Government of India to act immediately to prevent any further environmental and human disasters in the state," the letter underlined. The devastating glacier lake outburst flood in Sikkim washed away the Chungthang dam, which powered the Teesta 3, the State's biggest hydropower project, and killed at least 100 people in the process.

In its report approving the rebuilding, the EAC said that the new dam would be entirely concrete – reportedly to increase its strength – and its spillway will be capable of managing a peak flow of 19,946 cubic metres a second (cumecs), thrice the capacity of the former dam, which was 7,000 cumecs. The older dam had a part rock and part concrete structure.

As part of their appraisal to relook the projects, the EAC assessed studies by the government where the risk from 119 glacial lakes were identified in the catchment. Out of these, 50 glacial lakes were shortlisted with area of 10 ha or more for further evaluation.

Congress, Sikkim BJP oppose plan to rebuild Teesta dam

कांग्रेस, सिक्किम भाजपा ने तीस्ता बांध के पुनर्निर्माण की योजना का विरोध किया

Threat of disaster persists at the dam site, says Jairam Ramesh; approval granted despite concerns related to environmental safety, structural integrity, and public consultation, says Sikkim BJP chief

जयराम रमेश ने कहा कि बांध स्थल पर आपदा का खतरा बना हुआ है; पर्यावरण सुरक्षा, संरचनात्मक अखंडता और सार्वजनिक परामर्श से संबंधित चिंताओं के बावजूद मंजूरी दी गई, सिक्किम भाजपा प्रमुख ने कहा

Congress Disapproves of Teesta-3 Hydropower Project Reconstruction
कांग्रेस ने तीस्ता-3 जल विद्युत परियोजना के पुनर्निर्माण पर असंतोष व्यक्त किया

- The **Congress** on **Wednesday** disapproved of a recent decision by an expert committee of the **Environment Ministry** to allow the **reconstruction of the Teesta-3 hydropower project** in **Sikkim**, which was destroyed in **October 2023**.
  कांग्रेस ने **बुधवार** को **पर्यावरण मंत्रालय** की एक विशेषज्ञ समिति द्वारा **सिक्किम में तीस्ता-3 जल विद्युत परियोजना** के पुनर्निर्माण की अनुमति देने के हालिया फैसले का विरोध किया, जो **अक्टूबर 2023** में नष्ट हो गई थी।
- Rajya Sabha member **Jairam Ramesh** said in a post on **X** on Wednesday that the Indian National Congress opposes this **thoughtless clearance**.

राज्यसभा सदस्य जयराम रमेश ने **बुधवार** को **X** पर एक पोस्ट में कहा कि भारतीय राष्ट्रीय कांग्रेस इस **बेहद लापरवाह मंजूरी** का विरोध करती है।

- He added that the **threat of disaster** persists at the **dam site**, and there are also **cascading and multiplying effects on habitations downstream**.
  उन्होंने कहा कि **बांध स्थल पर आपदा का खतरा** अभी भी बना हुआ है, और **नीचे की बस्तियों पर इसके प्रभाव** भी बढ़ रहे हैं।
- He attached a letter from **August 2024**, where the Congress had criticised the government for not allocating enough money for **irrigation and flood control** in the **July 2024 Budget**.
  उन्होंने **अगस्त 2024** का एक पत्र संलग्न किया, जिसमें कांग्रेस ने **2024 जुलाई के बजट** में **सिंचाई और बाढ़ नियंत्रण** के लिए पर्याप्त धन आवंटित न करने पर सरकार की आलोचना की थी।

BJP's Opposition to Project Clearance
भा.ज.पा. का परियोजना मंजूरी के विरोध में बयान

- Earlier this week, **D.R. Thapa**, president of the **BJP Sikkim unit**, wrote to **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** and **Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav** demanding the **withdrawal of the clearance** given to the project.
  इस सप्ताह पहले, **भा.ज.पा सिक्किम इकाई के अध्यक्ष डी.आर. थापा** ने **प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी** और **पर्यावरण मंत्री भूपेंद्र यादव** को पत्र लिखकर परियोजना को दी गई **मंजूरी वापस लेने** की मांग की।
- The clearance was granted on **January 10, 2025**, despite unresolved concerns about **environmental safety**, **structural integrity**, and **public consultation**.
  10 जनवरी 2025 को मंजूरी दी गई थी, हालांकि **पर्यावरण सुरक्षा**, **संरचनात्मक अखंडता**, और **सार्वजनिक परामर्श** से संबंधित मुद्दे अनसुलझे थे।
- The **BJP leader** demanded that the clearance granted by the **Environment Appraisal Committee (EAC)** be put on hold until all pending **scientific studies** and a revised **Probable Maximum Flood (PMF)** assessment were completed and independently verified.
  भा.ज.पा. नेता ने मांग की कि **पर्यावरण मूल्यांकन समिति (EAC)** द्वारा दी गई मंजूरी को तब तक रोका जाए जब तक सभी लंबित **वैज्ञानिक अध्ययन** और संशोधित **संभावित अधिकतम बाढ़ (PMF)** मूल्यांकन पूरा और स्वतंत्र रूप से सत्यापित न हो जाए।
- He also called for a **fresh environmental impact assessment** incorporating updated **climate data**, **Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF)** risks, and evolving **hydrological conditions** in the region.
  उन्होंने **नई पर्यावरणीय प्रभाव आकलन** की मांग की, जिसमें अद्यतन **जलवायु डेटा**, **ग्लेशियल झील उभार बाढ़ (GLOF)** के जोखिम, और क्षेत्र में विकसित हो रही **हाइड्रोलॉजिकल परिस्थितियाँ** शामिल हों।
- He demanded a **fresh public hearing** on the issue.
  उन्होंने इस मुद्दे पर **नई सार्वजनिक सुनवाई** की मांग की।

BJP's View on Development and Infrastructure
भा.ज.पा. का विकास और बुनियादी ढांचे पर दृष्टिकोण

- The **Sikkim BJP** believes that while development and infrastructure are essential, they must be pursued with **scientific integrity**, **environmental responsibility**, and **public participation**.
  सिक्किम भा.ज.पा. का मानना है कि जबकि विकास और बुनियादी ढांचा आवश्यक हैं, इन्हें **वैज्ञानिक ईमानदारी**, **पर्यावरणीय जिम्मेदारी**, और **सार्वजनिक भागीदारी** के साथ किया जाना चाहिए।
- The **Teesta river** is the **lifeline of Sikkim**, and any decision regarding its future must prioritise the **safety**, **sustainability**, and **ecological well-being** of the region.
  तीस्ता नदी सिक्किम की जीवनरेखा है, और इसके भविष्य से संबंधित किसी भी निर्णय में क्षेत्र की **सुरक्षा**, **स्थिरता**, और **पारिस्थितिकी कल्याण** को प्राथमिकता देनी चाहिए।
- The letter urged the **Government of India** to act immediately to prevent any further **environmental and human disasters** in the state.
  पत्र में **भारत सरकार** से राज्य में आगे होने वाली **पर्यावरणीय और मानव आपदाओं** को रोकने के लिए तुरंत कार्रवाई करने का आग्रह किया गया।

Impact of the Glacier Lake Outburst Flood in Sikkim
सिक्किम में ग्लेशियर झील उभार बाढ़ का प्रभाव

- The **devastating Glacier Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF)** in **Sikkim** washed away the **Chungthang dam**, which powered the **Teesta-3**, the State's biggest hydropower project, and killed at least **100 people**.
  सिक्किम में विनाशकारी ग्लेशियर झील उभार बाढ़ (GLOF) ने **चुंगथांग बांध** को बहा दिया, जो राज्य की सबसे बड़ी जल विद्युत परियोजना **तीस्ता-3** को संचालित करता था, और इस प्रक्रिया में कम से कम **100 लोग** मारे गए।

EAC's Report on Project Rebuilding
परियोजना पुनर्निर्माण पर EAC की रिपोर्ट

- In its report approving the rebuilding, the **EAC** mentioned that the new dam would be entirely **concrete** to **increase its strength**, and its **spillway** would manage a peak flow of **19,946 cubic metres per second (cumecs)**, three times the capacity of the former dam, which was **7,000 cumecs**.
  पुनर्निर्माण को मंजूरी देते हुए, **EAC** ने कहा कि नया बांध पूरी तरह से **कंक्रीट** का होगा ताकि उसकी **मजबूती बढ़े**, और इसका **स्पिलवे** अधिकतम प्रवाह **19,946 क्यूबिक मीटर प्रति सेकंड (क्यूमेक्स)** को संभाल सकेगा, जो पूर्व बांध की क्षमता **7,000 क्यूमेक्स** से तीन गुना है।
- The older dam had a part **rock and part concrete structure**.
  पुराने बांध की **चट्टान और कंक्रीट संरचना** थी।

Studies on Glacial Lakes and Environmental Risks
ग्लेशियल झीलों और पर्यावरणीय जोखिमों पर अध्ययन

- As part of their appraisal to relook at the projects, the **EAC** assessed studies by the government where the risk from **119 glacial lakes** was identified in the catchment area.
  परियोजनाओं पर पुनः विचार करने के लिए अपनी मूल्यांकन प्रक्रिया के हिस्से के रूप में, **EAC** ने सरकार द्वारा किए गए अध्ययन का आकलन किया, जिसमें **119 ग्लेशियल झीलों** से होने वाले जोखिम की पहचान की गई थी।
- Out of these, **50 glacial lakes** were shortlisted with an area of **10 ha or more** for further evaluation.
  इनमें से **50 ग्लेशियल झीलों** को आगे की मूल्यांकन के लिए **10 हेक्टेयर या अधिक** क्षेत्र के साथ चयनित किया गया था।

Teesta River

Origin and Course

- The **Teesta River** originates from the **Tso Lhamo Lake** in the **Eastern Himalayas**, located in **North Sikkim, India**.
- It flows through the **Indian states of Sikkim and West Bengal** before entering **Bangladesh**, where it merges with the **Brahmaputra River** (known as the Jamuna in Bangladesh).

Length and Basin

- **Total Length:** Approximately **414 km** (about **151 km in Sikkim** and **123 km in West Bengal**).
- **Basin Area:** Covers about **12,159 sq. km**, primarily in India and Bangladesh.

Tributaries

- **Left Bank:** Rangit, Rangpo
- **Right Bank:** Lachung, Lachen

Significance of Teesta River

Economic and Agricultural Importance

- **Irrigation:** Supports agriculture in **North Bengal and Bangladesh**.
- **Hydroelectric Power:** Several dams and hydropower projects are built along the river, including the **Teesta-III Hydropower Project in Sikkim**.

Teesta River Water Dispute

- India and Bangladesh have an ongoing dispute over the **equitable sharing of Teesta waters**.
- **India's Stand:** Wants to ensure sufficient water for West Bengal.
- **Bangladesh's Stand:** Seeks a fair share of water, particularly during **lean season (December to March)**.
- **Teesta Water Sharing Agreement (Proposed 2011):** Suggested a **50:50 water-sharing formula**, but has not been implemented due to opposition from **West Bengal government**.

Environmental Concerns

- **Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs):**
  - **Teesta's headwaters are glacier-fed**, making it vulnerable to **rapid glacial melting**.
  - **GLOFs from Sikkim's glaciers** pose risks to downstream areas.
- **Hydroelectric Projects:**
  - Excessive damming of the river affects **natural flow, sediment transport, and aquatic biodiversity**.
- **Climate Change Impact:**
  - **Retreating glaciers and erratic rainfall patterns** threaten the river's flow.

TOPICS COVERED (GS Paper II: Polity, Governance, and International Relations)

1. **60% polling recorded in crucial election in Delhi / दिल्ली में महत्वपूर्ण चुनाव में 60% मतदान दर्ज**
2. **U.S. President vows to take over and develop Gaza Strip after resettling Palestinians / अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति ने गाजा पट्टी पर कब्जा करने और इसे विकसित करने की प्रतिज्ञा की, फिलिस्तीनियों के पुनर्वास के बाद**
3. **U.S. aircraft lands in Amritsar with 100 deported Indians / अमृतसर में अमेरिकी विमान 100 निर्वासित भारतीयों के साथ उतरा**

4. A Green Signal for India to Assert its Health Leadership / भारत के लिए अपनी स्वास्थ्य नेतृत्व क्षमता को स्थापित करने का हरा संकेत
5. House panel seeks SOPs for timely completion of spiritual tourism projects / सदन की समिति ने आध्यात्मिक पर्यटन परियोजनाओं को समय पर पूरा करने के लिए एसओपी की मांग की
6. Trump's Gaza takeover plan rejected by allies, foes alike / ट्रम्प की गाजा पर कब्ज़ा करने की योजना को सहयोगियों और दुश्मनों दोनों ने ही खारिज कर दिया

60% polling recorded in crucial election in Delhi

Turnout almost touches 62.59% recorded in the 2020 Assembly election; parties complain about violations of Model Code of Conduct in several areas, Delhi police say issues are resolved

GS Paper II: Polity

Satvika Mahajan
NEW DELHI

Delhi recorded a turnout of 60.44% as the polling percentage in the Assembly election was updated at 12.30 a.m. on Thursday.

The voter turnout figure for the high-stakes election is likely to rise as updates continue to come in from polling booths.

In the 2020 Assembly election, the turnout was 62.59%, while in 2015, it was even higher at 67.47%.

Political parties complained about violations of the Model Code of Conduct in Chirag Delhi, Jangpura, Farsh Bazaar, and Seelampur.

However, the Delhi police did not register any case on the basis of these allegations, saying that they had been resolved.

There are close contests expected in several high-profile constituencies, including New Delhi where former Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal of the Aam Aadmi Party will take on two former Chief Ministers' sons: Parvesh Sahib Singh of the BJP and Sandeep Dikshit of the Congress.

Seeking return: AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal with his family members after casting their vote on Wednesday. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

High-profile voters

The Capital is also home to high-profile voters including President Droupadi Murmu, Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar, Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar, who voted along with his family, and Chief Justice of India Sanjeev Kumar. Congress MPs Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi, and Sonia Gandhi also voted on Wednesday.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10
NO MAJOR COMPLAINTS
» PAGE 11

Exit polls predict victory for BJP in national capital

NEW DELHI
Most of the exit polls on Wednesday predicted the return of the BJP and its allies to power in Delhi after 27 years, while projecting that the AAP would stand second and the Congress a distant third. AAP, however, said it was confident of victory. » PAGE 11

60% polling recorded in crucial election in Delhi

दिल्ली में महत्वपूर्ण चुनाव में 60% मतदान दर्ज

Delhi recorded a turnout of 60.44% as the polling percentage in the Assembly election was updated at 12.30 a.m. on Thursday.

दिल्ली में 60.44% मतदान दर्ज किया गया, जब विधानसभा चुनाव का मतदान प्रतिशत गुरुवार को रात 12:30 बजे अपडेट किया गया।

- The voter turnout figure for the **high-stakes election** is likely to rise as updates continue to come in from polling booths.

महत्वपूर्ण चुनाव के लिए मतदान प्रतिशत बढ़ने की संभावना है क्योंकि मतदान केंद्रों से अपडेट आना जारी है।

- In the **2020 Assembly election**, the turnout was **62.59%**, while in **2015**, it was even higher at **67.47%**.
  2020 के विधानसभा चुनाव में मतदान प्रतिशत **62.59%** था, जबकि **2015** में यह और अधिक **67.47%** था।
- **Political parties complained** about violations of the **Model Code of Conduct** in **Chirag Delhi, Jangpura, Farsh Bazaar,** and **Seelampur**.
  राजनीतिक दलों ने शिकायत की कि **चिराग दिल्ली, जंगपुरा, फर्श बाजार** और **सीलमपुर** में **आदर्श आचार संहिता** का उल्लंघन हुआ।
- However, the **Delhi police** did not register any case on the basis of these allegations, saying that they had been resolved.
  हालांकि, **दिल्ली पुलिस** ने इन आरोपों के आधार पर कोई मामला दर्ज नहीं किया, यह कहते हुए कि मुद्दों को सुलझा लिया गया है।
- **Close contests expected** in several **high-profile constituencies**, including **New Delhi**, where **former CM Arvind Kejriwal** of **AAP** will take on **Parvesh Sahib Singh** of **BJP** and **Sandeep Dikshit** of **Congress**.
  कई महत्वपूर्ण विधानसभा क्षेत्रों में कड़ा मुकाबला होने की उम्मीद है, जिनमें **नई दिल्ली** भी शामिल है, जहां **AAP के पूर्व मुख्यमंत्री अरविंद केजरीवाल**, **BJP के प्रवेश साहिब सिंह** और **कांग्रेस के संदीप दीक्षित** के खिलाफ चुनाव लड़ रहे हैं।

High-profile voters
महत्वपूर्ण मतदाता

- The Capital is home to **high-profile voters**, including **President Droupadi Murmu, Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar, and CEC Rajiv Kumar**, who voted along with his family.
  राजधानी में **महत्वपूर्ण मतदाता** हैं, जिनमें **राष्ट्रपति द्रौपदी मुर्मू, उपराष्ट्रपति जगदीप धनखड़, और मुख्य चुनाव आयुक्त (CEC) राजीव कुमार** शामिल हैं, जिन्होंने अपने परिवार के साथ मतदान किया।
- **Chief Justice of India Sanjeev Kumar** also cast his vote.
  भारत के मुख्य न्यायाधीश संजीव कुमार ने भी अपना वोट डाला।
- **Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi, and Sonia Gandhi** voted on **Wednesday**.
  कांग्रेस नेता राहुल गांधी, प्रियंका गांधी, और सोनिया गांधी ने **बुधवार** को मतदान किया।

U.S. President vows to take over and develop Gaza Strip after resettling Palestinians

GS Paper II: US in West Asia

Re
WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump vowed on Tuesday that the U.S. would take over the war-ravaged Gaza Strip after Palestinians are resettled elsewhere and develop it economically, a move that would shatter decades of U.S. policy towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

He unveiled his surprise plan, without providing specifics, at a joint press conference with visiting Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The announcement followed Mr. Trump's shock proposal, made shortly before Mr. Netanyahu arrived on Tuesday, for the permanent resettlement of Palestinians from Gaza to neighbouring countries, calling the enclave – where the first phase of a fragile ceasefire is in effect – a "demolition site".

"The U.S. will take over the Gaza Strip, and we will do a job with it too," Mr. Trump told presspersons.

"We will own it and be responsible for dismantling all of the dangerous unexploded bombs and other weapons on the site," he said.

"If it's necessary, we'll do that, we're going to take over that piece, we're going to develop it, create thousands and thousands of jobs, and it'll be something that the entire Middle East can be very proud of," Mr. Trump added.

Asked who would live there, the U.S. President said it could become a home to "the world's people".

Mr. Netanyahu said Mr. Trump was "thinking outside the box with fresh ideas" and was "showing willingness to puncture conventional thinking."

Mr. Trump earlier repeated his call for Jordan, Egypt, and other Arab states to take in Gazans.

ALLIES, FOES REJECT PLAN
» PAGE 14

U.S. President vows to take over and develop Gaza Strip after resettling Palestinians

अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति ने गाजा पट्टी पर कब्जा करने और इसे विकसित करने की प्रतिज्ञा की, फिलिस्तीनियों के पुनर्वास के बाद

U.S. President Donald Trump vowed on Tuesday that the U.S. would take over the war-ravaged Gaza Strip after Palestinians are resettled elsewhere and develop it economically.

अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति डोनाल्ड ट्रंप ने मंगलवार को वादा किया कि अमेरिका युद्धग्रस्त गाजा पट्टी पर कब्जा करेगा, फिलिस्तीनियों को अन्यत्र पुनर्वासित करने के बाद और इसे आर्थिक रूप से विकसित करेगा।

- This move would **shatter decades of U.S. policy** towards the **Israeli-Palestinian conflict**.
  यह कदम **इजरायल-फिलिस्तीन संघर्ष** को लेकर **अमेरिका की दशकों पुरानी नीति** को तोड़ देगा।
- He unveiled his **surprise plan** at a **joint press conference** with visiting **Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu**, without providing specifics.
  उन्होंने अपनी **अचानक योजना** का खुलासा किया, जो उन्होंने **इजरायली प्रधानमंत्री बेंजामिन नेतन्याहू** के साथ **संयुक्त प्रेस कॉन्फ्रेंस** में किया, बिना कोई विशेष जानकारी दिए।
- The announcement followed Mr. Trump's **shock proposal**, made shortly before Mr. Netanyahu arrived on **Tuesday**, for the **permanent resettlement of Palestinians from Gaza to neighboring countries**.
  यह घोषणा **श्री ट्रंप के चौंकाने वाले प्रस्ताव** के बाद आई, जो **मंगलवार** को **श्री नेतन्याहू** के आगमन से पहले दिया गया था, जिसमें **गाजा से फिलिस्तीनियों को स्थायी रूप से पड़ोसी देशों में पुनर्वासित करने** का सुझाव था।

- Calling Gaza a **"demolition site"**, Mr. Trump said, **"The U.S. will take over the Gaza Strip, and we will do a job with it too."**

  गाजा को "विनाश स्थल" कहते हुए, श्री ट्रंप ने कहा, **"अमेरिका गाजा पट्टी पर कब्जा करेगा और हम वहां एक बड़ा काम करेंगे।"**
- He added that the **U.S. would own it** and be responsible for **dismantling unexploded bombs and other weapons**.

