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**Courage is knowing what  
not to fear.**

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### INSIDE



**DMK, Cong, seal seat sharing deal in T.N. for LS poll**

**CHENNAI** The Congress will contest in the Tiruvallur (SC), Krishnagiri, Mayiladuthurai, Cuddalore, Karur, Sivaganga, Virudhunagar, Tirunelveli, Kanyakumari Lok Sabha constituencies Tamil Nadu as part of the INDIA bloc led by the DMK. > PAGE 3

**'Shakti' remark: PM, Rahul engage in war of words**

**SHIVMOGGA/NEW DELHI** Congress leader Rahul Gandhi accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of distorting his "shakti" remark and clarified that it was not made in a religious context. He was responding to the PM's speech where he accused the INDIA bloc of trying to destroy "Hindu Shakti". > PAGE 4

**Spring season 'disappearing', shows study**

**NEW DELHI** Indian States have been gradually registering a withdrawal of spring, a period of relatively benign weather between the winter of January and the scorching summer of April, a 50-year analysis of meteorological records suggests. > PAGE 6

**Afghan forces hit back at Pak. after air strikes kill 8**

**KABUL** Eight civilians were killed on Monday in "reckless" air strikes by Pakistan's military in the border regions of Afghanistan, prompting Afghan's border forces to retaliate against Pakistani military outposts with "heavy weapons". Taliban officials said. > PAGE 12

## After securing another term, Putin says Russia is aiming at establishing a buffer zone in Ukraine

**Associated Press**  
Russian President Vladimir Putin said after extending his rule on Monday, in an election that stifled opposition, that Moscow will not relent in its invasion of Ukraine and plans to create a buffer zone to help protect against long-range Ukrainian strikes and cross-border raids.

The Kremlin's forces have made battlefield progress as Kyiv's troops struggle with a severe shortage of artillery shells and exhausted frontline units after more than two years of war. The frontline stretches over 1,000 km across Ukraine.

Advances have been

**TI-EUP OFFICIAL: PMK joins BJP-led NDA in T.N.**  
NEWS > PAGE 4

## Disclose complete details of poll bonds, SC tells SBI

Top court asks the bank to be 'candid and fair' and not selective while making the disclosure

**Krishnadas Rajagopal**  
NEW DELHI  
The Supreme Court on Monday asked the State Bank of India (SBI) to be "candid and fair" and not selective while directing it to make a "complete disclosure" of electoral bonds' data, including their unique hidden alphanumeric and serial numbers, to the Election Commission (EC) for publication.

"The State Bank of India was expected to give every conceivable detail with it regarding the electoral bonds. Your attitude seems to be 'you tell us to give the details, then we will give'. SBI should not be selective. SBI has to be candid and fair to the court," Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud, heading a five-judge Bench, advised the disclosure of data on poll bonds purchased and redeemed with effect from April 12, 2019.

**CONSTRUCTION ACCIDENT: Eight killed as building collapses in Kolkata**  
NEWS > PAGE 6

### Violence, homelessness, mental health

Accounts of trauma and life events  
EDITORIAL > PAGE 8

**NEW DELHI** The top Court refused to hear on Monday an intervention by individuals against an order questioning the SBI's non-disclosure of the numbers on electoral bonds. > PAGE 5

The State Bank of India was expected to give every conceivable detail with it regarding the electoral bonds. Your attitude seems to be 'you tell us to give the details, then we will give'. The SBI has to be candid and fair to the court D.Y. CHANDRACHUD Chief Justice of India

**NO URGENT HEARING, SC TELLS INDUSTRY BODIES**  
NEW DELHI The top Court refused to hear on Monday an intervention by industry associations against an order questioning the SBI's non-disclosure of the numbers on electoral bonds. > PAGE 5

### JD(S) got ₹48.7 cr. before April 5, 2019, show data

NEW DELHI New documents on electoral bonds published by the EC on Monday show that the Janata Dal (Secular) received ₹48.75 crore before March 8, 2018 and April 5, 2019. > PAGE 5

The court dismissed the application filed by an NGO, Citizens Rights Trust, represented by senior advocate Vijay Hansaria and advocate Sneha Kalita for similar disclosure on electoral bonds bought and encashed from March 1, 2018, to April 12, 2019.

The Bench clarified that its judgment had "specifically" directed the submission of electoral bonds data from April 12, 2019, and any tinkering now would amount to "substantial modification" of the February 15 verdict.

**SURVEY ON INDIAN WOMEN: Violence, homelessness, mental health**  
Accounts of trauma and life events  
EDITORIAL > PAGE 8

### Super King Ready

Dhoni is as match-fit as ever, says Hussey  
SPORT > PAGE 16

### Highway rose



Queen's bloom: Pink Trumpet trees, or *Basant Rani*, in full bloom on the Eastern Express Highway in Mumbai on Monday. EMMAJUAL YOGINI

### The Hindu Bureau

**NEW DELHI**  
Within 48 hours of announcing the election schedule, the Election Commission on Monday ordered the transfer of a host of senior officials in various States, including the Home Secretaries of Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Jharkhand as well as the District Collector of Police of West Bengal, Rajeev Kumar.

## Ahead of LS poll, Election Commission transfers six Home Secretaries, one DGP

The transfers, according to the commission, are part of its efforts to ensure the integrity of the electoral process. The decisions were taken after a meeting between Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Rajiv Kumar and Election Commissioners Gyanesh Kumar and Sukhbir Singh Sandhu here, sources said.

On March 16, the election panel had announced the schedule for the general election which will begin in April 19 and end by June 1. The counting of votes will be held on June 4.

**'Level playing field'**  
While announcing the schedule, the CEC had said the commission would ensure a level playing field for all political parties.

**Swift appointment**  
In West Bengal, the State administration moved swiftly to appoint Vivek Sahay as the new DGP in place of Mr. Rajeev Kumar, who had been appointed the State's DGP three months ago.

**CHENNAI** New documents on electoral bonds published by the EC on Monday show that the Janata Dal (Secular) received ₹48.75 crore before March 8, 2018 and April 5, 2019. > PAGE 5

### Rule of law

Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, for the Centre, drew the court's attention to the distinction of facts and numbers, and the "witch-hunting" which had followed the judgment and the publication of the electoral bonds' data. The Chief Justice said, the court's duty was over with the pronouncement of the judgment. "Our intent was disclosure. We are governed by the rule of law," Chief Justice Chandrachud said.

**MORE REPORTS > PAGE 5**



of Mizoram and Himachal Pradesh. Also on the transfer list were Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) Commissioner Iqbal Singh Chahal as well as Additional Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners of the BMC.

Meanwhile, according to sources, at Mantralaya, the Maharashtra Secretary, the poll body had expressed dissatisfaction with the Chief Secretary as the State failed to comply with directives regarding the transfer of certain municipal officials who had stayed in the same post for more than two years. The EC directed the Chief Secretary to transfer Mr. Chahal and other officials in the State by evening.

### T.N. moves SC against Ravi for stalling Ponnudiy's re-induction

Krishnaadas Rajagopal  
NEW DELHI

Tamil Nadu on Monday moved the Supreme Court, accusing Governor K.N. Ravi of "attempting to run a parallel government" in the State by refusing to adhere to the Cabinet's advice to appoint DMK leader K. Ponnudiy as Higher Education Minister.

The Cabinet's advice follows the recent top court order suspending Mr. Ponnudiy's conviction and sentence in a disproportionate assets case.

Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud agreed to list the case following an urgent oral mentioning made by the State. The State argued that the Governor had no individual discretion in the appointment of a Minister and the suitability of the candidate, and had to follow the advice of the Chief Minister-led State Cabinet under Article 164(1) of the Constitution.

It is now well settled that a Governor cannot decide who should be a Minister on moral grounds or any other grounds. That the prerogative is with the Chief Minister," the State said.

It pressed that Mr. Ravi was in clear contempt of the court's March 11 order, which had suspended the conviction of Mr. Ponnudiy specifically for the reason that he should not suffer disqualification under the Representation of People Act (RP) Act from holding office of Minister or M.L.A.

## Tamilisai resigns as Governor and L-G, to contest Lok Sabha election

According to sources, the BJP is exploring the option of fielding her from Chennai South constituency; the senior leader's return to active politics and likely candidature in the poll is seen as the party's attempt to field a known face in Tamil Nadu

N. Sai Charan  
CHENNAI

Tamilisai Soundararajan, Governor of Telangana and Lieutenant-Governor of Puducherry, on Monday resigned from her posts to contest the Lok Sabha election as a BJP candidate from Tamil Nadu.

She resigned after giving a send-off to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who had stayed at the Raj Bhavan in Hyderabad.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, she said: "I resigned from



the posts of Governor of Telangana and Lieutenant-Governor of Puducherry and submitted a letter to President Droupadi Murmu. I have decided to return to active politics and

I will not contest from Puducherry. I will contest from one of the constituencies in T.N., which will be decided by the BJP's high command

will contest in the Lok Sabha poll." She unsuccessfully contested the 2019 Lok Sabha election in Thoothukudi against DMK deputy general secretary Kanimoshi Karunanidhi.

She was also given additional charge as the Lieutenant-Governor of Puducherry in February 2021. Ms. Soundararajan has vacated the post of Governor to come back to politics. Even during her tenure as the Governor, Ms. Soundararajan continued to voice out criticism on political developments in Tamil Nadu. Her return to active politics and her likely candidature in the Lok Sabha poll is seen as an attempt by the BJP to field a known face in the State.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the roadshow in Coimbatore on Monday, ahead of the general election. M. PERASAMY

### After roadshow, PM pays homage to blast victims in Coimbatore

The Hindu Bureau  
COIMBATORE

After taking out a roadshow covering 2.5 km in Coimbatore on Monday ahead of the Lok Sabha election, Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid homage to the 58 people who died in a series of bomb blasts 26 years ago — on February 14, 1998, in the city.

Amid shouting of slogans "Modi Modi", "Atre-dum Modi", "We Want Modi", "Jai Shri Ram", and "Bharat Mata Ki Jai" by the BJP cadre and supporters, who had lined up on either side of the road, Mr. Modi arrived at R.S. Puram, which was one of the places of the serial blasts.

Floral tribute He spent around four minutes at the spot, paying floral tributes to those who had lost their lives and also enquiring with S.R. Sekhar, State treasurer of the party, about the blasts.

People, including children and the elderly, started arriving at the venue at R.S. Puram from 4 p.m. and waited behind barri-

er for almost three hours. A group of people that had come from tribal hamlets in the district performed the traditional dance as they waited for Mr. Modi to arrive.

"The Prime Minister is paying tribute to all those who died in the bomb blasts, including Muslims," K. Annamalai, BJP State president, told presspersons earlier in the day.

It was a "safran wave" from Mettupalayam Road to R.S. Puram as Mr. Modi, flanked by Mr. Annamalai and Union Minister L. Murugan, waved to the people from an open vehicle, covering the 2.5-km stretch. The party had put up stages in about 20 locations for the beneficiaries of various schemes to see Mr. Modi.

BJP flags, masks resembling Mr. Modi, and show-ers of bright marigold petals were seen through- out the stretch. The crowd chanted "Atre-dum Modi, Atre-dum Modi".

The roadshow also witnessed the display of several traditional art forms of the State such as *Kummitam* and *Kolattam*.

### Kavitha moves SC against her arrest in excise policy case

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

Bharat Rashtira Samithi MLC K. Kavitha has moved the Supreme Court against her arrest and remand by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in connection with the now-scrapped Delhi excise policy case.

She is the daughter of former Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrababhan Rao. The petition by the Telangana legislator contended that her arrest was arbitrary and violative of the postulates of Section 19 of the Prevention of Money



K. Kavitha  
Laudering Act, 2002.

Ms. Kavitha was remanded in ED custody on Saturday till March 23. She alleged that her arrest and remand were done in a "patently routine and mechanical manner".

An earlier petition that she filed in this connection is still pending in the Supreme Court. The court in September last year had agreed to examine Ms. Kavitha's arguments highlighting restrictions placed on police officers under Section 160 of the Code of Criminal Procedure against summoning women or questioning them at any place other than their own homes.

Ms. Kavitha maintained that there was no case against her and she had been implicated in the "patently routine and mechanical manner".

### MLC conspired with AAP leaders, says ED

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

The ED on Monday alleged that BRS MLC K. Kavitha conspired with the Aam Aadmi Party leaders to get favours in the implementation of the erstwhile Delhi excise policy.

The ED also alleged that during the searches conducted at their residence, her relatives and associates had caused obstruction.

Allegedly, Ms. Kavitha, along with others, had conspired with senior AAP leaders, including Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and former Deputy

Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, the ED said. "In exchange for these favours, she was involved in paying ₹100 crore to the leaders of AAP by the acts of corruption and conspiracy in the formulation of Delhi Excise Policy, a continuous stream of illegal funds in the form of kickback, from the wholesalers was generated for the AAP."

The ED also alleged that Ms. Kavitha and her associates were to recover the "proceeds of crime paid in advance to AAP and to further generate profits/proceeds of crime from this entire conspiracy".

