

Daily Current Affairs



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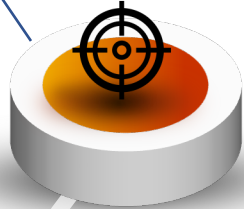


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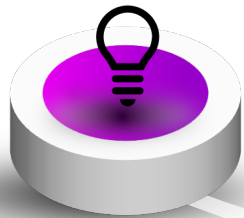
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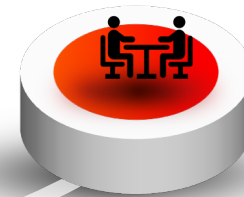
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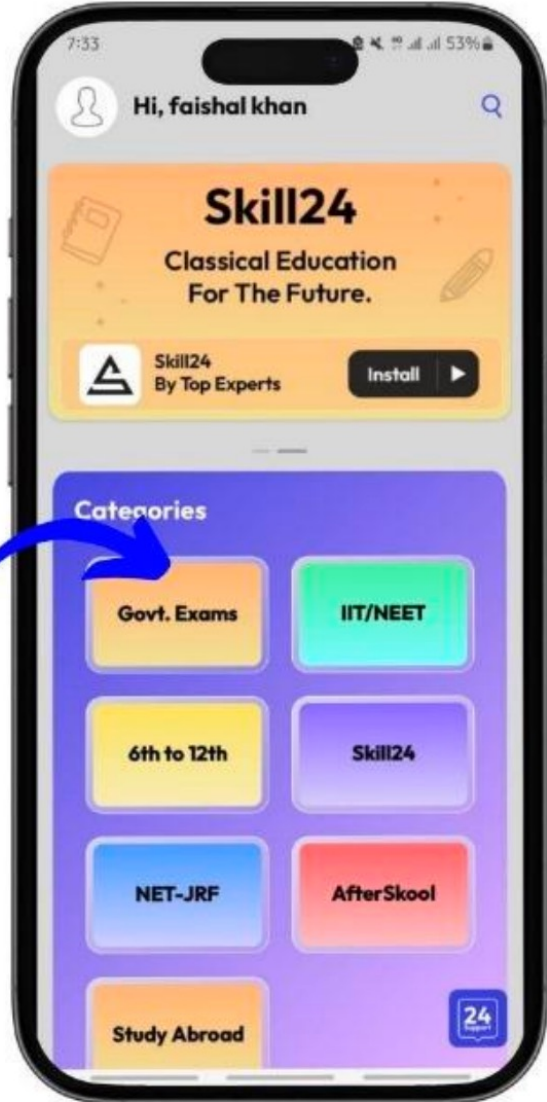
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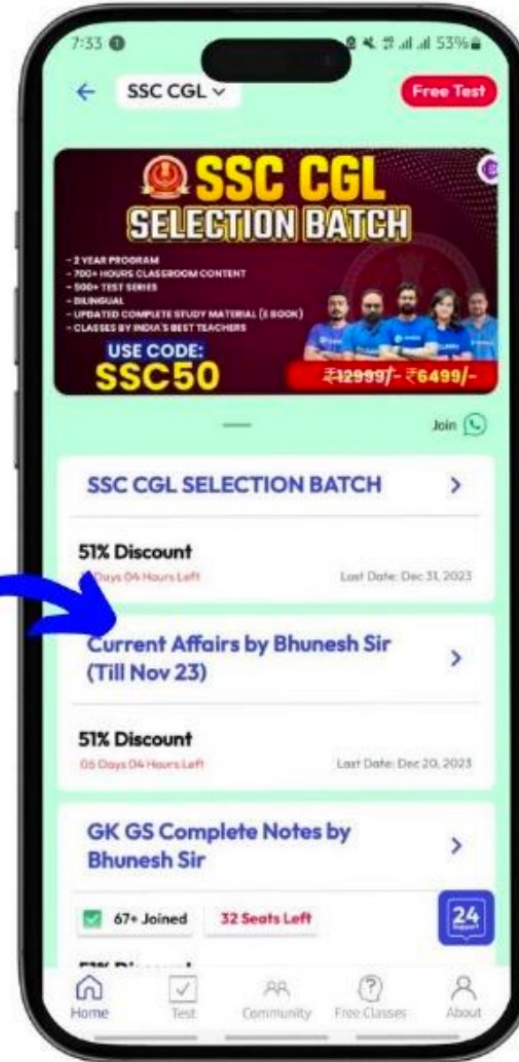
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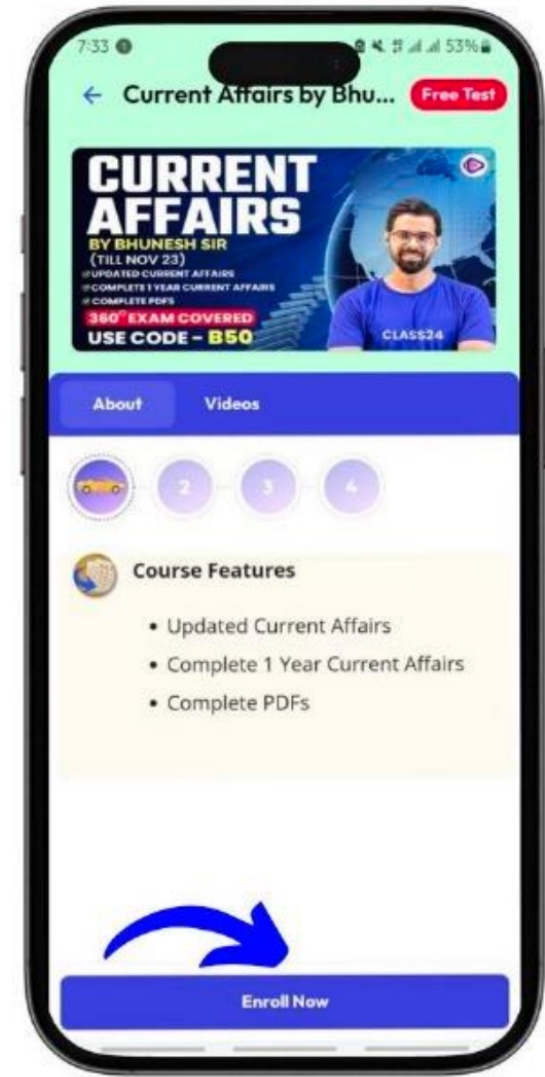
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IN BRIEF

Delhi MLA fund raised to ₹7 cr, says Bharadwaj

NEW DELHI
The Member of Legislative Assembly Local Area Development Scheme (MLAD) funds have been increased from ₹4 crore to ₹7 crore. Union Development Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj said in the Delhi Assembly on Friday. MLAD funds are allotted to legislators to carry out development projects in their constituencies. » Page 2

SC refuses to stay survey of Shani Idgah mosque

NEW DELHI
The Supreme Court on Friday refused to stay an Allahabad High Court order allowing a court-monitored survey of the Shani Idgah mosque in the Krishna Janmabhoomi temple in Mathura. A Bench headed by Justice Sanjay Kumar should not be expected to order a stay on the strength of an oral plea. » Page 9

Protests rock Parliament over security breach row

Both Houses adjourned till Monday as Opposition members continue stir over MPs' suspension, and seek statement from Shah; RS Chairman, LS Speaker reject their adjournment motion notices

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

A day after 14 Opposition members were suspended for disrupting Parliament proceedings, both the Houses were adjourned till Monday as protests continued over the issue of security breach. While the Lok Sabha barely functioned for a couple of minutes on Friday, the Rajya Sabha too did not take up any business motions, continued their protests as Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhanikhar and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla rejected the notices. When the Lok Sabha met at 11 a.m., the proceedings were chaired by BJP MP Rajender Agarwal instead of Mr. Om Birla. Al-



Issue escalates: Opposition MPs stage a protest at Makar Dwar on the Parliament premises in New Delhi on Friday. ANI

Lalit Jha was the 'mastermind' of the act, say police

NEW DELHI
Lalit Jha, who surrendered to the Delhi police on Thursday, has been described by the police as the alleged "mastermind" of the security breach in the Lok Sabha. He was produced in a court on Friday and sent to seven-day police custody. » PAGE 8

most immediately, Opposition members trooped into the well of the House, carrying placards and raising slogans against the government and demanded a statement from Home Minister Amit Shah over the security breach. The carrying of placards was in solidarity with their colleagues who were suspended for carrying the same. The Chair adjourned the House till 2 p.m. in less than a minute and then it was adjourned for the day soon after it met in the post-lunch session.

The function was held in front of the Albert Hall in the Ram Niwas Garden. Mr. Sharma, who was the BJP's State general secretary till recently, took charge of the State on the day he turned 56. Three stages were put up at the swearing-in ceremony to accommodate different groups. Over 50 Hindu priests and seers were seated at one stage, while

The Hindu Bureau
JAIPUR

Sanganer MLA Bhajanlal Sharma was sworn in as the new Chief Minister of Rajasthan at a high-profile ceremony on Friday, attended by thousands of BJP workers. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, several Union Ministers, and the CMs of BJP-ruled States were in attendance. Governor Kalraj Mishra administered the oath of office and secrecy to Mr. Sharma and Deputy Chief Ministers Diya Kumari and Prem Chand Bairwa.



Bhajanlal Sharma

The third stage was meant for the oath, where the Governor, Mr. Modi and the three leaders, who were to be sworn in, were seated. Saffron banners, posters, and hoardings, carrying pictures of Mr. Modi and details of Union government schemes as well as the BJP's "guarantees", were put up at the venue in large numbers. Thousands of BJP workers and supporters from all over the State waved the party's flags and raised slogans such as 'Jai Shri Ram' and 'Modi-Modi'. A group of party workers from Dausa district pro-

fusely praised the decision to appoint Mr. Sharma as the CM, saying that it would enable them to promote the BJP as a "party with a difference", which could pick a first-time MLA for the top post. "It is a transformation for Rajasthan... The next generation is taking over the reins," Kishore Fareek, one of the BJP workers, said. "The BJP's Bharatpur district unit vice-president Shor Singh said Mr. Sharma's appointment would encourage party workers at the grassroots level. "It is a clear signal that whoever works hard can become the CM. The BJP is the only party which recognises talent, dedication, and tireless work. Others are steeped in corruption and nepotism," Mr. Singh said.

Continued on page 8

Continued on page 4

Centre's endorsement shows we worked efficiently: Stalin

B. Kolappan
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Friday said the Central team's endorsement of the manner in which the administration handled Cyclone Mithrang and the Chennai floods, proved the State government's "efficient performance". In an interview with *The Hindu*, Mr. Stalin said the government would soon make public the report of the Thiruppuiguzh Committee on the long-term flood mitigation plans for Chennai and its surroundings. The government



M.K. Stalin

would also state the actions taken on the report and the status of the projects. "We are running an honest and transparent administration. We will release a report on measures taken to control flood in Chennai and its neighbouring areas and the expenditure involved," he said.

Asked if the government could have tackled the recent floods better, he said, "I always would like to do more for the people."

Updating the status of the flood mitigation projects, Mr. Stalin said the integrated stormwater drain (ISWD) project was completed for a length of 44.88 km along the Adyar and Cooum basin with ₹120 crore funding from the World Bank. Besides 50-km stormwater drain projects were implemented at a cost of ₹258 crore under Singara Chennai 2.0.