  उन्होंने कहा कि **अमेरिका इसका मालिक होगा** और **अनफटे बमों और अन्य हथियारों को हटाने की जिम्मेदारी लेगा।**
- Mr. Trump stated, **"If it's necessary, we will take over, develop it, create thousands of jobs, and make it something the entire Middle East can be proud of."**

  श्री ट्रंप ने कहा, **"यदि आवश्यक हुआ, तो हम इसे अपने नियंत्रण में लेंगे, इसे विकसित करेंगे, हजारों नौकरियां पैदा करेंगे और इसे ऐसा बनाएंगे जिस पर पूरा मध्य पूर्व गर्व कर सके।"**
- When asked **who would live in Gaza**, the **U.S. President** said it could become a **home to "the world's people"**.

  जब उनसे पूछा गया कि **गाजा में कौन रहेगा**, तो **अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति** ने कहा कि यह **"दुनिया के लोगों" का घर बन सकता है।**
- **Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu** praised **Trump's plan**, calling it **"thinking outside the box with fresh ideas"** and **"showing willingness to challenge conventional thinking."**

  इजरायली प्रधानमंत्री नेतन्याहू ने **ट्रंप की योजना** की सराहना की, इसे **"नए विचारों के साथ पारंपरिक सोच से बाहर निकलने की सोच"** और **"परंपरागत सोच को चुनौती देने की इच्छा"** बताया।
- Mr. Trump **repeated his call** for **Jordan, Egypt, and other Arab states** to take in **Gazans**.

  श्री ट्रंप ने **फिर से आह्वान किया** कि **जॉर्डन, मिस्र और अन्य अरब देश गाजा के लोगों** को शरण दें।

PATRIOTIC IAS

U.S. aircraft lands in Amritsar with 100 deported Indians

GS Paper II: US-India

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

A C-17 wide-bodied aircraft of the United States Air Force landed in the Guru Ram Dass Jee International Airport of Amritsar on Wednesday carrying around 100 Indian nationals who were suspected by the U.S. authorities of using illegal means to enter the country.

Sources here contradicted the previous assessment of over 200 passengers, saying that the flight carried a little more than 100 passengers as "large-scale deportation flights" usually do.

According to sources privy to the nature of the discussion regarding the passengers on the flight, the individuals on board the aircraft were handed over to the Punjab police soon after they landed.

The deportation through a military aircraft drew attention as this was the first time the U.S. had carried out such a deportation with one of its biggest cargo aircraft. The *BBC* had reported that the authorities in Amritsar moved fast and started sending them back to their home towns in Gujarat, Haryana, and Punjab. Commercial taxis and airlines were being used to send them back to their home towns, sources have said.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10

A U.S. military plane deporting Indian immigrants lands at the Guru Ram Dass Jee International Airport in Amritsar on Wednesday. ANI

U.S. aircraft lands in Amritsar with 100 deported Indians

अमृतसर में अमेरिकी विमान 100 निर्वासित भारतीयों के साथ उतरा

A C-17 wide-bodied aircraft of the United States Air Force landed in the Guru Ram Dass Jee International Airport of Amritsar on Wednesday, carrying around 100 Indian nationals who were suspected by the U.S. authorities of using illegal means to enter the country.

अमेरिकी वायु सेना का C-17 वाइड-बॉडी विमान बुधवार को अमृतसर के गुरु राम दास जी अंतरराष्ट्रीय हवाई अड्डे पर उतरा, जिसमें लगभग 100 भारतीय नागरिक थे, जिन्हें अमेरिकी अधिकारियों ने अवैध तरीकों से देश में प्रवेश करने का संदेह जताया था।

- Sources here contradicted the previous assessment of **over 200 passengers**, saying that the **flight carried a little more than 100 passengers** as **"large-scale deportation flights"** usually do.
  यहां के **सूत्रों ने पहले के 200 से अधिक यात्रियों के अनुमान** को खारिज कर दिया, यह कहते हुए कि **विमान में 100 से कुछ अधिक यात्री थे**, जैसा कि आमतौर पर **"बड़े पैमाने पर निर्वासन उड़ानों"** में होता है।
- According to sources privy to the nature of the discussion regarding the passengers on the flight, the **individuals on board the aircraft were handed over to the Punjab police** soon after they landed.
  उड़ान में यात्रियों से संबंधित चर्चा की प्रकृति से अवगत **सूत्रों के अनुसार**, विमान में सवार **व्यक्तियों को उतरते ही पंजाब पुलिस को सौंप दिया गया**।
- The **deportation through a military aircraft** drew attention as this was the **first time** the **U.S.** had carried out such a deportation with **one of its biggest cargo aircraft**.
  सैन्य विमान के माध्यम से निर्वासन ने ध्यान आकर्षित किया क्योंकि यह पहली बार था जब **अमेरिका** ने अपने **सबसे बड़े कार्गो विमानों में से एक** के माध्यम से ऐसा निर्वासन किया।

PATRIOTIC IAS

- The **BBC reported** that the **authorities in Amritsar moved fast** and started **sending them back to their home towns** in **Gujarat, Haryana, and Punjab**.
  बीबीसी की रिपोर्ट के अनुसार, अमृतसर के अधिकारियों ने तेजी से कार्रवाई की और उन्हें **गुजरात, हरियाणा और पंजाब** में **उनके गृह नगरों में भेजना शुरू कर दिया।**
- **Commercial taxis and airlines** were being used to send them back to their **home towns**, sources have said.
  सूत्रों के अनुसार, व्यावसायिक टैक्सियों और एयरलाइनों का उपयोग उन्हें **उनके गृह नगरों में भेजने के लिए किया जा रहा था।**

A green signal for India to assert its health leadership

GS Paper II: Health Sector

The Union Budget 2025-26 lays a robust foundation for India to assert its leadership in global health care and innovation, with strategic announcements that bolster medical infrastructure, expand educational opportunities, and promote global collaboration.

With a ₹90,958 crore health-care allocation, the addition of 75,000 medical seats over the next five years, and investments in daycare cancer centres, India is poised to enhance both accessibility and quality of care. The country will add 10,000 medical seats in FY26 alone, underscoring its commitment to health-care excellence.

India's health-care transformation

This Budget underscores India's remarkable journey of progress, from the 1980s when it grappled with limited medical infrastructure, to its current status as a global health-care leader. The transformation has been nothing short of extraordinary.

Recently, the writer had the privilege of presenting two key recommendations to Prime Minister Narendra Modi: first, establishing India as the global health-care destination, and second, addressing the global shortfall of health-care professionals. It has been a delight to see both these ideas in action through the 'Heal in India' and 'Heal by India' initiatives. With streamlined visa processes, enhanced hospital infrastructure, and robust public-private partnerships, India is poised to become the preferred medical destination for international patients.

Dr. Prathap C. Reddy

is Founder and Chairman, Apollo Hospitals

The Budget has recognised the role of health care as a pillar of national growth and development

Simultaneously, the country is addressing the global shortfall of health-care professionals by training and deploying more doctors, nurses, and paramedics abroad. This will ensure that Indian expertise supports health-care systems worldwide while creating new opportunities for our skilled professionals.

Customs duty exemptions, tech outlook

Moreover, it is commendable that the growing burden of non-communicable diseases such as cancer has been acknowledged in this Budget. The establishment of 200 day-care cancer centres in district hospitals will bring specialised treatment closer to people, improving early diagnosis and better patient outcomes.

The customs duty exemption on 36 life-saving drugs, including those for cancer, rare diseases, and chronic conditions will lower the cost of treatments, in turn, benefiting thousands of patients across the country. Also, the addition of 13 new patient assistance programmes would also improve access to critical medications for patients, particularly those with chronic conditions.

The emphasis on Artificial Intelligence and digital health marks a pivotal moment for the future of India's health care. The new National Centres of Excellence will spearhead innovation in diagnostics, treatment, and research, enabling India to develop cutting-edge solutions that enhance patient care.

The writer believes that the introduction of cutting-edge technologies to deliver quality health care has strengthened India's position as a global health-care player. Both private and public hospitals have played an integral role in this progress. Apollo was the first hospital to launch Proton therapy for advanced cancer care in this part of the world and continues to attract patients from countries such as Australia and the United Kingdom to name a few.

Build on the momentum

This Budget clearly recognises the government's vision for – and demonstration of bold leadership in recognising – health care as a pillar of national growth and development. From a country that once struggled to provide basic medical care, we have evolved into a nation offering world-class treatment to millions. Through the synergy of Heal in India, Heal by India, and innovation-driven care, we are shaping a future where India's health-care system sets new global benchmarks.

It is our collective responsibility now to build on this momentum – by embracing technology, strengthening medical education, and ensuring that health care reaches every individual in need.

India is not just healing its own people; it is healing the world.

A Green Signal for India to Assert its Health Leadership

भारत के लिए अपनी स्वास्थ्य नेतृत्व क्षमता को स्थापित करने का हरा संकेत

The Union Budget 2025-26 lays a robust foundation for India to assert its leadership in global health care and innovation with strategic announcements.

केंद्रीय बजट 2025-26 भारत के लिए वैश्विक स्वास्थ्य सेवा और नवाचार में अपनी नेतृत्व क्षमता को स्थापित करने की एक मजबूत नींव रखता है।

- **₹90,958 crore** health-care allocation has been announced.

- ₹90,958 करोड़ का स्वास्थ्य सेवा आवंटन किया गया है।
- **75,000 medical seats** will be added over the next **five years**, with **10,000 seats** in **FY26 alone**.
  - अगले **पाँच वर्षों** में **75,000 मेडिकल सीटें** जोड़ी जाएंगी, जिनमें से **10,000 सीटें** अकेले **FY26** में जोड़ी जाएंगी।

India's Health-Care Transformation
भारत का स्वास्थ्य सेवा परिवर्तन

- India's journey from **limited medical infrastructure in the 1980s** to becoming a **global health-care leader** has been extraordinary.
  - भारत की **1980 के दशक की सीमित चिकित्सा अवसंरचना** से **वैश्विक स्वास्थ्य सेवा नेतृत्व** तक की यात्रा असाधारण रही है।
- Two key recommendations were presented to **PM Narendra Modi**:
  - **Prime Minister नरेंद्र मोदी** को दो प्रमुख सिफारिशें प्रस्तुत की गईं:
  - **Establishing India as a global health-care destination.**
    - भारत को **वैश्विक स्वास्थ्य सेवा गंतव्य** के रूप में स्थापित करना।
  - **Addressing the global shortfall of health-care professionals.**
    - **स्वास्थ्य सेवा पेशेवरों की वैश्विक कमी** को दूर करना।
- **'Heal in India'** and **'Heal by India'** initiatives are already in action to support these goals.
  - इन लक्ष्यों को प्राप्त करने के लिए **'Heal in India'** और **'Heal by India'** पहल पहले से ही सक्रिय हैं।
- India is streamlining **visa processes, enhancing hospital infrastructure**, and promoting **public-private partnerships** to attract international patients.
  - भारत **वीजा प्रक्रियाओं को सरल बना रहा है, अस्पताल अवसंरचना को बढ़ा रहा है** और **सार्वजनिक-निजी भागीदारी** को प्रोत्साहित कर रहा है ताकि अंतरराष्ट्रीय मरीजों को आकर्षित किया जा सके।
- India is training and deploying **more doctors, nurses, and paramedics** abroad to help global health-care systems.
  - भारत **अधिक डॉक्टर, नर्स और पैरामेडिक्स** को प्रशिक्षित कर विदेशों में तैनात कर रहा है ताकि वैश्विक स्वास्थ्य प्रणाली को समर्थन मिल सके।

Customs Duty Exemptions, Tech Outlook
कस्टम ड्यूटी छूट, तकनीकी दृष्टिकोण

- **200 day-care cancer centres** will be established in **district hospitals** for specialized treatment.

- **200 डे-केयर कैंसर सेंटर जिला अस्पतालों** में स्थापित किए जाएंगे ताकि विशेष उपचार उपलब्ध हो सके।
- Customs duty exemption on **36 life-saving drugs**, including those for **cancer, rare diseases, and chronic conditions**, will reduce treatment costs.
  - **36 जीवनरक्षक दवाओं** पर कस्टम ड्यूटी छूट दी गई है, जिनमें **कैंसर, दुर्लभ रोग और दीर्घकालिक बीमारियों** की दवाएं शामिल हैं, जिससे उपचार की लागत घटेगी।
- **13 new patient assistance programmes** will improve access to critical medications.
  - **13 नई मरीज सहायता योजनाएं** महत्वपूर्ण दवाओं की पहुंच को बढ़ाएंगी।
- Focus on **Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital health** will drive future innovation.
  - **कृत्रिम बुद्धिमत्ता (AI) और डिजिटल स्वास्थ्य** पर जोर भविष्य के नवाचार को प्रेरित करेगा।
- **New National Centres of Excellence** will lead in **diagnostics, treatment, and research**.
  - **नए राष्ट्रीय उत्कृष्टता केंद्र निदान, उपचार और अनुसंधान** में अग्रणी भूमिका निभाएंगे।
- **Apollo** was the **first hospital** to launch **Proton therapy** for **advanced cancer care** in this part of the world.
  - **अपोलो** इस क्षेत्र में **उन्नत कैंसर उपचार** के लिए **प्रोटॉन थेरेपी** शुरू करने वाला **पहला अस्पताल** था।

Build on the Momentum
गति को बनाए रखें

- This **Budget recognizes health care as a pillar of national growth** and development.
  - यह **बजट स्वास्थ्य सेवा को राष्ट्रीय विकास का एक प्रमुख स्तंभ** मानता है।
- India has evolved from struggling to provide **basic medical care** to offering **world-class treatment**.
  - भारत **मूलभूत चिकित्सा सेवा** देने में संघर्ष से आगे बढ़कर **विश्वस्तरीय उपचार** देने वाले देश के रूप में विकसित हुआ है।
- **Heal in India, Heal by India**, and **innovation-driven care** are setting new global benchmarks.
  - **Heal in India, Heal by India** और **नवाचार आधारित देखभाल** नई वैश्विक मानदंड स्थापित कर रही हैं।
- Emphasis on **technology, medical education, and accessibility** will ensure better health care for all.
  - **प्रौद्योगिकी, चिकित्सा शिक्षा और पहुंच** पर जोर देने से सभी के लिए बेहतर स्वास्थ्य सेवा सुनिश्चित होगी।
- India is **not just healing its own people but healing the world**.
  - भारत **सिर्फ अपने लोगों का ही नहीं बल्कि पूरे विश्व का उपचार कर रहा है**।

House panel seeks SOPs for timely completion of spiritual tourism projects

GS Paper II: Government Scheme

Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI

Expressing disappointment over the slow progress of important projects in the spiritual tourism circuits and under the Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive (PRASHAD) scheme, a parliamentary committee has asked the government to develop a "clear-cut Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)" and obtain prior clearances and approvals from relevant authorities for timely completion of projects.

The PRASHAD scheme focuses on developing and identifying pilgrimage sites across India for enriching the religious tourism experience.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture noted that of the 23 spiritual circuits, five are yet to be completed out of which two circuits in Kerala – Sabarimala-Erumeli-Pampa-Sannidhanam circuit and Sivagiri Sree Narayana Guru Ashram circuit – are yet to be completed.

In a report tabled in the Lok Sabha on Monday, the committee, headed by Janata Dal(U) MP Sanjay Jha, said that at the time of the Demands for Grants, 2023-24, it had been informed that the reason for delays in these two Kerala circuits was lack of clearance from the temple authorities.

The panel also observed that under the PRASHAD scheme, only 21 of 45 projects have been completed.

Long trek: Pilgrims trekking through the Sathram-Sabarimala traditional forest path. LEJU KAMAL

House panel seeks SOPs for timely completion of spiritual tourism projects

सदन की समिति ने आध्यात्मिक पर्यटन परियोजनाओं को समय पर पूरा करने के लिए एसओपी की मांग की

Disappointment Over Slow Progress in Spiritual Tourism Projects
आध्यात्मिक पर्यटन परियोजनाओं में धीमी प्रगति पर निराशा

- A **parliamentary committee** expressed disappointment over the **slow progress** of important projects under the **Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive (PRASHAD)** scheme.
  एक संसदीय समिति ने **यात्रा पुनरोद्धार और आध्यात्मिक संवर्धन ड्राइव (PRASHAD)** योजना के तहत महत्वपूर्ण परियोजनाओं की **धीमी प्रगति** पर निराशा व्यक्त की।
- The committee has urged the government to develop a **"clearcut Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)"** and obtain prior **clearances and approvals** from relevant authorities for timely completion of projects.
  समिति ने सरकार से **"स्पष्ट मानक संचालन प्रक्रिया (SOP)"** विकसित करने और परियोजनाओं की समय पर पूर्णता के लिए संबंधित अधिकारियों से **पूर्व स्वीकृतियां और अनुमतियां** प्राप्त करने का अनुरोध किया है।
- The **PRASHAD scheme** focuses on developing and identifying **pilgrimage sites** across **India** to enrich the religious tourism experience.
  PRASHAD योजना का उद्देश्य **भारत** भर में **तीर्थ स्थलों** को विकसित करना और पहचानना है ताकि धार्मिक पर्यटन के अनुभव को समृद्ध किया जा सके।
- The **Parliamentary Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism, and Culture** noted that of the **23 spiritual circuits**, **five** are yet to be completed.

परिवहन, पर्यटन और संस्कृति पर संसदीय स्थायी समिति ने यह नोट किया कि **23 आध्यात्मिक सर्किटों** में से **पाँच** अभी तक पूर्ण नहीं हुए हैं।

- Two of the incomplete circuits are in **Kerala**: the **Sabarimala–Erumeli–Pampa-Sannidhanam** circuit and **Sivagiri Sree Narayana Guru Ashram** circuit.
  केरल में दो अधूरे सर्किट हैं: **सबरिमाला-एरुमेली-पम्पा-सन्निधानम** सर्किट और **सिवगिरी श्री नारायण गुरु आश्रम** सर्किट।
- The committee's report, tabled in the **Lok Sabha** on **Monday**, stated that at the time of the **Demands for Grants, 2023-24**, it was informed that the delay in the two Kerala circuits was due to the **lack of clearance from the temple authorities**.
  समिति की रिपोर्ट, जो **सोमवार** को **लोकसभा** में प्रस्तुत की गई, में कहा गया कि **वित्त वर्ष 2023-24 के लिए अनुदान की मांगों** के समय यह जानकारी दी गई कि इन दो केरल सर्किटों में देरी **मंदिर अधिकारियों से मंजूरी की कमी** के कारण हो रही है।
- The committee also observed that under the **PRASHAD scheme**, only **21** out of **45 projects** have been completed.
  समिति ने यह भी देखा कि **PRASHAD योजना** के तहत **45 परियोजनाओं** में से केवल **21** परियोजनाएं ही पूरी हुई हैं।

Trump's Gaza takeover plan rejected by allies, foes alike

Australia, Ireland, China, New Zealand, Germany, Russia reiterate support for a two-state solution; Palestinian President Abbas calls for the UN to protect the territory's people and their rights

GS Paper II: US in West Asia

A
DUBAI

U.S. President Donald Trump's proposal that the United States "take over" the Gaza Strip and permanently resettle its Palestinian residents was swiftly rejected and denounced on Wednesday by American allies and adversaries alike.

Saudi Arabia, an important American ally, weighed in quickly on Mr. Trump's expanded idea to take over the Gaza Strip in a sharply worded statement, noting that its long call for an independent Palestinian state was a "firm, steadfast and unwavering position."

The Prime Ministers of Australia and Ireland, Foreign Ministries from China, New Zealand and Germany, and a Kremlin spokesman all reiterated support for a two-state solution.

Old friends: Donald Trump meets Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the Oval Office of the White House on Tuesday. AFP

"Australia's position is the same as it was this morning, as it was last year, as it was 10 years ago," Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said.

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said Mr. Trump's proposal on "deportations from Gaza is not something that either the region or we would accept."

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas called for the UN to "protect the Palestinian people and their rights," saying that what Mr. Trump wanted to do would be "a serious violation of international law."