### Poised for touch down



Smooth flight: A Hawx fighter jet of the Indian Air Force (IAF) flies at a very low altitude, with landing gears out, during the testing of the emergency landing runway on National Highway-16 at Bapatla in Andhra Pradesh on Monday. T. VIJAYA KUMAR

### Karuvannur scam: HC pulls up ED for delay in probe

The Hindu Bureau  
BENGALURU

The Kerala High Court on Monday reiterated its displeasure over the delay in the investigation by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) into the alleged fraudulent deals in the Karuvannur Service Cooperative Bank.

Considering a petition filed by Ali Sabri challenging the attachment of his properties and freezing of his bank accounts by ED, Justice Devan Kannachandran orally observed that the ED cannot continue the investigation for more than six months.

### Bengaluru facing shortage of 500 MLD of water, says Karnataka Chief Minister

The Hindu Bureau  
BENGALURU

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has said that Bengaluru is facing a shortage of 500 million litres per day (MLD) of water and the State government has taken various measures to mitigate its impact. This is the first time that the water shortage the city is facing this summer has been quantified.

"The city needs 2,600 MLD of water, of which 1,450 MLD is coming from the Cauvery and 650 MLD from the ground water through borewells. There is a shortage of 500 MLD," he said.



Parched city: A man carrying packaged drinking water at Hanumanthnagar, in Bengaluru on Monday. K. MURALI KUMAR

drinking water crisis in Bengaluru. He is the first meeting that Mr. Siddaramaiah has held on the water crisis plaguing the city.

ter in the Cauvery basin to provide for the drinking water needs of the core city till June-end by when the monsoon will begin.

"There is 11.02 tmcft of water in the KR2 reservoir and 9.02 tmcft in the Kabinji reservoir," he said.

"These areas will also get the Cauvery water, which this June after the Cauvery Stage V is commissioned," he said. At present, these areas are solely dependent on borewells. In such a drought many of them have gone dry, exacerbating the problem, Mr. Siddaramaiah said.

The Hindu Bureau  
BENGALURU

The Karnataka High Court on Monday directed the State government not to suspend the trade licence and seal the premises of private establishments for not changing the display to 60% in Kannada on the upper half of nameboard, if the date for implementing the amended Section 17(6) of the Karnataka Language Comprehension Development Act, 2022, is notified in the official gazette.

However, the court restrained the Karnataka government and its agencies from taking any precipitative action against private establishments for not



The Karnataka HC noted that the Act has provision for not imposing a penalty.

complying with the amended law, if the government has not notified the date for implementation of the Act in the official gazette.

Justice M. Nagapprasanna

### Do not seal premises for violating Kannada nameboard law, says HC

passed the interim order on business premises contrary to the Section 23 of the Act, which prescribe only fine as penalty for violation.

The amended Act was notified in the Gazette February 26 on obtaining assent from the Governor on February 25, and Section 1 (2) of the amended Act states that "it shall come into force on such date as the State government may by notification in the Official Gazette appoint."

But the government is yet to issue official gazette notification as per Section 1(2) announcing the date from which the amendment will come into force, the advocate contended.

### Multi-purpose app SAKHI to assist Gaganyaan crew

The Hindu Bureau  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC), the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) facility, Thumba in Thiruvananthapuram, has developed a multi-purpose app that will help astronauts on the Gaganyaan space flight mission carry out a range of tasks such as location of vital technical information or communicating with one another.

The Space-borne Assistant and Knowledge Help for Crew Interaction (SAKHI) will, among other things, ensure that the astronauts, help them stay connected with Earth and even alert about their dietary sche-

dules. The space facility has successfully tested an engineering model of the custom-built, hand-held module for the SAKHI. The development of the app is in progress.

The VSSC describes the application as an indispensable assistant to the crew.

"During the mission, for instance, a group of people may need to look up technical documents and training manuals at short notice. Given the limited space in the crew module, thick manuals will be out of the question. SAKHI will ensure that they have all the required data at their fingertips," VSSC Director S. Unnikrishnan Nair told PTI.

Strapped to space suits, the platform can be quickly accessed after a one-



SAKHI was developed by the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The ISRO is hoping to launch the Gaganyaan mission in 2025. The identities of the four astronaut-designates in the first test flight were revealed at an event attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on February 27.

# Multi-purpose app SAKHI to assist Gaganyaan crew

**Tiki Rajwi**

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

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SAKHI was developed by the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

dules. The space facility has successfully tested an engineering model of the custom-built, hand-held smart device featuring SAKHI. The development of a flight model is in progress.

The VSSC describes the application as an indispensable assistant to the crew.

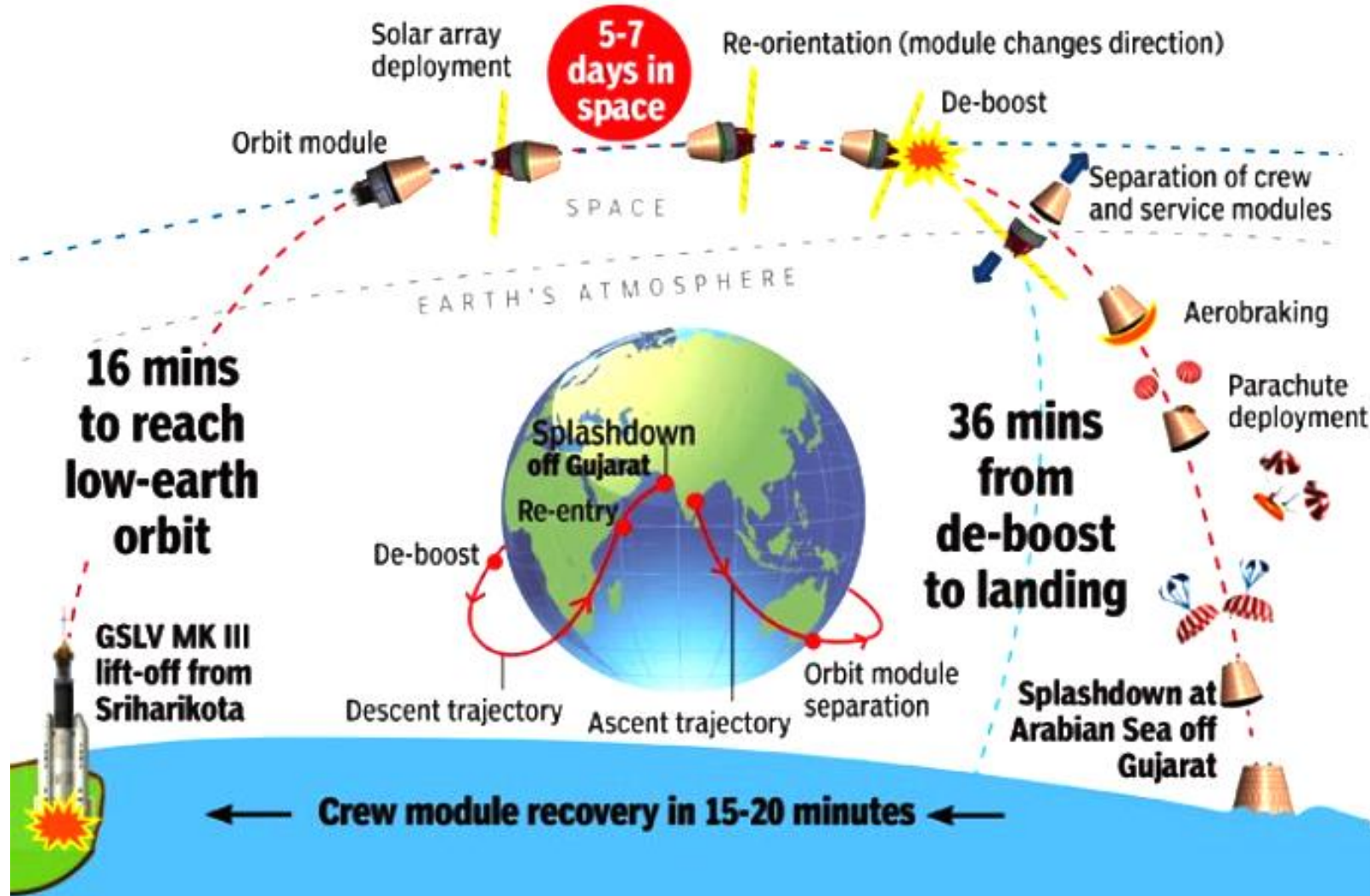
“During the mission, for instance, the astronauts may need to look up technical documents and training manuals at short notice. Given the limited space in the crew module, taking along thick tomes will be out of the question. SAKHI will ensure that they have all the required data at their fingertips,” VSSC director S. Unnikrishnan Nair told *The Hindu*.

Strapped to space suits, the platform can be quickly accessed at all times.

The ISRO is hoping to launch the Gaganyaan mission in 2025. The identities of the four astronaut-designates, all IAF test pilots, were revealed at an event attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on February 27.



# MANNED MISSION



**COST:** Less than  
**₹10,000 cr**

**LAUNCH:**  
**2022**

India to be the 4th nation to launch  
a manned spaceflight mission after  
the US, Russia and China


# GAGANYAAN MISSION

## INDIA'S FIRST MANNED FLIGHT TO SPACE

The project was first approved by **PM Narendra Modi** on **August 15, 2018**.

It will send the three member crew to space for at least **seven days by 2022**.

ISRO hopes to deploy its biggest rocket, **GSLV MK III**, for this project.




The space agency hopes to launch the first mission within **40 months from the date of approval**.



It would be one of the cheapest manned spaceflights in the world, with the estimated cost of not more than **Rs 10000 crore**.

India plans to call its astronauts "**Vyomnauts**" since '**Vyom**' in Sanskrit means '**Space**'.



India will become **fourth country after Russia, US and China** to send humans to space.

# Gaganyaan Mission



**Crew Module: Habitat of Astronaut**

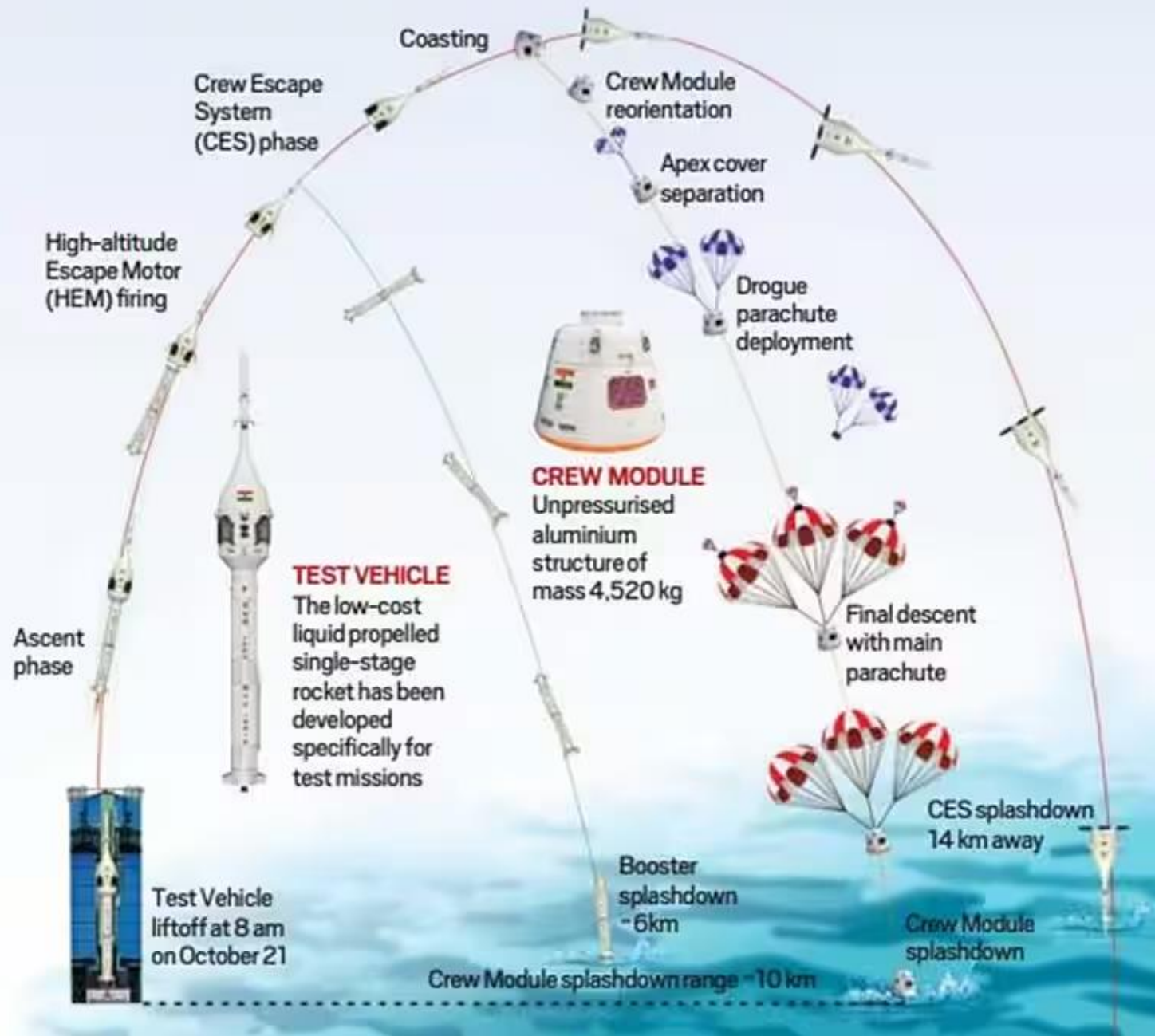
**Service Module: Does on-orbit servicing**

**Orbital Module**



**Human Rated Launch Vehicle**  
(GSLV MKIII derived)

# TEST VEHICLE ABORT DEMONSTRATION MISSION PROFILE



**Poll bonds show use of money power in politics: BSP**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

In her first reaction to the electoral bonds scheme that has been declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court, Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayavati on Monday pointed out how the revelations over the past week about electoral bonds had demonstrated the use of "money power" to try and keep the public, and public interest out of the nation's politics.