Interview » Page 9

India's exports dipped 2.83% in November

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

India's goods exports slipped back into contraction to drop 2.83% in November to \$33.9 billion, while imports fell by a sharper 4.33% to \$54.48 billion.

The trade deficit for November eased sharply beyond expectations to \$20.58 billion from the all-time high of \$29.91 billion recorded in October.

Exports had recorded only their second uptick this year in October.

Full Report » Page 11

Centre tells airports to curb expansion of retail outlets to reduce congestion

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

In a set of guiding principles established by the government, airports have been advised to curb the proliferation of retail outlets and lounges at airports if these impact their capacity to handle passengers. The Civil Aviation Ministry has also told airports to ensure that the retail shops do not obstruct the movement of passengers.



Terminals are often designed to force travellers to walk past duty-free outlets and other shops. FILE PHOTO

Terminal buildings are often designed to force travellers to walk past duty-free outlets and other shops from the security-check area to the boarding gates, instead of giving them access to a clear passage.

Terminal buildings are often designed to force travellers to walk past duty-free outlets and other shops from the security-check area to the boarding gates, instead of giving them access to a clear passage. The waiting lounges, shops, and office spaces have been demolished at

Delhi and Mumbai airports last winter to facilitate passenger movement. Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said, addressing a press conference on Friday. Preventive measures These are among the measures that airports were told to adopt to deal with

congestion during peak travel seasons, and come after the stampee-like situations witnessed across major airports last December. Another step that has been taken is the enhancement of airport infrastructure. For instance, the number of entry lanes at passenger terminals has risen to 312 across 16 air-

ports, recording 46% growth over the last year. The number of check-in counters and immigration counters has each gone up by 24% over the same period, while the stock of X-ray machines has risen by 37%.

The workforce of the Central Industrial Security Force deployed at airports has also grown 21%, from 20,487 to 24,733 personnel. From May 2022, passengers can expect to start seeing faster movement through security due to the planned installation of full-body scanners and advanced computer tomography X-ray machines that will mitigate the need to remove electronic items from hand baggage, said Zulfiquar Hassan, Director General of the Bureau of Civil Aviation.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY
Heartfelt Birthday wishes to our FORMER CHIEF MINISTER of Karnataka **SRI H.D KUMARASWAMY**
Our nation is witnessing the dedication & excellence with which is your contribution towards India's progress.
K. N. CHAKRAPANI
BJP Leader & President - Chakrapani Foundation (R) Bangalore North, Karnataka

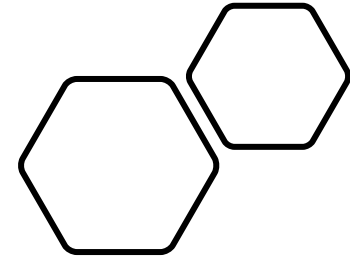
IN BRIEF



Delhi MLA fund raised to ₹7 cr., says Bharadwaj

NEW DELHI

The Member of Legislative Assembly Local Area Development Scheme (MLALAD) funds have been increased from ₹4 crore to ₹7 crore, Urban Development Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj said in the Delhi Assembly on Friday. MLALAD funds are allotted to legislators to carry out development projects in their constituencies. » **Page 2**



How does MPLADS work?



Members of Parliament

- recommend works based on local needs of the selected constituency



District Authorities (District Collectors)

- sanction eligible works
- select implementing agency
- responsible for implementation



Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) : Central Government

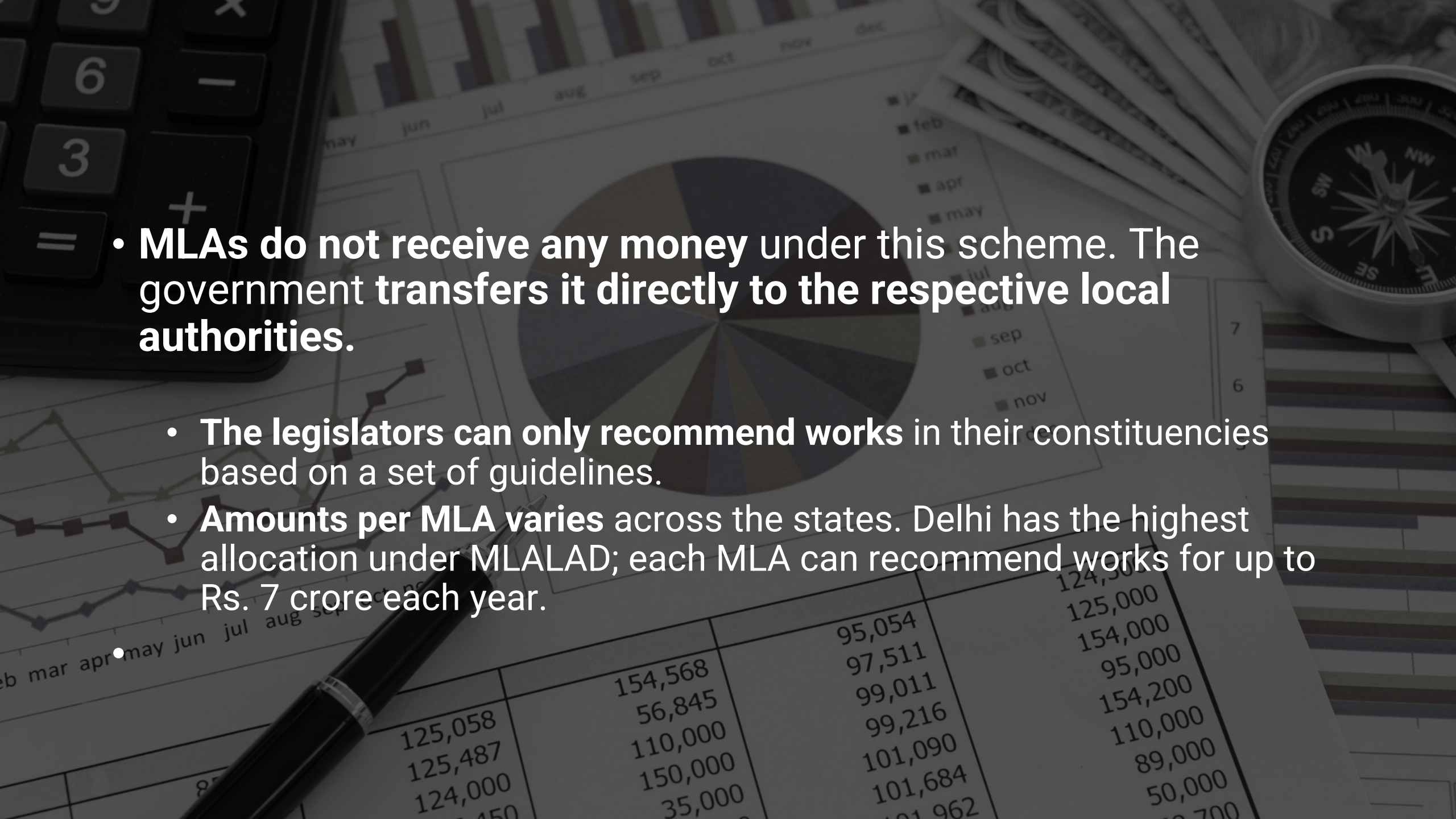
- formulates MPLADS Policy
- Releases ₹ 5 crore annually, in installments of ₹ 2.5 crore, directly to District Authority
- establishes monitoring mechanisms



Completed and Ongoing works listed at **DA's office** and on **www.mplads.gov.in**



Citizens can **file RTI** to know about status of works and funds

- 
- **MLAs do not receive any money** under this scheme. The government transfers it directly to the respective local authorities.
 - **The legislators can only recommend works** in their constituencies based on a set of guidelines.
 - **Amounts per MLA varies** across the states. Delhi has the highest allocation under MLALAD; each MLA can recommend works for up to Rs. 7 crore each year.

125,058	154,568	95,054	124,500
125,487	56,845	97,511	125,000
124,000	110,000	99,011	154,000
1450	150,000	99,216	95,000
	35,000	101,090	154,200
		101,684	110,000
		101,962	89,000
			50,000
			700

- **Lok Sabha Members** can recommend works within their constituencies and elected Members of **Rajya Sabha** can recommend works within the State they are elected from.
- **Nominated Members** of both the **Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha** can **recommend** works anywhere **in the country**.
- To create **durable assets of national priorities** viz. drinking water, primary education, public health, sanitation and roads, etc.

-

IN BRIEF



SC stays proceedings against Surjewala in 23-year-old case

The Supreme Court has stayed the proceedings against Congress leader Randeep Surjewala in a Varnama court in a 23-year-old case of damaging public property. A Bench headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud issued notice to Uttar Pradesh on Friday. Senior advocate A.M. Singhvi, for Mr. Surjewala, said it was a "political case". The case dates back to 2000 when Mr. Surjewala, then national president of the Youth Congress, was charged with creating a ruckus while protesting against the alleged false implication of Congress leaders in Sarvaswini scandal at Varanasi. In November, the top court stayed the non-bailable warrant issued against him in the case. The Bench listed the case on January 8.

Decide Sena camps' pleas by Jan. 10: SC to Rahul Narwekar

The Supreme Court on Friday gave the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly Speaker, Rahul Narwekar, till January 10 to deliver his judgment on disqualification petitions filed by the rival Sena factions of Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Uddhav Thackeray. On October 30, the Supreme Court had given Mr. Narwekar time till December 31. Appearing before a Bench headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said the disqualification proceedings would wrap up on December 20 and he reserved his judgment. He said the records spanned over 2.71 lakh pages, the respondents numbered 133 and there were 53 MLAs involved.

Netflix stops streaming uncut Indian films globally

Aroon Deep
NEW DELHI

Netflix has fully stopped streaming uncensored versions of Indian films around the world, according to a review of films released this year. The change in policy is significant for what was possibly the last streaming service in India that continued to show versions of Indian films before they went through the central Board of Film Certification (CBFC), which has increasingly been removing political references, particularly those that are disparaging to the dispensation in power, from films. The film *Bheed*, set in the pandemic, had voiceovers of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, as well as a host of other political references, a copy of the list of cuts from the censor board shows. These references were heavily

edited at the CBFC's behest. Netflix chose to stream this version globally, instead of the version that the filmmakers had prepared. Now, that template is being applied to all Indian films, even in ways that go against Netflix's internal policy on some forms of censorship. Films like *Leo*, starring actor Vijay, have been censored globally on Netflix, even though the film was released in overseas markets. *OMG 2*, a film about sex education that has been removed from Netflix, also had references to the dispensation in power, from films. The film *Bheed*, set in the pandemic, had voiceovers of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, as well as a host of other political references, a copy of the list of cuts from the censor board shows. These references were heavily

Virtual mobile number app Doosra told to halt operation

Aroon Deep
NEW DELHI

The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has issued an order, essentially halting the operation of Doosra app completely. Doosra sells secondary mobile numbers to users to hand out at shops or online platforms, where providing a number is mandatory but may leave people open to spam messages or calls. The firm requires users to provide ID documents to buy a "virtual mobile number", just like a telecom firm would. Describing the app, Aditya Vuchi, the founder, said that it is useful for customers who are forced to give out their phone number for making a purchase, or for women who don't want to hand out contact information to strangers. Virtual numbers are used by firms like Amazon and Uber when delivery agents or drivers call customers. Doosra's product is a virtual SMS inbox that filters out spam messages, while only allowing some incoming calls. It is unclear why the DoT has ordered the firm's operations to stop. A spokesperson for Vodafone Idea said the firm's hold on Doosra's services by the DoT was valid "until further orders".