Trump's Gaza takeover plan rejected by allies, foes alike

ट्रम्प की गाजा पर कब्ज़ा करने की योजना को सहयोगियों और दुश्मनों दोनों ने ही खारिज कर दिया

Australia, Ireland, China, New Zealand, Germany, Russia reiterate support for a two-state solution; Palestinian President Abbas calls for the UN to protect the territory's people and their rights

ऑस्ट्रेलिया, आयरलैंड, चीन, न्यूजीलैंड, जर्मनी, रूस ने दो-राज्य समाधान के लिए अपना समर्थन दोहराया; फिलिस्तीनी राष्ट्रपति अब्बास ने संयुक्त राष्ट्र से क्षेत्र के लोगों और उनके अधिकारों की रक्षा करने का आह्वान किया

U.S. President Trump's Gaza Proposal Rejected by Global Leaders
यू.एस. राष्ट्रपति ट्रंप का गाजा प्रस्ताव वैश्विक नेताओं द्वारा अस्वीकार

- **U.S. President Donald Trump's proposal** to have the United States "take over" the **Gaza Strip** and permanently resettle its **Palestinian residents** was **rejected** and **denounced** by both **American allies** and **adversaries**.
  यू.एस. राष्ट्रपति डोनाल्ड ट्रंप का प्रस्ताव कि संयुक्त राज्य अमेरिका **गाजा पट्टी** को "कब्जा करे" और उसके **फिलिस्तीनी निवासियों** को स्थायी रूप से पुनर्वासित करे, को **अमेरिकी सहयोगियों** और **विरोधियों** द्वारा **अस्वीकार** और **निंदा** किया गया।
- **Saudi Arabia**, an important **American ally**, quickly responded to Mr. Trump's expanded idea to take over the Gaza Strip with a **sharply worded statement**, reaffirming its long-standing call for an **independent Palestinian state**.
  सऊदी अरब, एक महत्वपूर्ण **अमेरिकी सहयोगी**, ने गाजा पट्टी को कब्जा करने के लिए श्री ट्रंप के विस्तारित विचार पर तुरंत **कड़े शब्दों में बयान** दिया, जिसमें उसने **स्वतंत्र फिलिस्तीनी राज्य** के लिए अपनी दीर्घकालिक मांग को दोहराया।
- The **Prime Ministers of Australia and Ireland**, **Foreign Ministries** from **China**, **New Zealand**, and **Germany**, and a **Kremlin spokesman** all reiterated their support for a **two-state solution**.
  ऑस्ट्रेलिया और आयरलैंड के प्रधान मंत्री, **चीन**, **न्यूजीलैंड** और **जर्मनी** के **विदेश मंत्रालय**, और एक **क्रेमलिन प्रवक्ता** ने सभी **दो-राज्य समाधान** के लिए अपना समर्थन दोहराया।
- **Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese** stated, "Australia's position is the same as it was this morning, as it was last year, as it was 10 years ago."
  ऑस्ट्रेलिया के प्रधानमंत्री एंथनी अल्बनीज़ ने कहा, "ऑस्ट्रेलिया की स्थिति वही है जो आज सुबह थी, जैसा कि पिछले साल था, जैसा कि 10 साल पहले था।"
- **Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan** stated that Mr. Trump's proposal on **"deportations from Gaza"** is not something that **either the region or Turkey** would accept.
  तुर्की के विदेश मंत्री हाकान फिदान ने कहा कि श्री ट्रंप का प्रस्ताव **"गाजा से निर्वासन"** पर **न तो क्षेत्र** और न ही **तुर्की** इसे स्वीकार करेगा।
- **Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas** called for the **UN to protect the Palestinian people** and their rights, asserting that Mr. Trump's proposal would be **"a serious violation of international law."**
  फिलिस्तीनी राष्ट्रपति महमूद अब्बास ने **यूएन से फिलिस्तीनी लोगों** और उनके अधिकारों की रक्षा करने का आह्वान किया, यह कहते हुए कि श्री ट्रंप का प्रस्ताव **"अंतर्राष्ट्रीय कानून का गंभीर उल्लंघन"** होगा।

TOPICS COVERED (GS Paper III: Economy, Science & Technology, Environment, Disaster Management, Internal Security)

1. New life-sized mechanical elephant to assist Kerala temple in ceremonies / केरल मंदिर में अनुष्ठानों में सहायता के लिए नया जीवन-आकार का यांत्रिक हाथी

2.M.P. CM releases five more cheetahs into the wild in Kuno / मध्य प्रदेश के मुख्यमंत्री ने कुनो में पांच और चीते जंगल में छोड़े

3. A Budget that is mostly good but with one wrong move / एक बजट जो ज्यादातर अच्छा है लेकिन एक गलत कदम के साथ

4. A Tough Call / मुश्किल फ़ैसला

5. The Rise and Rise of UPI Digital Payments / यूपीआई डिजिटल भुगतान का बढ़ता प्रभाव

6.SC Directive on Sacred Groves / सुप्रीम कोर्ट का पवित्र उपवनों पर निर्देश

7. Govt. warns officials against using AI tools due to security risks / सरकार ने सुरक्षा जोखिमों के कारण एआई टूल्स के उपयोग पर अधिकारियों को चेतावनी दी

8.Stryker infantry vehicle deal with the U.S. progresses; Javelin to be re-demonstrated / अमेरिका के साथ स्ट्राइकर इन्फैंट्री वाहन सौदा प्रगति पर; जैवलिन फिर से प्रदर्शित किया जाएगा

PATRIOTIC IAS

M.P. CM releases five more cheetahs into the wild in Kuno

GS Paper III: Environment

BHOPAL

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Wednesday released five cheetahs, including the female Veera who had given birth to two cubs on Tuesday, into the wild from their enclosures at the Kuno National Park in Sheopur district.

The other cheetahs set free include Asha and her three cubs. Two cheetahs – Agni and Vayu – already roam freely in the forest since they were released on December 4, 2024 on the occasion of International Cheetah Day.

Mr. Yadav shared pictures from the national park on X. "On this occasion, a review was also conducted with the officials regarding the cheetah project," he wrote.

The Chief Minister said it was a matter of great pleasure to see the cheetahs gaining speed again and increasing their population in Madhya Pradesh.

"The land of Madhya Pradesh with the spirit of *'jeev charachar jantu samaana'* is amazing; which is the ideal shelter for wildlife and the courtyard of the frolic of many endangered wild animals. We are committed to preserving wildlife and biodiversity for the coming generations and will continue to make the holy land of Madhya Pradesh proud with such innovations in the future too," he said.

The total population of cheetahs at the national park is now 26.

Eight cheetahs had been brought from Namibia and Prime Minister Narendra Modi had released them in the enclosures at the park on September 17, 2022, marking a return of the feline species to the country.

More cheetahs

Six to eight more cheetahs are also set to be brought from South Africa and moved to a new home, Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary in Mandsaur district of the State. While an official date is yet to be decided, officials say it could be before April this year.

M.P. CM releases five more cheetahs into the wild in Kuno

मध्य प्रदेश के मुख्यमंत्री ने कुनो में पांच और चीते जंगल में छोड़े

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Wednesday released five cheetahs, including the female Veera, who had given birth to two cubs on Tuesday, into the wild from their enclosures at Kuno National Park in Sheopur district.

मध्य प्रदेश के मुख्यमंत्री मोहन यादव ने बुधवार को पांच चीते, जिनमें मादा चीता वीरा शामिल है, जिसे मंगलवार को दो शावक हुए, को उनके बाड़ों से शिवपुरी जिले के कुनो राष्ट्रीय उद्यान में जंगल में छोड़ दिया।

- The other cheetahs set free include **Asha and her three cubs**.
  अन्य छोड़े गए चीतों में **आशा और उसके तीन शावक** शामिल हैं।
- **Two cheetahs, Agni and Vayu**, already roam freely in the forest since they were released on **December 4, 2024**, on the occasion of **International Cheetah Day**.
  दो चीते, अग्नि और वायु, पहले से ही जंगल में स्वतंत्र रूप से घूम रहे हैं, क्योंकि उन्हें **4 दिसंबर 2024** को **अंतर्राष्ट्रीय चीता दिवस** के अवसर पर छोड़ा गया था।
- **Mr. Yadav shared pictures from the national park on X** and wrote, *"On this occasion, a review was also conducted with the officials regarding the cheetah project."*
  श्री यादव ने एक्स पर राष्ट्रीय उद्यान की तस्वीरें साझा कीं और लिखा, *"इस अवसर पर, अधिकारियों के साथ चीता परियोजना की समीक्षा भी की गई।"*
- The Chief Minister said it was a **matter of great pleasure** to see the cheetahs **gaining speed again and increasing their population in Madhya Pradesh**.
  मुख्यमंत्री ने कहा कि यह **बहुत खुशी की बात है** कि चीते **फिर से गति पकड़ रहे हैं और मध्य प्रदेश में उनकी संख्या बढ़ रही है।**
- *"The land of Madhya Pradesh, with the spirit of* **'jeev charachar jantu samaana'**, *is an ideal shelter for wildlife and home to many endangered animals."*

PATRIOTIC IAS

"मध्य प्रदेश की भूमि **'जीव चराचर जन्तु समान'** *की भावना के साथ वन्यजीवों के लिए एक आदर्श आश्रय स्थल है और कई लुप्तप्राय जानवरों का घर है।"*

- *"We are committed to preserving wildlife and biodiversity for future generations and will continue such innovations to make Madhya Pradesh proud."*
  "हम भविष्य की पीढ़ियों के लिए वन्यजीवों और जैव विविधता के संरक्षण के लिए प्रतिबद्ध हैं और मध्य प्रदेश को गर्व महसूस कराने के लिए ऐसे नवाचार जारी रखेंगे।"
- **The total population of cheetahs at Kuno National Park is now 26.**
  कुनो राष्ट्रीय उद्यान में चीतों की कुल संख्या अब 26 हो गई है।

Cheetahs from Namibia and South Africa

नामीबिया और दक्षिण अफ्रीका से चीते

- **Eight cheetahs were brought from Namibia**, and **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** released them in the enclosures at **Kuno on September 17, 2022**, marking the **return of the feline species to India**.
  नामीबिया से आठ चीते लाए गए थे, और **प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी** ने उन्हें **17 सितंबर 2022** को **कुनो में बाड़ों में छोड़ा**, जिससे **भारत में इस बिल्ली प्रजाति की वापसी हुई**।
- **Six to eight more cheetahs** are set to be brought from **South Africa** and moved to a new home at **Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary in Mandsaur district**.
  छह से आठ और चीते दक्षिण अफ्रीका से लाए जाने हैं और उन्हें **मंदसौर जिले के गांधी सागर वन्यजीव अभयारण्य** में बसाया जाएगा।
- **While an official date is yet to be decided, officials say it could be before April this year.**
  हालांकि आधिकारिक तिथि अभी तय नहीं हुई है, लेकिन अधिकारियों का कहना है कि यह इस साल अप्रैल से पहले हो सकता है।

PATRIOTIC IAS

New life-sized mechanical elephant to assist Kerala temple in ceremonies

GS Paper III: S&T

The Hindu Bureau
THRISSUR

A three-metre-tall mechanical elephant weighing 800 kilograms was offered to Kombara Sreekrishna Swami Temple in Kerala's Thrissur, on Wednesday.

Sitarist Anoushka Shankar and People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India gifted the life-size elephant, Kombara Kannan, to the temple, in recognition of its decision not to own or hire live elephants.

Kombara Kannan was unveiled by Satish Vimalan, secretary of Unnayi Warier Smaraka Kalanilayam, and will be used to conduct ceremonies at the temple.

Larger than life: Kombara Kannan is a three-metre-tall mechanical elephant weighing 800 kilograms. THULASI KAKKAT

After the *Nadayiruthal* ceremony of the mechanical elephant, the temple hosted a *Panchari melam* performance led by Kalamandalam Harish Marar.

Ms. Shankar, who was nominated for two awards at the Grammys held on February 2 in Los Angeles, says, "Kombara Kannan struck a chord with the devotees, especially children, as he can perform duties in accordance with the temple's requirements, but without getting lonely, thirsty, hungry or upset."

Ms. Shankar adds, "By bringing mechanical elephants to temples, real elephants can flourish in their native habitats."

In honour of our decision to never hire or own a live elephant for our temple rituals and festivals, we are absolutely thrilled to accept a mechanical elephant, says Kombara Sreekrishna Swami Temple president Ravi Namboothiri. "All of God's creations deserve love and respect," he adds.

New life-sized mechanical elephant to assist Kerala temple in ceremonies

केरल मंदिर में अनुष्ठानों में सहायता के लिए नया जीवन-आकार का यांत्रिक हाथी

A three-metre-tall mechanical elephant weighing 800 kilograms was offered to Kombara Sreekrishna Swami Temple in Thrissur, Kerala, on Wednesday.

तीन मीटर ऊंचा यांत्रिक हाथी, जिसका वजन 800 किलोग्राम है, को बुधवार को केरल के त्रिशूर जिले के कोम्बारा श्रीकृष्ण स्वामी मंदिर को भेंट किया गया।

- **Sitarist Anoushka Shankar** and **People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India** gifted the **life-size elephant, Kombara Kannan**, to the temple in recognition of its decision **not to own or hire live elephants**.
  सितार वादक अनुष्का शंकर और **पीपल फॉर द एथिकल ट्रीटमेंट ऑफ एनिमल्स (PETA) इंडिया** ने

कोम्बारा कन्नन नामक जीवन-आकार के यांत्रिक हाथी को मंदिर को भेंट किया, क्योंकि मंदिर ने **जीवित हाथियों को न रखने या किराए पर न लेने का निर्णय** लिया था।

- **Kombara Kannan** was unveiled by **Satish Vimalan**, secretary of **Unnayi Warier Smaraka Kalanilayam**, and will be used to **conduct ceremonies** at the temple.
  कोम्बारा कन्नन का अनावरण **सतीश विमलन**, सचिव, **उन्नायी वारियर स्मारका कलानिलयम** द्वारा किया गया और इसे मंदिर में **अनुष्ठानों के लिए उपयोग** किया जाएगा।
- After the **Nadayiruthal ceremony** of the mechanical elephant, the temple hosted a **Panchari melam performance** led by **Kalamandalam Harish Marar**.
  यांत्रिक हाथी के नदयिरुथल अनुष्ठान के बाद, मंदिर ने **कलामंडलम हरीश मारार के नेतृत्व में पंचारी मेलम प्रदर्शन** आयोजित किया।
- **Ms. Shankar**, who was **nominated for two awards** at the **Grammys on February 2** in **Los Angeles**, said, **"Kombara Kannan struck a chord with the devotees, especially children, as he can perform duties in accordance with the temple's requirements, but without getting lonely, thirsty, hungry, or upset."**
  सुश्री शंकर, जिन्हें **2 फरवरी को लॉस एंजेलेस में ग्रैमी पुरस्कारों के लिए दो नामांकन मिले**, ने कहा, **"कोम्बारा कन्नन ने भक्तों, विशेष रूप से बच्चों का दिल जीत लिया, क्योंकि वह मंदिर की आवश्यकताओं के अनुसार कार्य कर सकता है, लेकिन बिना अकेलापन, प्यास, भूख, या परेशानी महसूस किए।"**
- **Ms. Shankar** added, **"By bringing mechanical elephants to temples, real elephants can flourish in their native habitats."**
  सुश्री शंकर ने कहा, **"मंदिरों में यांत्रिक हाथियों को लाने से वास्तविक हाथी अपने प्राकृतिक आवास में बेहतर तरीके से रह सकते हैं।"**
- **Kombara Sreekrishna Swami Temple President Ravi Namboothiri** stated, **"In honour of our decision to never hire or own a live elephant for our temple rituals and festivals, we are absolutely thrilled to accept a mechanical elephant."**
  कोम्बारा श्रीकृष्ण स्वामी मंदिर के अध्यक्ष रवि नमबूथिरी ने कहा, **"हमारे इस निर्णय के सम्मान में कि हम कभी भी मंदिर अनुष्ठानों और त्योहारों के लिए जीवित हाथी नहीं रखेंगे या किराए पर नहीं लेंगे, हमें यांत्रिक हाथी को स्वीकार करके अत्यंत खुशी हो रही है।"**
- He added, **"All of God's creations deserve love and respect."**
  उन्होंने कहा, **"ईश्वर की सभी रचनाएँ प्रेम और सम्मान की हकदार हैं।"**

PATRIOTIC IAS

A Budget that is mostly good but with one wrong move

GS Paper III: Budget

The Union Budget has got many things right. Its projection of nominal GDP growth for 2025-26, at 10.1%, is reasonable and acceptable. The Economic Survey 2024-25 had indicated a real GDP growth in the range of 6.3%-6.8% for 2025-26. This provides some buffer if growth picks up more. The increase in the capital expenditure of the government in 2025-26 over the revised estimates of 2024-25 is estimated at ₹1.03 lakh crore. But the capital expenditures in 2025-26, at ₹11.2 lakh crore, are nearly the same as was indicated in the Budget of 2024-25 at ₹11.1 lakh crore.

The overarching aim of the Budget was to accelerate growth and push India towards a developed country status. The required rate of real growth to achieve this is estimated differently including a rate of 8% in the Economic Survey for 2024-25. In any case, the country needs a definite pickup in growth rate. The various measures indicated in the Budget are welcome. In fact, some of these could have been implemented even earlier. The concession given to the 'middle-class' in terms of income-tax is welcome as a relief. But its impact on demand depends on the marginal propensity to consume of the households who are expected to largely benefit from these concessions and their consumption basket.

Gross tax revenues

Growth in the Government of India's gross tax revenues (GTR) have trended downwards in recent years. The buoyancy of GTR has fallen for three successive years from 1.4 in 2023-24 to 1.15 in 2024-25 (RE) and then to 1.07 in 2025-26 (BE). As a result, growth in the Government of India's GTR has kept falling from 13.5% in 2023-24 to 11.2% in 2024-25 (RE), and to 10.8% in 2025-26 (BE). Within the government's tax revenues, the growth rate of Goods and Services Tax (GST) has also fallen from 12.7% in 2023-24 to 10.9% in 2025-26 (BE).

In fact, the structure of the government's taxation has moved away from indirect to direct taxes. The share of direct taxes in the government's GTR has increased from 52% in 2021-22 to 59% in 2025-26 (BE) which is a welcome development. Within direct taxes, however, it is personal income-tax which has performed better than corporate income-tax in terms of growth and buoyancy.

However, even in the case of personal income-tax there has been a fall in growth from 25.4% in 2023-24 to 20.3% in 2024-25 (RE) and 14.4% in 2025-26 (BE). This fall in growth in 2025-26 (BE) is partly due to the announced income-tax concessions. In the case of corporate income-tax, the growth in 2024-25 (RE) is quite low at 7.6%. This growth has been raised to 10.4% in 2025-26 (BE). On the whole, assumptions regarding the government's tax revenue growth in 2025-26 (BE) appear to be realistic.

In the case of non-tax revenues, the main contribution has been in the form of dividends from the Reserve Bank of India and public sector companies, which together accounted for about ₹3.25 lakh crore in 2025-26 – an increase of ₹35,715 crore over the revised estimates. Thus, the non-tax revenues have been raised from ₹5.3 lakh crore (RE) to ₹5.8 lakh crore in 2025-26 (BE).

Level of government expenditure

Tax and non-tax revenues, non-debt capital receipts and fiscal deficit together determine the size of government expenditure. As discussed, a gross tax revenue growth at a lower level of 10.8% appears to be realistic. Given the commitment to fiscal consolidation, the size of government expenditure as a percentage of GDP had to be reduced from 14.6% in 2024-25 (RE) to 14.2% in 2025-26 (BE). Growth in total expenditure, at 7.6% in 2025-26 (BE), is lower than the budgeted nominal GDP growth at 10.1%.

In fact, this was so even in 2024-25 (RE), when the government's total expenditure growth was 6.1% as against the nominal GDP growth of 9.7% as per the first advanced estimates. However, there has been a steady improvement in the quality of government expenditure as the share of capital expenditure in total expenditure has been improving. In fact, this share has improved by 10% points over the period from 2020-21 to 2025-26 (BE). Given the contemporary context, the Government of India has to build up large-scale Artificial Intelligence (AI) infrastructure in order to facilitate the adoption of emerging technologies. In this context, China has taken a clear lead. The United States has recently announced an investment of $500 billion for AI infrastructure. In the field of AI, India's technology companies have failed to anticipate developments. India should have done what China did. Perhaps, India should push these companies for research and development, by offering some tax concessions, if necessary.

A less transparent fiscal health indicator

One wrong measure introduced in the Budget is to move away from fiscal deficit as an indicator of fiscal prudence. Contrary to what is stated in the Budget document, we are moving from a transparent to a less transparent indicator. As per the glide path given in the Medium-Term Fiscal Policy Cum Fiscal Policy Strategy Statement of the 2024-25 Budget, the fiscal deficit was to be brought down to below 4.5% by 2025-26.

However, in the 2025-26 Budget, the practice of giving a glide path in terms of fiscal deficit is being discontinued. It has been stated that from now on, the focus will be on reducing the debt-GDP ratio annually. In the annexure statement titled 'Statements of Fiscal Policy as required under the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act, 2003', alternative paths of the debt-GDP ratio with nominal GDP growth assumptions of 10.0%, 10.5% and 11.0% are given.

The glide paths are indicated in terms of alternative growth assumptions and alternative assumptions regarding mild, moderate, and high degrees of fiscal consolidation. This makes the whole exercise vague and non-transparent. It is better for fiscal discipline to indicate specific fiscal deficit target for different years and the corresponding debt-GDP ratios for those years. It should clearly be shown by what year the FRBM Act targets are to be achieved. A larger claim on the available investible resources by the government will make it difficult for private investment to pick up.

The views expressed are personal

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Some of the measures indicated in the Budget could have been implemented even earlier; moving away from 'fiscal deficit' as an indicator is an incorrect step

A Budget that is mostly good but with one wrong move

एक बजट जो ज्यादातर अच्छा है लेकिन एक गलत कदम के साथ

The Union Budget has got many things right.