She said the BSP had purposely kept its distance from "the money power of big capitalists and the rich, to avoid this kind of *quid pro quo*", adding that this was why the government's proposals were formed in Uttar Pradesh where anti-corruption initiatives in the interest of the public and for public welfare, and to eliminate poverty and backwardness. "Other parties are mostly engaged in serving their own interests," she said.

The BSP is among the few political parties which have not accepted any of the nations through electoral bonds.

**J(S) got poll bonds from Infosys, Biocon, JSW Steel**

**Documents show party received ₹48.75 crore before April 12, 2019 and ₹43 crore thereafter; its biggest donor, Embassy Group, emerged as the sole bidder of Bengaluru's pod tax project in 2018**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
CHENNAI

The Election Commission of India on Sunday disclosed new documents listing the corporations and individuals who contributed to the Janata Dal (Secular) in Karnataka before April 12, 2019 through the electoral bond route. The documents reveal that these donors contributed a total of ₹48.75 crore to the party from March 8, 2018 to April 5, 2019.

Initially, these details were submitted to the Supreme Court in sealed envelopes. The top court instructed the commission to make this information available to the public.

The commission disclosed details last week of electoral bonds issued after April 12, 2019. After this date, the JD(S) received ₹43 crore, although the names of the individual donors are yet to be released.

The JD(S) is one of the few regional parties that have revealed the names of



The JD(S) received ₹43 crore through poll bonds after April 2019, however details of the contributors are not available. FILE PHOTO

those who donated to them through electoral bonds. In 2018, the party secured ₹1 crore from Infosys Technologies, ₹22 crore from the Embassy Group, ₹25 lakh from Health Care Global Enterprises, and ₹50 lakh from Biocon, the pharmaceutical company founded by Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw.

Notably, according to media reports, the Embassy Group (EMGL), which is ranked second among companies that purchased the highest amount of electoral bonds (by value). The party also

secured ₹1 crore from Infosys Technologies, ₹22 crore from the Embassy Group, ₹25 lakh from Health Care Global Enterprises, and ₹50 lakh from Biocon, the pharmaceutical company founded by Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw.

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**In 2018, the party secured ₹1 crore from Infosys, ₹22 crore from the Embassy Group**

got ₹5 crore from JSW Steel Ltd., India's second largest private sector steel company. The Biocon group donated ₹1 crore again in 2019, taking their total tally to 1.5 crore. Shahi Exports Ltd., the largest agricultural manufacturing company in India, also donated ₹1.5 crore. Finally, the Aditya Birla group donated ₹50 crore to the party in 2019-07. The Karnataka government led by then Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy decided to execute a lease-cum-sale agreement with JSW Steel Ltd., pertaining to 3,666 acres of land allotted to the company in 2006-07. The JSW had paid for the land at the guidance rate at the time of purchase in 2002. This significant donation was made between

**NCP encashed bonds worth ₹37.75 crore till May 9, 2019**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
CHENNAI

The Election Commission of India on Sunday made public new documents revealing the names of companies and individuals that made contributions to the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) till May 9, 2019. The party encashed ₹37.75 crore between January 18 and May 9, 2019.

Originally, this information was provided to the Supreme Court in sealed envelopes. Details of electoral bonds encashed by the NCP beyond May 9, 2019, were disclosed by the election authority last week.

The party had encashed ₹27.5 crore after May 9, 2019, for which the donor information is still not available.

Single-day encashment: Compiling the donations encashed by the NCP via the electoral bond route, from its initial receipt on January 18, 2019, to the most recent one on April 13, 2024, the party had the largest single-day encashment of ₹10 crore was recorded on January 18, 2022. This significant donation was made between



The party had encashed ₹27.5 crore after May 9, 2019, for which the donor information is still not available. CHENNAI VOICE

November 28, 2019, and June 29, 2022, a time when the NCP returned to power in the State as a member of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) coalition.

Parties are required to encash electoral bonds within 15 days of their issuance. The NCP is among the few parties that have disclosed the identities of contributors who donated via the electoral bond route.

In the period, for which donor information was available, the party had secured ₹7.5 crore through the electoral bonds route from Bajaj Finserv and ₹5 crore from Infina Infrastructures.

It had also received ₹5 crore from Atul Chordia

and ₹4.5 crore from Avinash Bhosle in the period. Their addresses were not included in the details.

Individual donor: Cyrus Poonawalla, the founder of Serum Institute of India, had donated ₹3.75 crore to the party in this period. Bharti Airtel Limited was another donor. The rest were from other firms and individuals.

In 2023, the Election Commission awarded the party's original name and symbol to a faction led by Ajit Pawar.

The group that remained with party chief Sharad Pawar was given the name NCP (Sharadchandra Pawar).

**SC refuses urgent hearing on industry bodies' plea**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court refused to urgently hear on Monday an intervention by industry associations seeking an explanation from the SBI on the non-disclosure of unique alphanumeric numbers of electoral bonds to the Election Commission of India for publication.

A five-judge Bench headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud asked senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for ASSOCHAM, FICCI and CII, on why they have come now after the pronouncement of the judgment in the electoral bonds scheme case on February 15. "The whole world knew the matter was being heard by us. You file an application now?" Chief Justice

Chandrachud asked Mr. Rohatgi.

Justice B.R. Gava also questioned the timing of Mr. Rohatgi's clients. The senior lawyer clarified that the industry associations had no problem with revealing the names of the recipients under the disclosure of the unique alphanumeric numbers of electoral bonds to the Election Commission of India for publication. "We will deal with it in due course. There is no oral mentioning... You appear for big clients... If we allow you to mention orally, what case will I show to a junior advocate who wants to do the same... Now, what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander," Chief Justice Chandrachud addressed the senior advocate.

In a statement, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) confirmed that it had, along with ASSOCHAM and CII, filed an intervention application. FICCI said it believed that ease of doing business was a key element of India's competitiveness globally. "Retrospective actions lead to reduction of business confidence for Indian and global investors. This was the basis for our application. FICCI believes in fostering a conducive environment for economic development, where the private sector will contribute to the growth of India as the third largest economy," the statement said.

**Top court's order on electoral bonds disclosure does not cover full details from March 2018**

**NEWS ANALYSIS**

**Krishnasdas Rajagopal**  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday directed full disclosure of electoral bonds purchased after April 2019, but information about a chunk of poll bonds bought and encashed during the first year of the anonymous political funding scheme will continue to remain hidden from the public eye.

This would mean that full information on who bought how many electoral bonds to donate to which political party between March 1, 2018, and April 11, 2019, would continue to remain under wraps despite the fact that the Supreme Court had held the entire electoral bond scheme, from start to fin-



The five-judge Constitution Bench during a hearing on the electoral bonds case. SCREENSHOT VIA SUPREME COURT OF INDIA YOUTUBE

ish, plainly unconstitutional in its judgment on February 15.

On March 18, the court dismissed a plea by an NGO, Citizens Rights Trust, represented by senior advocate Vijay Hansaria and advocate Sneha Kalita, to direct complete disclosure of electoral bonds' details from March 1, 2018, to the court said the plea

was not "maintainable" as the NCP claimed that information on nearly 20,000 bonds worth over ₹4000 crore, bought since March 2018, was not publicly available.

Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud explained to the NCP that the February 15 judgment had explicitly mandated disclosure of electoral bonds' details only from April 12, 2019. Following the NCP's application, the court issued a "substantive modification" of the February judgment. Though the judgments had explicitly directed disclosure of electoral bonds purchased only from April 12, 2019, till February 15, 2024, a subsequent order of the court in the same case on March 11, 2024, had specifically instructed the Election Commission of India to "publish the details of the information which was supplied to this court in pursuance of its interim orders [April 12, 2019, and November 2, 2023] on its official website".

2019 order: The April 12, 2019, order of the top court had required political parties which had received donor information through electoral bonds to

submit to the Election Commission of India (ECI) the "detailed particulars" of the donors as against each bond and the "full particulars" of the bank account to which the amount was credited and the date of each such credit. On November 2 last year, the court had directed the ECI to update this data till September 30, 2023, and hand it over to the court.

So, the March 11 order had already extended the ambit of the judgment to the period prior to April 12, 2019. Besides, ordering a judgment should be read in consonance with it.

Hence, the question referred to the Supreme Court has now limited complete disclosure to electoral bonds post April 2019, and not to those already encashed from March 1, 2018.

**ED attaches assets of businessman in chopper deal case**

**Deveah K. Pandey**  
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has provisionally attached immovable properties worth ₹16.57 crore belonging to businessman Shriyan Gupta, who is an accused in the ₹3,700-crore AgustaWestland VVIP chopper deal bribery case.

The attached assets are in the form of land or farmhouses located in a posh locality of Delhi. On Monday, the Central agency alleged that Mr. Gupta, who is a former managing director of Kinmar, MGF, had received "proceeds of crime" in the company named Natville Overseas Inc., Switzerland; Timekeeper Limited, British Virgin Islands (BVI); Hall Park Holdings Limited, U.K., and others.

"The proceeds of crime were received from a shell company based out of Mauritius, which had re-

ceived the kickbacks in the defence deal from Agusta Spa, Italy. The ED had also filed a prosecution complaint dated February 10, 2022, against accused Mr. Gupta. Presently, extradition proceedings against Mr. Gupta are underway as he had fled the country in November 2019," said the agency.

According to the ED, kickbacks amounting to ₹70 million were paid by Agusta Westland for influencing the deal for supply of 12 VVIP choppers in its favour and for subsequent payment of bribes to certain Air Force officials, bureaucrats, and politically influential persons in India, through a complex web of transactions. The tender documents for the VVIP helicopters forbade engaging of any middlemen and paying of kickbacks in any form for a favourable decision.



Personnel from Indian and U.S. navies during the tri-service exercise. PA

**India-U.S. tri-service exercise Tiger Triumph commences**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Tiger Triumph, the tri-service exercise between India and the U.S., commenced on Monday and will continue till March 31. "The exercise is aimed at

developing interoperability for conducting HADR operations and refining Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to enable rapid and smooth coordination between forces of both countries," the Navy said. The harbour phase is scheduled for March 18 to 25. Personnel from both navies would participate in

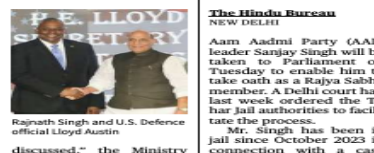
training visits, subject matter expert exchanges, sports events and social interactions, the Navy said. The integrity pact in the Harbour Phase, the ships would sail for the sea phase and undertake maritime, amphibious and HADR operations in accordance with injected situations, it added.

**In call to Rajnath, U.S. official lauds Navy's anti-piracy operation**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin, appreciated the important role being played by the Indian Navy in conducting anti-piracy operations in the Indian Ocean Region. This was conveyed during a telephone conversation with Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday.

The comments come against the backdrop of the over 40-hour anti-piracy operation 1600 NM from India that led to the surrender of 17 crew members of the merchant vessel Rishabh and the capture of two terrorists. The two ministers discussed ways and means to strengthen the India-U.S. defence cooperation road map which was concluded last year. Other defence industrial cooperation issues such as repair of U.S. naval ships in Indian shipyards were also briefly



Rajnath Singh and U.S. Defence official Lloyd Austin

discussed. The Ministry of External Affairs also discussed a range of bilateral, regional security and defence cooperation issues, the Ministry said. The ministers discussed bilateral events such as the INDUS-X Summit and the bilateral tri-service "Tiger Triumph" which commenced in India on Monday.

**Court allows jailed AAP leader to take oath as MP**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Sanjay Singh will be taken to Parliament on Tuesday to enable him to take oath as a Rajya Sabha member. A Delhi court had last week ordered the Bihar jail authorities to facilitate the process.

Mr. Singh has been in jail since October 2023 in connection with a case pertaining to the scrapped Delhi excise policy. While travelling to Parliament, Mr. Singh will not be permitted to use a mobile phone. He is neither permitted to speak to anyone nor to address the press or hold any public meeting. The court made it clear that his family or lawyer. Special Judge M.K. Nagpal, Delhi, directed the jail Superintendent to ensure adequate security arrangements for Mr. Singh's visit to Parliament.



**In formation:** Personnel from Indian and U.S. navies during the tri-service exercise. PIB

# India-U.S. tri-service exercise Tiger Triumph commences

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Tiger Triumph, the tri-service Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) exercise between India and the U.S. commenced on the Eastern seaboard on Monday and will continue till March 31. “The exercise is aimed at

developing interoperability for conducting HADR operations and refining Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to enable rapid and smooth coordination between forces of both countries,” the Navy said. The harbour phase is scheduled for March 18 to 25. Personnel from both navies would participate in

training visits, subject matter expert exchanges, sports events and social interactions, the Navy said.