CJ seeks report from Allahabad HC on woman judge's plight

The judge said she was sexually harassed by a district judge and his wife. She was denied fair hearing on her complaint.

Fit to width

NEW DELHI

Chief Justice India D.Y. Chandrachud has sought a report from the Allahabad High Court after a woman judge from Uttar Pradesh wrote an open letter to him, saying she has suffered the "personal humiliation" of being denied a fair hearing on her complaint of sexual harassment at workplace and has lost her will to live. The woman judge said she was sexually harassed by a district judge and his wife. She said, in the letter circulated on social media, that she had complained to the Chief Justice of the Allahabad High Court and Administrative Judge, but to no avail. The Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) of the High Court took six months and "a thousand emails" to even start an inquiry into her complaint filed in July. The woman judge said the inquiry "a farce and a sham" in which the witnesses were subordinates of the district judge in question. Her plea to the ICC to transfer the



The judge said that she had complained to the Chief Justice of the Allahabad HC and Administrative Judge but to no avail. GETTY IMAGES

district judge during the pendency of the inquiry was not allowed. She said the High Court took six months and "a thousand emails" to even start an inquiry into her complaint. The case had come up before a Bench of Justices Hrishikesh Roy and Sanjiv Mehta on December 13. The Bench had dismissed her case in "eight seconds". The enquiry will now be conducted with the district judge in control of all the witnesses. What justice will give to her, I am myself hopeful, I have no will to live anymore. I have been rendered into a walking corpse in the last year-and-half," the letter said. (Those in distress may contact Sanjivini Society for Mental Health suicide prevention helpline 011-40769002)

already passed which is pending approval of the Chief Justice of the Allahabad High Court. "I felt like my life, my dignity and my soul have been DISMISSED. It felt like a personal humiliation," the open letter read. "The enquiry will now be conducted with the district judge in control of all the witnesses. What justice will give to her, I am myself hopeful, I have no will to live anymore. I have been rendered into a walking corpse in the last year-and-half," the letter said. (Those in distress may contact Sanjivini Society for Mental Health suicide prevention helpline 011-40769002)

Help violence victims celebrate Christmas, SC tells Manipur govt.

Krishnaadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday asked the Manipur government to help victims of violence living in relief camps across the State to ring in Christmas, a festival of sharing and forgiveness. Appearing before a Bench headed by the Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud, Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, appearing for Manipur, initially sounded apprehensive, wondering if religious celebrations associated with one particular community may trigger a law and order problem which may repeat during the next months of ethnic violence and bloodshed in the State. Mr. Mehta said the State had helped celebrate Christmas without anybody inviting an order from the State. Senior advocate Huzefa Ahmad, who sought the State's intervention with the State to make arrangements for the safe observance of Christmas, had said his intention in making the request was not sensationalise. The hearing had begun with Mr. Ahmad telling the court that "Christmas was being celebrated and the State ought to make "arrangements for the people to congregate". Mr. Mehta, in

19 laid to rest in mass burial in Kangpokpi

The last rites of 19 people, including a seven-year-old boy, belonging to the Kuki-Zo community who were killed during the ethnic conflict in May, were performed in Kangpokpi district of Manipur on Friday. The burial was organised by the Committee on Tribal Unity. The 19 bodies among the 60 that were airlifted from two morgues in Imphal on Thursday.

turn, had advised caution. During the hearing, senior advocate Vibha Malik, appearing for the Justice Gita Mittal Committee appointed by the court to look into the case, was monitoring the rehabilitation of the State. She confirmed that "religious, non-religious buildings have suffered damage". In the hearing, the court directed the State to submit to the committee, in two weeks a comprehensive report identifying religious structures of all faiths which were damaged or destroyed by the violence. The Bench said the State should further apprise the committee of the steps taken to secure these places of worship.

High Court dismisses plea to transfer case against arrested ED officer to CBI

The Hindu Bureau
MADRAS

The Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court on Friday dismissed the petition that sought the transfer of the investigation into the bribery case, involving Director of Enforcement (ED) Officer Ankit Tiwari, to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). The officers in the Division Bench of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption (DVAC) officials recently on the charges of demanding and accepting a bribe amount. A Division Bench of Justices M. Sundar and R. Sakthivel dismissed the petition filed by J. Vivek of Madurai. The petitioner claimed that when a Government employee was involved in the malpractice, the competent authority to take action was the Central Vigilance Commission and the State had no role. He sought a CBI probe into the matter and also action against the "erring officials". During the course of the hearing, Advocate General Shanmugasundaram and State Public Prosecutor M. Mohamed Iqbal representing the State, submitted that the petition does not hold water in the light of well settled principles of law. The State submitted that it was a trap case and the DVAC, notified as a police station, had powers to conduct searches and investigations. No mala fide can be attributed to

the search, it was submitted. The court observed that Section 17 (Persons authorised to investigate) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, were set out and the offence involving the target as to whether it was a Central government officer or a State government officer. The State submitted that the Investigating Officer Ankit Tiwari, it was a trap case. It was held water in the light of well settled principles of law. The State submitted that it was a trap case and the DVAC, notified as a police station, had powers to conduct searches and investigations. No mala fide can be attributed to



Films like Leo have been censored globally on Netflix.

effectively hands the censor board indirect powers over what Indians see in films anywhere, even online, though its mandate is limited to cinemas and TV. On top of shielding the public from political references, it has also been applying censorship on references to prominent business personalities: the film *Jagan*, for instance, has a scene mentioning "Ambani land Adani", which the CBFC removed. Netflix is streaming the version without the names

mentioned. Netflix and other streaming services have reportedly been applying intense socio-political scrutiny on original series that they commission. These practices are likely a result of the fear of online mobs and police action for any politically outspoken content. The Screenwriters Association said in a statement that streaming services and the film industry have forced writers, in agreed-upon indemnity producers if there is a socio-political backlash on their work. Amazon Prime Video's head of originals, Aparna Purohit, had to face police summons after the 2021 political series *Tandav* and had to issue an apology and reference a stay on action against her in the Supreme Court. But licensed content has escaped such similar scrutiny, as most films go through the censor board, which is run by the Union

SUDOKU

8	2	1	7					
		9	1	8	4	2		
5				8				
		3	1		8			
9	1	8	9				1	
	1	6						2
6	1		3	6	3			
	9		2		6	3		

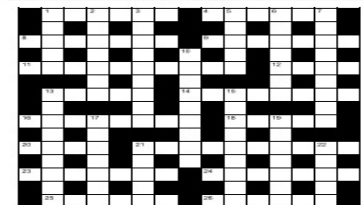
Solution to previous puzzle

9	4	2	1	6	8	5	1	3
3	2	1	6	3	4	7	8	5
6	7	5	3	2	8	1	4	9
8	1	4	5	9	6	8	3	7
7	3	9	8	5	1	2	6	4
4	8	7	1	6	5	3	9	2
2	5	3	8	7	4	9	6	1

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

9	4	2	1	6	8	5	1	3
3	2	1	6	3	4	7	8	5
6	7	5	3	2	8	1	4	9
8	1	4	5	9	6	8	3	7
7	3	9	8	5	1	2	6	4
4	8	7	1	6	5	3	9	2
2	5	3	8	7	4	9	6	1

THE CROSSWORD 13407



To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ <https://qr2o.page.link/gpvt>

- 13 Covers trials (5)
 - 14 Plane in Africa crashes over border of Rwanda, tragic at the outset (8)
 - 15 Hint: cutting sugar by 40%, gets dizzy and has a tick of sugar (8)
 - 16 Reliefed officer meeting criminal at bar (5)
 - 17 Guest unimpressed, complains about (6)
 - 18 Anxious husband trespasses bending steel bars (10)
 - 19 Leave for ashram... (7)
 - 20 Disparaging as sad divorcee losing independence (7)
 - 21 Perhaps one of you, will give nothing away for gaining one metal (6)
 - 22 Like Peru, Ecuador has original talking point (6)
- Down**
- 1 If upset lady enters inside, Messi often takes off (5)
 - 2 At the end of endless magicians lose weight and become reptiles (7)
 - 3 Newspaper is getting manuscripts on cells (5)
 - 4 Agent lost his head with performer (5)
 - 5 Lady Curie fastened without potassium and became more successful (7)
 - 6 Productive and fast after pressure, I almost complete (3)
 - 7 Assemblies reconvened to expel Luxembourg delegations (5)
 - 8 Noblemen besiege the French without end (9)
 - 9 Jubilation in house with kin (9)
 - 10 Sheila reneges in retreat constraining senior officer (7)
 - 11 Institution is firm on learners' league is evenly represented (7)
 - 12 Somehow able to skirt zone of fire (5)
 - 13 Sri Lanka - Spain, top players over time to be rested (5)

- Across**
- 1 Partner collapsed, down after losing margins (6)
 - 2 Say, Republicans invite everyone to run (6)
 - 3 In sleep, police officer laughs intermittently and meanders (7)
 - 4 Chained learner for top tents and hoarded (7)
 - 5 Most recent seen in recent broadcast by scientist (10)
 - 6 Enthusiastic Indian natives trade orders from sources (4)

FAITH
Significance of Thiruppavai

Andal's *Thiruppavai* is recited in Margashira because of the sacredness of the month. But *Thiruppavai* is so full of Vaishnavite thoughts that it must be read throughout the year. It is the first verse, Andal says Krishna's face is like the sun and the moon, said T.N. Aravamudachariar in a discourse. This seems contradictory, because the sun is associated with heat and the moon with coolness. The Lord is kindness personified to His devotees. But He is an avenging God to those who torment His bhaktas.

Vedanta Desika elaborates on this idea in *Kamaskatakam*, when he uses the words - "sata patala bheesha". Here, he describes the Lord's mercy in His Narayana avatar. He is full of fury, because of Hiranyakasipu's cruelty to Prahlada. But when His eyes alight on Prahlada, His karunya flows from them. Andal says that Krishna's foster father Nandagopa held a sharpened spear to protect his son because Krishna faced many dangers in infancy. Such love and concern for the Lord is evident in the case of the Azhvars also. Periyavazhar, who was fully cognisant of Lord Narayana's Supremacy, got carried away when he saw the Lord on Garuda. What a magnificent spectacle it was! What if someone were to cast evil eyes this Lord? And so, in a spontaneous outburst of love, he sang the *palandu* verses, praying that He be protected from evil eyes.

Virtual mobile number app Doosra told to halt operation

Aroon Deep

NEW DELHI

The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has issued an order, essentially halting the operations of Doosra app completely.

Doosra sells secondary mobile numbers to users to hand out at shops or online platforms, where providing a number is mandatory but may leave people open to spam messages or calls.

The firm requires users to provide ID documents to buy a “virtual mobile number”, just like a telecom firm would.

Describing the app, Aditya Vuchi, the founder, has said that it is useful for customers who are forced to give out their phone number for making a purchase, or for women who don't want to hand out contact information to strangers. Virtual numbers are used by firms like Amazon and Uber when delivery agents or drivers call customers.

Doosra's product is a virtual SMS inbox that filters out spam messages, while only allowing some incoming calls. It is unclear why the DoT has ordered the firm's operations to stop.

HELSINKI

NATO member Finland to grant U.S. access to 15 military bases



Finland will sign a defence agreement next week giving the U.S. access to 15 military bases in NATO's newest member...