केंद्रीय बजट ने कई चीजों को सही तरीके से किया है।

- Its projection of **nominal GDP growth for 2025-26, at 10.1%**, is reasonable and acceptable.
  इसका **2025-26 के लिए नाममात्र जीडीपी वृद्धि 10.1%** का अनुमान उचित और स्वीकार्य है।

- The **Economic Survey 2024-25** had indicated a **real GDP growth in the range of 6.3%-6.8% for 2025-26**.
  आर्थिक सर्वेक्षण 2024-25 ने **2025-26 के लिए वास्तविक जीडीपी वृद्धि 6.3%-6.8%** के दायरे में रहने का संकेत दिया था।
- The increase in **capital expenditure of the government in 2025-26 over the revised estimates of 2024-25 is estimated at ₹1.03 lakh crore**.
  सरकार का **2025-26 में पूंजीगत व्यय 2024-25 के संशोधित अनुमानों की तुलना में ₹1.03 लाख करोड़ अधिक** होने का अनुमान है।
- However, **capital expenditures in 2025-26, at ₹11.2 lakh crore, are nearly the same as was indicated in the Budget of 2024-25 at ₹11.1 lakh crore**.
  हालांकि, **2025-26 में पूंजीगत व्यय ₹11.2 लाख करोड़ है, जो 2024-25 के बजट में बताए गए ₹11.1 लाख करोड़ के बराबर ही है।**

Overarching Aim of the Budget
बजट का प्रमुख उद्देश्य

- The aim was to **accelerate growth and push India towards a developed country status**.
  उद्देश्य **वृद्धि को तेज करना और भारत को एक विकसित देश की ओर ले जाना** था।
- The **required rate of real growth** to achieve this is **estimated differently, including a rate of 8% in the Economic Survey for 2024-25**.
  इसे प्राप्त करने के लिए **आवश्यक वास्तविक वृद्धि दर विभिन्न रूप से अनुमानित की गई है, जिसमें 2024-25 के आर्थिक सर्वेक्षण में 8% की दर शामिल है।**
- **Concessions given to the middle class in terms of income tax are welcome as relief**, but their impact on demand depends on the **marginal propensity to consume**.
  मध्यम वर्ग को आयकर में दी गई रियायत राहत के रूप में स्वागत योग्य है, लेकिन इसका मांग पर प्रभाव **सीमांत उपभोग प्रवृत्ति** पर निर्भर करता है।

Gross Tax Revenues
सकल कर राजस्व

- Growth in the **Government of India's Gross Tax Revenues (GTR) has trended downwards in recent years**.
  भारत सरकार के **सकल कर राजस्व (GTR) की वृद्धि हाल के वर्षों में घट रही है।**
- **Buoyancy of GTR has fallen for three successive years:**
  GTR की स्थिरता तीन लगातार वर्षों से घटी है:
  - **1.4 in 2023-24**
    2023-24 में 1.4
  - **1.15 in 2024-25 (RE)**
    2024-25 (RE) में 1.15

- **1.07 in 2025-26 (BE)**
  2025-26 (BE) में 1.07

- Growth in **GTR has kept falling:**
  GTR की वृद्धि लगातार गिर रही है:
  - **13.5% in 2023-24**
    2023-24 में 13.5%
  - **11.2% in 2024-25 (RE)**
    2024-25 (RE) में 11.2%
  - **10.8% in 2025-26 (BE)**
    2025-26 (BE) में 10.8%
- Growth rate of **GST has also fallen from 12.7% in 2023-24 to 10.9% in 2025-26 (BE)**.
  GST की वृद्धि दर भी 2023-24 में 12.7% से घटकर 2025-26 (BE) में 10.9% हो गई है।

Shift from Indirect to Direct Taxes
अप्रत्यक्ष से प्रत्यक्ष करों की ओर बदलाव

- The share of **direct taxes in GTR has increased from 52% in 2021-22 to 59% in 2025-26 (BE)**.
  प्रत्यक्ष करों का GTR में हिस्सा 2021-22 में 52% से बढ़कर 2025-26 (BE) में 59% हो गया है।
- Within direct taxes, **personal income-tax has performed better than corporate income-tax**.
  प्रत्यक्ष करों में, **व्यक्तिगत आयकर ने कॉर्पोरेट आयकर की तुलना में बेहतर प्रदर्शन किया है।**

Government Expenditure and Fiscal Deficit
सरकारी व्यय और राजकोषीय घाटा

- Given the commitment to **fiscal consolidation**, government expenditure as a percentage of GDP is **reduced from 14.6% in 2024-25 (RE) to 14.2% in 2025-26 (BE)**.
  राजकोषीय समेकन की प्रतिबद्धता को देखते हुए, सरकारी व्यय जीडीपी के प्रतिशत के रूप में **2024-25 (RE) में 14.6% से घटकर 2025-26 (BE) में 14.2% हो गया है।**
- Growth in **total expenditure, at 7.6% in 2025-26 (BE), is lower than the budgeted nominal GDP growth at 10.1%**.
  कुल व्यय में वृद्धि 2025-26 (BE) में 7.6% है, जो बजट में अनुमानित नाममात्र जीडीपी वृद्धि 10.1% से कम है।
- **Quality of government expenditure is improving**, with the **share of capital expenditure increasing by 10% points from 2020-21 to 2025-26 (BE)**.
  सरकारी व्यय की गुणवत्ता में सुधार हो रहा है, और **2020-21 से 2025-26 (BE) तक पूंजीगत व्यय का हिस्सा 10% अंकों तक बढ़ गया है।**

One Wrong Move: Fiscal Health Indicator Change
एक गलत कदम: राजकोषीय स्वास्थ्य संकेतक में बदलाव

- The Budget **moves away from fiscal deficit as an indicator of fiscal prudence**, making it **less transparent**.
  बजट **राजकोषीय विवेक के संकेतक के रूप में राजकोषीय घाटे से दूर चला गया है**, जिससे यह **कम पारदर्शी** हो गया है।
- Instead, the focus will now be on **reducing the debt-GDP ratio annually**, without a **clear fiscal deficit target**.
  इसके बजाय, अब ध्यान **वार्षिक रूप से ऋण-जीडीपी अनुपात को कम करने** पर होगा, **स्पष्ट राजकोषीय घाटा लक्ष्य के बिना**।
- This move makes the **exercise vague and non-transparent**, affecting **fiscal discipline and private investment**.
  यह कदम **अभ्यास को अस्पष्ट और अपारदर्शी बना देता है**, जिससे **राजकोषीय अनुशासन और निजी निवेश** प्रभावित हो सकता है।

GS Paper III: Economy

A tough call

The rupee's slide confounds monetary policymakers' task

The Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) will conclude its first policy review of 2025 on Friday, in significantly different circumstances from its December meet. For one, the key personnel have changed. The RBI has a new Governor, with former Revenue Secretary Sanjay Malhotra replacing Shaktikanta Das soon after the last review. Deputy Governor Michael Patra, an MPC member who was in charge of monetary policy, also retired last month. With the Centre yet to name his successor, navigating this review is going to be a tad tricky for the new central bank boss, with another deputy holding additional charge of monetary policy. Second, the rupee is in a free fall of sorts. After hitting 85 to the U.S. dollar on December 19, 2024, it slipped to 86 on January 13, 2025 and crossed 87 on February 3, partly due to the third factor at work. The strengthening dollar is driven by U.S. President Donald Trump's overdrive to 'Make America Great Again' with higher tariffs on major trade partners, and other disruptive economic plans such as exiting global tax accords, shutting aid flows, *et al*.

One thing has not changed – the clamour for an interest rate cut from industry and government honchos. In December, this noise was heightened after a sharp growth blip in the July-September quarter when GDP grew just 5.4%. Now, with 2024-25 GDP growth downgraded to just 6.4%, and the no marked uptick in economic metrics in the December-ending quarter, growth worries remain entrenched. In the interim, there has been some back and forth between North Block and Mint Street on the factors responsible for stumbling economic activity. The Finance Ministry sought to lay some of the blame for an urban demand slump on tight monetary policy. RBI officials, in the central bank's January bulletin, said the "one way" to spark a growth rebound and a virtuous cycle of fresh private investments, is to boost consumption through higher disposable incomes, especially for the urban middle class that has been pining for relief from food inflation. With the Budget delivering on this front with income tax cuts, the ball is back in the RBI's court. Inflation has been over 5% in the last five months, but may have eased closer to the RBI's 4% target in January. But a rate cut could also hurt the rupee further, and spur higher imported inflation. It is an unenviable situation for the new RBI chief to be in; he might be tempted to take a cue from Mr. Das who had surprised markets with a rate cut in the first review under his watch in 2019, reversing his predecessor's stance.

A Tough Call
मुश्किल फ़ैसला

The rupee's slide confounds monetary policymakers' task
रुपये की गिरावट मौद्रिक नीति निर्माताओं के लिए मुश्किलें बढ़ा रही है

- **The Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) will conclude its first policy review of 2025 on Friday**, in significantly different circumstances from its December meet.
  भारतीय रिज़र्व बैंक (RBI) की मौद्रिक नीति समिति (MPC) 2025 की पहली नीति समीक्षा शुक्रवार को समाप्त करेगी, जो दिसंबर की बैठक से काफी अलग परिस्थितियों में हो रही है।
- **For one, the key personnel have changed.**
  पहली बात, प्रमुख अधिकारी बदल गए हैं।
  - **The RBI has a new Governor, with former Revenue Secretary Sanjay Malhotra replacing Shaktikanta Das soon after the last review.**
    RBI को नया गवर्नर मिला है, पूर्व राजस्व सचिव संजय मल्होत्रा ने पिछली समीक्षा के बाद शक्तिकांत दास की जगह ली।
  - **Deputy Governor Michael Patra, an MPC member who was in charge of monetary policy, also retired last month.**
    उप-गवर्नर माइकल पात्रा, जो मौद्रिक नीति के प्रभारी और MPC के सदस्य थे, पिछले महीने सेवानिवृत्त हो गए।

- With the Centre yet to name his successor, navigating this review is going to be a tad tricky for the new central bank boss, with another deputy holding additional charge of monetary policy.
  केंद्र सरकार ने अब तक उनके उत्तराधिकारी की घोषणा नहीं की है, जिससे नए गवर्नर के लिए यह समीक्षा कठिन हो सकती है, क्योंकि एक अन्य डिप्टी गवर्नर अतिरिक्त रूप से मौद्रिक नीति की ज़िम्मेदारी संभाल रहे हैं।

- **Second, the rupee is in a free fall of sorts.**
  दूसरा, रुपये की क़ीमत तेज़ी से गिर रही है।
  - After hitting 85 to the U.S. dollar on December 19, 2024, it slipped to 86 on January 13, 2025, and crossed 87 on February 3.
    19 दिसंबर 2024 को रुपये ने 85 प्रति डॉलर का स्तर छुआ, 13 जनवरी 2025 को 86 पर गिरा और 3 फरवरी को 87 के पार चला गया।
  - Partly due to the third factor at work – the strengthening dollar driven by U.S. President Donald Trump's overdrive to 'Make America Great Again' with higher tariffs on major trade partners and other disruptive economic plans.
    इसका एक प्रमुख कारण अमेरिकी डॉलर की मज़बूती भी है, जो अमेरिका के राष्ट्रपति डोनाल्ड ट्रंप की 'Make America Great Again' नीति के तहत प्रमुख व्यापारिक साझेदारों पर अधिक टैरिफ और अन्य आर्थिक नीतियों के कारण हुआ।

One thing has not changed — the clamour for an interest rate cut from industry and government honchos.
एक चीज़ नहीं बदली – उद्योग और सरकार के उच्च अधिकारियों की ब्याज दर में कटौती की माँग।

- In December, this noise was heightened after a sharp growth blip in the July-September quarter when GDP grew just 5.4%.
  दिसंबर में यह माँग बढ़ गई, जब जुलाई-सितंबर तिमाही में GDP वृद्धि मात्र 5.4% रही।
- Now, with 2024-25 GDP growth downgraded to just 6.4%, and no marked uptick in economic metrics in the December-ending quarter, growth worries remain entrenched.
  अब 2024-25 की GDP वृद्धि को घटाकर 6.4% कर दिया गया है, और दिसंबर तिमाही में कोई विशेष सुधार नहीं दिखा, जिससे विकास संबंधी चिंताएँ बनी हुई हैं।

In the interim, there has been some back and forth between North Block and Mint Street on the factors responsible for stumbling economic activity.

इस बीच, आर्थिक मंदी के लिए ज़िम्मेदार कारकों पर वित्त मंत्रालय (North Block) और RBI (Mint Street) के बीच बहस जारी रही।

- **The Finance Ministry sought to lay some of the blame for an urban demand slump on tight monetary policy.**
  वित्त मंत्रालय ने शहरी माँग में गिरावट के लिए सख्त मौद्रिक नीति को ज़िम्मेदार ठहराया।
- **RBI officials, in the central bank's January bulletin, said the "one way" to spark a growth rebound and a virtuous cycle of fresh private investments is to boost consumption through higher disposable incomes, especially for the urban middle class.**
  RBI अधिकारियों ने जनवरी बुलेटिन में कहा कि आय में वृद्धि और उपभोग बढ़ाकर आर्थिक सुधार को बढ़ावा दिया जा सकता है, खासतौर पर शहरी मध्यम वर्ग के लिए।
- **With the Budget delivering on this front with income tax cuts, the ball is back in the RBI's court.**
  बजट में आयकर में कटौती के बाद अब यह ज़िम्मेदारी फिर से RBI के ऊपर आ गई है।

Inflation has been over 5% in the last five months but may have eased closer to the RBI's 4% target in January.
महंगाई पिछले 5 महीनों से 5% से अधिक रही, लेकिन जनवरी में यह RBI के 4% लक्ष्य के करीब आ सकती है।

But a rate cut could also hurt the rupee further and spur higher imported inflation.
लेकिन ब्याज दर में कटौती रुपये को और कमज़ोर कर सकती है और आयातित महंगाई को बढ़ा सकती है।

It is an unenviable situation for the new RBI chief to be in.
यह नए RBI गवर्नर के लिए एक कठिन स्थिति है।

- **He might be tempted to take a cue from Mr. Das, who had surprised markets with a rate cut in the first review under his watch in 2019, reversing his predecessor's stance.**
  हो सकता है कि वे शक्तिकांत दास से प्रेरणा लें, जिन्होंने 2019 में अपनी पहली समीक्षा में ब्याज दर में कटौती कर बाज़ार को चौंका दिया था।

The rise and rise of UPI digital payments

GS Paper III: Digitization

There has been a 10-fold increase in digital payments from 2018

DATA POINT

The Hindu Data Team

Digital payments increased more than 3.5 times in value between 2013 and 2024 – from ₹772 lakh crore to ₹2,758 lakh crore. They grew in volume from 222 crore to more than 20,787 crore in the same period. In the last five years alone, digital payments in India increased by 1.6 times in value and 6.7 times in volume, as per the RBI's Payment System Report.

The payments landscape in India is mainly driven by the Unified Payments Interface (UPI), which consolidates multiple bank accounts into one mobile interface.

Chart 1 shows the comparison of UPI and other payment methods in digital transactions over the years. UPI's contribution to the digital payments ecosystem in terms of volume rose from 34% in 2019 to 83% in 2024. While the volume of transactions through UPI increased by 46 times between 2018 and 2024, from 375 crore in to 17,221 crore, other methods of digital payments doubled to 3,566 crore. Overall, there was a 10-fold increase in digital payments to 20,787 crore from 2018.

Chart 2 shows UPI transaction volumes and values since 2019. While the volume surged from 1,078.75 crore in 2019 to 17220.80 crore in 2024, values increased from ₹18.37 lakh crore to ₹246.83 lakh crore in the same period.

Charts 3 and 4 show the volume and value of UPI transactions Person-to-Person (P2P) and Person-to-Merchant (P2M). P2M transactions grew at a faster rate than P2P in terms of volume.

Charts 5 and 6 show the share of various digital payment methods in the volume and value of transactions in 2024. Though UPI accounted for over 80% of all digital transactions by volume, it constituted just 30% in terms of value.

Payments revolution

Data for the charts was taken from the RBI's Payment System Report, December 2024

Digital payments increased more than 3.5 times in value between 2013 and 2024

UPI contribution to the digital payments ecosystem in terms of volume rose from 34% in 2019 to 83% in 2024

Chart 1: Comparison of UPI and other payment systems in digital transaction volume over the years (in crore)

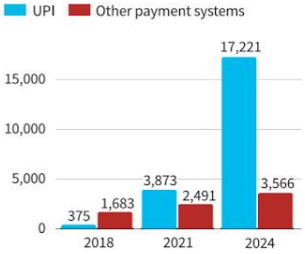

Chart 3: The chart shows the yearly total volume of UPI transactions (P2P vs P2M)

P2M transactions grew at a faster rate than P2P in terms of volume.

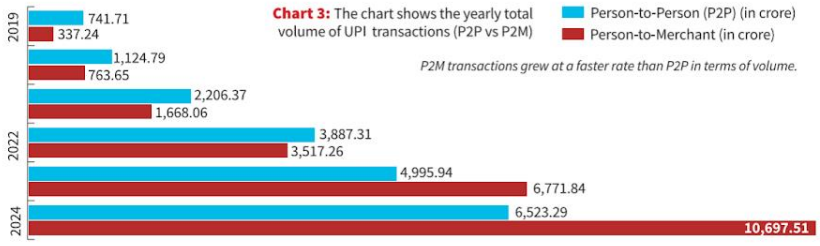

Chart 2: UPI transaction volumes and values since 2019

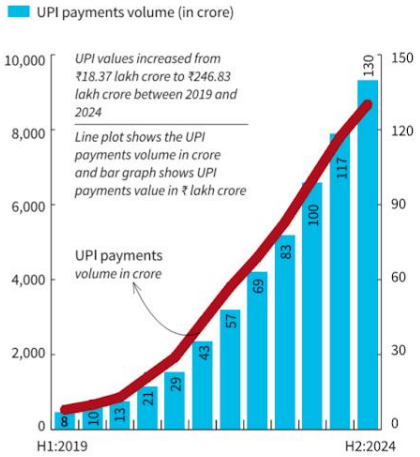

Chart 4: Yearly total value of transactions (P2P vs P2M)

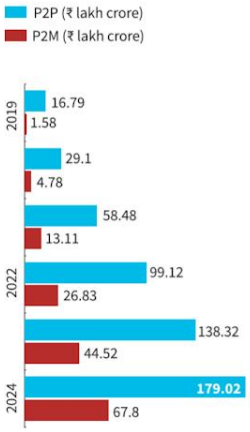

Chart 5: Share of transaction volume of various payment methods in total retail digital payments in 2024 (in %)

Payment method	Share
UPI	82.96
NEFT	4.47
Prepaid Payment Instruments	3.37
NACH	3.26
IMPS	2.86
Credit cards	2.15
Debit cards	0.84
NETC (linked to bank account)	0.08
BHIM Aadhaar Pay	0.01
AePS (Fund Transfers)	0.001

Chart 6: Share of the value of various payment methods in total retail digital payments in 2024 (in %)

Payment method	Share
NEFT	52.76
UPI	30.09
IMPS	8.62
NACH	5.14
Credit cards	2.48
Debit cards	0.63
Prepaid Payment Instruments	0.27
BHIM Aadhaar Pay	0.01
NETC (linked to bank account)	0.002
AePS (Fund Transfers)	0.0002

NACH: National Automated Clearing House, NEFT: National Electronic Fund Transfer, NETC: National Electronic Toll Collection, AePS: Aadhar enabled Payment System, IMPS: Immediate Payment Service, Prepaid Payment Instruments are issued in the form of smart cards, wallets, etc.

The Rise and Rise of UPI Digital Payments

यूपीआई डिजिटल भुगतान का बढ़ता प्रभाव

Digital payments increased more than 3.5 times in value between 2013 and 2024 — from ₹772 lakh crore to ₹2,758 lakh crore.

डिजिटल भुगतान का मूल्य 2013 से 2024 के बीच 3.5 गुना से अधिक बढ़ा – ₹772 लाख करोड़ से ₹2,758 लाख करोड़ तक।

- They grew in **volume** from **222 crore** to more than **20,787 crore** in the same period.
  इसी अवधि में **लेन-देन की संख्या 222 करोड़** से बढ़कर **20,787 करोड़** से अधिक हो गई।
- In the last **five years**, digital payments in India increased by **1.6 times in value** and **6.7 times in volume**, as per the **RBI's Payment System Report**.
  पिछले **पांच वर्षों** में, भारत में डिजिटल भुगतान का **मूल्य 1.6 गुना** और **संख्या 6.7 गुना** बढ़ी, **RBI की पेमेंट सिस्टम रिपोर्ट** के अनुसार।
- The payments landscape in India is mainly driven by **Unified Payments Interface (UPI)**, which consolidates **multiple bank accounts into one mobile interface**.
  भारत में भुगतान प्रणाली मुख्य रूप से **यूनिफाइड पेमेंट्स इंटरफेस (UPI)** द्वारा संचालित होती है, जो **कई बैंक खातों को एक मोबाइल इंटरफेस में समेकित** करती है।
- **Chart 1** shows the comparison of **UPI** and other payment methods in digital transactions over the years.
  चार्ट 1 वर्षों में **UPI और अन्य भुगतान विधियों** की तुलना दर्शाता है।
- **UPI's contribution** to the digital payments ecosystem in terms of **volume** rose from **34% in 2019** to **83% in 2024**.
  UPI का योगदान डिजिटल भुगतान पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र में **वॉल्यूम** के हिसाब से **2019 में 34% से बढ़कर 2024 में 83%** हो गया।
- The **volume of transactions** through UPI increased **46 times** between **2018 and 2024**, from **375 crore** to **17,221 crore**, while other methods of digital payments doubled to **3,566 crore**.
  UPI लेन-देन की संख्या 2018 से 2024 के बीच **46 गुना** बढ़ी, **375 करोड़** से **17,221 करोड़** तक, जबकि अन्य डिजिटल भुगतान विधियां **3,566 करोड़** तक दोगुनी हो गईं।
- Overall, there was a **10-fold increase** in digital payments to **20,787 crore** from **2018**.
  कुल मिलाकर, **डिजिटल भुगतान में 10 गुना वृद्धि** हुई, जो **2018 में 20,787 करोड़** तक पहुंच गई।
- **Chart 2** shows **UPI transaction volumes and values** since **2019**.
  चार्ट 2 2019 से UPI लेन-देन की संख्या और मूल्य को दर्शाता है।
- The **volume surged** from **1,078.75 crore in 2019** to **17,220.80 crore in 2024**, while the **values increased** from **₹18.37 lakh crore** to **₹246.83 lakh crore** in the same period.
  लेन-देन की संख्या 2019 में 1,078.75 करोड़ से बढ़कर 2024 में 17,220.80 करोड़ हो गई, जबकि **मूल्य ₹18.37 लाख करोड़ से ₹246.83 लाख करोड़** तक बढ़ गया।
- **Charts 3 and 4** show the **volume and value of UPI transactions** in **Person-to-Person (P2P) and Person-to-Merchant (P2M)** transactions.
  चार्ट 3 और 4 यूपीआई लेन-देन की संख्या और मूल्य को **व्यक्ति-से-व्यक्ति (P2P) और व्यक्ति-से-व्यापारी (P2M)** लेन-देन में दर्शाते हैं।
- **P2M transactions** grew at a **faster rate** than **P2P** in terms of **volume**.
  P2M लेन-देन की वृद्धि दर **P2P की तुलना में तेज** रही **(संख्या के अनुसार)**।

- **Charts 5 and 6** show the **share of various digital payment methods** in **volume and value** of transactions in **2024**.