On completion of the Harbour Phase, the ships would sail for the sea phase and undertake maritime, amphibious and HADR operations in accordance with injected situations, it added.



CANADA

NEW HAMPSHIRE

MAINE

NEW YORK

MASSACHUSETTS

RHODE ISLAND

PENNSYLVANIA

CONNECTICUT

MARYLAND

NEW JERSEY

DELAWARE

UNITED STATES

VIRGINIA

NORTH CAROLINA

SOUTH CAROLINA

ATLANTIC OCEAN

PACIFIC OCEAN

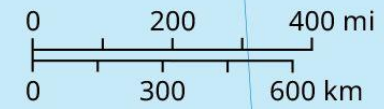
GEORGIA

**EASTERN SEABOARD**

FLORIDA

MEXICO

Gulf of Mexico



# JOINT MILITARY EXERCISES OF INDIA

Sl. No.	Country	Exercise
1	Australia	Ex AUSTRALIA HIND, Ex AUSINDEX, EX PITCH BLACK
2	Bangladesh	Ex SAMPRITI, IN-BN CORPAT, IN-BN BILAT, IN-BN SF EXERCISE, TABLE TOP EX, SAMVEDNA
3	Brazil & South Africa	IBSAMAR
4	China	Ex HAND IN HAND
5	Egypt	Ex CYCLONE
6	France	Ex SHAKTI, Ex VARUNA, GARUDA
7	Indonesia	Ex GARUDA SHAKTI, IND-INDO CORPAT, IND-INDO BILAT
8	Israel	Ex BLUE FLAG
9	Japan	Ex DHARMA GUARDIAN, Ex JIMEX
10	Kazakhstan	Ex KAZIND
11	Kyrgyzstan	Ex KHANJAR
12	Malaysia	Ex HARIMAU SHAKTI, Ex IN-RMN BILAT, HOP EX
13	Maldives	Ex EKUVERIN, EX EK ATI LX
14	Mongolia	Ex NOMADIC ELEPHANT
15	Myanmar	Ex 1MBEX, IMCOR, IN-MN BILAT, TABLE TOP EX
16	Nepal	Ex SURYA KIRAN
17	Oman	Ex AL NAGAH, NASEEM-AL-BAHR, Ex EASTERN BRIDGE
18	Qatar	ZA IR AL BAHR
19	Russia	EX INDRA, EX AVIAINDRA
20	Seychelles	EX LAMITIYE
21	Singapore	SIMBEX, JOINT MILITARY TRAINING
22	Sri Lanka	Ex MITRA SHAKTI, SLINEX, IN-SLN SF Ex, SAMVEDNA
23	Thailand	Ex MAITREE, INDO-THAI CORPAT, Ex SIAM BHARAT
24	UAE	DESERT EAGLE
25	UK	Ex AJEY WARRIOR, KONKAN, INDRADHANUSH



IN BRIEF



4 coaches of superfast train derail in Ajmer; no casualties

Four general coaches and the engine of the Sabarmati-Agra superfast train derailed near Madar railway station in Rajasthan's Ajmer district early on Monday. There were no casualties and no one suffered serious injuries in the incident. Rescue teams from the Railway Protection Force and the Government Railway Police rushed to the spot. The incident occurred at 1 a.m., when the passengers heard a loud noise and felt a jerk. Rail traffic on the track was disrupted, leading to the cancellation of six trains and rerouting of two. A few passengers, who sustained minor injuries, were given first aid on the spot. Northern Railway sources said the restoration work was started promptly.

Ukraine's Foreign Minister likely to visit India this month

Ukraine Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba is expected to visit India later this month, a diplomatic source has confirmed. This comes just days after National Security Adviser Ajit Doval spoke to Andriy Yermak over the phone. Mr. Yermak is head of the office of the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy. "We also understand that in parallel with the ongoing fight waged by our defenders and all our people, we must do everything possible, use all diplomatic opportunities to elaborate a joint plan to achieve a lasting and just peace," Mr. Yermak had said. A visit by Mr. Kuleba will be keenly awaited as it will be the first visit by a senior Ukrainian official to India since the war began.

Uttarakhand trade body rallies against 'outsiders'

Ishita Mishra NEW DELHI

A campaign led by a traders' body in Dharchula town of Uttarakhand has asked people to not give shops and houses on rent to 'outsiders', especially businessmen, flaring up tension in the area. "Prantiya Udyog Vyapaar Mandal" Dharchula has cancelled the registrations of 91 shops in Dharchula over the last 40 days. "Our organisation is meeting all the landlords who have rented their shops and houses to 'outsiders', to create awareness that these people are not just a threat to the jobs and income opportunities, but also to national security as our country is a border territory," said its general secretary, Mahesh Gabrayal.

Spring season 'disappearing' in many States, shows study

Analysis of records since 1970 reveals increased warming between Dec. and Feb. across country; at 2.3 degrees Celsius, Manipur records the biggest jump in temperature in the winter months

Jacob Koshy NEW DELHI

Indian States have been gradually registering a withdrawal of spring, a period of relatively benign weather between the winter of January and the scorching summer of April, a 50-year analysis of meteorological records suggests.

Researchers from the agency Climate Trends calculated the monthly average temperature for 33 States and Union Territories from 1970 to the present. This was the period during which the impact of global warming has been empirically observed and for which consistent data exist. For each State or Union Territory, the rate of warming for each month was compared with each three-month meteorological season. For instance, in December, January, and February are considered the winter months in meteorological terminology.

Significant trend Every region analysed had a 'net warming' during winter. Manipur had the biggest change since 1970 (2.3 degrees Celsius), while Delhi had the smallest (0.2 degree Celsius). "Winter is



Researchers analysed records of 50 years, the period during which global warming impact has been empirically observed. FILE PHOTO

the fastest warming season for 12 out of the 34 States and Union Territories in January), and among the States, Ladakh (0.1 degree Celsius in December) and Uttar Pradesh (0.8 degree Celsius in January) had the lowest warming rates.

Sharp change The pattern changes dramatically between January and February. All regions have warmed in February but the warming is especially pronounced in many of the regions that showed cooling or low warming in the previous months. Jammu and Kashmir had the highest warming (3.1 degree Celsius) and Telangana had the lowest (0.4 degree Celsius).

In northern India, the contrast between January trends (cooling or slight warming) and February (strong warming) implied that these regions now have the potential for abrupt transitions from cool winter-like temperatures to the much warmer conditions that traditionally occurred in March.

The biggest jump in warming rates occurred in Rajasthan, where the warming in February was 2.6 degrees Celsius higher than in January. A total of nine States and Union Territories showed a net February difference of more than 2 degrees Celsius: Rajasthan, Haryana, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Ladakh, Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir, and Uttarakhand.

Meteorologists have earlier ascribed the warming of winter in South India and the lack of rainfall in the North in winter due to an aberration in the pattern of Western Disturbances and the jet streams, winds that originate in the Mediterranean and bring moisture to North India during winter.

Centre notifies rules allowing transfer of 'captive' elephants

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

The Centre has notified a set of rules called the Captive Elephant (Transfer or Transport) Rules, 2024 that liberalise the conditions under which elephants may be transferred within or between States.

The circumstances under which captive elephants can be transferred are when an owner is no longer in a position to maintain the elephant, the elephant will likely have a better upkeep than in the present circumstances or when a State's Chief Wildlife Warden "deems it fit and proper" in the circumstances of the case for better upkeep of the elephant.

Before a transfer within a State, an elephant's health has to be certified by a veterinarian and the Deputy Conservator of Forests must establish that the animal's current habitat and prospective habitat are suitable. The Chief Wildlife Warden, on receipt of such documents, may reject or approve the transfer.

If the transfer involves moving the elephant outside a State, similar conditions apply. Before a transfer is effected, the "genetic profile" of the elephant has to be registered with the Ministry of Environment,



A vet has to certify that the elephant is fit for travel, states one of the rules.

Forest and Climate Change. Other conditions - a mahout and an elephant assistant should accompany the animal, a health certificate, a quarantine period before the transfer and more - are also part of the rules.

On August 2022, the Wildlife Protection Act explicitly prohibited the trade in wildlife including both wild and captive elephants. However, amendments to the Act brought in an exemption that for the first time allowed captive elephants to be moved. A Parliamentary Committee, led by Congress Rajya Sabha MP, Jairam Ramesh, had recommended the deletion of this exemption clause for elephants. The final version of the amended Act, however, retains the clause.

Vaccine for dengue may be out in markets by mid-2026, says IIL

R. Sujatha CHENNAI

Ishita Mishra NEW DELHI

A campaign led by a traders' body in Dharchula town of Uttarakhand has asked people to not give shops and houses on rent to 'outsiders', especially businessmen, flaring up tension in the area. "Prantiya Udyog Vyapaar Mandal" Dharchula has cancelled the registrations of 91 shops in Dharchula over the last 40 days. "Our organisation is meeting all the landlords who have rented their shops and houses to 'outsiders', to create awareness that these people are not just a threat to the jobs and income opportunities, but also to national security as our country is a border territory," said its general secretary, Mahesh Gabrayal.

Phase I trial to ensure safety, has been completed, phases to test efficacy will start soon

The findings of the first phase have already been published in peer-reviewed journals, he said. "We should have completed the trial in December but it was delayed by a few months. We wanted to release it in early 2026, but now, may be by mid-2026, we will be ready to release the vaccines," he added.

"We have completed phase I trial, which is to determine safety. It was very successful. There have been no adverse reports. We will start phase 2 and 3 trials soon," Dr. Kumar said in an interaction with The Hindu in Chennai over the

developing a vaccine for the Zika virus and for the Kyasmar Forest Disease (KFD).

The virus, first identified in 1957 in Karnataka's forests, is reported to have infected 400 to 500 people annually since then. Transmission in humans occurs through an infected tick's bite or due to contact with an infected animal, especially a sick or dead monkey.

"The ICMR (Indian Council of Medical Research) has agreed in principle to help undertake the clinical trials for KFD and we are discussing co-developing the vaccine for KFD along with the Council," Dr. Kumar said.

Akbar Ali, 34, Rizevan Alam, 23, Mohammad Waheed, 19, Mohan Kumar, 27, Ramzan Ali, 28, and Nasimuddin, 24, were declared dead at a private health facility at Metiabruz on Sunday.

8 killed as building under construction in Kolkata collapses; Mamata visits site

Shiv Sahay Singh KOLKATA

Eight persons, two of them women, were killed and several injured at a five-storey building under construction in the Garden Reach area of Kolkata collapsed late on Sunday night.

The incident occurred around 11:49 p.m. The building came crashing down on nearby shanties. Those who died in the incident were a woman, Begam, 45, and Hasina Khatoun, 60, - were declared dead at a private health facility at Metiabruz on Sunday.

Akbar Ali, 34, Rizevan Alam, 23, Mohammad Waheed, 19, Mohan Kumar, 27, Ramzan Ali, 28, and Nasimuddin, 24, were declared dead at the State SSKM Hospital on Monday. Rescue workers were busy working throughout the area where those trapped underneath through the night. While 18 persons were rescued, five of them were discharged and are undergoing treatment at the SSKM Hospital and a private

A rescue operation was carried out well into Monday morning to free people trapped under the rubble of the fallen building. (1)

clered dead at the State SSKM Hospital on Monday. Rescue workers were busy working throughout the area where those trapped underneath through the night. While 18 persons were rescued, five of them were discharged and are undergoing treatment at the SSKM Hospital and a private

and took stock of rescue efforts. She also met the injured at a nearby health facility.

Speaking to journalists, she raised concerns about whether permission was taken for such construction. "I am not sure whether permission was taken for the building. He said no," Ms. Banerjee said.

"We shall provide compensation for the next of kin of the deceased and for the injured persons. We stand by the distressed families and rescue operations shall continue," she posted on social media.

The State government announced a compensation of ₹5 lakh for the next of kin of each of the deceased and ₹1 lakh to the injured. Local people alleged that the building was constructed illegally after filling up a waterbody.

FAITH

Gajendra Moksha message

Huhu, a Gandharva (celestial musician), was once sporting in a lake. Sage Devla too entered for a bath at that time. The naughty Gandharva pulled the sage by the leg under water and played a prank. The sage cursed Huhu to be born as an alligator.

Gajendra, the king of elephants, was known by the name of Indradrumma in his previous birth. When Agastya visited the kingdom, the king had shown scant respect and humiliated the sage. As the king was gripped by infatuation like an elephant, the sage cursed him to be born as...

Smt. Subhadhrajai said in a discourse that the lives of both the Gandharva and the king are the best examples not to incur the disrespect or wrath of true devotees of God (Bhagavatha Apachara).

The alligator indignantly seized the elephant by the foot in the lake when it came to drink water. For pulling the legs of the sage Devla and playing a prank, the alligator was destined to cling to the foot of Gajendra.

There are various ways of deriving God's blessings, such as penance, performing yagas, and following the rituals stipulated in the scriptures (Anusthanam).

For these, a person needs to be well-qualified and trained. The easiest way is to chant the name of God with deep devotion.

A sincere prayer by Gajendra prompted Lord Vishnu to transcend down and rescue the elephant. Reciting Gajendra Sthuthi gives a person the power to face any problem in life and come out of difficult situations.