DUBAI

Yemen's Houthis rebels hit cargo ship in latest Red Sea attack



Yemen's Houthis rebels struck the Liberia flagged cargo ship Al-Jawah, causing a fire on deck in the latest of a near-daily series of attacks...

CARACAS

Venezuela, Guyana agree not to 'use force' to settle land dispute



The Presidents of Venezuela and Guyana pledged not to resort to force to settle the long-simmering and recently reheated dispute over the oil-rich Essequibo region...

LONDON

Court rules Prince Harry is victim of phone hacking by Mirror Group



A U.K. judge ruled that Prince Harry was a victim of phone hacking by journalists working for Mirror Group Newspapers...

U.K., partners ask Israel to tackle settler violence

LONDON

Britain, the European Union and more than a dozen partner countries including Australia and Canada, called on Israel to take immediate steps to tackle settler violence...

U.S., Israel discuss timetable to scale back war in Gaza

War will take months, says U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan after meeting with Israeli officials...

Associated Press

The U.S. and Israel have discussed a timetable for scaling back intense combat operations in the war against Hamas...



Abbas gestures. Jake Sullivan meets Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in Ramallah in occupied West Bank on Friday.

U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan also met with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to discuss the besieged enclave's postwar future.

Including the transition from the high-intensity operations to more targeted operations.

Austin's visit He said he discussed a timetable with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Israel's War Cabinet, and that such conversations would continue during an upcoming visit by U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin.

Hungary blocks EU aid for Ukraine despite consensus on bloc membership talks

Agence France-Presse BRUSSELS

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban on Friday blocked 50 billion euros (\$55 billion) in EU aid for Ukraine...



Viktor Orban

what it deserves. Not half, then a quarter, but it must get the whole thing," Mr. Orban said.

The second day of the summit was expected to turn to the Israeli-Hamas war in Gaza...

Divided EU EU countries are divided between those backing calls for a ceasefire in Gaza — supported by the overwhelming majority of the UN General Assembly — and those supporting the stance of Israel...

The blockage from the Hungarian nationalist — Russia's best friend

China slams U.K., U.S. criticism of bounties on Hong Kong activists

Agence France-Presse BEIJING

China lashed out at Britain and the U.S. on Friday after they "condemned" Hong Kong police for offering bounties for information leading to the capture of five overseas activists.

The move was strongly condemned by Washington, while London called it "a threat to our democracy and fundamental human rights."

China said that the Hong Kong police force's desire to arrest the activists was "necessary and legitimate" on national security grounds...

Maldives will not renew agreement for joint hydrographic survey with India: top official

Megha Srinivasan COLOMBO

Hot on the heels of the Maldives' demand that Indian troops be removed from the island nation, the Cabinet has decided against renewing a 2019 MoU with India for hydrographic surveying...

the MoU, which is due to expire in 2025, will not be renewed. It's a decision by the Cabinet," Mr. Shalaby told The Hindu on Friday...

Some government critics mainly those part of the 'India Out' campaign led by former President Abdulla Yameen have been opposed to the initiative.

Meanwhile, asked if there was any update on President Muizzu's announce-

ment that India had "agreed" to his demand that Indian troops be drawn from the island nation, Mr. Shalaby said: "It is progressing."

Sport

Pakistan makes a steady start after debutant Jamal's six-for

PAKISTAN IN AUS

Agence France-Presse PERTH

Australian spinner Nathan Lyon moved to within three wickets of joining the elite 50-club on Friday as Pakistan dug deep to stay afloat on day two of the opening Test.

ENGLAND IN WI

Agence France-Presse BRISTOL

Brandon King scored an unbeaten 82 and skipper Ravi Bopara blasted a century to help England defeat Australia by 10 runs to take a commanding 2-0 lead in their best-of-five Twenty20 international series on Thursday.



King, AFP



King, AFP

for the tourists with 50 off 32 balls, but the Englishmen were always struggling to reach the required run-rate.

It's Knotty Chamer vs. Touch Of Grey

AGENCIJA ZA VEŠTAČENJE ZA RUKOMETNO ŠPORTOVANJE

Knotty Chamer vs. Touch Of Grey... The match was a closely fought affair, with both teams showing their strengths and weaknesses.

Touch Of Grey (5) Suraj 57. Knotty Chamer (2) Touch Of Grey... The game was characterized by tactical plays and individual brilliance.

Touch Of Grey (5) Suraj 57. Knotty Chamer (2) Touch Of Grey... The match ended in a narrow victory for Touch Of Grey.

Hungary blocks EU aid for Ukraine despite consensus on bloc membership talks

Agence France-Presse

BRUSSELS

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban on Friday blocked 50 billion euros (\$55 billion) in EU aid for Ukraine, after leaders side-stepped his opposition to agree to open talks with Ky-iv on joining the bloc.

A crunch summit in Brussels broke up after a day of wrangling as the Hungarian authoritarian leader refused to green-light funding to help prop up Ukraine's government over the next four years.

Mr. Orban called for un-blocking all of the still-frozen funds from the European Union for his country, before considering lifting his veto on further aid to Ukraine

"This is a great opportunity for Hungary to make it clear that it should get



Viktor Orban

what it deserves. Not half, then a quarter, but it must get the whole thing," Mr. Orban said.

"So we want to be treated fairly, and now there is a good chance that we can assert this," he added.

The wrangling injected a bitter note over the summit, a day after the leaders – minus Hungary – made the historic decision to open talks with Ukraine on it one day joining the bloc.

The second day of the summit was expected to turn to the Israeli-Hamas war in Gaza, and the search for a common EU position on it.

Divided EU

EU countries are divided between those backing calls for a ceasefire in Gaza – supported by the overwhelming majority of the UN General Assembly – and those supporting the stance of Israel and the U.S. that a ceasefire would bind Israel's hands as it tries to destroy Hamas.

With the issue of grants to Ukraine blocked by Hungary, the 26 other EU leaders have decided to hold a fresh meeting early next year to try to thrash out an agreement.

The blockage from the Hungarian nationalist – Russia's best friend





MASTER OF ALL TRADES Deepthi becomes second Indian to get fifty-fifer combo in a Test



EMMANUJAL YOGINI

After scoring a fluent 110 ball 67, Deepthi Sharma helped India end their two in a commanding position. She then finished on debut on day one of the Test against England, reportedly sustained a hairline fracture on her left hand. She did not take the field with Harleen Deol stepping in as a substitute and Vasika Ithatia promoted up the order in her place.

INJURED Shubha suffers hairline fracture after dream debut



SPORTSPICS/BCCI

India all-rounder Shubha Satheshwari, who got her international career off to a dream start by scoring a half century on debut on day one of the Test against England, reportedly sustained a hairline fracture on her left hand. She did not take the field with Harleen Deol stepping in as a substitute and Vasika Ithatia promoted up the order in her place.

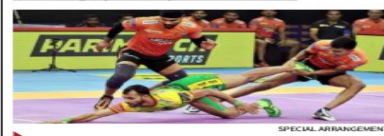
RARE HONOUR To honour Dhoni's contribution to Indian cricket, No. 7 jersey retired



AP

The Board of Control for Cricket in India has decided to 'retire' World Cup-winning captain M.S. Dhoni's number 7 jersey. He was one of the legendary players. His contribution to Indian as well as world cricket is immense. To honour his contribution, the decision to retire number seven has been taken by the BCCI," said vice-president Rajeev Shukla.

HUMDINGER U Mumba pips Patna Pirates in a topsy-turvy encounter



SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Ammohammad Zafardaneh put up an inspiring performance to help U Mumba clinch a thrilling 42-40 win over Patna Pirates in the Pro Kabaddi League in Pune on Friday. The Iranian raider netched up 13 points, in the second match, Haryana Steelers registered a 46-39 win over Puneii Falcons.

England stupefied by India's spin sorcery

Deepthi, with a five-for, spins out the visitors for 136; Sneh chips in with two wickets; the hosts sell the advantage to 478 at the end of day two against the physically and mentally exhausted visitors

ENGLAND IN INDIA

LAZYVILLA NAXI MUMBAI

A hapless response to spin saw England batting for a total of just three hours and 30 minutes, eventually bowled out for 136 on day two of the one-off Test against India at the D.Y. Patil Stadium here on Friday. With England's decision to go with the extra bowler, but choosing a pace option over spin backing, it was surprising to see Knight not bowl himself. With the wicket showing increasing signs of assistance for spin bowling, India will hope to inflate its 478-run lead a little more and give its bowlers the opportunity to hunt for the win. England will need a drastic course correction if it is to save, or more impressively win, its milestone 100th Test match.

timed with its brink approach to scoring at over four runs an over, made clear when Smriti Mandhana got off the mark with a six over long on. England chose to give its spinners 14 of the 42 overs bowled and Dean and Ecclestone shared six wickets between them, despite continuing to bat a tad expensive. Skipper Harmanpreet and Pooja Vastrakar ended the day unscathed, with Harman snuffing her maiden Test fifty. With England's decision to go with the extra bowler, but choosing a pace option over spin backing, it was surprising to see Knight not bowl himself. With the wicket showing increasing signs of assistance for spin bowling, India will hope to inflate its 478-run lead a little more and give its bowlers the opportunity to hunt for the win. England will need a drastic course correction if it is to save, or more impressively win, its milestone 100th Test match.

Opens Sophia Dunkley and Tammy Beaumont looked all sorts of uncomfortable when facing a pace-spin opening salvo from the India. Renuka Singh cramped Dunkley for room and struck her stumps, ending with four dismissals in four attempts. Knight, the out of form opener, Knight, Wyatt and Jones fell cheaply with Natalie Sciver-Burnt once again thrust with rescue duties. She eventually fell to a peach of a delivery from Sneh Rana with turned sharply into the stumps. Deepthi Sharma got just a little over five overs to bowl, but took five key wickets to bring the curtains down on the English response in three and a half hours. India chose not to enforce the follow on and con-

Bangladesh beats India; UAE stuns Pakistan

Press Trust of India DUBAI

Ariful Islam (94) and left-arm pacer Masifur Mirza (four for 41) were instrumental in Bangladesh's crucial four-wicket win over India in the semifinal of the U-19 Asia Cup on Friday. UAE stunned Pakistan by 11 runs to enter the final.

SPORTS BUREAU CHENNAI

D. Gukesh managed to draw with Levon Aronian in the first round of the Chennai Grand Prix chess championship at The Leela Palace hotel here on Friday. Aronian, who played white, said he was disappointed with the result and that he felt jetlagged during the match. "I remembered that I had planned something but during the game I missed up some moves. I think I decided to play the safest way at some point.

SCOREBOARD

India — 1st innings: Smriti Mandhana b Bell 17 (20), 26(6), 15-84-4, Dean 19-1-67-1, Ecclestone 26-3-5-91-3
England — 1st innings: Tammy Beaumont run out 10 (35), 14(6), 20(6), 24(6), Renuka Singh b Renuka 11 (20), 26(6), Heather Knight lbw b Pooja 11 (23), 24(6), Nat Sciver-Burnt b Sneh 5(7), 20(6), Dani Wyatt c Jemimah b Deepthi 13 (24), 40(6), Amy Jones c Shafiq b Deepthi 12 (26), 26(6), Sophie Ecclestone b Deepthi 0 (2), Charlie Dean lbw b Sneh 0 (2), Kate Cross c & b Deepthi 1 (8), Lauren Hiller b Deepthi 5 (7), 24(6), Lauren Bell (not out) 0 (2), Extras (lb+nb): 8; Total (9) 35-3 overs: 136.
Fall of wickets: 1-13 (Dunkley, 2-31, 2-38 (Knight, 7-31, 7-36 (Beaumont, 18-51, 4-108 (Wyatt, 25-21, 5-126 (Jones, 29-41, 6-126 (Ecclestone, 29-5), 7-130 (Sciver-Burnt, 30-3), 8-131 (Dean, 32-4), 9-135 (Cross, 33-4).