  चार्ट 5 और 6 में **2024 में विभिन्न डिजिटल भुगतान विधियों की हिस्सेदारी** को **संख्या और मूल्य** के अनुसार दिखाया गया है।
- Though **UPI accounted for over 80%** of all digital transactions by **volume**, it constituted just **30% in terms of value**.

  भले ही **UPI का योगदान 80% से अधिक** हो **(संख्या के अनुसार)**, लेकिन यह **मूल्य के अनुसार केवल 30%** रहा।

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What is the SC directive on sacred groves?

What are the implications of the December 18 order? What did *T.N. Godavarman v. Union of India* establish about the definition of 'forest land'? How are sacred groves traditionally conserved by communities?

GS Paper III: Environment

EXPLAINER

C.R. Bijoy

The story so far:

On December 18, 2024, the Supreme Court directed the Forest Department of Rajasthan to map on the ground and via satellite every 'sacred grove' in detail. They were to be identified irrespective of their size and based "solely on their purpose and their cultural and ecological significance to the local community". After mapping, the court directed the department to classify them as 'forests' and notify them as 'community reserves' under the Wildlife Protection Act (WLPA) 1972. Effectively, the decision would transfer the sacred groves from community protection to forest officialdom for the purposes of conservation. The move defies the Forest Rights Act (FRA) 2006, which by virtue of being enacted later overrides the WLPA, and which the government had intended to do the reverse: i.e. recognise traditional and customary rights over all forest lands and transfer them back from the Forest Department to gram sabhas.

The sacred groves of Rajasthan, also known as 'orans', 'malvan', 'deo ghat', and 'baugh', number around 25,000 and cover about six lakh hectares of the State.

What was the case about?

In *T.N. Godavarman v. Union of India*, the Supreme Court ordered that 'forest land' in Section 2 of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, "will not only include 'forest' as understood in the dictionary sense, but also any area recorded as forest in the government record irrespective of the ownership of the land". The court then directed State governments to constitute expert committees to identify areas that met this understanding of 'forest land'.

In 2004, the expert committee report of the Rajasthan government identified only those sacred groves that fulfilled the criteria of 'deemed forests' – that is, trees covering 5 hectares of land with at least 200 trees per hectare were classified as 'forests', while the remainder was not.

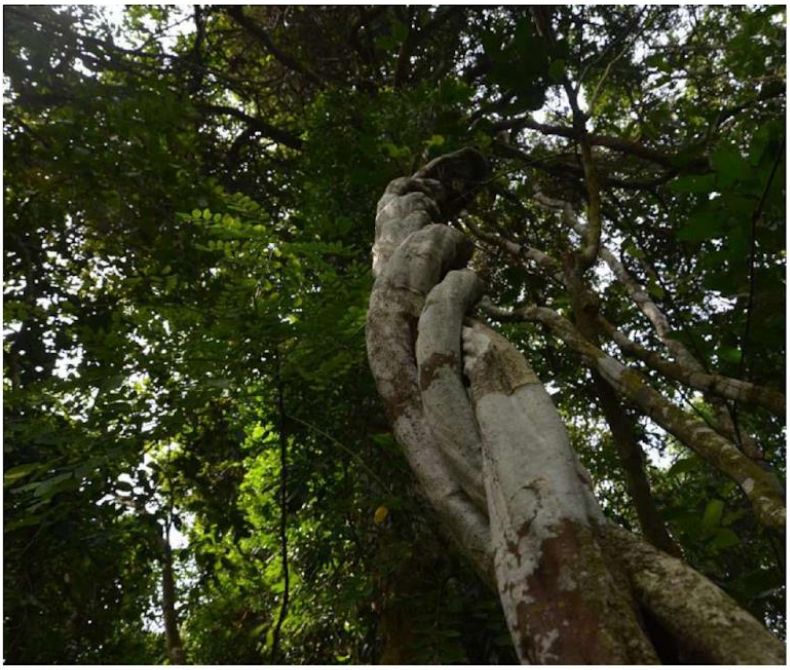
The Supreme Court's Central Empowered Committee (CEC) disagreed with this choice because it was inconsistent with the court's definition of 'forest land'. The CEC also said all such areas diverted for non-forestry purposes before 1980 could be exempted. The apex court agreed with the CEC and directed Rajasthan to implement the recommendations post-haste in 2018.

In early 2024, the Rajasthan government – responding to interlocutory applications seeking directions to implement this order – said that sacred groves were being identified and documented as 'forest lands'. Ironically, the Rajasthan Forest Policy 2023 omitted the detailed framework for the protection of sacred groves specified in its 2010 policy.

The present order came in response to a challenge to these positions at the Supreme Court.

What do sacred groves mean to communities?

Sacred groves are community-regulated and conserved patches of forest land. They are created and managed traditionally by communities in various ways deeply rooted in their identity. The groves are kept inviolate through customary laws and taboos, many of which completely prohibit the extraction of any resources in any form, except for custodians to access medicinal plants. The grove's conservation ethos is strongly linked to piety and sanctity, enforced in terms of the community's relationship with its spirits and gods.



Sacred heritage: Sacred groves are community-regulated and conserved patches of forest land. THULASI KAKKAT

India is estimated to have 1-10 lakh sacred groves of this nature – the highest in the world. They are called '*devara kadu*' in Karnataka, '*devban*' in Himachal Pradesh, '*kavu*' and '*sarpa kavu*' in Kerala, '*sarna*' in the Chota Nagpur Plateau region, '*devbani*' in Chhattisgarh, '*jahera*' or '*thakuramma*' in Odisha, '*devgudi*' by the Muria, the Madia, and the Gond adivasis of Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh, '*ki law lyngdoh*', '*ki law kyntang*' or '*ki law niam*' in Meghalaya, '*sabarkantha*', '*dahod*' or '*banaskantha*' in Gujarat, and so forth.

They are often associated with temples, monasteries, shrines, pilgrim sites, and/or burial grounds. These sites are thus also repositories of various herbal medicines and gathering points for local healers, as much as they are biodiversity hotspots. They are also, frequently, sources of perennial streams that support the growth of unique and endemic flora and fauna.

Local legends, myths, and beliefs surround sacred groves, and communities have transmitted them orally through several generations as a matter of conserving their cultural identities. Communities' relationships with their groves have also helped mitigate the effects of floods, landslides, and droughts on their lives while stabilising the soil and preventing erosion. Anthropologists have also documented the impact of sacred groves on their respective communities' mental and physical well-being.

What are community reserves?

The WLPA 2002 introduced the category of Protected Areas called 'community reserves', in addition to 'national parks' and 'sanctuaries'.

Community reserves are notified over community or private land where locals have volunteered to conserve habitats to protect "fauna, flora, and traditional or cultural conservation values and practises".

The community, or even the individual, is thus required to prevent any offences specified in the WLPA, assist the authorities in arresting any offenders, report the "death of any wild animal," and prevent or extinguish any fires. The offences include damaging the boundary marks, teasing or molesting wild animals, littering in the community reserve, setting fires or allowing a fire to burn, and using any chemical substances that endanger wildlife.

Further, a land-use pattern within a community reserve cannot be changed without the approval of the reserve management committee and the State government. The Chief Wildlife Warden, under whose jurisdiction community reserves fall, effectively has overall control of the reserve and its management plan.

The Supreme Court's directions also obligate the State government to constitute a 'Community Reserve Management Committee' to conserve, maintain, and manage the reserve and to protect wildlife and habitats. This committee is to have at least five members nominated by the gram panchayat (or members of the gram sabha if there is no gram panchayat) and a representative of the Forest or Wildlife Department in whose jurisdiction the community reserve is located. If the reserve is on private land, the committee will consist of the land owner, a representative of the Forest or Wildlife Department, and a representative of the concerned Panchayat or tribal community.

The elected chairperson of the committee will be designated the reserve's 'Honorary Wildlife Warden'.

The court also recommended that the Union Environment Ministry identify and map sacred groves nationwide and formulate a policy for their governance and management.

How will the Forest Department's takeover clash with the FRA's provisions?

If sacred groves had fallen under the FRA's purview, they would have been part of 'community forest resources'. According to the FRA, a community forest resource is the "customary common forest land within the traditional or customary boundaries of the village... including reserved forests, protected forests and protected areas such as sanctuaries and national parks to which the community had traditional access".

Thus, the gram sabhas would have been the statutory authority to protect, regenerate, conserve or manage community forest resources, along with the wildlife, flora, and biodiversity within. The gram sabhas would also have been responsible for preventing activities that harm their cultural and natural heritage.

To this end, the sabha would have to constitute its own Community Forest Resource Management Committees to develop and execute the managed plan approved by the gram sabha. And State governments would be duty-bound to support these plans.

All sacred groves in forest areas are currently subsets of community forest resources, which are in turn under the jurisdiction of gram sabhas, and not the Forest or the Wildlife department. All sacred groves outside forest land, if any, also come under the FRA's purview if a proposal to notify them as 'forest land' comes into being. In sum, notifying sacred groves as community reserves controlled by the Forest Department could conflict with the customs of communities, and with the community forest resources notified by the FRA, which complies with the customs by bringing them under its governance.

C.R. Bijoy examines natural resource conflicts and governance issues

THE GIST

- The Supreme Court ordered the Rajasthan Forest Department to map and classify sacred groves as 'forests' and 'community reserves' under the Wildlife Protection Act.
- This order shifts control of sacred groves from community-based management to the Forest Department.
- The decision conflicts with the Forest Rights Act, which recognises community rights over forest resources.
- The shift in control from community protection to Forest Department management could undermine the traditional governance of these areas.

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SC Directive on Sacred Groves
सुप्रीम कोर्ट का पवित्र उपवनों पर निर्देश

On December 18, 2024, the Supreme Court directed the Forest Department of Rajasthan to map all sacred groves on the ground and via satellite.

18 दिसंबर 2024 को सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने राजस्थान के वन विभाग को सभी पवित्र उपवनों को जमीन पर और उपग्रह के माध्यम से मानचित्रित करने का निर्देश दिया।

- The mapping was to be done **irrespective of their size**, based **solely on their purpose and cultural and ecological significance** to the local community.
  मानचित्रण का कार्य **उनके आकार की परवाह किए बिना** किया जाना था और इसे केवल **उनके उद्देश्य और स्थानीय समुदाय के लिए सांस्कृतिक और पारिस्थितिक महत्व** के आधार पर किया जाना था।
- After mapping, the court ordered them to be **classified as 'forests'** and **notified as 'community reserves'** under the **Wildlife Protection Act (WLPA) 1972**.
  मानचित्रण के बाद, अदालत ने उन्हें **'वन' के रूप में वर्गीकृत** करने और **वन्यजीव संरक्षण अधिनियम (WLPA) 1972** के तहत **'सामुदायिक भंडार'** के रूप में अधिसूचित करने का आदेश दिया।
- This decision effectively **transfers sacred groves from community protection to forest officialdom** for conservation.
  यह निर्णय प्रभावी रूप से **पवित्र उपवनों को समुदाय संरक्षण से वन विभाग के अधिकार में स्थानांतरित** करता है।
- The move **defies the Forest Rights Act (FRA) 2006**, which aimed to **recognize traditional and customary rights over forest lands and transfer them to gram sabhas**.
  यह कदम **वन अधिकार अधिनियम (FRA) 2006** के खिलाफ जाता है, जिसका उद्देश्य **वन भूमि पर पारंपरिक और प्रथागत अधिकारों को मान्यता देना और उन्हें ग्राम सभाओं को हस्तांतरित करना** था।
- Rajasthan's sacred groves, known as **'orans', 'malvan', 'deo ghat', and 'baugh'**, number around **25,000** and cover approximately **six lakh hectares** of the state.
  राजस्थान के पवित्र उपवन, जिन्हें **'ओरण', 'मालवान', 'देव घाट' और 'बाग'** कहा जाता है, की संख्या लगभग **25,000** है और वे राज्य में लगभग **छह लाख हेक्टेयर** क्षेत्र में फैले हुए हैं।

What was the case about?
मामला किस बारे में था?

- In **T.N. Godavarman v. Union of India**, the **Supreme Court** ruled that '**forest land**' under **Section 2 of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980** would include not just land recorded as a forest in government records but also land understood as forest in a **dictionary sense**.

  T.N. गोडावरमन बनाम भारत संघ में **सुप्रीम कोर्ट** ने फैसला सुनाया कि **वन (संरक्षण) अधिनियम, 1980 की धारा 2** के तहत '**वन भूमि**' में केवल सरकारी रिकॉर्ड में दर्ज वन भूमि ही नहीं बल्कि **शब्दकोश के अर्थ में समझी जाने वाली भूमि** भी शामिल होगी।
- The court directed **State governments to form expert committees** to identify such forest lands.

  अदालत ने **राज्य सरकारों को विशेषज्ञ समितियां गठित करने** का निर्देश दिया ताकि ऐसी वन भूमि की पहचान की जा सके।
- In **2004**, Rajasthan's expert committee classified only those sacred groves as '**deemed forests**' that covered **at least 5 hectares** with a **minimum of 200 trees per hectare**.

  2004 में, राजस्थान की विशेषज्ञ समिति ने केवल उन्हीं पवित्र उपवनों को '**निर्धारित वन**' के रूप में वर्गीकृत किया, जो **कम से कम 5 हेक्टेयर क्षेत्र** में फैले थे और जिनमें प्रति हेक्टेयर **कम से कम 200 पेड़** थे।
- The **Supreme Court's Central Empowered Committee (CEC)** disagreed, stating that this classification did not align with the **court's broader definition of 'forest land'**.

  सुप्रीम कोर्ट की केंद्रीय सशक्त समिति (CEC) ने असहमति जताई, यह कहते हुए कि यह वर्गीकरण **अदालत की व्यापक 'वन भूमि' परिभाषा के अनुरूप नहीं था**।
- The **Supreme Court directed Rajasthan** to implement the CEC's recommendations in **2018**.

  सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने राजस्थान को 2018 में CEC की सिफारिशों को लागू करने का निर्देश दिया।
- In **early 2024**, Rajasthan reported to the court that sacred groves were being **identified and documented as forest lands**.

  2024 की शुरुआत में, राजस्थान सरकार ने अदालत को बताया कि पवित्र उपवनों को **वन भूमि के रूप में पहचाना और दस्तावेजीकृत किया जा रहा है**।
- The **Rajasthan Forest Policy 2023** omitted the **detailed framework for sacred grove protection** that was present in the **2010 policy**.

  राजस्थान वन नीति 2023 ने **2010 की नीति में शामिल पवित्र उपवन संरक्षण के विस्तृत ढांचे** को हटा दिया।

What do sacred groves mean to communities?
समुदायों के लिए पवित्र उपवनों का क्या महत्व है?

- **Sacred groves** are **community-regulated and conserved** patches of forest land.

  पवित्र उपवन समुदाय द्वारा **नियंत्रित और संरक्षित** वन भूमि के भाग होते हैं।

- They are traditionally **managed through customs, taboos, and spiritual beliefs**.
  इन्हें परंपरागत रूप से **रूढ़ियों, वर्जनाओं और आध्यात्मिक विश्वासों** के माध्यम से प्रबंधित किया जाता है।
- Many groves **completely prohibit resource extraction**, except for medicinal plant collection by custodians.
  कई उपवनों में **संसाधनों के निष्कर्षण पर पूरी तरह से रोक** होती है, केवल संरक्षकों को औषधीय पौधों के उपयोग की अनुमति होती है।
- India has **1-10 lakh sacred groves**, the **highest number in the world**.
  भारत में **1-10 लाख पवित्र उपवन** हैं, जो **दुनिया में सबसे अधिक** हैं।
- Different states have different names for sacred groves, such as **'devara kadu' (Karnataka), 'devban' (Himachal Pradesh), 'kavu' (Kerala), 'sarna' (Chota Nagpur Plateau), and 'devgudi' (Maharashtra & Chhattisgarh)**.
  विभिन्न राज्यों में पवित्र उपवनों के अलग-अलग नाम हैं, जैसे **'देवरा काडु' (कर्नाटक), 'देवबन' (हिमाचल प्रदेश), 'कावु' (केरल), 'सरना' (छोटा नागपुर पठार), और 'देवगुड़ी' (महाराष्ट्र और छत्तीसगढ़)**।
- These groves are **biodiversity hotspots, water sources, and natural disaster buffers**.
  ये उपवन **जैव विविधता के केंद्र, जल स्रोत और प्राकृतिक आपदाओं से बचाव में सहायक** होते हैं।
- **Oral traditions and myths** help conserve them as part of **cultural identity**.
  मौखिक परंपराएं और मिथक इन्हें **सांस्कृतिक पहचान** के रूप में संरक्षित रखने में मदद करते हैं।
- Sacred groves **stabilize soil, prevent erosion, and support local ecology**.
  पवित्र उपवन **मिट्टी को स्थिर करते हैं, कटाव रोकते हैं और स्थानीय पारिस्थितिकी का समर्थन करते हैं**।

Community Reserves
सामुदायिक संरक्षण क्षेत्र

- The **WLPA 2002** introduced the category of **Protected Areas** called '**community reserves**' in addition to **national parks** and **sanctuaries**.
  डब्ल्यूपीएलए 2002 ने **संरक्षित क्षेत्रों** की श्रेणी में '**सामुदायिक संरक्षण क्षेत्र**' को जोड़ा, जो **राष्ट्रीय उद्यानों** और **अभयारण्यों** के अतिरिक्त है।
- **Community reserves** are notified over **community or private land** where locals have volunteered to conserve habitats to protect **fauna, flora, and traditional or cultural conservation values and practices**.
  सामुदायिक संरक्षण क्षेत्र उन **सामुदायिक या निजी भूमि** पर अधिसूचित किए जाते हैं, जहाँ स्थानीय लोग **जीव-जंतु, वनस्पति, पारंपरिक या सांस्कृतिक संरक्षण मूल्यों और प्रथाओं** को संरक्षित करने के लिए स्वेच्छा से योगदान देते हैं।
- The **community or an individual** is required to **prevent any offenses** specified in the **WLPA**, assist the authorities in **arresting offenders**, report the **death of any wild animal**, and **prevent or extinguish fires**.