Crossword puzzle grid with clues and a 14126 score.

- 11. Constant hail and rain at the borders leading to a tunnel (6)
12. Rice came running for dinner (3,5)
13. Function outside college? Be sure really (9)
14. Tired judge and lawyer starting first brief (5)
15. Clash in college union (5)
16. One very clueless, lacking line and class to pinch a type of figure (8)
17. Immature, green and soulless, partying behind university (8)
18. Incharge with commanding officer, guards and stranger (6)
19. Indian cricketers, say, use lobby in trouble (4,2,4)
20. Aroused belligerently started the first victim (6)
21. Leaders from Tamil Nadu initiated regarding antagonism, revolution, equality leading to ousting (6)
22. Withdrawn-made decree (6)
Down
1. Tamil Nadu's basic problem is saving north Adyar inlet, one getting huge waves (7)
2. Britain-Kemalia Harris, say, on retirement before start of election (5)
3. Tost found at bridge near corner road (7)
4. Scrap metal one pushed forward (6)
5. Drive, say Centre often picked interpreter of scriptural text (7)
6. Lift given by new valet behind the last gate on East (7)
7. Small weaknesses lead to pains masking problem by soundbites (8,5)
8. There's no answer to son of Cesar converting to a Catholic, say (9)
9. Rugby team coined by league in Spain revealed (4,3)
10. Release on screen (7)
11. Drive, say Centre often picked interpreter of scriptural text (7)
12. Be bold enough to capture North, some damage can be repaired (6)
13. Fish found on coast (5)

Sudoku puzzle grid with numbers and difficulty rating.

Solution to previous puzzle and solution to yesterday's Sudoku.

- Across
1. Stenographer is tawdry, lacking substance with constant small talks primarily (6)
4. Seek a point (6)
5. Press coverage ultimately was massive (4)
10. Ancient Greek Engineer - his dream? Vacate Crete to rebuild (10)

# Spring season 'disappearing' in many States, shows study

Analysis of records since 1970 reveals increased warming between Dec. and Feb. across country; at 2.3 degrees Celsius, Manipur records the biggest jump in temperature in the winter months

**Jacob Koshy**  
NEW DELHI

**I**ndian States have been gradually registering a withdrawal of spring, a period of relatively benign weather between the winter of January and the scorching summer of April, a 50-year analysis of meteorological records suggests.

Researchers from the agency Climate Trends calculated the monthly average temperature for 33 States and Union Territories from 1970 to the present. This was the period during which the impact of global warming has been empirically observed and for which consistent data exist. For each State or Union Territory, the rate of warming for each month was compared with each three-month meteorological season. For instance, December, January, and February are considered the winter months in meteorological terminology.

## Significant trend

Every region analysed had a 'net warming' during winter. Manipur had the biggest change since 1970 (2.3 degrees Celsius), while Delhi had the smallest (0.2 degree Celsius). "Winter is



Researchers analysed records of 50 years, the period during which global warming impact has been empirically observed. FILE PHOTO

the fastest warming season for 12 out of the 34 States and territories considered. This is second only to autumn, which was the fastest warming season in 13 regions," the analysts noted.

There were significant differences in the pattern of temperature changes during the winter. The southern part of the country had "strong" warming in December and January. Sikkim (2.4 degrees Celsius) and Manipur (2.1 degrees Celsius) had the largest changes in temperature in December and January, respectively. The northern part of the country had weaker warming and even cooling during December and January.

Delhi had the lowest

rates during this period (-0.2 degree Celsius in December, -0.8 degree Celsius in January), and among the States, Ladakh (0.1 degree Celsius in December) and Uttar Pradesh (-0.8 degree Celsius in January) had the lowest warming rates.

## Sharp change

The pattern changes dramatically between January and February. All regions have warmed in February but the warming is especially pronounced in many of the regions that showed cooling or low warming in the previous months. Jammu and Kashmir had the highest warming (3.1 degrees Celsius) and Telangana had the lowest (0.4 degrees Celsius).

In northern India, the contrast between January trends (cooling or slight warming) and February (strong warming) implied that these regions now have the potential for abrupt transitions from cool winter-like temperatures to the much warmer conditions that traditionally occurred in March.

The biggest jump in warming rates occurred in Rajasthan, where the warming in February was 2.6 degrees Celsius higher than in January. A total of nine States and Union Territories showed a January-February difference of more than 2 degrees Celsius: Rajasthan, Haryana, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Ladakh, Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir, and Uttarakhand. "This supports the reports that it feels like spring has disappeared in many parts of India," the report noted.

Meteorologists have earlier ascribed the warming of winter in South India and the lack of rainfall in the North in winter due to an aberration in the pattern of Western Disturbances and the jet stream, winds that originate in the Mediterranean and bring moisture to North India during winter.

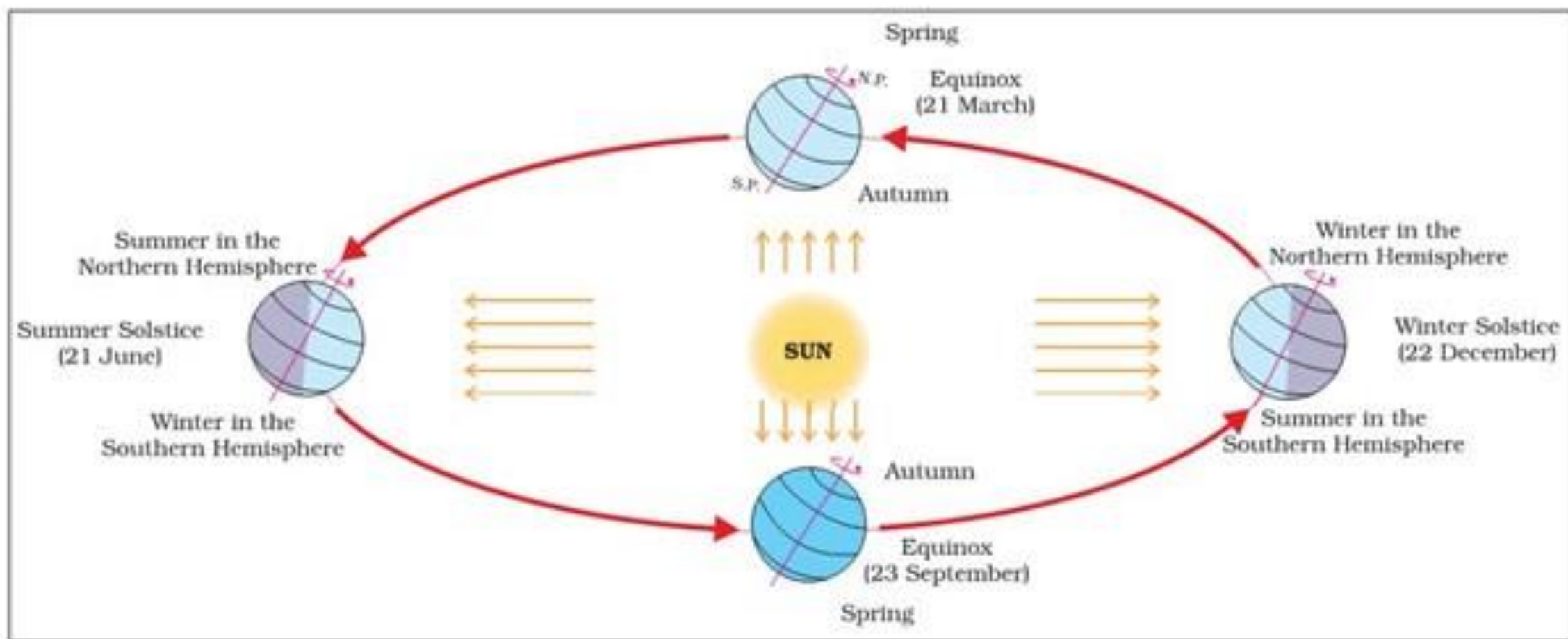


Figure : : Revolution of the Earth and Seasons

# Vaccine for dengue may be out in markets by mid-2026, says IIL

**R. Sujatha**

CHENNAI

Vaccine for dengue could be available commercially as early as mid-2026. Indian Immunologicals Ltd. (IIL) has finished the first phase of clinical trials to determine the safety of the vaccine, the company's managing director K. Anand Kumar said. The second and third phases of trials to test the vaccine's efficacy are expected to begin shortly. IIL is a wholly owned subsidiary of the National Dairy Development Board, established in 1982.

"We have completed phase 1 trial, [which is] to determine safety. It was very successful. There have been no adverse reports. We will start phase 2 and 3 trials soon," Dr. Kumar said in an interaction with *The Hindu* in Chennai over the

**Phase 1 trial, to ensure safety, has been completed; phases to test efficacy will start soon**

past weekend.

The findings of the first phase have already been published in peer-reviewed journals, he said. "We should have completed the trial in December but it was delayed by a few months. We wanted to release it in early 2026 but now, may be by mid-2026, we will be ready to release the vaccines," he added.

"For dengue, we got the virus strains from the National Institute of Virology. We will release the results of the clinical trials," he explained of the protocol requirements for any such scientific work.

The company is also de-

veloping a vaccine for the Zika virus and for the Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD).

The virus, first identified in 1957 in Karnataka's forests, is reported to have infected 400 to 500 people annually since then. Transmission in humans occurs through an infected tick's bite or due to contact with an infected animal, especially a sick or dead monkey.

"The ICMR (Indian Council of Medical Research) has agreed in principle to help undertake, bear all the cost for clinical trials for the Zika vaccine and we are discussing co-developing the vaccine for KFD along with the Council," Dr. Kumar said.

In January this year, the company launched the Hepatitis A vaccine, Havisure. The product has taken off well, Dr. Kumar said.

# Dengue in India & World

## Year-wise cases in State

EACH YEAR, CLOSE TO **50 MILLION** DENGUE INFECTIONS GET REPORTED GLOBALLY

• Out of these, **70%** of dengue cases are from Asia

• India contributes anywhere between **34% and 40%** of dengue cases in Asia

• A University of Oxford study says that India has maximum number of dengue cases in world

The study indicates there are **33 million** dengue cases in India

• The first dengue case was reported in India way back in **1946**

• After that, there was no major outbreak for two decades

• First major epidemic occurred in Kolkata in **1963**

2014 **704**

2015 **1,831**

2016 **4,037**

2017 **5,369**

2018 **4,592**

2019 **1,500**

(Till Aug first week)

## PRECAUTIONS & PREVENTIVE METHODS

• Keep home, environment and surroundings clean

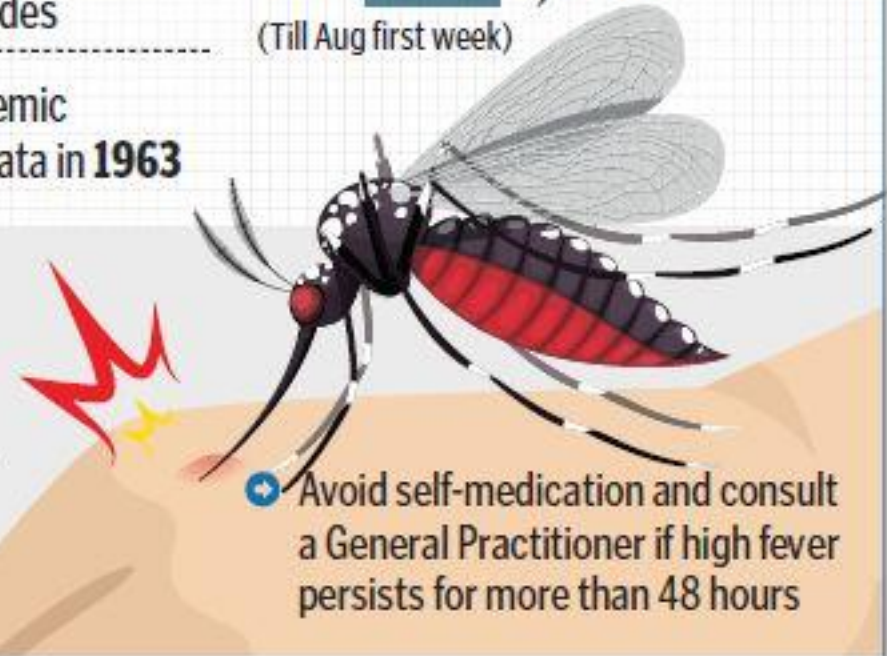
• Remove stagnant water from containers, dumped tyres, air-coolers etc.