INDIA BOWLING:

Renuka 9-1-32-1, Sneh 6-0-29-2, Pooja 9-1-39-1, Rajeshwari 6-0-26-0, Deepthi 5-3-4-7-5.
India — 2nd innings: Shafiq c Ecclestone b Dean 33 (35), 24(6), 20(6), 24(6), Sciver-Burnt c Beaumont b Ecclestone 26 (28), 24(6), 24(6), Jemimah c 9 (24), 24(6), Sneh b Dean 27 (28), 24(6), Harmanpreet (batting) 44 (67), 54(6), Deepthi lbw Dean 20 (18), 24(6), Sneh b Dean 0 (2), Sophie Ecclestone b Deepthi 0 (2), Charlie Dean lbw b Sneh 0 (2), (b-21); 1-0; Total for six wickets in 42 overs: 186.
Fall of wickets: 1-61 (Smriti, 12-51, 2-71 (Shafiq, 13-31, 3-77 (Yastika, 16-31, 4-104 (Jemimah, 23-61, 5-133 (Knight, 27-41), 6-133 (Wyatt, 27-5).
England bowling: Bell 3-1-6-0, Ecclestone 15-2-76-2, Dean 12-3-68-4, Cross 5-0-13-0, Hiller 2-0-13-0.

Sneh and I planned where to bowl: Deepthi



LAVANYA L. NAXI MUMBAI

In the run-up to the India-England Test, the host skipper Harmanpreet Kaur said, "I do not expect the wicket to turn while her spinner Knight felt the spinners would thrive over the course of the match."

"The surface is already taking spin, but it is not consistent and that is the hardest bit about it," said Natalie Sciver-Burnt here on Friday.

Deepthi Sharma and Sneh Rana proved to be the thorns in England's flesh. "Deepthi's varying lengths made things hard with the batters not knowing whether to come forward or back, said Sciver-Burnt.

"During the innings break, we saw patches on the wicket and my idea was to bowl into those patches which would give us some assistance," said Deepthi, ecstatic about her maiden Test five-for.

"Bowling partnerships are as important as batting partnerships because Sneh was bowling before me. So we were talking about the areas to bowl in and the flight we would get," she added.

The conditions suited the spinners a bit, says Kuldeep

INDIA IN SA

Press Trust of India JOHANNESBURG

Surprised by the spin on offer during the third T20I at The Wanderers here, Kuldeep Yadav said the South African wickets, generally known for their pace and bounce, are also suiting spinners in the ongoing tour.

Kuldeep had a perfect 29th birthday on Thursday as he became only the second Indian bowler to pick up multiple five-wicket hauls in T20Is after Bhuvneshwar Kumar.

"It turned out to be a special day. I have never thought about taking five wickets. I just wanted the team to win," Kuldeep said.

Hardik replaces Rohit as Mumbai Indians captain

Sports Bureau MUMBAI

Hardik Pandya has replaced Rohit Sharma as the skipper of Mumbai Indians. The official statement issued by the franchise referred to the move as a "significant leadership transition."

"It is part of legacy building and staying true to the MI philosophy of being future-ready," Mahela Jayawardene, Global Head of Performance of MI, stated. Ever since Hardik was traded into Mumbai Indians for an undisclosed sum last month, there were whispers that he was likely to take over as the MI

India-South Africa T20I series stats

Batting	Runs	Wickets	SR	100s/50s	
Suryakumar	2	156	100	109/56	1/1
Rohit	2	82	68*	107/34	0/1
Jaiswal	2	60	60	136/36	0/1
Hardicks	2	57	49	142/50	0/0

Bowling	Runs	Overs	Wickets	Wkt	Econ
Kuldeep	5.5	5.17	7.27	7.27	7.27
Coetzee	1	3.3	3	3/32	9.14
Mukesh	2	5.0	3	2/34	11.00
Williams	2	7.0	3	2/46	11.14

South Africa by 106 runs to help India finish the three-match T20I series tied 1-1.

"The wicket was very good for the spinners. The good thing about these wickets are that the ball comes very quickly after it is bowled and the conditions too suited the spinners a bit."

Hardik replaces Rohit as Mumbai Indians captain



Hardik Pandya, MUMBAI INDIANS

MI titles so far. Under Rohit's leadership, India lost the World Cup final to Australia last month. In 2023, Titans was elevated as India's T20 captain last year on the back of a triumphant IPL debut for Gujarat Titans in IPL 2022. In 2023, Titans lost the final against Chennai Super Kings. The premier all-rounder has been missing from action since he was injured during the World Cup tie against Bangladesh on October 19. He is still an up certainty to feature in the three T20Is at home against Afghanistan, India's last T20I assignment ahead of the IPL and the T20 World Cup in June.

Gukesh draws with Aronian; Harikrishna outwits Arjun

CHESS

Sports Bureau CHENNAI

D. Gukesh managed to draw with Levon Aronian in the first round of the Chennai Grand Prix chess championship at The Leela Palace hotel here on Friday. Aronian, who played white, said he was disappointed with the result and that he felt jetlagged during the match. "I remembered that I had planned something but during the game I missed up some moves. I think I decided to play the safest way at some point.

Mavericks move to the top; Brigade pull down Wizards

TPL

Sports Bureau PUNE

Ramkumar Ramanathan played his part brilliantly to help Bengaluru SG Mavericks clinch a 46-34 victory over Gujarat Panthers in the league Premier League on Friday. Ramkumar beat Samit Nagal 14-6 and combined with Vishnu Vardhan to win 3-1 in a tough game. Sasikumar 13-7 in doubles. Vishnu also won his match in doubles with Arina who had stumbled to a 8-12 start in the women's singles against Ekaterina Yashina.



Ramkumar Ramanathan, SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Bengaluru is on top of the table with 173 points.

The results: Delhi Binny's Brigade bt

Sports Bureau GUWAHATI

NorthEast United FC succumbed to a 1-3 loss against Mohun Bagan Super Giant in an ISL clash on Friday.

NEUFC took the lead in the fourth minute after Phalguni Singh but Bagan equalised 10 minutes later through Deepak Tangri. Anirudh Thapa's cross inside the box found Armanud Sadiku inside the box, who cushioned his header to Jason Cummings.

The Australian was in the fight place at the right time. NEUFC was down to 10 men after Tondomba Singh scored the second yellow. The result: NEUFC 1 (Phalguni) lost to Mohun Bagan 3 (Tangri 14, Cummings 28, Subhashish 73).

RARE HONOUR

To honour Dhoni's contribution to Indian cricket, No. 7 jersey retired



AP

▲ The Board of Control for Cricket in India has decided to 'retire' World Cup-winning captain M.S. Dhoni's iconic No.7 jersey. "He is a legendary player. His contribution to Indian as well as world cricket is immense. To honour his contribution, the decision to retire number seven has been taken by the BCCI," said vice-president Rajeev Shukla.

DISPUTED MATHURA SITE SC declines to stay HC order for Shahi Idgah complex survey

Not at this stage, come if there is any adverse order: Bench to mosque panel

ANANTHAKRISHNAN G
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 15

THE SUPREME COURT Friday declined to stay the Allahabad High Court order allowing an application for an inspection of the Shahi Idgah mosque complex in Mathura by a court-appointed commissioner.

Hindu petitioners contend that the mosque was built on the Krishna jansasthan, the birthplace of Lord Krishna.

Muslim litigants maintain that the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991 bars changing the character of any place of worship as it existed on August 15, 1947.

"At this stage, we will not stay anything. Let him continue. If any adverse order is passed, you can come," Justice Sanjay Kishan, presiding over a two-judge bench, told Senior Advocate Huzefa Ahmadi who appeared for the Covanand Management Trust Shahi Masjid Idgah, that approached the Supreme Court against the order passed Thursday by Justice Mayank Kumar Jain of the Allahabad High Court.



The Shahi Idgah mosque and the Krishna Janmabhoomi temple in Mathura. (PTI)

Ahmedi pointed out that the Supreme Court is scheduled to hear the mosque committee's plea challenging the Allahabad High Court order permitting all petitions in connection with the Mathura dispute to itself, and that the High Court in the meanwhile had passed an interlocutory order allowing the appointment of the commissioner.

"When Your Lordships are due to hear these matters on January 8, the High Court should not proceed with these interlocutory orders. It will have far-reaching consequences and is expected to continue when Parliament meets Monday as Opposition leaders said they will stick to their demand and expressed solidarity with the 14 MPs who were suspended Thursday for the rest of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



RAJASTHAN'S NEW CM TAKES OATH

Prime Minister Narendra Modi with newly elected Rajasthan CM Bhajan Lal Sharma, Deputy CMs Diya Kumari and Prem Chand Bairwa and Governor Kalraj Mishra at the swearing-in ceremony in Jaipur on Friday. (Sanku Jani/Ansa)

INDIA BLOC BACKS 14 MPs SUSPENDED FOR PROTESTS Opp insists on Shah statement on breach, stalls House proceedings

LIZ MATHEW
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 15

PROCEEDINGS IN Parliament were washed out for the second consecutive day Friday as Opposition parties continued to hold protests over Wednesday's House security breach, insisting on a statement from Union Home Minister Amit Shah and a discussion in both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.

With the government showing no signs of relenting, the deadlock is expected to continue when Parliament meets Monday as Opposition leaders said they will stick to their demand and expressed solidarity with the 14 MPs who were suspended Thursday for the rest of



Congress leader Sonia Gandhi with DMK's Kanimozhi and other suspended MPs at Parliament House on Friday. (PTI)

the winter session.

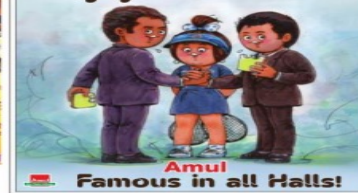
The tone for the Friday's protest was set at the meeting of the Opposition INDIA bloc in the

morning before the House rose. According to sources, DMK leader T. R. Baalu said that the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



A Vijay for Leander



AMUL
Famous in all Halls!

REPORT, PAGE 6

ALLEGED PLOT TO KILL PANNUN

Gupta's arrest in Prague illegal, his extradition to US unsafe: Kin to SC Court agrees to hear plea seeking Centre's intervention on January 4

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 15

THE SUPREME COURT agreed Friday to take up on January 4 next year a petition filed by the family of Nishit Gupta — who is accused by US authorities of plotting to kill Khalistan separatist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun — seeking directions to the Centre to intervene in the extradition proceedings pending against him in Czech Republic, where he is currently under detention.

The plea said that since June 30 this year, Gupta "has been identified only as Mr X" — contended that Gupta, 52, "has no roots in the US" and questioned "the veracity of the narrative presented in the second unsealed superseding indictment" dated November 29 filed before a US District Court. It underscored "the absurdity of the notion that the Indian government would engage him in alleged covert operations and assassinations on US soil when he has no connections or business in the country".