समुदाय या व्यक्ति को **डब्ल्यूपीएलए** में उल्लिखित किसी भी **अपराध को रोकने**, अधिकारियों की **अपराधियों को पकड़ने में सहायता करने**, किसी **वन्यजीव की मृत्यु की सूचना देने**, और **आग को रोकने या बुझाने** की जिम्मेदारी दी गई है।

- The **offenses** include **damaging boundary marks, teasing or molesting wild animals, littering, setting fires, or using chemical substances** that endanger wildlife.
  अपराधों में **सीमा चिह्नों को नुकसान पहुँचाना, वन्यजीवों को परेशान या परेशान करना, कूड़ा डालना, आग लगाना या वन्यजीवों के लिए खतरनाक रासायनिक पदार्थों का उपयोग करना** शामिल है।
- A **land-use pattern** within a **community reserve** cannot be changed without the approval of the **reserve management committee** and the **State government**.
  सामुदायिक संरक्षण क्षेत्र के भीतर **भूमि उपयोग पैटर्न** को **रिजर्व प्रबंधन समिति** और **राज्य सरकार** की अनुमति के बिना नहीं बदला जा सकता।
- The **Chief Wildlife Warden** has **overall control** over the reserve and its management plan.
  मुख्य वन्यजीव वार्डन के पास **रिजर्व और इसके प्रबंधन योजना** पर संपूर्ण नियंत्रण होता है।
- The **Supreme Court** directed the **State government** to constitute a '**Community Reserve Management Committee**' to **conserve, maintain, and manage** the reserve and protect wildlife and habitats.
  सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने **राज्य सरकार** को निर्देश दिया कि वह **सामुदायिक संरक्षण प्रबंधन समिति** का गठन करे, जो **संरक्षण, रखरखाव और प्रबंधन** कार्य करेगी और वन्यजीवों तथा उनके आवासों की रक्षा करेगी।
- This committee will have at least **five members** nominated by the **gram panchayat** (or gram sabha if there is no gram panchayat) and a **representative of the Forest or Wildlife Department**.
  इस समिति में कम से कम **पाँच सदस्य** होंगे, जिन्हें **ग्राम पंचायत** (यदि ग्राम पंचायत नहीं है तो ग्राम सभा) और **वन या वन्यजीव विभाग के प्रतिनिधि** द्वारा नामांकित किया जाएगा।
- If the **reserve is on private land**, the committee will consist of the **landowner, a Forest or Wildlife Department representative, and a Panchayat or tribal community representative**.
  यदि **रिजर्व निजी भूमि पर स्थित है**, तो समिति में **भूमि मालिक, वन या वन्यजीव विभाग का प्रतिनिधि, और संबंधित पंचायत या आदिवासी समुदाय का प्रतिनिधि** शामिल होगा।
- The elected **chairperson** of the committee will be designated as the reserve's **'Honorary Wildlife Warden'**.
  समिति के चुने गए **अध्यक्ष** को रिजर्व का **'मानद वन्यजीव वार्डन'** नामित किया जाएगा।
- The **Supreme Court** recommended that the **Union Environment Ministry** identify and map **sacred groves** nationwide and formulate a policy for their **governance and management**.
  सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने **केंद्रीय पर्यावरण मंत्रालय** को निर्देश दिया कि वह **पूरे देश में पवित्र उपवनों** की पहचान करे और उनकी **शासन और प्रबंधन नीति** तैयार करे।

Forest Department's Takeover vs FRA's Provisions
वन विभाग का अधिग्रहण बनाम एफआरए के प्रावधान

- If **sacred groves** had fallen under the **FRA's purview**, they would have been part of **'community forest resources'**.
  यदि **पवित्र उपवन एफआरए के अधिकार क्षेत्र** में आते, तो वे **'सामुदायिक वन संसाधनों'** का हिस्सा होते।
- According to **FRA**, a **community forest resource** is the **customary common forest land** within a village's **traditional boundaries**, including **reserved forests, protected forests, sanctuaries, and national parks**, where the community had **traditional access**.
  एफआरए के अनुसार, **सामुदायिक वन संसाधन** एक गाँव की **परंपरागत सीमाओं के भीतर स्थित पारंपरिक सामान्य वन भूमि** है, जिसमें **आरक्षित वन, संरक्षित वन, अभयारण्य और राष्ट्रीय उद्यान** शामिल हैं, जहाँ समुदाय को **परंपरागत रूप से पहुंच** प्राप्त थी।
- The **gram sabhas** would have been the **statutory authority** to **protect, regenerate, conserve, and manage** community forest resources, including **wildlife, flora, and biodiversity**.
  ग्राम सभाएँ वन्यजीवों, वनस्पतियों और जैव विविधता सहित सामुदायिक वन संसाधनों को **संरक्षित, पुनर्जीवित, संरक्षित और प्रबंधित** करने की **वैधानिक प्राधिकरण** होतीं।
- The **gram sabha** would also have been responsible for preventing **activities that harm cultural and natural heritage** and form **Community Forest Resource Management Committees** for executing management plans.
  ग्राम सभा सांस्कृतिक और प्राकृतिक विरासत को नुकसान पहुँचाने वाली गतिविधियों को रोकने और **सामुदायिक वन संसाधन प्रबंधन समितियाँ** बनाने की जिम्मेदार होती।
- **State governments** would be **duty-bound** to support these plans.
  राज्य सरकारों का कर्तव्य होगा कि वे इन योजनाओं का समर्थन करें।
- All **sacred groves in forest areas** are currently subsets of **community forest resources**, which fall under the jurisdiction of **gram sabhas**, not the **Forest or Wildlife Department**.
  सभी **वन क्षेत्रों में स्थित पवित्र उपवन** वर्तमान में **सामुदायिक वन संसाधनों** के अंतर्गत आते हैं, जो **ग्राम सभाओं** के अधिकार क्षेत्र में होते हैं, न कि **वन या वन्यजीव विभाग** के।
- **Notifying sacred groves as community reserves** controlled by the **Forest Department** could **conflict with community customs** and **FRA-notified community forest resources**.
  पवित्र उपवनों को सामुदायिक संरक्षण क्षेत्र घोषित करना, जो **वन विभाग द्वारा नियंत्रित** होंगे, यह **सामुदायिक परंपराओं और एफआरए अधिसूचित सामुदायिक वन संसाधनों** के साथ टकराव पैदा कर सकता है।

PATRIOTIC IAS

Govt. warns officials against using AI tools due to security risks

GS Paper III: Cyber Security

NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Finance has advised government officials to "strictly avoid" artificial intelligence (AI) tools, including ChatGPT and DeepSeek, on official devices as they "pose risks to the confidentiality of government data and documents".

Sam Altman, the CEO of OpenAI, which operates ChatGPT, is currently in India to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

DeepSeek, developed by China, was launched in January.

The circular, accessed by *The Hindu*, was issued by the Department of Expenditure (DoE) on January 29.

Risks to confidentiality

"It has been determined that AI tools and AI Apps (such as ChatGPT, DeepSeek etc.) on office computers and devices pose risks to the confidentiality of government data and documents. It is, therefore, advised that the use of AI tools/AI applications on office devices be strictly avoided. This may be brought to the notice of all employees. This issue has been approved by the Finance Secretary," said an order by Pradeep Kumar Singh, Joint Secretary, DoE.

On January 30, Ashwini Vaishnaw, Union Minister for Information Technology, told *The Hindu* in an interview that DeepSeek would soon be hosted on Indian servers.

The DoE issued a circular on January 29, outlining the risks associated with AI tools. AFP

"DeepSeek is an open source model and we are very soon going to host DeepSeek on Indian servers, the way we have hosted Llama, so that the data privacy parameters can be addressed. That we will do soon. Already team has done that work. And we will soon be hosting open source models on Indian servers. That will address the concerns regarding privacy," Mr. Vaishnaw had said.

The DoE's circular comes months after another Central government office, the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT), organised a training session for officials in the rank of Joint Secretary and below, including Directors and Deputy Secretaries, on the use of 'ChatGPT-4 Plus'.

The circular to DoPT officials was sent on October 10, 2024, and the training was held from October 14 to 16 of the same year in seven batches. It remains unclear whether other Ministries or Central government departments received similar orders restricting the use of AI tools.

Govt. warns officials against using AI tools due to security risks

सरकार ने सुरक्षा जोखिमों के कारण एआई टूल्स के उपयोग पर अधिकारियों को चेतावनी दी

The Ministry of Finance has advised government officials to "strictly avoid" artificial intelligence (AI) tools, including ChatGPT and DeepSeek, on official devices.

वित्त मंत्रालय ने सरकारी अधिकारियों को आधिकारिक उपकरणों पर ChatGPT और DeepSeek सहित AI टूल्स के उपयोग से "सख्ती से बचने" की सलाह दी है।

- These tools **"pose risks to the confidentiality of government data and documents."**

ये टूल्स **"सरकारी डेटा और दस्तावेजों की गोपनीयता के लिए जोखिम पैदा करते हैं।"**

- **Sam Altman, CEO of OpenAI**, which operates **ChatGPT**, is currently in **India** to meet **Prime Minister Narendra Modi.**

सैम ऑल्टमैन, ओपनएआई के सीईओ, जो **ChatGPT संचालित करता है**, वर्तमान में **भारत में प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी से मिलने आए हैं।**

- **DeepSeek**, developed by **China**, was launched in **January 2024.**

DeepSeek, जिसे **चीन** ने विकसित किया है, **जनवरी 2024** में लॉन्च हुआ था।

Risks to Confidentiality

गोपनीयता के लिए जोखिम

- The **Department of Expenditure (DoE)** issued a **circular on January 29, 2024**, warning against the use of AI tools on **office computers and devices**.

वित्त विभाग (DoE) ने **29 जनवरी 2024** को एक सर्कुलर जारी किया, जिसमें **कार्यालयी कंप्यूटर और उपकरणों** पर AI टूल्स के उपयोग को लेकर चेतावनी दी गई।

- The order, signed by **Pradeep Kumar Singh, Joint Secretary, DoE**, stated:
  DoE के संयुक्त सचिव प्रदीप कुमार सिंह द्वारा हस्ताक्षरित आदेश में कहा गया:
  - **"AI tools and AI Apps (such as ChatGPT, DeepSeek) on office computers and devices pose risks to government data and documents' confidentiality."**
    "कार्यालयी कंप्यूटर और उपकरणों पर AI टूल्स और AI ऐप्स (जैसे ChatGPT, DeepSeek) सरकारी डेटा और दस्तावेजों की गोपनीयता के लिए जोखिम पैदा करते हैं।"
  - **"It is, therefore, advised that the use of AI tools/AI applications on office devices be strictly avoided."**
    "इसलिए, कार्यालयी उपकरणों पर AI टूल्स/AI एप्लिकेशन के उपयोग से सख्ती से बचने की सलाह दी जाती है।"
  - **"This issue has been approved by the Finance Secretary."**
    "इस मुद्दे को वित्त सचिव द्वारा अनुमोदित किया गया है।"

Government Plans to Host DeepSeek on Indian Servers
सरकार DeepSeek को भारतीय सर्वरों पर होस्ट करने की योजना बना रही है

- On **January 30, 2024**, **Ashwini Vaishnaw, Union Minister for Information Technology**, stated that **DeepSeek** would soon be **hosted on Indian servers** to ensure data privacy.
  30 जनवरी 2024 को **सूचना प्रौद्योगिकी मंत्री अश्विनी वैष्णव** ने कहा कि **DeepSeek जल्द ही भारतीय सर्वरों पर होस्ट किया जाएगा** ताकि डेटा गोपनीयता सुनिश्चित की जा सके।
- He mentioned:
  उन्होंने कहा:
  - **"DeepSeek is an open-source model, and we are soon going to host it on Indian servers, just like we have hosted Llama."**
    "DeepSeek एक ओपन-सोर्स मॉडल है, और हम इसे जल्द ही भारतीय सर्वरों पर होस्ट करने जा रहे हैं, जैसे हमने Llama को किया था।"
  - **"This will address privacy concerns."**
    "यह गोपनीयता संबंधी चिंताओं को दूर करेगा।"
  - **"The team has already completed the work, and soon, multiple open-source models will be hosted on Indian servers."**
    "टीम ने पहले ही इस पर काम पूरा कर लिया है, और जल्द ही कई ओपन-सोर्स मॉडल भारतीय सर्वरों पर होस्ट किए जाएंगे।"

Past AI Training for Government Officials
सरकारी अधिकारियों के लिए एआई प्रशिक्षण का आयोजन

- In **October 2024**, the **Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT)** organized an **AI training session** for officials ranked **Joint Secretary and below**.
  अक्टूबर 2024 में **कार्मिक और प्रशिक्षण विभाग (DoPT)** ने **संयुक्त सचिव और उससे नीचे के अधिकारियों** के लिए **AI प्रशिक्षण सत्र** आयोजित किया।
- The **training was conducted from October 14 to 16, 2024**, in **seven batches**.
  प्रशिक्षण 14 से 16 अक्टूबर 2024 के बीच **सात बैचों में आयोजित किया गया।**
- The **circular to DoPT officials was sent on October 10, 2024**.
  DoPT अधिकारियों को सर्कुलर 10 अक्टूबर 2024 को भेजा गया था।
- It remains **unclear whether other Ministries or Central government departments received similar orders restricting the use of AI tools.**
  यह अभी तक **स्पष्ट नहीं है कि अन्य मंत्रालयों या केंद्र सरकार के विभागों को AI टूल्स के उपयोग पर इसी तरह के आदेश मिले हैं या नहीं।**

Stryker infantry vehicle deal with the U.S. progresses; Javelin to be re-demonstrated

GS Paper III: Defence

Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

Against the backdrop of U.S. President Donald Trump's remarks to Prime Minister Narendra Modi that India should buy more military equipment from them and amid the upcoming visit of Mr. Modi to Washington DC next week, several defence deals in the pipeline are in focus, among them the deal for co-production of Stryker infantry combat vehicles.

The performance of Stryker in high-altitude conditions was demonstrated for the Indian Army and negotiations are making progress, according to sources in the know.

The Stryker, manufactured by General Dynamics, has been evaluated in high-altitude conditions of Ladakh last September-October and the report has subsequently been shared with the Army Headquarters for further action, according to the sources.

The performance of the vehicles was demonstrated in high-altitude conditions between 13,000 and 18,000 feet which also saw the testing of the Javelin Anti-Tank Guided Missile (ATGM), two sources said. And given some shortcomings, last month a communication was sent and re-trials are now awaited anytime, the sources stated.

The Stryker with its double-V hull performed optimally, one of the sources said, adding that the Javelin's performance was not at the optimum level, which was due to the age of the system that being used and repeat trials are expected to validate that. India has already sent a communication to the U.S. side asking for repeat demonstration of the Javelin, another source said, and the schedule is being worked out.

Infantry carrier: A Stryker armoured vehicle used by the U.S. Army during their final days in Iraq. FILE PHOTO

The Army has identified a key requirement for ATGMs mounted on infantry combat vehicles, several defence officials stated. However, the Stryker variant with the Javelin ATGM is under development and is expected to be demonstrated to India in the near future, it has been learnt.

Assembling in India

The envisaged plan, according to sources, is the procurement of few hundred vehicles in two stages. Direct import of small number of Strykers in the first stage and license manufacture of a bulk of them, with some customisations, in India likely by defence public sector undertaking Bharat Earth Movers Limited.

The Stryker deal is expected to figure in the conversations during Mr. Modi's U.S. visit along with the deal for license manufacture of General Electric F-414 jet engines in India and the long delays in deliveries of the F-404 engines for the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA)-Mk1A which has delayed the delivery and induction schedule.

The U.S. has in the past demonstrated both the Stryker as well as Javelin ATGM to the Indian Army during bilateral exercises.

Stryker infantry vehicle deal with the U.S. progresses; Javelin to be re-demonstrated

अमेरिका के साथ स्ट्राइकर इन्फैंट्री वाहन सौदा प्रगति पर; जैवलिन फिर से प्रदर्शित किया जाएगा

U.S. President Donald Trump told Prime Minister Narendra Modi that India should buy more military equipment from the U.S.

अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति डोनाल्ड ट्रंप ने प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी से कहा कि भारत को अमेरिका से अधिक सैन्य उपकरण खरीदने चाहिए।

- Ahead of **Modi's visit to Washington DC next week**, several **defense deals** are in focus, including the **co-production of Stryker infantry combat vehicles**.
  अगले सप्ताह मोदी के वाशिंगटन डीसी दौरे से पहले, कई **रक्षा सौदे चर्चा में हैं**, जिनमें **स्ट्राइकर इन्फैंट्री कॉम्बैट वाहनों का संयुक्त उत्पादन** शामिल है।
- The **Stryker's performance** in **high-altitude conditions** was demonstrated for the **Indian Army**, and negotiations are progressing.
  स्ट्राइकर का प्रदर्शन उच्च ऊंचाई वाले इलाकों में **भारतीय सेना** के लिए प्रदर्शित किया गया था, और **बातचीत प्रगति पर है।**

Stryker's High-Altitude Evaluation

स्ट्राइकर का उच्च ऊंचाई पर मूल्यांकन

- **Stryker**, manufactured by **General Dynamics**, was evaluated in **Ladakh in September-October 2023**, and the report was shared with **Army Headquarters** for further action.
  स्ट्राइकर, जिसे **जनरल डायनामिक्स** ने निर्मित किया है, **सितंबर-अक्टूबर 2023 में लद्दाख** में परीक्षण किया गया था, और रिपोर्ट **सेना मुख्यालय** के साथ साझा की गई थी।
- The **Stryker's performance** was tested between **13,000 and 18,000 feet**, along with **Javelin Anti-Tank Guided Missile (ATGM)** trials.
  स्ट्राइकर का प्रदर्शन 13,000 से 18,000 फीट की ऊंचाई पर परीक्षण किया गया, जिसमें **जैवलिन एंटी-टैंक गाइडेड मिसाइल (ATGM)** के परीक्षण भी शामिल थे।
- Due to **some shortcomings**, a **communication was sent last month**, and **re-trials** are now awaited.
  कुछ कमियों के कारण, **पिछले महीने एक सूचना भेजी गई**, और **फिर से परीक्षण** की प्रतीक्षा की जा रही है।
- The **Stryker's double-V hull** performed **optimally**, but the **Javelin missile's performance** was not at the **expected level** due to the **age of the system**.
  स्ट्राइकर की डबल-V हल संरचना का प्रदर्शन **उत्तम** था, लेकिन **जैवलिन मिसाइल** का प्रदर्शन **उम्मीद के अनुसार नहीं था**, जिसका कारण **सिस्टम की पुरानी स्थिति** बताया गया।
- **India has requested** the **U.S. for a repeat demonstration** of the **Javelin missile**, and the schedule is being planned.
  भारत ने अमेरिका से जैवलिन मिसाइल के दोबारा परीक्षण के लिए **अनुरोध किया है**, और **कार्यक्रम तैयार किया जा रहा है।**

Infantry Combat Vehicles with ATGMs

एटीजीएम से लैस इन्फैंट्री कॉम्बैट वाहन

- The **Indian Army** has identified a key requirement for **ATGMs mounted on infantry combat vehicles**.
  भारतीय सेना ने **इन्फैंट्री कॉम्बैट वाहनों पर लगे एटीजीएम** की एक महत्वपूर्ण आवश्यकता पहचानी है।
- The **Stryker variant** with the **Javelin ATGM** is still **under development** and is expected to be **demonstrated to India soon**.
  जैवलिन एटीजीएम से लैस स्ट्राइकर वेरिएंट अभी भी **विकास के चरण में है** और जल्द ही **भारत को प्रदर्शित किया जाएगा।**

Assembling in India

भारत में असेंबली

- The **plan** is to **procure a few hundred Stryker vehicles** in **two stages**:
  योजना के अनुसार, **कुछ सौ स्ट्राइकर वाहन दो चरणों में खरीदे जाएंगे**:
  - **First stage: Direct import** of a **small number** of Strykers.
    पहला चरण: थोड़ी संख्या में सीधा आयात किया जाएगा।
  - **Second stage: License manufacturing** of a bulk of Strykers **with customizations** in **India**, likely by **Bharat Earth Movers Limited (BEML)**.
    दूसरा चरण: अधिकांश स्ट्राइकर वाहनों का लाइसेंस निर्माण कस्टमाइजेशन के साथ भारत में किया जाएगा, संभवतः **भारत अर्थ मूवर्स लिमिटेड (BEML)** द्वारा।

Defense Deals to be Discussed During Modi's U.S. Visit

मोदी की अमेरिका यात्रा के दौरान रक्षा सौदों पर चर्चा होगी

- The **Stryker deal** is expected to be discussed during **Modi's visit to the U.S.**, along with:
  स्ट्राइकर सौदे पर चर्चा की उम्मीद है **मोदी की अमेरिका यात्रा के दौरान**, साथ ही:
  - **License manufacture** of **General Electric F-414 jet engines** in India.
    जनरल इलेक्ट्रिक F-414 जेट इंजनों के **लाइसेंस निर्माण** पर चर्चा होगी।
  - **Delays in the delivery of F-404 engines** for **LCA-Mk1A**, which has affected its **induction schedule**.
    LCA-Mk1A के लिए F-404 इंजनों की डिलीवरी में देरी, जिससे इसके **प्रवेश कार्यक्रम में विलंब हुआ** है।
- The **U.S. has previously demonstrated** both the **Stryker and Javelin ATGM** to the **Indian Army** during **bilateral exercises**.

अमेरिका ने पहले भी स्ट्राइकर और जैवलिन एटीजीएम को **भारतीय सेना** के लिए **द्विपक्षीय अभ्यासों** में प्रदर्शित किया है।

TOPICS COVERED (GS Paper IV and Essay)

1. **Not worth the risk / जोखिम के लायक नहीं**
2. **Trump to sign order barring transgender women athletes from competing in sports / ट्रम्प ट्रांसजेंडर महिला एथलीटों को खेलों में भाग लेने से रोकने वाले आदेश पर हस्ताक्षर करेंगे**

GS Paper II: Illegal emigration
GS Paper IV: Illegal emigration

Not worth the risk

India must address illegal emigration with empathy and urgency

The deportation of dozens of Indians, believed to be illegal immigrants in the United States, is neither surprising nor unprecedented. Over the past few years, the U.S. government has intensified its Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) operations to identify, detain, and deport individuals without proper documentation. For instance, between June and October 2024, the Department of Homeland Security reported that 1,60,000 individuals had been deported on 495 international repatriation flights to more than 145 countries, including India. However, the manner and timing should be cause for concern for New Delhi. To begin with, these deportations coincide with a major crackdown by ICE, spurred by Donald Trump's swearing-in as the U.S. President in January. He has made illegal immigration his "number one priority". India, which has one of the largest populations of illegal immigrants in the U.S., estimated at 7,25,000 undocumented individuals, will need to prepare for a significant increase in the number of returning migrants. Second, for the first time, the use of military flights signals that the U.S. does not intend to be challenged. This move drew protests from Colombian President Gustavo Petro, particularly after reports emerged of deported migrants being shackled. The U.S. Embassy in Delhi has also made it clear that this deportation is part of a broader initiative to tighten immigration laws and enforcement, reinforcing the message that illegal migration is not worth the risk. Further, the timing, just ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's U.S. visit, suggests that diplomatic efforts alone may not be enough to deter the Trump administration from pursuing such measures. This has the potential to become a bilateral flashpoint in India-U.S. relations.