• Use mosquito repellents, medicated screens, coils and sprays

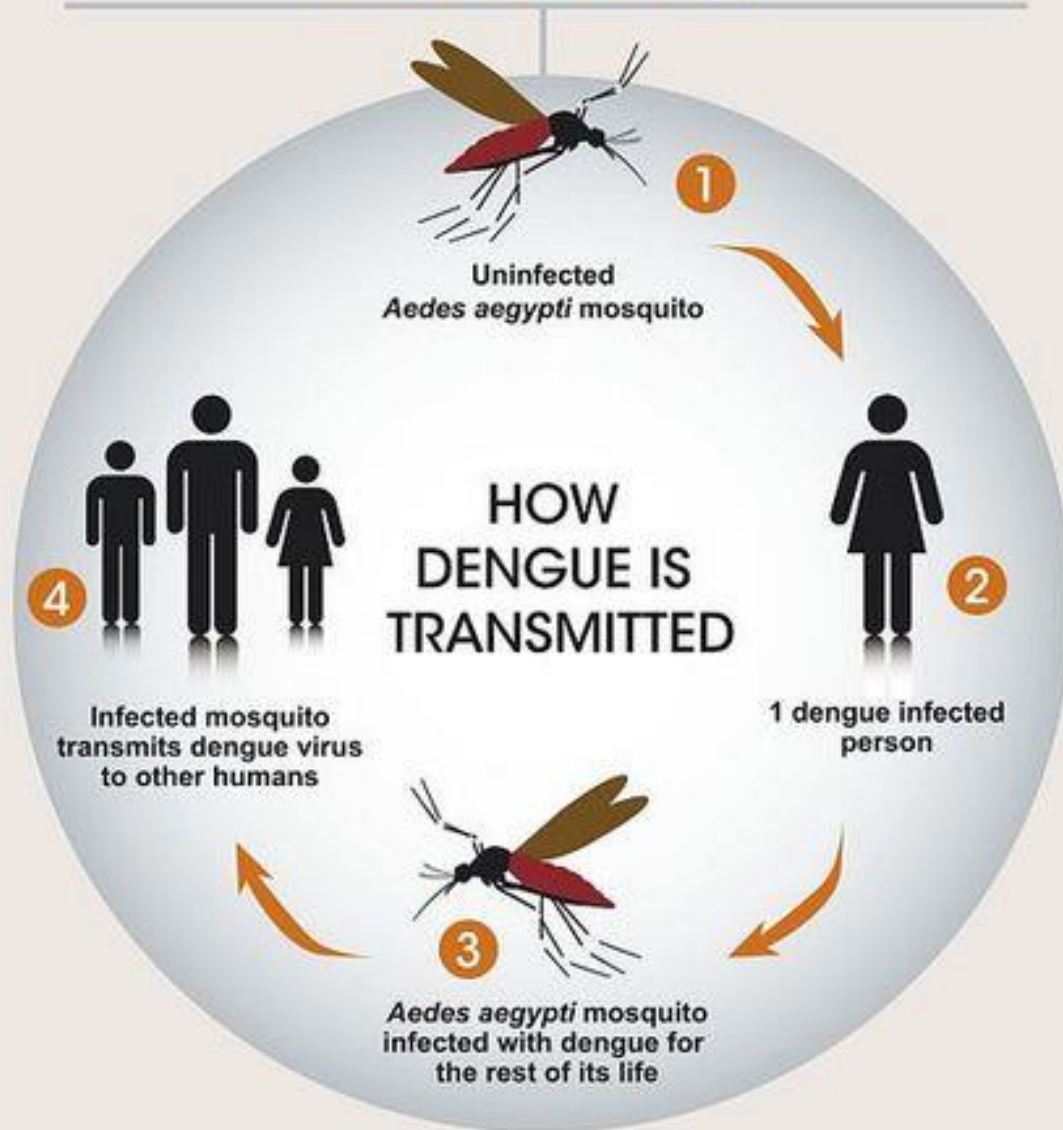
• Observe dry day once a week

• Keep drains well maintained and repair chokes

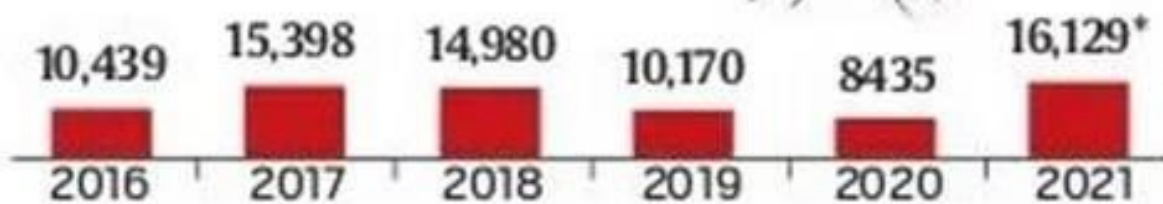
• Avoid self-medication and consult a General Practitioner if high fever persists for more than 48 hours



# DENGUE



# TRACKING THE SPIKE

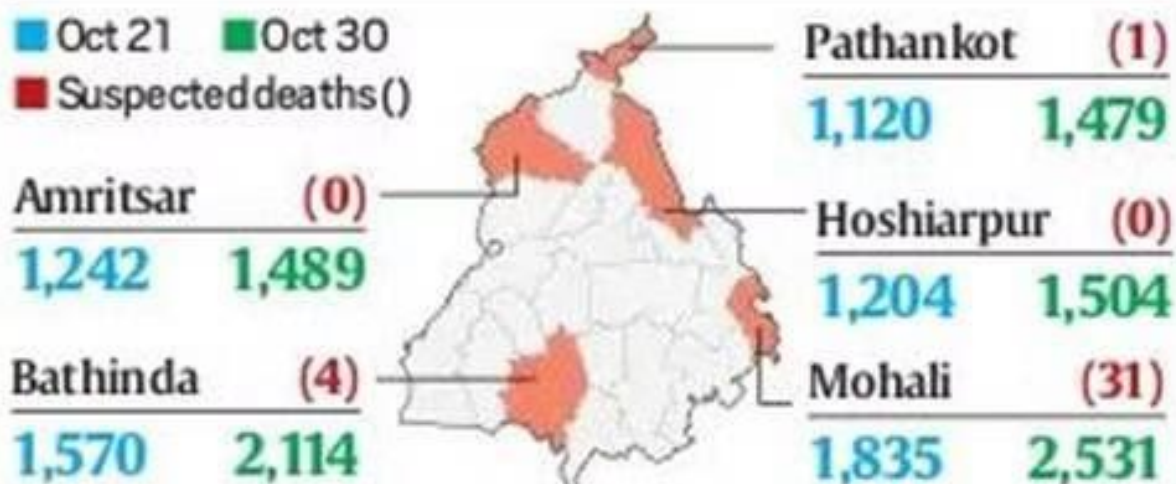


\*Till October 30

Cases reported are from Jan to Dec

## DISTRICTS WITH MAXIMUM DENGUE CASES

■ Oct 21 ■ Oct 30  
■ Suspected deaths()



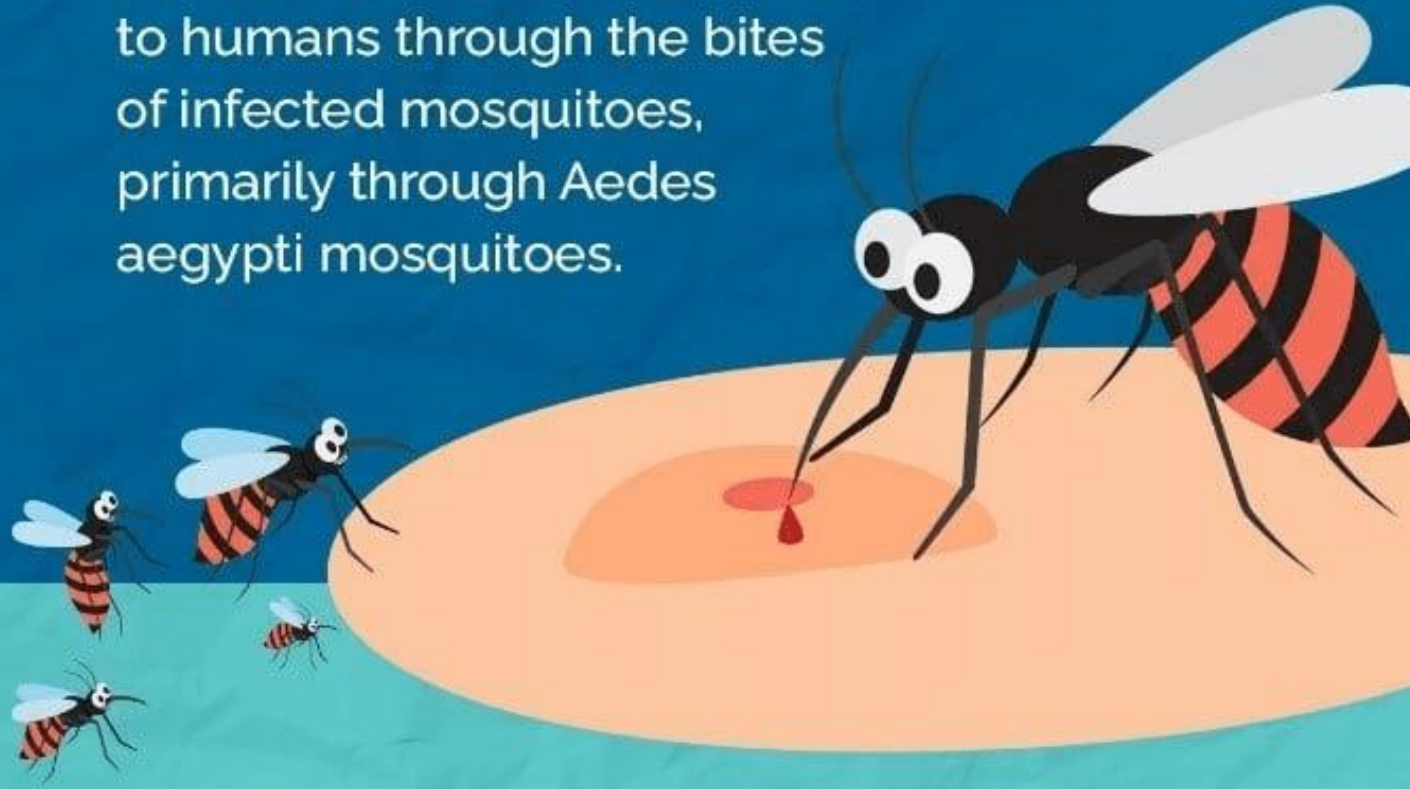
### TOTAL SUSPECTED DENGUE DEATHS IN

■ 2021: 61  
■ Till October 26: 40

Muktsar, Ludhiana, Ropar and Faridkot have reported four suspected deaths each, while three suspected deaths have happened in Jalandhar till now

# DENGUE

is a viral infection transmitted to humans through the bites of infected mosquitoes, primarily through *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes.



It causes a flu-like illness and sometimes, a potentially **life-threatening complication** called **severe dengue**.



**IN BRIEF**



SEV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

**Lanning put her heart and soul: Capitals coach Batty**

Delhi Capitals coach Jonathan Batty lauded skipper Meg Lanning whose tactical acumen helped the side take the WPL final against Royal Challengers Bangalore at the Arun Jaitley Stadium here on Sunday. "She puts her heart and soul into this competition at Delhi Capitals. She's been fantastic. I guess she is disappointed as we all are, we felt we didn't do ourselves justice today. Full credit to RCB for winning tonight."



**Advani in Hall Of Fame at the World Billiards Museum**

India's ace cueist Pankaj Advani has been inducted to the Hall Of Fame at the World Billiards Museum in Shangrao City, Yushan, China. Seven-time World Cup winner in 40-20, Ronnie O'Sullivan was also bestowed the honour.

**BFI and High Performance Director Dunne part ways**

Boarding Federation of India (BFI) on Monday announced that it has parted ways with High Performance Director Bernard Dunne, adding the Indian team will continue to train under foreign coach Dennis Dnairrak. Dunne, who was appointed as the HPD in October 2022, had sent in his resignation after the Indian team's dismal performance at this month's first World Olympic Qualifiers in Italy.

**Tanzid and Rishad help Bangladesh clinch series**

Rishad Hossain played an attacking innings of 48 after substitute Tanzid Hasan Tamim hit 64 off 81 balls to steer Bangladesh to a four-wicket win, and a 2-1 ODI series victory, over Sri Lanka in Chittagong on Monday. After Jarrith Lyanage's unbeset 101 guided Sri Lanka to 237/6 in 40.2 overs, Bangladesh raced to 237/6 in 40.2 overs.

**The scores:** Sri Lanka 235 in 50 overs (Lyanage 101 n.o.) lost to Bangladesh 237/6 in 40.2 overs (Tanzid Hasan Tamim 64, Rishad Hossain 48 n.o., Kumara 44&4, Wanindu Hasaranga 2-64). Bangladesh won by four wickets, clinches series 2-1.

**Barcelona breezes past Atletico Madrid**

Barcelona cruised to an emphatic 3-0 win at Atletico Madrid on Sunday with goals from Joao Felix, Robert Lewandowski and Ferrn Lopez, to move second in the LaLiga standings. Runaway leader Inter Milan drew 1-1 with Napoli in Serie A on Sunday after Matteo Darmian's first-half goal was cancelled out by a late header from Juan Jesus. Inter is top of the table with 76 points, 14 ahead of AC Milan in second after 29 matches.

**Results:** Atletico Madrid 0-3 Barcelona (Felix 38, Lewandowski 47, Lopez 65). (Felix 38, Lewandowski 47, Lopez 65). (Felix 38, Lewandowski 47, Lopez 65). (Felix 38, Lewandowski 47, Lopez 65).