The plea said that since June 30 this year, Gupta "has been identified only as Mr X" — contended that Gupta, 52, "has no roots in the US" and questioned "the veracity of the narrative presented in the second unsealed superseding indictment" dated November 29 filed before a US District Court. It underscored "the absurdity of the notion that the Indian government would engage him in alleged covert operations and assassinations on US soil when he has no connections or business in the country".

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

BUSINESS AS USUAL
By UNNY

With the new kitchen, they could've built an outdoor.

EXPRESS NETWORK

U.P. BJP MLA GETS 25 YEARS' JAIL FOR RAPING MINOR
PAGE 8

THE WORLD

U.S. PUSHES ISRAEL TO SCALE DOWN IN GAZA AS TOLL RISES

TO KILLED IN MILITANT ATTACKS ON POLICE, ARMY IN PAKISTAN

United we screen: Punjabi movies make a splash in theatres across the border

PAGE 1
ANCHOR

KAMALDEEP SINGH BRAR
AMRITSAR, DECEMBER 15

EARLIER THIS year, the third instalment of a Punjabi film franchise ended up being a runaway hit in Pakistan. Carry on Jatta 2, starring Indian actors Gippy Grewal and Sonam Bajwa, reportedly grossed Rs 75 crore in Pakistani currency in the first four days of its release over the extended Eid weekend in June.



A Punjabi movie poster is displayed at a multiplex cinema hall in Lahore.

First in India: Delhi airport set to get body, CTX scanners by May

SUKALP SHARMA
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 15

FULL-BODY SCANNERS and computer tomography X-ray (CTX) scanners, awaited for long, are likely to be installed by May 2024 at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport, according to Bureau, Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) Director General Zulfikar Hasan.

The scanners, which are already in place at numerous airports globally, allow faster and

rigorous screening of passengers than metal detectors and manual frisking. CTX scanners are used to screen cabin or carry-on baggage and do not require passengers to segregate electronic devices and liquids separately for screening. Together, the two machines are expected to reduce time taken in passengers' security check before departure, which is likely to play a part in easing congestion and wait time at busy airports.

Earlier this year, the BCAS

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Justice Kaul signs off: If judges are not bold, can't expect others in admin to be

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 15

UNDERLINING THE need for judges to be bold, Supreme Court judge Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul, who retires later this month, said Friday that if they with their constitutional protection are not able to be so, they cannot expect other parts of the administration to do so.

"It is my belief that boldness of the judge is a very important factor. If, with the constitutional protection which we have, we are not able to exhibit this, we



Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul shares the ceremonial bench with CJ D Y Chandrachud on his last working day on Friday.

cannot expect other parts of the administration to do so," Justice Kaul said, sharing the ceremonial bench with Chief Justice of

India D Y Chandrachud and Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Dubai Duty Free

Adding a surprising touch to your travels.

Celebrate our four decades of retail service at Dubai Duty Free. Since the start of our journey in 1983, we've aimed to be a world-class shopping destination offering a first-class customer service and a wide range of exceptional products. What's kept us excited over 40 years? Our dedication to surprising you at every turn.

40th anniversary 1983-2023

Full of surprises.

Iran announces visa-free travel for Indians

DIVYAA

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 15

IRAN HAS announced that it was lifting visa requirements for citizens of India as well as 32 other countries — being an addition to several other countries that have recently announced visa-free travel for Indian nationals.

This move is aimed at boosting tourism with more visitors from across the world, said Ezzatollah Zarghami, Iranian minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, following a cabinet meeting on Wednesday.

This decision aims at showcasing Iran's commitment to global interaction, said Zarghami, adding, "Iran aims to counter negative perceptions and rumours with this move, while combating the phenomenon of 'Iranophobia perpetuated by the global arrogance system'."

Thirty-two other countries in Iran's visa-free travel list include Russia, UAE, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Lebanon, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Mauritania, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Mauritius, Seychelles, Indonesia, Darussalam, Japan, Singapore, Cambodia, Malaysia, Vietnam,

Brazil, Peru, Cuba, Mexico, Venezuela, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Croatia, and Belarus.

Earlier, Iran had lifted visa requirements for the citizens of Türkiye, Azerbaijan, Oman, China, Armenia, Lebanon, and Syria.

Regular flights to Saudi Arabia for Umrah

According to the latest statistics, the total number of tourists in Iran reached 4.4 million, during the first eight months of the current Iranian year (beginning March 21) — an increase of 48.5 per cent from the same period

last year.

Zarghami also said that his Ministry had proposed a visa-free travel for 60 countries, which was not approved completely.

As per Iranian media reports, its citizens will be able to travel to Saudi Arabia for Umrah through "regular flights", starting December 19. Due to this, Iranians would be able to perform Umrah in Saudi Arabia for the first time in eight years — an improvement in relations between the two countries.

FULL REPORT ON
www.indianexpress.com

Ola's Aggarwal launches Krutrim, India's answer to ChatGPT, Bard

AI model can generate text in 10 Indian languages

JATIN GROVER
New Delhi, December 15

OLA CO-FOUNDER AND CEO Bhavish Aggarwal on Friday unveiled Krutrim, a 'made in India' large language model (LLM) and generative artificial intelligence (AI) platform, on the lines of OpenAI's ChatGPT and Google's Bard.

The platform, owned and developed by Krutrim Si Designs, the AI venture of Aggarwal, is trained on 2 trillion tokens or pieces of textual information, having the largest representation of Indian data.

Krutrim, which means 'artificial' in Sanskrit, will come in two models — a base model and a Pro. Just like ChatGPT, the current basic version of Krutrim is capable of answering people's prompt or query. It can understand 22 Indian languages and

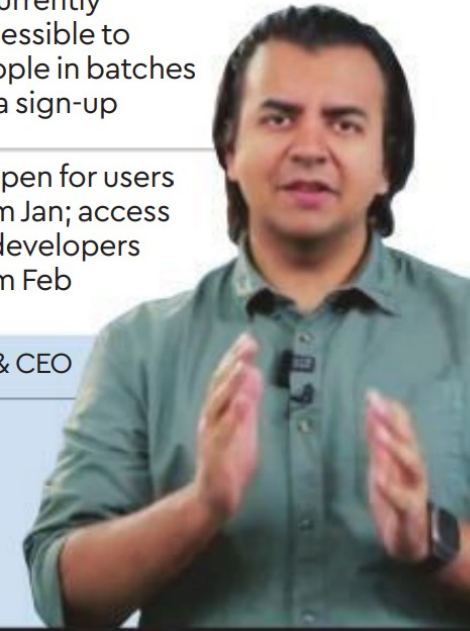
INDIA'S OWN AI

■ Krutrim, 'artificial' in Sanskrit, to come in two models — base and Pro

■ Can understand **22** Indian languages and generate text in 10

■ Currently accessible to people in batches on a sign-up

■ Open for users from Jan; access to developers from Feb



BHAVISH AGGARWAL, OLA CO-FOUNDER & CEO

INDIA-FIRST AI MODEL SHOULD BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND THE UNIQUENESS AND THE RIGHT CULTURAL CONTEXT

generate text in 10 Indian languages, including Marathi, Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, Kannada, Telugu, Odia, Gujarati, and Malayalam. Krutrim Pro, which is a larger model for solving complex problems, will be launched by the company in the

January-March quarter.

Currently, Krutrim is accessible to people in batches on a sign-up and the company will open it for all users by January.

Continued on Page 11

The jury is out on T10 cricket in India

ALOKANANDA
CHAKRABORTY &
AKANKSHA NAGAR

New Delhi/Mumbai,
December 15

THE NEWS OF another cricket league, shorter than the shortest format of cricket currently — the 20-over Indian Premier League (IPL) — has evoked mixed response from advertisers and media experts. While the whole idea is still in the ‘pre-planning’ stage, some media reports suggested that the new T10 league might be kicked off as early as September 2024 and that BCCI secretary Jay Shah is already working on the nitty-gritty of the proposed league.

“There is never too much cricket in India,” says Vivek Gupta, managing director (research), Ipsos India. Gupta says a shorter format implies quicker results so there is no question of viewer fatigue set-

TOO MUCH CRICKET?

■ Experts believe there is no question of viewer fatigue in a shorter format



■ It might give an opportunity to regional/smaller advertisers

■ Advertisers don't want to cannibalise the GEC ad pool

■ However, some feel the overall ad pie may not grow with a new league

ting in. “I would call it the sachet version of cricket for viewers,” he says. Ergo, there will be no dearth of advertisers.

If it takes off, the new league will come at a time when the IPL has already secured itself as a benchmark of viewership and valuation. A recent Brand Finance report said the 16-year-old IPL is already a decacorn with a valuation of around

\$10.7 billion. IPL's television broadcaster Disney Star had said after the conclusion of this year's tournament that the 2023 edition was its biggest season ever, registering over half a billion viewers. JioCinema, the official streaming partner, said a record 449 million viewers tuned in on the OTT platform for coverage.

Some big advertisers on cricket are gung-ho about a new

cricket property. “There would be greater interest and excitement from advertisers for this property because it's cricket, a sport that everyone loves, and also because it will be in a shorter format. It might give an opportunity to regional/smaller advertisers to also advertise during the league,” says Krishnarao Buddha, senior category head, marketing, Parle Products, the maker of Parle-G, Hide & Seek, and KrackJack biscuits. The brand is a big spender on IPL on television because cricket is “tried and tested” and TV offers the benefit of “co-viewing”.

Others are not so sure. Profitability of general entertainment channels (GEC) is higher than sports/cricket channels and they wouldn't want to cannibalise the GEC ad pool, they argue. So, much will depend on “how creatively the league is organised, who the broadcast platforms are and what the

advertising rates are like”, says a sports broadcaster.

The moot question is, will advertisers bite? Cricket is already a significant percentage of India's sports ad expenditure. Media planners say close to 80% of ₹16,000 crore spent on sports in 2023 went into cricket, across formats for both men's and women's games. “The overall ad pie is unlikely to grow because of one more event. Yes, some money will get reallocated from one property to another,” says a Mumbai-based brand marketer and big spender on sports properties on television.

Don't compare it with IPL though, warn experts. “The organisers really have to think creatively this time, with IPL well entrenched in the entertainment space,” he says. One thing that the league organisers should do is to build excitement around it. A big bang launch can help, said Ipsos' Gupta.

A blurred background of a park with people and trees, and a colorful plaid blanket in the foreground.