Accepting its citizens, provided they are verifiably Indian and have entered other countries illegally, is undoubtedly the Indian government's responsibility. However, stricter controls must be enforced to prevent Indians from embarking on perilous journeys to cross into the U.S. via Mexico and Canada. The government must ensure that young people in States with high deportation rates (Gujarat, Punjab, and Haryana), understand that working illegally abroad is not a guaranteed path to success. Educational campaigns should highlight the dangers associated with illegal immigration. Importantly, the root causes must not be ignored. The central and State governments must address the underlying economic distress, deepening agricultural crises, social tensions, and employment shortages that push people to take such risks. Attention must be paid to those who deliberately travel to conflict zones in search of opportunities. While altering U.S. immigration policies may be difficult, the Indian government must address the reasons behind this large-scale migration with empathy and urgency.

Not worth the risk
जोखिम के लायक नहीं

India must address illegal emigration with empathy and urgency
भारत को अवैध प्रवास को सहानुभूति और त्वरितता के साथ संबोधित करना चाहिए

- The **deportation** of dozens of Indians, believed to be **illegal immigrants** in the **United States**, is neither surprising nor unprecedented.

संयुक्त राज्य अमेरिका में **अवैध प्रवासी** माने जाने वाले दर्जनों **भारतीयों के निर्वासन** न तो आश्चर्यजनक हैं और न ही अभूतपूर्व।

- Over the past few years, the **U.S. government** has intensified its **Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) operations** to **identify, detain, and deport** individuals without proper documentation.

पिछले कुछ वर्षों में, **अमेरिकी सरकार** ने अपने **आव्रजन और सीमा शुल्क प्रवर्तन (ICE) अभियानों** को तेज कर दिया है ताकि बिना उचित दस्तावेज़ों के व्यक्तियों की **पहचान, हिरासत और निर्वासन** किया जा सके।

- Between **June and October 2024**, the **Department of Homeland Security** reported that **1,60,000 individuals** had been deported on **495 international repatriation flights** to more than **145 countries**, including **India**.

जून से अक्टूबर 2024 के बीच, **गृह सुरक्षा विभाग** ने बताया कि **1,60,000 व्यक्तियों** को **495 अंतर्राष्ट्रीय प्रत्यावर्तन उड़ानों** के माध्यम से **145 से अधिक देशों**, जिनमें **भारत** भी शामिल है, में निर्वासित किया गया।

- The **manner and timing** of these deportations should be a **cause for concern** for **New Delhi**.
  इन निर्वासनों का **तरीका और समय नई दिल्ली** के लिए **चिंता का विषय** होना चाहिए।
- These deportations coincide with a **major crackdown** by **ICE**, spurred by **Donald Trump's swearing-in** as the **U.S. President** in **January 2024**.
  ये निर्वासन **ICE द्वारा बड़े पैमाने पर कार्रवाई** के साथ मेल खाते हैं, जो कि **जनवरी 2024** में **डोनाल्ड ट्रंप के अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति के रूप में शपथ ग्रहण** के बाद तेज हुआ।
- **Trump** has made **illegal immigration** his "**number one priority**".
  ट्रंप ने **अवैध प्रवासन** को अपनी "**प्राथमिक प्राथमिकता**" बना दिया है।
- **India** has one of the **largest populations** of **illegal immigrants** in the **U.S.**, estimated at **7,25,000 undocumented individuals**.
  भारत में **अमेरिका** में **अवैध प्रवासियों** की **सबसे बड़ी आबादी** में से एक है, जिसका अनुमान **7,25,000 बिना दस्तावेज़ वाले व्यक्तियों** का है।
- The **use of military flights** for the **first time** signals that the **U.S. does not intend to be challenged**.
  पहली बार सैन्य उड़ानों का उपयोग यह संकेत देता है कि **अमेरिका चुनौती स्वीकार करने के मूड में नहीं है**।
- This move drew **protests** from **Colombian President Gustavo Petro**, particularly after reports of **deported migrants being shackled** emerged.
  इस कदम ने **कोलंबिया के राष्ट्रपति गुस्तावो पेट्रो** के विरोध को जन्म दिया, खासकर जब **निर्वासित प्रवासियों को हथकड़ी लगाए जाने** की खबरें आईं।
- The **U.S. Embassy in Delhi** has stated that this **deportation** is part of a **broader initiative** to tighten **immigration laws and enforcement**.
  दिल्ली में अमेरिकी दूतावास ने कहा है कि यह **निर्वासन**, **आव्रजन कानूनों और प्रवर्तन को कड़ा करने की एक व्यापक पहल** का हिस्सा है।
- The **timing**, just ahead of **Prime Minister Narendra Modi's U.S. visit**, suggests that **diplomatic efforts alone may not be enough** to deter the **Trump administration**.
  समय, **प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी की अमेरिकी यात्रा** से ठीक पहले, यह संकेत देता है कि **केवल कूटनीतिक प्रयास ट्रंप प्रशासन** को रोकने के लिए **पर्याप्त नहीं हो सकते**।
- This issue has the **potential** to become a **bilateral flashpoint** in **India-U.S. relations**.
  यह मुद्दा **भारत-अमेरिका संबंधों** में **द्विपक्षीय टकराव** का कारण बन सकता है।
- **Accepting its citizens**, provided they are **verifiably Indian**, is **India's responsibility**.
  अपने **नागरिकों को स्वीकार करना**, यदि वे **सत्यापन योग्य भारतीय** हैं, **भारत की जिम्मेदारी** है।
- However, stricter controls must be enforced to prevent **Indians** from embarking on **perilous journeys** to **cross into the U.S.** via **Mexico and Canada**.
  हालांकि, **भारतीयों** को **मैक्सिको और कनाडा** के माध्यम से **अमेरिका में अवैध रूप से प्रवेश** करने से रोकने के लिए सख्त नियंत्रण लागू किए जाने चाहिए।
- The **government** must ensure that **young people** in **States with high deportation rates** (**Gujarat, Punjab, and Haryana**) understand that **working illegally abroad** is **not a guaranteed path to success**.

सरकार को यह सुनिश्चित करना चाहिए कि **उच्च निर्वासन दर वाले राज्यों** (**गुजरात, पंजाब और हरियाणा**) के **युवा यह समझें** कि **विदेश में अवैध रूप से काम करना सफलता की गारंटी नहीं** है।

- **Educational campaigns** should highlight the **dangers associated with illegal immigration**.
  शैक्षिक अभियानों को **अवैध प्रवासन से जुड़े खतरों** को उजागर करना चाहिए।
- The **root causes** of **illegal immigration** must not be ignored.
  अवैध प्रवासन के मूल कारणों की अनदेखी नहीं की जानी चाहिए।
- The **central and state governments** must address **economic distress, deepening agricultural crises, social tensions, and employment shortages** that push people to take such risks.
  केंद्र और राज्य सरकारों को **आर्थिक संकट, गहराते कृषि संकट, सामाजिक तनाव और रोजगार की कमी** जैसे मुद्दों को हल करना चाहिए, जो लोगों को ऐसे जोखिम उठाने के लिए मजबूर करते हैं।
- Attention must be paid to those who **deliberately travel to conflict zones** in search of **opportunities**.
  उन लोगों पर ध्यान देना चाहिए जो **जानबूझकर संघर्षग्रस्त क्षेत्रों** में **अवसरों की तलाश में यात्रा** करते हैं।
- While altering **U.S. immigration policies** may be **difficult**, the **Indian government** must **address the reasons** behind this **large-scale migration** with **empathy and urgency**.
  हालांकि **अमेरिकी आव्रजन नीतियों** को बदलना **कठिन** हो सकता है, लेकिन **भारतीय सरकार** को इस **बड़े पैमाने पर प्रवासन के पीछे के कारणों** को **सहानुभूति और त्वरितता** के साथ संबोधित करना चाहिए।

PATRIOTIC IAS

Trump to sign order barring transgender women athletes from competing in sports

Essay

Reuters

U.S. President Donald Trump will sign an executive order on Wednesday designed to prevent people who were biologically assigned male at birth from participating in women's or girls' sporting events.

The order, which Mr. Trump is expected to sign at an afternoon ceremony, marks another aggressive shift by the President's second administration in the way the federal government deals with transgender people and their rights.

The President put out a sweeping order on his first day in office last month that called for the federal government to define sex as only male or female and for that to be reflected on official documents such as passports and in policies such as federal prison assignments.

Mr. Trump found during the campaign that his pledge to "keep men out of women's sports" resonated beyond the usual party lines. More than half the voters surveyed by AP VoteCast said support for transgender rights in government and society has gone too far. He leaned into the rhetoric before the election, pledging to get rid of the "transgender insanity," though his campaign offered little in the way of details.

Minority report: People gather to defend transgender people's rights in New York City on Monday. AFP

Wednesday's order – which coincides with National Girls and Women in Sports Day – will involve how his administration will interpret Title IX, the law best known for its role in pursuing gender equity in athletics and preventing sexual harassment on campuses.

Every administration has the authority to issue its own interpretations of the landmark legislation. The last two presidential administrations – including Mr. Trump's first – offer a glimpse at the push-pull involved.

The Biden administration rolled back in last April a policy set by the previous Trump administration, with one of its own that stipulated the rights of LGBTQ+ students would be protected by federal law and provided new safeguards for victims of campus sexual assault. The policy stopped short of explicitly addressing transgender athletes. Still, more than a half-dozen Republican-led states immediately challenged the new rule in court.

Trump to sign order barring transgender women athletes from competing in sports

ट्रम्प ट्रांसजेंडर महिला एथलीटों को खेलों में भाग लेने से रोकने वाले आदेश पर हस्ताक्षर करेंगे

U.S. President Donald Trump's Executive Order on Transgender Participation in Sports

अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति डोनाल्ड ट्रंप का ट्रांसजेंडर लोगों की खेलों में भागीदारी पर कार्यकारी आदेश

- **U.S. President Donald Trump** will sign an **executive order** on **Wednesday**, designed to prevent people who were biologically assigned male at birth from participating in **women's or girls' sporting events**.

  अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति डोनाल्ड ट्रंप बुधवार को एक **कार्यकारी आदेश** पर हस्ताक्षर करेंगे, जो जन्म के समय जैविक रूप से पुरुष के रूप में पहचाने गए लोगों को **महिलाओं या लड़कियों के खेल आयोजनों** में भाग लेने से रोकने के लिए है।
- The order is expected to be signed at an **afternoon ceremony**, marking another aggressive shift by the President's **second administration** in the way the **federal government** deals with **transgender people** and their rights.

  यह आदेश एक **दोपहर की समारोह** में हस्ताक्षरित होने की संभावना है, जो राष्ट्रपति के **दूसरे प्रशासन** द्वारा **संघीय सरकार** के **ट्रांसजेंडर लोगों** और उनके अधिकारों के साथ निपटने के तरीके में एक और आक्रामक बदलाव को चिह्नित करता है।
- The President issued a sweeping order on his **first day in office last month**, calling for the federal government to define **sex** as only **male or female** and reflect that on official documents like **passports** and in policies like **federal prison assignments**.

  राष्ट्रपति ने **पिछले महीने अपने कार्यालय में पहले दिन** एक व्यापक आदेश जारी किया था, जिसमें

संघीय सरकार से **लिंग** को केवल **पुरुष या महिला** के रूप में परिभाषित करने और इसे आधिकारिक दस्तावेजों जैसे **पासपोर्ट** और नीतियों में जैसे **संघीय जेल आवंटन** में दर्शाने को कहा था।

Trump's Campaign and Public Sentiment
ट्रंप का अभियान और सार्वजनिक भावना

- During his **campaign**, Mr. Trump found that his pledge to "**keep men out of women's sports**" resonated beyond the usual party lines.
  अपने अभियान के दौरान, श्री ट्रंप ने पाया कि उनका वादा "**महिलाओं के खेलों से पुरुषों को बाहर रखना**" सामान्य पार्टी सीमाओं से परे गूंज रहा था।
- More than half the voters surveyed by **AP VoteCast** said that support for **transgender rights** in **government and society** has gone **too far**.
  AP वोटकास्ट द्वारा किए गए सर्वेक्षण में से आधे से अधिक मतदाताओं ने कहा कि **सरकार और समाज** में **ट्रांसजेंडर अधिकारों** का समर्थन **बहुत अधिक** हो गया है।
- He leaned into the rhetoric before the election, pledging to get rid of the "**transgender insanity**," though his campaign offered little in the way of details.
  चुनाव से पहले, उन्होंने इस वक्तव्यमाला को बढ़ावा दिया, "**ट्रांसजेंडर पागलपन**" को खत्म करने का वादा करते हुए, हालांकि उनके अभियान ने इससे संबंधित विवरण बहुत कम दिए थे।

Wednesday's Order and National Girls and Women in Sports Day
बुधवार का आदेश और राष्ट्रीय लड़कियों और महिलाओं का खेल दिवस

- **Wednesday's order**, which coincides with **National Girls and Women in Sports Day**, will involve how his administration will interpret **Title IX**, a law best known for its role in pursuing **gender equity** in athletics and preventing **sexual harassment** on campuses.
  बुधवार का आदेश, जो **राष्ट्रीय लड़कियों और महिलाओं का खेल दिवस** के साथ मेल खाता है, यह निर्धारित करेगा कि उनका प्रशासन **टाइटल IX** की व्याख्या कैसे करेगा, यह कानून जिसे एथलेटिक्स में **लिंग समानता** की खोज करने और कैंपसों में **यौन उत्पीड़न** को रोकने में अपनी भूमिका के लिए जाना जाता है।
- Every administration has the authority to issue its own interpretations of this landmark legislation.
  प्रत्येक प्रशासन को इस ऐतिहासिक कानून की अपनी व्याख्याएँ जारी करने का अधिकार होता है।

Comparing Trump's and Biden's Approaches
ट्रंप और बाइडन के दृष्टिकोण की तुलना

- The last two presidential administrations, including **Mr. Trump's first** one, offer a glimpse of the push-pull involved.
  पिछले दो राष्ट्रपति प्रशासन, जिसमें **श्री ट्रंप का पहला** प्रशासन शामिल है, इस परिप्रेक्ष्य को स्पष्ट करते हैं।

- The **Biden administration** rolled back a policy set by the previous **Trump administration** in **April 2024**, with its own policy that stipulated the rights of **LGBTQ+ students** would be protected by **federal law** and provided new safeguards for victims of **campus sexual assault**.

  बाइडन प्रशासन ने **अप्रैल 2024** में पिछले **ट्रंप प्रशासन** द्वारा निर्धारित नीति को पलटते हुए अपनी खुद की नीति जारी की, जिसमें यह सुनिश्चित किया गया कि **LGBTQ+ छात्रों** के अधिकारों की **संघीय कानून** द्वारा सुरक्षा की जाएगी और **कैंपस यौन हमले** के शिकारों के लिए नई सुरक्षा प्रदान की जाएगी।
- The Biden policy stopped short of explicitly addressing **transgender athletes**.

  बाइडन नीति ने **ट्रांसजेंडर एथलीटों** को स्पष्ट रूप से संबोधित करने से परहेज किया।
- Still, more than a half-dozen **Republican-led states** immediately challenged the new rule in court.

  फिर भी, **सात से अधिक रिपब्लिकन-नेतृत्व वाले राज्यों** ने तुरंत नई नीति को अदालत में चुनौती दी।

TOPICS COVERED (PCS Special)

1. **Over 65% turnout in Milkipur byelection / मिल्कीपुर उपचुनाव में 65% से अधिक मतदान**
2. **Majhi launches special village infrastructure development programme of ₹5,000 crore / माझी ने 5,000 करोड़ रुपये के विशेष ग्राम अवसंरचना विकास कार्यक्रम की शुरुआत की**
3. **Mamata highlights 'political stability, lack of strikes' to attract investment / ममता ने निवेश आकर्षित करने के लिए 'राजनीतिक स्थिरता, हड़तालों की कमी' पर प्रकाश डाला**
4. **Army's Fort William in Kolkata set to be known as Vijay Durg / कोलकाता में सेना के फोर्ट विलियम को विजय दुर्ग के नाम से जाना जाएगा**

Over 65% turnout in Milkipur byelection

UP PCS

Press Trust of India

AYODHYA

Over 65% of the total 3.70 lakh voters exercised their franchise in the Milkipur Assembly byelection in Uttar Pradesh on Wednesday.

The turnout surpassed the 60.23% recorded in the 2022 poll, with 65.35% votes cast till the completion of voting, according to the Election Commission.

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav alleged that presiding officers were "fulfilling the target of fake voting" in the constituency and urged the poll body and the Supreme Court to take cognisance of the "enemies of democracy".

Over 65% turnout in Milkipur byelection

मिल्कीपुर उपचुनाव में 65% से अधिक मतदान

Milkipur Assembly Byelection Voter Turnout
मिलकीपुर विधानसभा उपचुनाव में मतदाता मतदान दर

- **Over 65%** of the total **3.70 lakh voters** exercised their franchise in the **Milkipur Assembly byelection** in **Uttar Pradesh** on **Wednesday**.

3.70 लाख मतदाताओं में से **65% से अधिक** ने **उत्तर प्रदेश** के **मिलकीपुर विधानसभा उपचुनाव** में **बुधवार** को अपने मत का प्रयोग किया।

- The **turnout surpassed** the **60.23%** recorded in the **2022 poll**, with **65.35% votes cast** till the completion of voting, according to the **Election Commission**.

मतदान प्रतिशत ने **2022 के चुनाव** में **60.23%** के आंकड़े को पार किया, **65.35% वोट डाले गए** जब तक मतदान समाप्त नहीं हुआ, यह जानकारी **चुनाव आयोग** के अनुसार है।

Akhilesh Yadav's Allegations
अखिलेश यादव के आरोप

- **Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav** alleged that **presiding officers** were "**fulfilling the target of fake voting**" in the constituency and urged the **poll body** and the **Supreme Court** to take cognisance of the "**enemies of democracy**."

समाजवादी पार्टी के प्रमुख अखिलेश यादव ने आरोप लगाया कि **प्रधान अधिकारी** क्षेत्र में "**झूठे मतदान के लक्ष्य को पूरा कर रहे हैं**" और उन्होंने **चुनाव आयोग** और **सुप्रीम कोर्ट** से "**लोकतंत्र के दुश्मनों**" का संज्ञान लेने की अपील की।

PATRIOTIC IAS

Majhi launches special village infrastructure development programme of ₹5,000 crore

PCS

Satyasundar Barik
BHUBANESWAR

The Mohan Majhi-led government's village-focused development initiative, 'Bikashita Gaon, Bikashita Odisha' (Developed Village, Developed Odisha), was formally launched on Wednesday.

Launching the scheme, the Chief Minister said it will help reduce the gap in development of cities and villages and bring parity in basic infrastructure.

Under the scheme, ₹1,000 crore will be spent every year for the development of infrastructure in villages. The government will spend ₹5,000 crore in five years from the current financial year to 2028-29 and expand the programme if necessary.

Stating that it is impossible to think of the development of Odisha without the development of villages, Mr. Majhi said, "Our programme is completely dedicated to the development of our villages. It will be implemented through an annual plan in a planned manner in education, community assets, places of worship, sports infrastructure and small tourism projects, apart from village roads."

The scheme will help reduce the gap in development of cities and villages, says the CM.

The basic infrastructure of village roads especially those which connect villages to villages will get high priority. Moreover, all community infrastructure such as Kalyan Mandap, community centres, improvement of bathing ghats and market sheds will be constructed.

Plans have also been made for the development of educational infrastructure. Construction of additional classrooms and improvement and expansion of the existing infrastructure will be taken up.

"The minimum cost of each project will be ₹3 lakh... so that the quality can be maintained," he said.

Responding to the scheme launch, opposition Biju Janata Dal MLA Arun Sahoo said, "The fund earmarked annually for villages is too meagre to take up any development programme. We had far bigger allocations for village development."