**WFI Ad-hoc committee dissolved**

**Sports Bureau KOLKATA**  
for Olympic qualifiers were conducted by the ad-hoc committee following the Delhi High Court order.  
The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) on Monday dissolved the ad-hoc committee that ran the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI), restoring full control of the federation with the Sanjay Singh-led elected body.  
The IOA said there's no need to run the federation through the ad-hoc panel after the United World Wrestling lifted the suspension on WFI and the trials

**Veterans, young guns rising to the occasion augur well**

Having two venues, Bengaluru and New Delhi, for the second edition of the tournament has helped the Indian players test themselves under challenging and different conditions

**WPL**  
**Laxayana L**  
**NEW DELHI**

Two venues, a nail-biting last leg and an improved showing from India's domestic crop marked the second edition of the Women's Premier League. Royal Challengers Bangalore, a side which was headed towards yet another mid-table finish, course corrected in the best way possible, ultimately winning the title beating league leader Delhi Capitals.



Smriti's journey as captain turned out to be the biggest gain of WPL's second chapter. SEV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Most Valuable Player honour with 295 runs and 40 wickets to her name. Jennimah Rodrigues' 33-ball 69 against Mumbai Indians also saw her explore a way to maintain a healthy strike rate even when not clearing the fence too much. However, the lower order batters across the board have struggled to step up in crunch situations, something that cost DC the title and has hurt India several times in the past.

Two venues allowed national team players particularly to face challenging international talent in new conditions. A change in we-

which the M. Chinmaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru's small periphery and toss-bowling deficiency ahead of the next season.  
The intensity of competition makes the prospect of another team being added an exciting one, even if it comes a few seasons later. From Shabnim Ismail, who at 38, recorded the fastest delivery recorded in the women's game to 21-year-olds like Shreyanka - new age talents who know how to scorch the stage on and off the field - the women's franchise cricket ecosystem is in good hands.

**Suryakumar Yadav likely to miss MI's first two games**

**IPIL-17**  
**Anmol Karchadkar**

Suryakumar Yadav is a doubtful starter for the Mumbai Indians' first two games of the Indian Premier League (IPL), starting March 22.

While Mark Boucher, the Mumbai Indians head coach, remained non-committal about Suryakumar's availability, The Hindu understands that Suryakumar is still undergoing his rehabilitation at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Bengaluru.  
Mumbai Indians will begin its campaign with away games against Gujarat Titans (March 24) and Sunrisers Hyderabad (March 27). While the franchise is optimistic about Suryakumar joining the squad ahead of its first home game on April 1, there is no clarity about his fitness clearance.

"Surya at the moment is on the guidance of the Indian cricket team as well. Just waiting for updates on that. I don't like to micro-manage."  
"We have got a world class medical team that's in control of all of that," Boucher said on Monday during the franchise's media conference.  
"We have had a few fit-ness issues. We are always going to be in that sort of situation where we have issues as other teams are as well. We trust our medical team that they are doing the right things. If we lose

**Kolkata Knight Riders made me a successful leader, says Gambhir**

**Sports Bureau KOLKATA**

Promising to make Kolkata happy this season, Kolkata Knight Riders' mentor Gautam Gambhir said the team had made him a successful leader.

On his return to the franchise, Gambhir, the two-time Indian Premier League-winning captain of the side, said, "I didn't not make KKR successful, KKR made me a successful leader. KKR meant passion, honesty, sacrifice and it meant selflessness," said Gambhir.

"The Buss taught me a lot of things about passion. When I talk about sacrifice, this young shy boy, he has gone through so much... back and doing the same stuff year after year. I had seen his insecurities,



Suryakumar, The Hindu. FILE PHOTO: VLAD SKOBEV

Surya at the moment is on the Indian cricket team as well. Just waiting for updates on that - BOUCHER

one or two from fitness perspective, it is what it is. We just have to keep on the right track and sharp on replacements."  
It is understood that neither Suryakumar, who has been on the sidelines since last December, nor the BCCI medical team wants to rush his comeback considering his back to back for India's T20 World Cup campaign in June.

**Sports Bureau GULBARI**

Think tanks Gambhir, Pandit, and Arun would plan their strategies to make KKR come on top again. PFI

have lived through that. He (Surya) has gone on to become one of the greatest bowlers in IPL history."

"The greatest teammate, most selfless human being, someone I can take bullet for. Ryan ten doeschate taught me selflessness. When the foundation was based on such strong stuff, KKR can never go wrong."

**Chartbusters**

BATTING	Runs	Wickets	SR	50s	
Perry (RCB)	9	347	66	125.72	2
Lanning (DC)	9	331	60	123.04	4
Sharma (DC)	9	309	71	116.45	3
BOWLING	Wickets	Runs	Econ	4W/5W	
Shreyanka (RCB)	8	3.3	4/12	7.30	2/0
Asha (RCB)	10	3.2	5/22	7.13	0/1
Molnueux (RCB)	10	3.2	3/20	7.51	0/0

**Playing domestic cricket a conscious decision: Smriti**

**Laxayana L**  
**NEW DELHI**

Women's Premier League-winning Royal Challengers Bangalore captain Smriti Mandhana revealed that she had a role to play in bringing Luke Williams on as head coach here on Monday.

Having played under Williams at Southern Brave in The Hundred, Smriti admitted that his was the first name that came to her mind when the management asked her for her preference.

"I've seen Luke Williams operate for the last few years at Southern Brave and have been following his work at Adelaide Strikers as well. When the management asked me if I had anyone in mind, the name that came to my mind was that of Luke Williams," Smriti told reporters.

"The 27-year-old explained that much of the planning for the WPL was done during The Hundred and the international window.  
"Charlotte Edwards is my coach there but we'd speak from time to time on

what we needed to do in the auction and other things. The Hundred is where we started tracking a few players. Sophie Molnueux was one of them. We were playing international cricket then and my focus was entirely there but we would have the odd phone call to discuss. We're really big on playing like a family and the biggest part of the planning went into that."

Smriti also said that her decision to skip the Women's Big Bash League to play in the Indian domestic scene went a long way in her preparation for this edition of the WPL.  
"Playing domestic cricket was a conscious decision. This helped as a player and as RCB captain. I had not played domestic for a few years and sometimes when you hear names you don't recognise them or you don't get the full picture just by watching videos."

"We have a great scouting team. But when you're facing them, even as a fielder, you realise she has a spark. Also, for me as a player, I wanted to get used to Indian conditions," she explained.

privileged to be working around them (Gambhir and coach Chandrakant Pandit). Feel lucky to be having such players playing under me."

**Confident Pandit, who said the side led by Nitish Kaur did well despite the constraints last season, pointed out that about the team composition this season.**

"The balance that we have in our team, not only individuals but support staff, is important."

KKR launched the 2024 season, Gambhir said, its team jersey ahead of the 2024 season of the Indian Premier League.  
The franchise presented 19 of its players, including Shreyas, vice-captain Nitish, costliest buy Mitchell Starc, comeback man Manish Pandey, and match winners Andre Russell and Rinku Singh at the event.



Think tanks Gambhir, Pandit, and Arun would plan their strategies to make KKR come on top again. PFI

Coming to the upcoming season, Gambhir said, "He (Gshah Rukh Khan) told me the same thing that he had told me when I joined in 2011."

"This is your franchise, make it or break it. I can assure that whenever I leave this place we will be in a much better place."

Captain Shreyas Iyer said, "I feel honoured and

**Swiatek sweeps past Sakkari; Alcaraz defends his title at Indian Wells**

**TENNIS**  
**Associated Press**

**INDIAN WELLS**  
Carlos Alcaraz defeated Daniil Medvedev 7-6(5), 6-1 for the second straight year in the ATP Masters 1000 event on Sunday, earning his first title since winning the 2022 Indian Wells Open.  
Iga Swiatek beat Maria Sakkari 6-0, 6-1 to defend her title, with Swiatek earning just 21 million each for their wins.

tournament - an average of 3.5 games per match. Medvedev lost 6-3, 6-2 last year in the Southern California desert.  
Alcaraz is the first man to win the Indian Wells title since Novak Djokovic won three in a row from 2014-16.  
Swiatek improved to 20-2 this year, with her wins leading the WTA Tour. It was a repeat of the 6-0, 6-1 win over Swiatek bear Sakkari 6-4, 6-1.  
Alcaraz and Swiatek earned \$1 million each for their wins.



Champions both... Swiatek and Alcaraz AFP



## Advani in Hall Of Fame at the World Billiards Museum

India's ace cueist Pankaj Advani has been inducted to the Hall Of Fame at the World Billiards Museum in Shangrao City, Yushan, China. Seven-time World snooker champion Ronnie O'Sullivan was also bestowed the honour.

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## BIGGEST AI DEAL IN THE OFFING?

# Apple in talks with Google to use Gemini for iPhones

MARK GURMAN  
March 18

**APPLE IS IN** talks to build Google's Gemini artificial intelligence (AI) engine into the iPhone, according to people familiar with the situation, setting the stage for a blockbuster agreement that would shake up the AI industry.

The two companies are in active negotiations to let Apple license Gemini, Google's set of generative AI models, to power some new features coming to the iPhone software this year, said the people, who asked not to be identified. Apple also recently held discussions with OpenAI and has considered using its model, according to the people.

If a deal between Apple and Google comes to fruition, it would

### BONDING OVER AI

■ If a deal between Apple and Google comes to fruition, it would build upon the two companies' search partnership



build upon the two companies' search partnership.

For years, Alphabet's Google has paid Apple billions of dollars annually to make its search engine



■ Since early last year, Apple has been testing its own large language model, but the tech remains inferior to tools from Google and other rivals

■ Apple also recently held discussions with OpenAI and has considered using its model

the default option in the Safari web browser on the iPhone and other devices. The two parties haven't decided the terms or branding of an AI agreement or

finalised how it would be implemented, the people said.

A deal would give Gemini a key edge with billions of potential users. But it also may be a sign that Apple

isn't as far along with its AI efforts as some might have hoped — and threatens to draw further antitrust scrutiny of both companies.

Apple is preparing new capabilities as part of iOS 18 — the next version of the iPhone operating system — based on its own AI models. But those enhancements will be focused on features that operate on its devices, rather than ones delivered via the cloud. So, Apple is seeking a partner to do the heavy lifting of generative AI, including functions for creating images and writing essays based on simple prompts.

Spokespeople for Apple and Google declined to comment.

OpenAI didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

Since early last year, Apple has

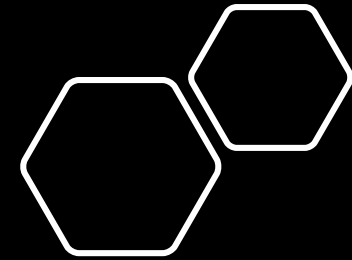
been testing its own large language model — the technology behind generative AI — codenamed Ajax. Some employees also have been trying out a basic chatbot dubbed Apple GPT. But Apple's technology remains inferior to tools from Google and other rivals, according to the people, making a partnership look like the better option.


A deal with Apple would be Google's highest-profile partnership for Gemini to date and could be a major boon for the company's AI efforts. Apple has more than 2 billion devices in active use that could potentially become home to Google Gemini later this year. In January, Samsung Electronics rolled out new smartphones with AI features powered by Gemini.

—BLOOMBERG



# India-EFTA Trade Deal



- 
- India and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) recently signed the Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA).
  - India previously rejected the inclusion of "data exclusivity" clauses in the agreement which would have restricted Indian pharmaceutical companies from producing generic drugs.
  - Now, India and EFTA agreed to exclude the most "sensitive" agricultural products and gold imports from the pact.

## What are the Key Highlights of the TEPA?

**About:** The India-EFTA trade deal was finalised a decade after initial negotiations broke down in **2013** due to disagreements.

- Recent geopolitical changes and a **shared goal to reduce dependence on China** facilitated the agreement.
- TEPA comprises 14 chapters with a main focus on market access related to **goods, rules of origin, trade facilitation, trade remedies, sanitary and phytosanitary measures**, technical barriers to trade, investment promotion, market access on services, intellectual property rights, trade and sustainable development and other legal and horizontal provisions.



- 
- EFTA Commitments:
  - To increase foreign direct investments in India by USD 100 billion over 15 years.
  - The investments do not cover foreign portfolio investment. Target to generate 1 million direct jobs in India through these investments.
  - Commitments related to Intellectual Property Rights in TEPA are at the Trade-Related Aspects of the Intellectual Property Rights level.