INS Tarmugli

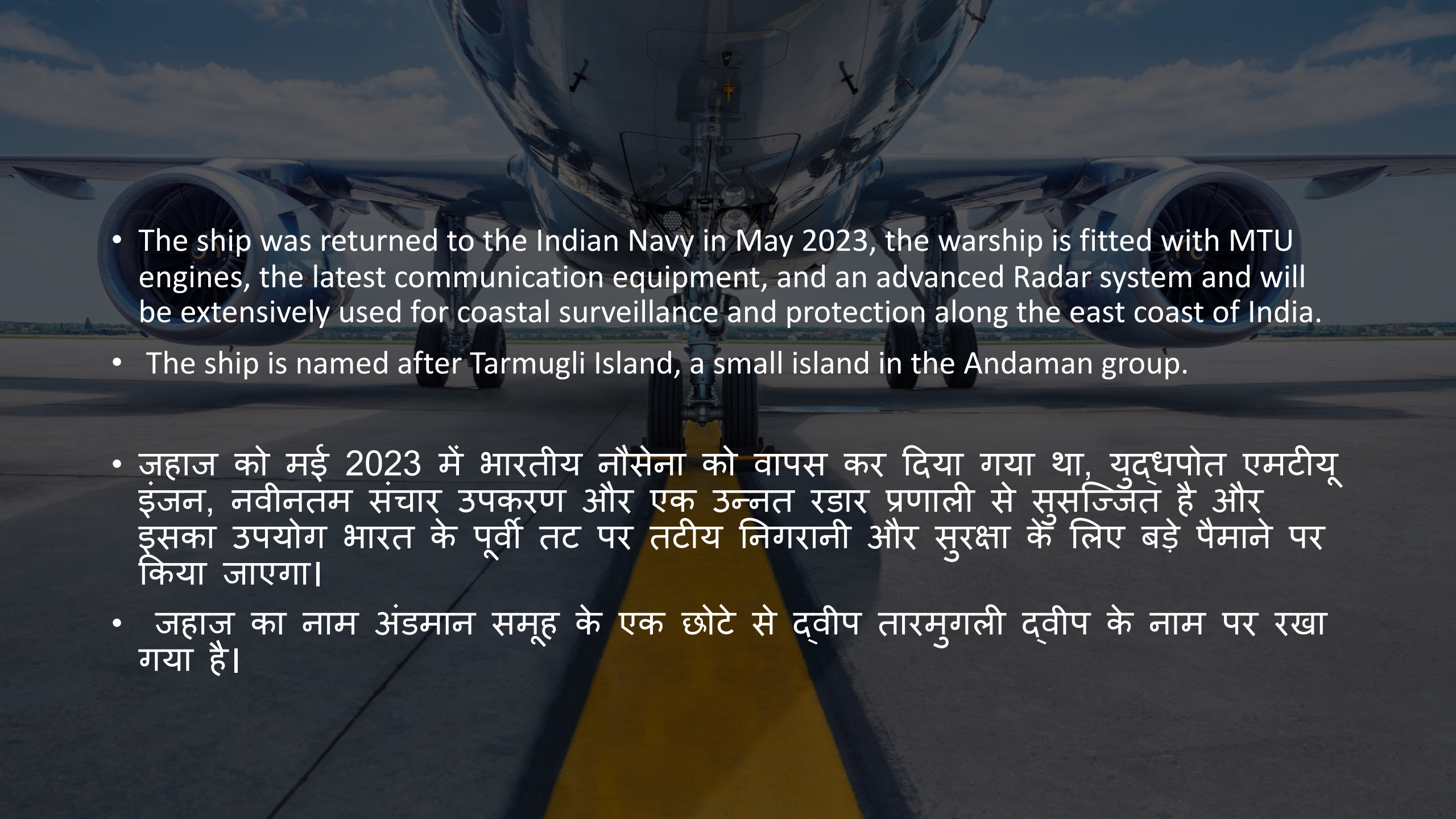


- The Indian Navy recently commissioned INS Tarmugli, a fast attack craft (FAC), showcasing maritime diplomacy and strength.

- The ship was commissioned in the Indian Navy as INS Tillanchang, a Trinkat Class ship, was in active service till 2006, and thereafter gifted to the Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF) government of India in 2006 as part of diplomatic outreach in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

- भारतीय नौसेना ने हाल ही में समुद्री कटनीति और ताकत का प्रदर्शन करते हुए एक फास्ट अटैक क्राफ्ट (एफएसी) आईएनएस त्रमुग्ली को चालू किया है।

- इस जहाज को भारतीय नौसेना में आईएनएस टिलंचांग के रूप में शामिल किया गया था, जो एक ट्रिंकट क्लास जहाज था, जो 2006 तक सक्रिय सेवा में था, और उसके बाद 2006 में हिंद महासागर में राजनयिक आउटरीच के हिस्से के रूप में भारत की मालदीव राष्ट्रीय रक्षा बल (एमएनडीएफ) सरकार को उपहार में दिया गया था। क्षेत्र (आईओआर)।

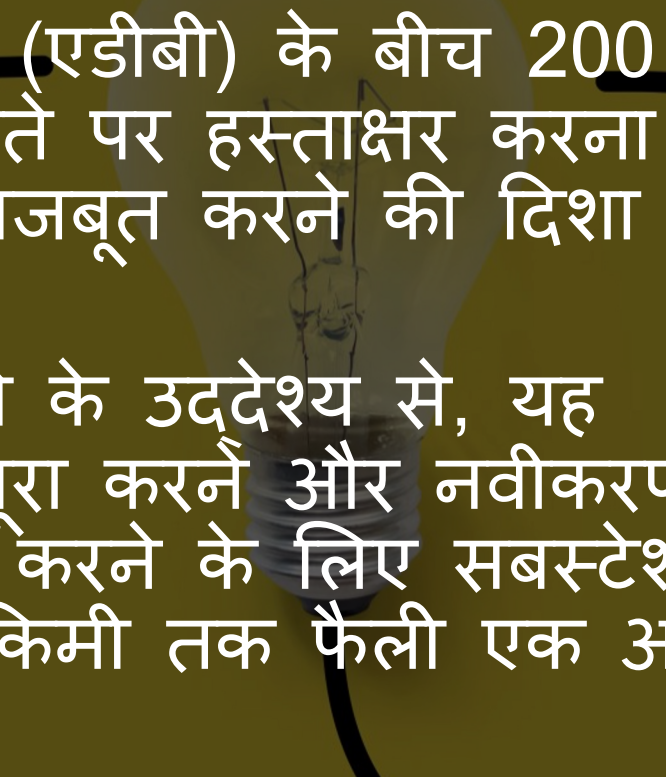
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- A low-angle, front-facing view of a large commercial aircraft on a runway. The aircraft's nose, cockpit, and two engines are visible. The runway has a yellow center line. The background shows a clear sky and a distant horizon.
- The ship was returned to the Indian Navy in May 2023, the warship is fitted with MTU engines, the latest communication equipment, and an advanced Radar system and will be extensively used for coastal surveillance and protection along the east coast of India.
 - The ship is named after Tarmugli Island, a small island in the Andaman group.

- जहाज को मई 2023 में भारतीय नौसेना को वापस कर दिया गया था, युद्धपोत एमटीयू इंजन, नवीनतम संचार उपकरण और एक उन्नत रडार प्रणाली से सुसज्जित है और इसका उपयोग भारत के पूर्वी तट पर तटीय निगरानी और सुरक्षा के लिए बड़े पैमाने पर किया जाएगा।
- जहाज का नाम अंडमान समूह के एक छोटे से द्वीप तारमुगली द्वीप के नाम पर रखा गया है।



India, Asian Development Bank Ink Deal for Uttarakhand Power Project

- The signing of the **USD 200 million loan agreement between the Government of India and the Asian Development Bank (ADB)** marks a significant step towards **fortifying Uttarakhand's power infrastructure**.
- Aimed at enhancing **quality, efficiency, and reliability**, the project will introduce a modernized underground cable system spanning 537 km, along with substations and power lines to **meet escalating electricity demands and ensure smoother integration of renewable energy**.

- 
- भारत सरकार और एशियाई विकास बैंक (एडीबी) के बीच 200 मिलियन अमेरिकी डॉलर के ऋण समझौते पर हस्ताक्षर करना उत्तराखंड के बिजली बुनियादी ढांचे को मजबूत करने की दिशा में एक महत्वपूर्ण कदम है।
 - गणवत्ता, दक्षता और विश्वसनीयता बढ़ाने के उद्देश्य से, यह परियोजना बढ़ती बिजली की माँगों को पूरा करने और नवीकरणीय ऊर्जा के संचारु एकीकरण को सनिश्चित करने के लिए सबस्टेशनों और बिजली लाइनों के साथ-साथ 537 किमी तक फैली एक आधुनिक भूमिगत केबल प्रणाली पेश करेगी।

ADB is a regional development bank established in 1966 with the objective of promoting social and economic development in Asia and the Pacific.

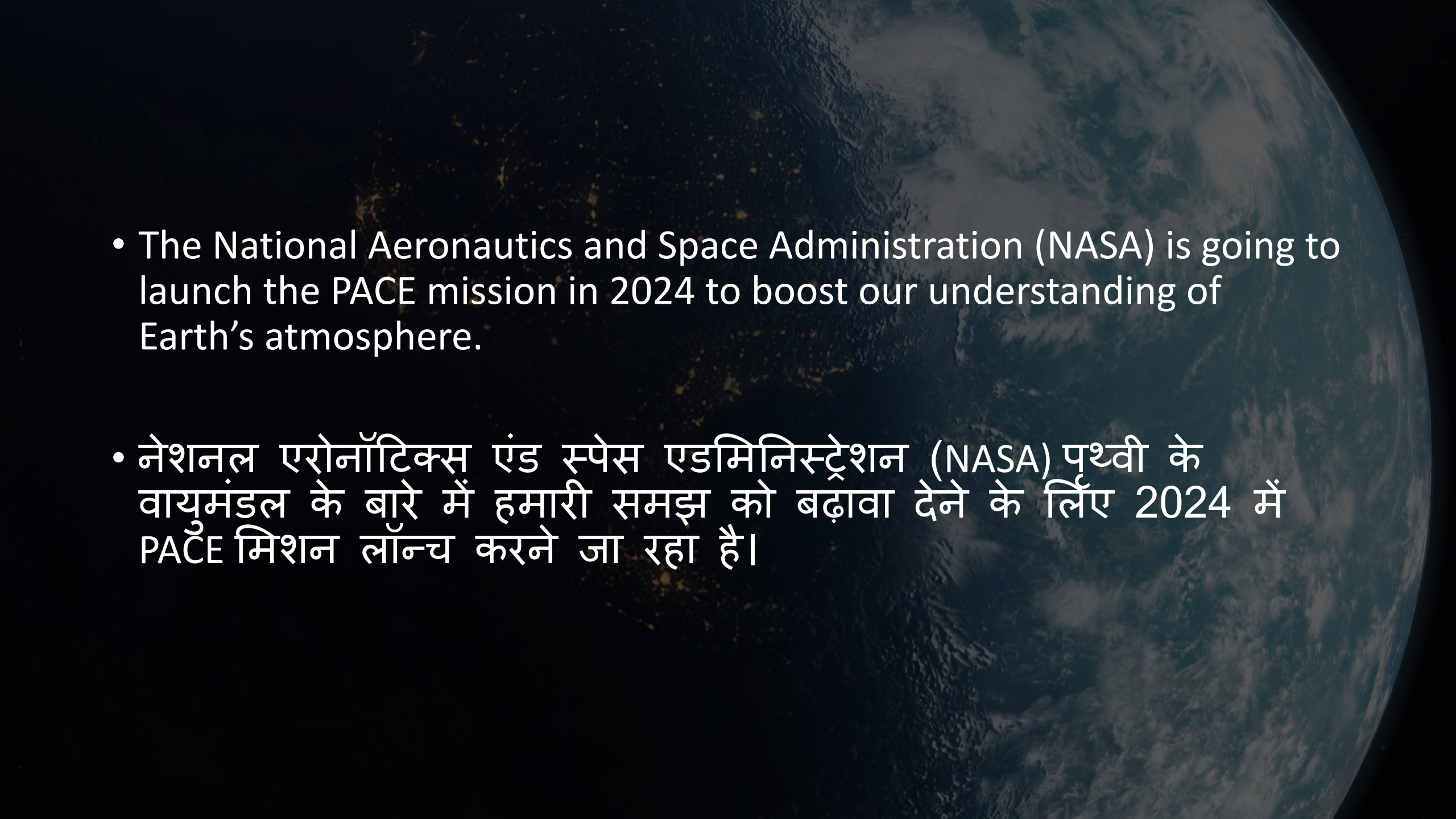
- It has 68 members; 49 are from within Asia and the Pacific and 19 outside. **India is a founding member.** ADB is **headquartered in Manila, Philippines.**

एडीबी एक क्षेत्रीय विकास बैंक है जिसकी स्थापना 1966 में एशिया और प्रशांत क्षेत्र में सामाजिक और आर्थिक विकास को बढ़ावा देने के उद्देश्य से की गई थी।

इसके 68 सदस्य हैं; 49 एशिया और प्रशांत क्षेत्र के भीतर से हैं और 19 बाहर से हैं। भारत एक संस्थापक सदस्य है. एशियाई विकास बैंक मनीला, फिलीपींस में मुख्यालय है।



PACE Mission



- The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) is going to launch the PACE mission in 2024 to boost our understanding of Earth's atmosphere.