Majhi launches special village infrastructure development programme of ₹5,000 crore

माझी ने 5,000 करोड़ रुपये के विशेष ग्राम अवसंरचना विकास कार्यक्रम की शुरुआत की

Mohan Majhi-led Government's Village-Focused Development Initiative
मोहन मज़ी के नेतृत्व वाली सरकार की गांव-केंद्रित विकास पहल

- **'Bikashita Gaon, Bikashita Odisha'** (Developed Village, Developed Odisha) was formally launched on **Wednesday**.
  'बिकसित गांव, विकसित ओडिशा' (विकसित गांव, विकसित ओडिशा) को **बुधवार** को औपचारिक रूप से लॉन्च किया गया।
- The **Chief Minister** stated that the initiative will help **reduce the gap** in development between cities and villages and bring **parity in basic infrastructure**.
  मुख्यमंत्री ने कहा कि यह पहल **शहरों और गांवों** के बीच विकास के अंतर को **कम करने** और **मूलभूत संरचना में समानता** लाने में मदद करेगी।
- Under the scheme, **₹1,000 crore** will be spent every year for the **development of infrastructure in villages**.
  योजना के तहत, **₹1,000 करोड़** हर साल **गांवों में बुनियादी ढांचे के विकास** के लिए खर्च किए जाएंगे।
- The government will spend **₹5,000 crore** over **five years** from the current financial year to **2028-29**, and will expand the programme if necessary.
  सरकार वर्तमान वित्तीय वर्ष से लेकर **2028-29** तक **पाँच वर्षों में ₹5,000 करोड़** खर्च करेगी और आवश्यकतानुसार कार्यक्रम का विस्तार करेगी।
- The **Chief Minister** emphasized that development of Odisha is impossible without the development of **villages**.
  मुख्यमंत्री ने यह जोर देकर कहा कि ओडिशा का विकास बिना **गांवों के विकास** के असंभव है।

- The programme will be implemented through an **annual plan** in various areas such as **education**, **community assets**, **places of worship**, **sports infrastructure**, and **small tourism projects**, in addition to **village roads**.
  यह कार्यक्रम **वर्षिक योजना** के माध्यम से **शिक्षा**, **समुदायिक संसाधन**, **पूजा स्थल**, **खेल संरचना**, और **छोटे पर्यटन परियोजनाओं** के अलावा **गांव की सड़कों** में लागू किया जाएगा।
- **Village roads**, especially those connecting villages, will get **high priority**.
  गांवों की सड़कें, खासकर वो जो गांवों को जोड़ती हैं, उन्हें **उच्च प्राथमिकता** मिलेगी।
- All **community infrastructure** such as **Kalyan Mandap**, **community centres**, **improvement of bathing ghats**, and **market sheds** will be constructed.
  सभी **समुदायिक बुनियादी ढांचे** जैसे **कल्याण मंडप**, **समुदायिक केंद्र**, **नहाने के घाटों की सुधार** और **बाजार शेड्स** का निर्माण किया जाएगा।
- Plans are also in place for the development of **educational infrastructure**, including **construction of additional classrooms** and improvement/expansion of existing infrastructure.
  शैक्षिक बुनियादी ढांचे के विकास के लिए योजनाएं भी बनाई गई हैं, जिनमें **अतिरिक्त कक्षाओं का निर्माण** और मौजूदा ढांचे का सुधार/विस्तार शामिल है।
- The **minimum cost** of each project will be **₹3 lakh** to maintain quality.
  प्रत्येक परियोजना की **न्यूनतम लागत ₹3 लाख** होगी ताकि गुणवत्ता बनाए रखी जा सके।

Opposition's Response
विपक्ष की प्रतिक्रिया

- **Biju Janata Dal MLA Arun Sahoo** stated that the fund allocated annually for villages is too meagre to take up any development programme.
  बीजू जनता दल के विधायक अरुण साहू ने कहा कि गांवों के लिए हर साल आवंटित किया गया फंड विकास कार्यक्रम शुरू करने के लिए बहुत कम है।
- He claimed that they had **far bigger allocations** for village development in the past.
  उन्होंने दावा किया कि पहले **गांवों के विकास** के लिए **काफी बड़े आवंटन** थे।

PATRIOTIC IAS

Mamata highlights 'political stability, lack of strikes' to attract investment

At 8th Bengal Global Business Summit, CM announces formation of synergy committee to facilitate ease of doing business; says 60% of proposals from past seven summits implemented in State, mining to begin at Deocha Pachami coal block today

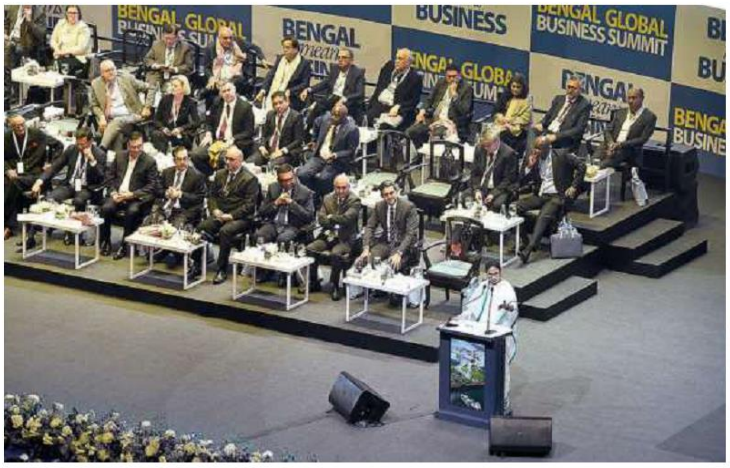
PCS

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee showcased the State's "political stability and strike-free environment" as a major draw for investors while addressing delegates at the 8th Bengal Global Business Summit in Kolkata on Wednesday.

"We have a stable government in Bengal, where no man-days are lost. Earlier, there were strikes and we stopped all this in the interest of business," Ms. Banerjee said at the event attended by over 200 delegates from 40 countries, including diplomats from more than 20 countries.

She also announced the formation of a synergy committee to facilitate ease of doing business in the State and highlighted that over 60% of the investment proposals from the past seven summits had been implemented. "Over the last seven business summits, investment proposals worth ₹19.51 lakh crore were received, of which investments worth ₹12 lakh crore (61.5%) have taken off," she said.



Mamata Banerjee addressing the 8th Bengal Global Business Summit on Wednesday. DEBASISH BHADURI

The Chief Minister also announced that mining will begin on Thursday at Birbhum district's Deocha Pachami coal block, one of the largest in the world. "Over 1 lakh people will be employed and several ancillary projects will come up too," she said, thanking residents for cooperating with the State government to start operations.

Ms. Banerjee highlighted the construction of six economic corridors and several initiatives such as the Tea Tourism Allied Business Policy, Data Centre Policy, Export Promotion Policy, and New and Renewable Energy Policy.

She said the Gross State Domestic Product grew at a faster pace than the GDP in the last financial year and claimed that the State is one of the largest economies in the country.

The CM also pointed out that one of strengths of the State is that it "promotes diversity and does not divide people". She added that it is a "pioneer in women empowerment" as it implements various cash incentive schemes such as Lakshmir Bhandar.

Soren attends meet

Among those present at the inaugural session of the two-day event was Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren, who highlighted that the two States have a lot in common and expressed hope that they would emerge as key investment destinations in the country. "West Bengal and Jharkhand have a lot in common. Jharkhand is rich in minerals and natural resources. I believe States must collaborate to attract investments and build a strong nation," he said.

Industrialists lauded the CM for organising the event and said the summit has grown from strength to strength under her leadership. Ms. Banerjee said she urged N. Chandrasekaran, chairman of Tata Group, to start a direct flight from Kolkata to Europe.

While Reliance Industries chairman Mukesh Ambani promised to double the investment in West Bengal by the end of this decade, JSW Group chairman Sajjan Jindal announced the setting up of two 800 MW power plants at Salboni at ₹16,000 crore.

Ambuja Neotia Group chairman Harshavardhan Neotia said the group will invest ₹15,000 crore in the State over five years, while RP-Sanjiv Goenka Group chairman Sanjiv Goenka said his companies will invest ₹10,000 crore in the areas of energy, infrastructure, and education.

Mamata highlights 'political stability, lack of strikes' to attract investment

ममता ने निवेश आकर्षित करने के लिए 'राजनीतिक स्थिरता, हड़तालों की कमी' पर प्रकाश डाला

At 8th Bengal Global Business Summit, CM announces formation of synergy committee to facilitate ease of doing business; says 60% of proposals from past seven summits implemented in State, mining to begin at Deocha Pachami coal block today

8वें बंगाल ग्लोबल बिजनेस समिट में सीएम ने व्यापार को आसान बनाने के लिए तालमेल समिति के गठन की घोषणा की; कहा कि पिछले सात शिखर सम्मेलनों के 60% प्रस्तावों को राज्य में लागू किया गया, आज देवचा पचामी कोयला ब्लॉक में खनन शुरू होगा

Mamata Banerjee at the 8th Bengal Global Business Summit
ममता बनर्जी 8वें बंगाल ग्लोबल बिजनेस समिट में

- **West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee** showcased the State's **"political stability and strike-free environment"** as a major draw for investors at the 8th Bengal Global Business Summit in **Kolkata** on **Wednesday**.
  पश्चिम बंगाल की मुख्यमंत्री ममता बनर्जी ने राज्य के **"राजनीतिक स्थिरता और हड़ताल-मुक्त माहौल"** को निवेशकों के लिए एक प्रमुख आकर्षण के रूप में प्रस्तुत किया, यह आयोजन **कोलकाता** में **बुधवार** को 8वें बंगाल ग्लोबल बिजनेस समिट में हुआ।
- She emphasized that **Bengal** has a **stable government** and that **no man-days are lost** due to strikes. She also mentioned that previous strikes were stopped in the interest of business.
  उन्होंने यह जोर दिया कि **बंगाल** में **स्थिर सरकार** है और **हड़तालों के कारण कोई भी कार्यदिवस नहीं खोए जाते**। उन्होंने यह भी कहा कि व्यापार के हित में पूर्व में हुई हड़तालों को रोका गया।
- The event was attended by **over 200 delegates from 40 countries**, including **diplomats from more than 20 countries**.
  इस आयोजन में **40 देशों के 200 से अधिक प्रतिनिधि** उपस्थित थे, जिनमें **20 से अधिक देशों के राजनयिक** शामिल थे।
- **Mamata Banerjee** announced the formation of a **synergy committee** to facilitate the **ease of doing business** in the state.
  ममता बनर्जी ने राज्य में **व्यवसाय करने में आसानी** के लिए **सिनर्जी समिति** के गठन की घोषणा की।
- She highlighted that **over 60%** of the investment proposals from the past **seven summits** had been **implemented**.
  उन्होंने यह बताया कि पिछले **सात समिटों** से **60% से अधिक** निवेश प्रस्तावों को **लागू किया गया**।
- **₹19.51 lakh crore** worth investment proposals were received in the past seven business summits, out of which **₹12 lakh crore (61.5%)** have been successfully implemented.
  पिछले सात व्यापार समिटों में **₹19.51 लाख करोड़** के निवेश प्रस्ताव प्राप्त हुए, जिनमें से **₹12 लाख करोड़ (61.5%)** सफलतापूर्वक लागू किए गए।
- **Mining** will begin on **Thursday** at the **Deocha Pachami coal block** in **Birbhum district**, one of the largest in the world.
  गुरुवार को **बिरभूम जिले** के **दिओचा पचामी कोयला ब्लॉक** पर **खनन** शुरू होगा, जो दुनिया के सबसे बड़े कोयला ब्लॉकों में से एक है।
- **Over 1 lakh people** will be employed, and several **ancillary projects** will also be developed.

1 लाख से अधिक लोग रोजगार प्राप्त करेंगे, और कई **सहायक परियोजनाएं** भी विकसित की जाएंगी।

- The Chief Minister highlighted the construction of **six economic corridors** and initiatives like **Tea Tourism Allied Business Policy**, **Data Centre Policy**, **Export Promotion Policy**, and **New and Renewable Energy Policy**.
  मुख्यमंत्री ने **छह आर्थिक गलियारों** के निर्माण और **चाय पर्यटन संबद्ध व्यापार नीति**, **डेटा केंद्र नीति**, **निर्यात प्रोत्साहन नीति** और **नवीन और नवीकरणीय ऊर्जा नीति** जैसी पहलों का उल्लेख किया।
- **West Bengal's GDP** grew at a faster pace than the national GDP in the last financial year.
  पिछले वित्तीय वर्ष में **पश्चिम बंगाल की जीडीपी** ने राष्ट्रीय जीडीपी से तेज़ गति से वृद्धि की।
- She claimed that **West Bengal** is one of the largest economies in the country.
  उन्होंने दावा किया कि **पश्चिम बंगाल** देश की सबसे बड़ी अर्थव्यवस्थाओं में से एक है।
- The **State promotes diversity** and does not divide people. She added that it is a **pioneer in women empowerment**, implementing schemes like **Lakshmir Bhandar**.
  राज्य **विविधता को बढ़ावा देता** है और लोगों को विभाजित नहीं करता। उन्होंने यह भी कहा कि यह **महिला सशक्तिकरण में एक अग्रणी** है, जो **लक्ष्मीर भंडार** जैसी योजनाओं को लागू करता है।

Soren attends meet
सोरेन ने बैठक में भाग लिया

- **Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren** attended the inaugural session of the two-day event and expressed hope that **West Bengal and Jharkhand** would become key **investment destinations**.
  झारखंड के मुख्यमंत्री हेमंत सोरेन ने दो दिवसीय कार्यक्रम के उद्घाटन सत्र में भाग लिया और आशा जताई कि **पश्चिम बंगाल और झारखंड** देश में प्रमुख **निवेश स्थलों** के रूप में उभरेंगे।
- Soren emphasized that **Jharkhand** is rich in **minerals and natural resources**, and states should collaborate to attract investments.
  सोरेन ने यह रेखांकित किया कि **झारखंड** खनिजों और **प्राकृतिक संसाधनों** से भरपूर है, और राज्यों को निवेश आकर्षित करने के लिए सहयोग करना चाहिए।

Industrialists' Praise
उद्योगपतियों की सराहना

- Industrialists praised **Mamata Banerjee** for organizing the event and mentioned that the summit has grown under her leadership.
  उद्योगपतियों ने **ममता बनर्जी** की सराहना की कि उन्होंने इस कार्यक्रम का आयोजन किया और कहा कि समिट उनके नेतृत्व में बढ़ी है।
- **Mukesh Ambani** of **Reliance Industries** promised to **double the investment** in **West Bengal** by the end of this decade.

रिलायंस इंडस्ट्रीज के **मुकेश अंबानी** ने इस दशक के अंत तक **पश्चिम बंगाल** में **निवेश को दोगुना** करने का वादा किया।

- **Sajjan Jindal**, Chairman of **JSW Group**, announced the setting up of two **800 MW power plants** at **Salboni** worth **₹16,000 crore**.
  JSW ग्रुप के अध्यक्ष **सज्जन जिंदल** ने **सलबोनी** में **₹16,000 करोड़** की लागत से दो **800 मेगावाट पावर प्लांट्स** स्थापित करने की घोषणा की।
- **Harshavardhan Neotia**, Chairman of **Ambuja Neotia Group**, said the group will invest **₹15,000 crore** in **West Bengal** over the next five years.
  अंबुजा नोटिया ग्रुप के अध्यक्ष **हर्षवर्धन नोटिया** ने कहा कि ग्रुप अगले पांच वर्षों में **पश्चिम बंगाल** में **₹15,000 करोड़** का निवेश करेगा।
- **Sanjiv Goenka**, Chairman of **RP-Sanjiv Goenka Group**, stated his companies will invest **₹10,000 crore** in **energy, infrastructure, and education**.
  RP-संजीव गोएंका ग्रुप के अध्यक्ष **संजिव गोएंका** ने कहा कि उनकी कंपनियां **ऊर्जा, बुनियादी ढांचे और शिक्षा** में **₹10,000 करोड़** का निवेश करेंगी।

Army's Fort William in Kolkata set to be known as Vijay Durg

PCS

GS Paper I: History

In the latest step toward eliminating colonial practices and mindsets within the armed forces, Fort William in Kolkata, the headquarters of the Eastern Army Command, has been renamed Vijay Durg. Additionally, Kitchener House inside Fort William has been renamed Manekshaw House, and South Gate, formerly known as St. George's Gate, is now Shivaji Gate.

Wing Commander Himanshu Tiwari, the Defence Public Relations Officer in Kolkata, has said the decision was made in mid-December and all internal communications have since ceased using "Fort William", adopting the new name instead. However, the official announcement is still pending.

Fort William, named after King William III of England, was constructed by the British in 1781.

The new name, Vijay Durg, is derived from the oldest fort along the Sindhudurg coast in Maharashtra. It served as a naval base for the Marathas under Chhatrapati Shivaji.

In recent years, there have been a series of measures aimed at removing

Army officers gather at Fort Williams in Kolkata during the Army Day celebrations. AP

"vestiges of the colonial era" and "Indianising" military traditions and customs – an initiative Prime Minister Narendra Modi has described as freedom from the mentality of slavery.

In March 2022, while addressing the top military leadership at Kevadia in Gujarat, Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasised the importance of enhancing indigenisation in national defence – not just in terms of sourcing of equipment and weapons but also in the doctrines, procedures and customs practised by the armed forces.

He urged the three services to "rid themselves of legacy systems and practices that have outlived utility and relevance".

Army's Fort William in Kolkata set to be known as Vijay Durg

कोलकाता में सेना के फोर्ट विलियम को विजय दुर्ग के नाम से जाना जाएगा

Renaming of Fort William and Other Changes
फोर्ट विलियम और अन्य परिवर्तनों का नामकरण

- **Fort William** in **Kolkata**, the headquarters of the **Eastern Army Command**, has been renamed **Vijay Durg** as part of efforts to eliminate colonial practices in the armed forces.

कोलकाता में स्थित **पूर्वी सेना कमांड** का मुख्यालय **फोर्ट विलियम** का नाम बदलकर **विजय दुर्ग** कर दिया गया है, यह सशस्त्र बलों में उपनिवेशी प्रथाओं को समाप्त करने की दिशा में एक कदम है।

- **Kitchener House** inside **Fort William** has been renamed **Manekshaw House**, and the **South Gate**, formerly known as **St. George's Gate**, is now **Shivaji Gate**.

फोर्ट विलियम के अंदर स्थित **किचनर हाउस** का नाम बदलकर **मनैकशॉ हाउस** कर दिया गया है, और **साउथ गेट**, जिसे पहले **सेंट जॉर्ज गेट** के नाम से जाना जाता था, का नाम अब **शिवाजी गेट** रखा गया है।

- **Wing Commander Himanshu Tiwari**, the **Defence Public Relations Officer** in Kolkata, confirmed that the decision was made in **mid-December**, and since then, all internal communications have

stopped using the name "Fort William" and adopted the new name. However, the official announcement is still pending.

विंग कमांडर हिमांशु तिवारी, कोलकाता में **रक्षा जनसंपर्क अधिकारी**, ने पुष्टि की कि यह निर्णय **दिसंबर के मध्य** में लिया गया था, और उसके बाद से सभी आंतरिक संवादों में "फोर्ट विलियम" का उपयोग बंद कर दिया गया है और नए नाम को अपनाया गया है। हालांकि, आधिकारिक घोषणा अभी बाकी है।

- **Fort William**, constructed by the **British** in **1781**, was named after **King William III of England**.

  फोर्ट विलियम, जिसे **ब्रिटिशों** ने **1781** में बनाया था, का नाम **किंग विलियम III** के नाम पर रखा गया था।
- The new name, **Vijay Durg**, is derived from the oldest fort along the **Sindhudurg coast** in **Maharashtra**, which served as a naval base for the **Marathas** under **Chhatrapati Shivaji**.

  नया नाम **विजय दुर्ग**, **महाराष्ट्र** के **सिंधुदुर्ग तट** पर स्थित सबसे पुराने किले से लिया गया है, जो **छत्रपति शिवाजी** के तहत **मराठों** के लिए एक नौसैनिक ठिकाना था।
- Recent measures aim at removing the "vestiges of the colonial era" and "Indianising" military traditions and customs, a move described by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** as **freedom from the mentality of slavery**.

  हाल की पहलें **"उपनिवेशी युग के अवशेषों"** को हटाने और सैन्य परंपराओं और रीति-रिवाजों को **"भारतीय बनाना"** हैं, जिसे **प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी** ने **"गुलामी की मानसिकता से स्वतंत्रता"** के रूप में वर्णित किया है।
- In **March 2022**, while addressing the top military leadership at **Kevadia in Gujarat**, **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** emphasized the importance of enhancing **indigenisation in national defence**, not only in terms of sourcing equipment and weapons but also in the doctrines, procedures, and customs practised by the armed forces.

  मार्च 2022 में, **गुजरात** के **केवडिया** में शीर्ष सैन्य नेतृत्व को संबोधित करते हुए, **प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी** ने **राष्ट्रीय रक्षा में स्वदेशीकरण** की महत्ता पर जोर दिया, यह सिर्फ उपकरणों और हथियारों के स्रोत के संदर्भ में नहीं, बल्कि सैन्य बलों द्वारा प्रचलित सिद्धांतों, प्रक्रियाओं और रीति-रिवाजों के संदर्भ में भी।
- He urged the three services to “rid themselves of legacy systems and practices that have outlived utility and relevance.”

  उन्होंने तीनों सेवाओं से आग्रह किया कि वे “ऐसी विरासत प्रणालियों और प्रथाओं से छुटकारा पाएं जो अब उपयोगिता और प्रासंगिकता खो चुकी हैं।”

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Amul presents SPORTSTAR ACES 2025 INDIA TRIUMPHS in association with IndianOil

Nominees for the National Team of the Year

2024 was a landmark year for Indian sports with a host of achievements across several disciplines. The annual ***Sportstar*** Aces Awards seek to honour the trailblazers.

MEN'S CRICKET TEAM

Won the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024, held in the West Indies and USA

Jasprit Bumrah was named player of the tournament at the T20 World Cup

Beat England 4-1 and Bangladesh 2-0 in home Test series, drew 1-1 in South Africa