- नेशनल एरोनॉटिक्स एंड स्पेस एडमिनिस्ट्रेशन (NASA) पृथ्वी के वायुमंडल के बारे में हमारी समझ को बढ़ावा देने के लिए 2024 में PACE मिशन लॉन्च करने जा रहा है।



- **About**

- **Plankton, Aerosol, Cloud, Ocean Ecosystem (PACE) Mission** aims to enhance the understanding of Earth's oceans and atmosphere by studying key components, like light, aerosols, and clouds.
- The mission will make global **measurements of ocean color** to improve our understanding of the carbon cycle and ocean ecosystem responses to a changing climate.

- के बारे में
- प्लैंकटन, एरोसोल, क्लाउड, महासागर पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र (पीएसीई) मिशन का उद्देश्य प्रकाश, एरोसोल और बादलों जैसे प्रमुख घटकों का अध्ययन करके पृथ्वी के महासागरों और वायुमंडल की समझ को बढ़ाना है।
- यह मिशन बदलती जलवायु के प्रति कार्बन चक्र और महासागर पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र की प्रतिक्रियाओं के बारे में हमारी समझ को बेहतर बनाने के लिए समुद्र के रंग का वैश्विक माप करेगा।



- Elements of Mission

- **Ocean Color Instrument (OCI):** It will be capable of measuring the color of the ocean from ultraviolet to shortwave infrared.
- **Advanced Polarimeters:** PACE will also include two polarimeters. They are the **Spectro-polarimeter for Planetary Exploration (SPEXone)** and the **Hyper Angular Research Polarimeter (HARP2)**.
- मिशन के तत्व
- महासागर रंग उपकरण (ओसीआई): यह पराबैंगनी से शॉर्टवेव इन्फ्रारेड तक समुद्र के रंग को मापने में सक्षम होगा।
- उन्नत पोलारिमीटर: PACE में दो पोलारिमीटर भी शामिल होंगे। वे ग्रहों की खोज के लिए स्पेक्ट्रो-पोलारिमीटर (SPEXone) और हाइपर एंगुलर रिसर्च पोलारिमीटर (HARP2) हैं।

What is Aerosol?

- Aerosols are very small particles in the air like those of smoke, dust, sea salt and other pollutants.
- Aerosols absorb as well as scatter sunlight. This decides how much solar energy reaches the surface of Earth.

Naya Savera Scheme

The background of the slide features a dark grey field with a network of thin, grey lines connecting various nodes. The nodes are represented by small, semi-transparent circles in shades of blue, green, orange, and black. Some nodes are larger than others, suggesting different levels of connectivity or importance. The network is dense and spans across the entire frame. In the upper left, there is a faint, stylized representation of a globe with latitude and longitude lines. The overall aesthetic is modern and technological.

- A total of 1,19,223 Minority students/candidates have been trained under Naya Savera Scheme.
- About
- **Ministry:** The Ministry of Minority Affairs launched the scheme in **2007**.
- नया सवेरा योजना के तहत कुल 1,19,223 अल्पसंख्यक छात्रों/उम्मीदवारों को प्रशिक्षित किया गया है।
- के बारे में
- मंत्रालय: अल्पसंख्यक कार्य मंत्रालय ने 2007 में यह योजना शुरू की।



Objective: To assist students/ candidates by way of special coaching for qualifying examinations for admission in technical/professional courses and competitive examination for recruitment to Group 'A', 'B', & 'C' services and other equivalent posts under the Central and State Governments including public sector undertakings, banks and railways.



Criteria: The candidates must belong to the six notified minority communities namely **Sikh, Jain, Muslim, Christian, Buddhist and Parsi.**

उद्देश्य: तकनीकी/व्यावसायिक पाठ्यक्रमों में प्रवेश के लिए योग्यता परीक्षाओं और समूह 'ए', 'बी', और 'सी' सेवाओं और केंद्रीय और अन्य समकक्ष पदों पर भर्ती के लिए प्रतिस्पर्धी परीक्षा के लिए विशेष कोचिंग के माध्यम से छात्रों/उम्मीदवारों की सहायता करना। सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र के उपक्रम, बैंक और रेलवे सहित राज्य सरकारें।



मानदंड: उम्मीदवारों को छह अधिसूचित अल्पसंख्यक समुदायों अर्थात् सिख, जैन, मुस्लिम, ईसाई, बौद्ध और पारसी से संबंधित होना चाहिए।

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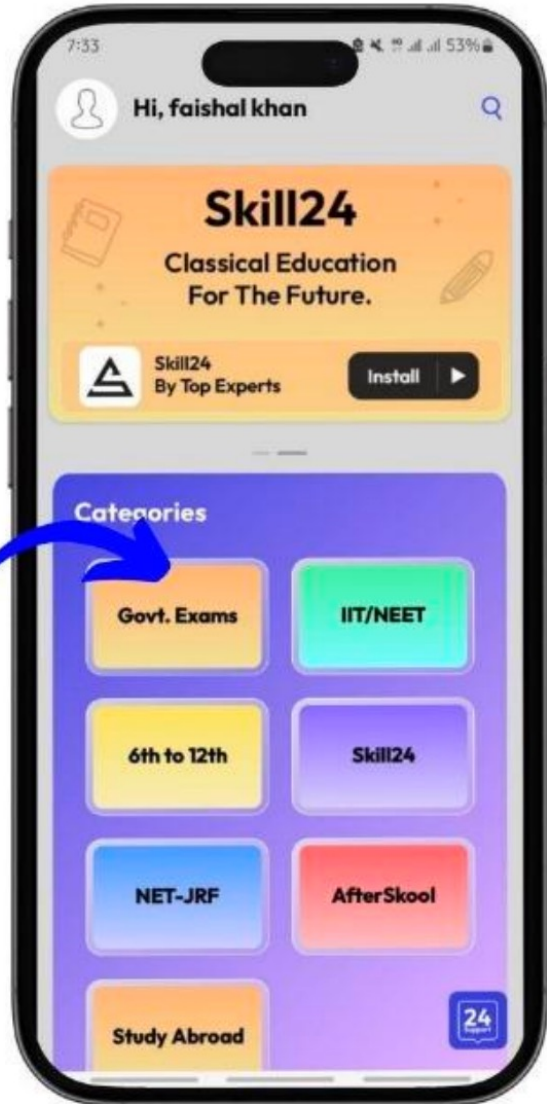
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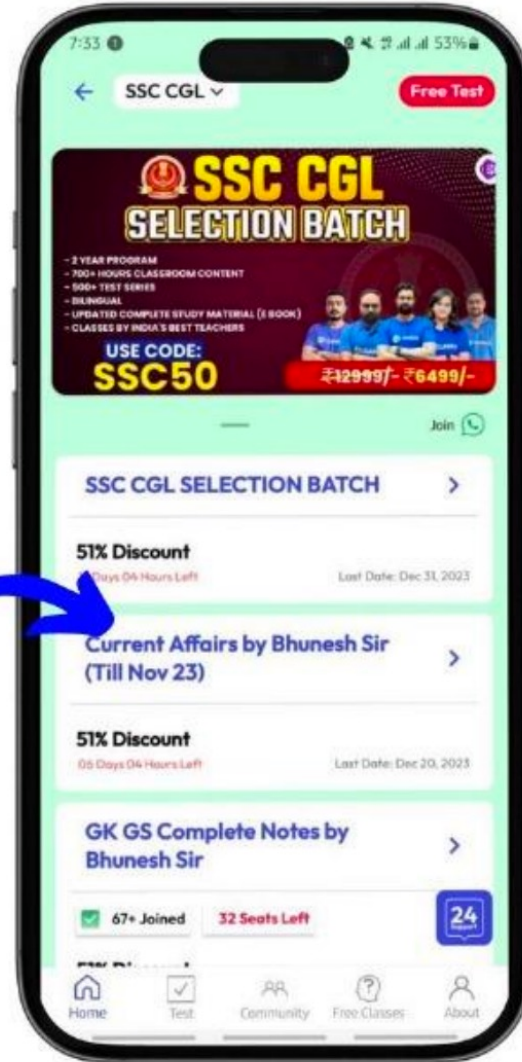
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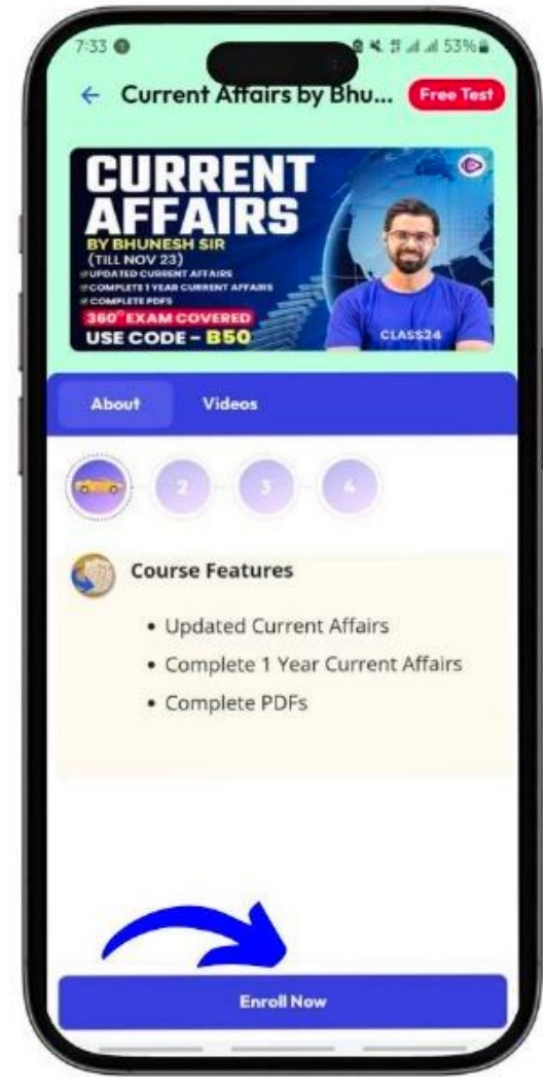
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Step-3



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A group of people are clapping in a dimly lit room. The focus is on the hands and forearms of several individuals, some in the foreground and some blurred in the background. The lighting is soft and moody, with a blueish tint. In the top left corner, there is a small orange horizontal bar and a few small red dots.

Thank you
guys.