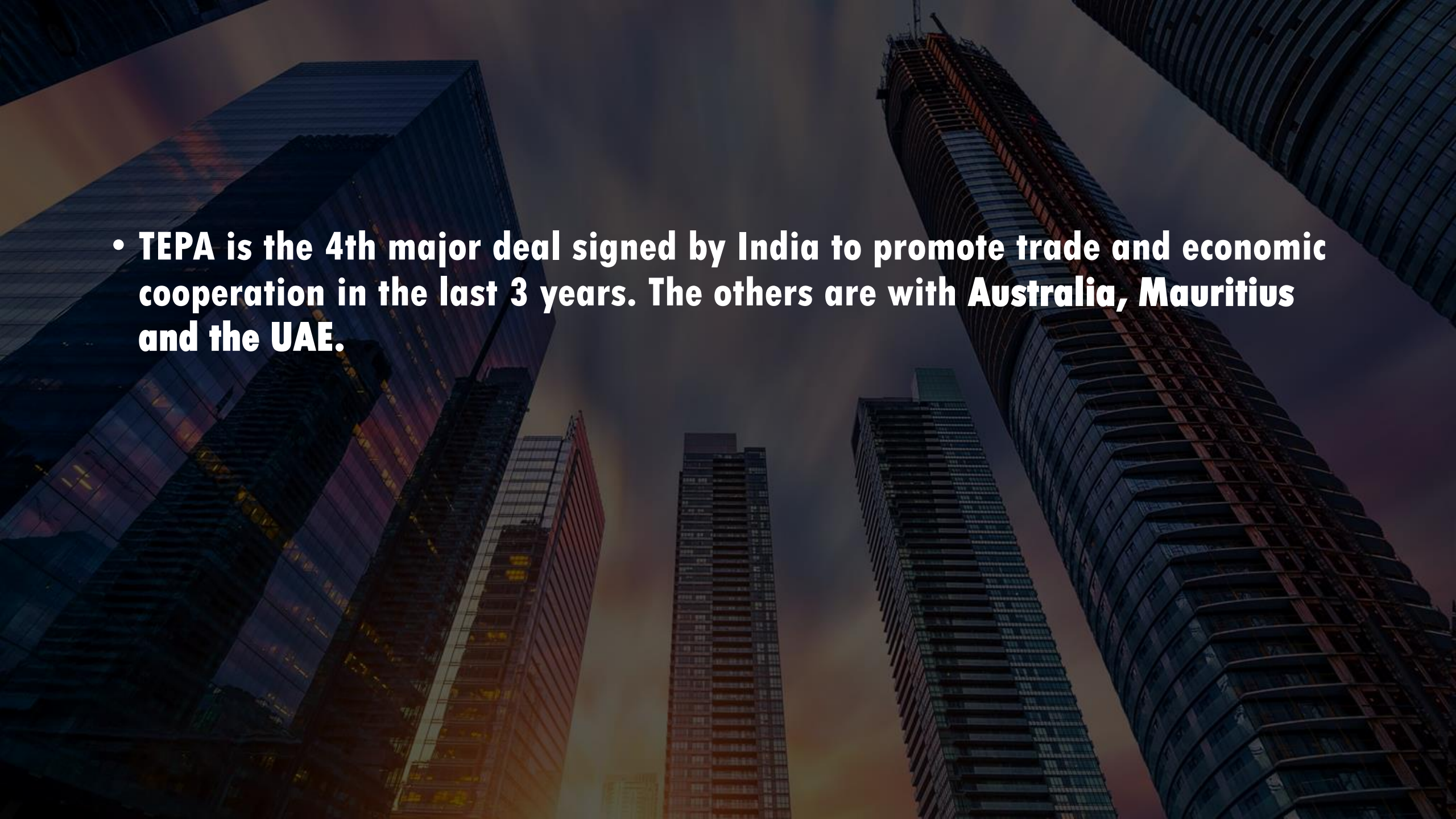
- **Tariff Offers:** EFTA offers 92.2% of tariff lines covering 99.6% of India's exports.
  - India offers 82.7% of tariff lines covering 95.3% of EFTA exports.
  - India excludes sectors like dairy, soya, coal, and sensitive agricultural products from tariff concessions.
- **Mutual Recognition:** TEPA has provisions for Mutual Recognition Agreements in Professional Services like nursing, chartered accountants, architects etc.

-



• **India and EFTA:**

- **India is the EFTA's 5th-largest trading partner after the European Union, the United States, Britain and China.**
  - **Two-way trade between India and EFTA was USD 18.65 billion in 2022-23, with a trade deficit of USD 14.8 billion for India.**
    - **Switzerland is India's largest trading partner in this bloc of nations, followed by Norway.**
  - **The biggest exports to India were pharmaceutical items (11.4%) and machinery (17.5%), while organic chemicals (27.5%) made up the majority of EFTA imports.**

- 
- **TEPA is the 4th major deal signed by India to promote trade and economic cooperation in the last 3 years. The others are with Australia, Mauritius and the UAE.**

## Free Trade Agreement (FTA) With Neighbouring Countries

- ↳ India-Sri Lanka FTA
- ↳ India-Nepal Treaty of Trade
- ↳ India-Bhutan Agreement on Trade, Commerce, and Transit

*A free trade agreement is a comprehensive deal between countries, offering preferential trade terms and tariff concessions, with a negative list excluding specific products and services.*

## Regional FTA's of India

- ↳ **India ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (11):** 10 ASEAN countries + India
- ↳ **South Asia Free Trade Agreement (7):** India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Bhutan, and the Maldives
- ↳ **Global System of Trade Preferences** (41 countries + India)

## India's CECAs and CEPAs

CECA/CEPA is broader than FTAs, addressing regulatory, trade, and economic aspects comprehensively, with CEPA having the widest scope including services, investment, etc while CECA mainly focuses on tariff and TQR rates negotiation.

- ↳ CEPA with **UAE, South Korea, Japan**
- ↳ CECA with **Singapore, Malaysia**

↳ **Others:**

- India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA)
- India-Thailand Early Harvest Scheme (EHS)
- India-Mauritius Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA)

An EHS precedes an FTA/CECA/CEPA, where negotiating countries select products for tariff liberalisation, paving way for broader trade agreements and fostering confidence.

**Preferential Trade Agreements (PTAs)**

Partners in a PTA grant preferential access to specific products by lowering duties on agreed tariff lines, maintaining a positive list of products eligible for reduced or zero tariffs.

- ↳ **Asia Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA):** Bangladesh, China, India, S. Korea, Lao PDR, Sri Lanka, and Mongolia
- ↳ **SAARC Preferential Trading Agreement (SAPTA):** Same as SAFTA
- ↳ **India-MERCOSUR PTA:** Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay and India
- ↳ India's PTA with **Chile, Afghanistan**

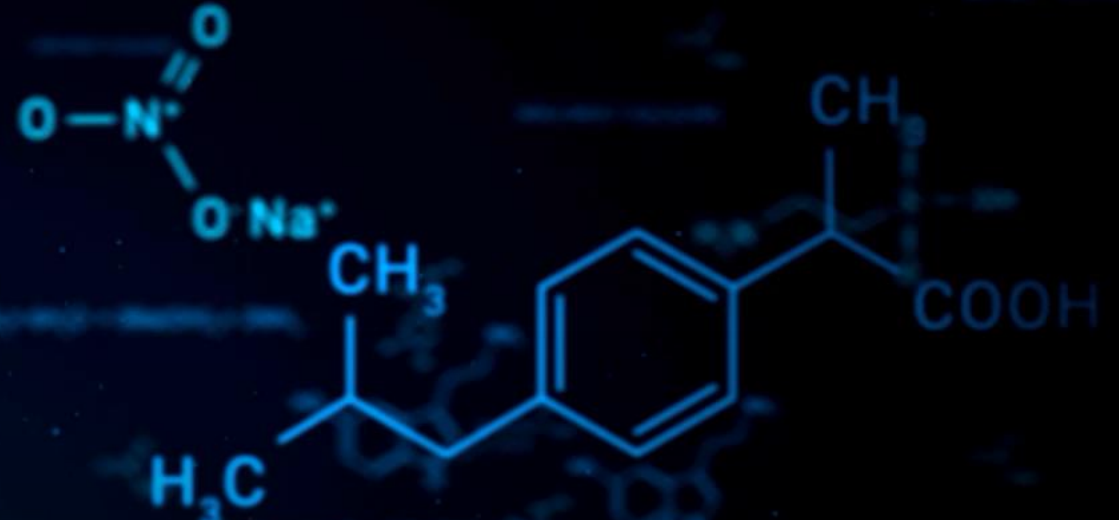
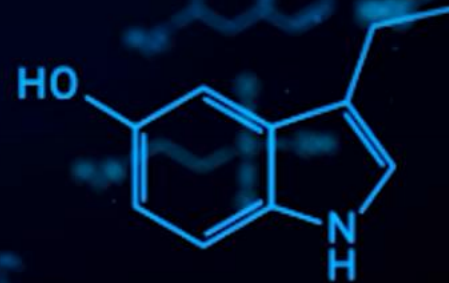
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- **Broad-based Trade and Investment Agreement (BTIA)' is sometimes seen in the news in the context of negotiations held between India and (2017)**
  - **(a) European Union**
  - **(b) Gulf Cooperation Council**
  - **(c) Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development**
  - **(d) Shanghai Cooperation Organization**

The term 'Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership' often appears in the news in the context of the affairs of a group of countries known as (2016)

- (a) G20
- (b) ASEAN
- (c) SCO
- (d) SAARC




# ETHANOL 100



The Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas launched 'ETHANOL 100' at select 183 retail outlets in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, New Delhi, and Tamil Nadu.

ETHANOL 100 is a revolutionary automotive fuel that consists of 100% ethanol. It is a biofuel produced from renewable sources such as corn, sugarcane, or other plant materials.

- 
- ETHANOL 100 is aimed at reducing dependence on fossil fuels, promoting sustainability, and contributing to a cleaner environment by lowering greenhouse gas emissions compared to traditional gasoline.
  - The initiative aligns with the vision to achieve 20% ethanol blending (E20) by 2025-26, reducing import dependency and boosting the agriculture sector.
  - The move towards ETHANOL 100 reflects a shift towards sustainable technologies and decarbonization.

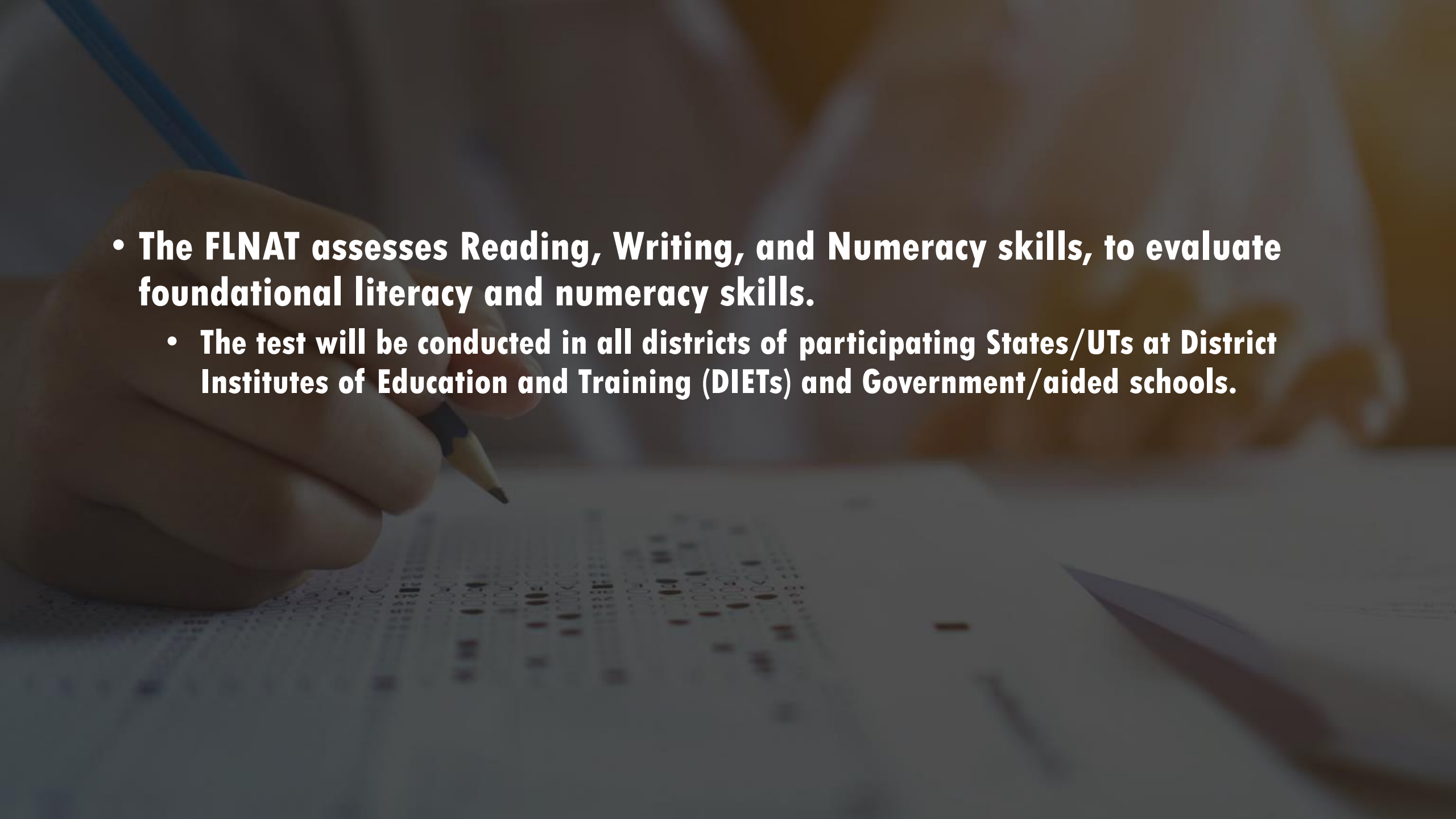
ETHANOL 100 is versatile and can be used in various vehicles, including flex-fuel vehicles (FFVs) that can run on gasoline, ethanol, or any blend of the two.

This demonstrates its practicality and potential to become a mainstream fuel option with the appropriate infrastructure.



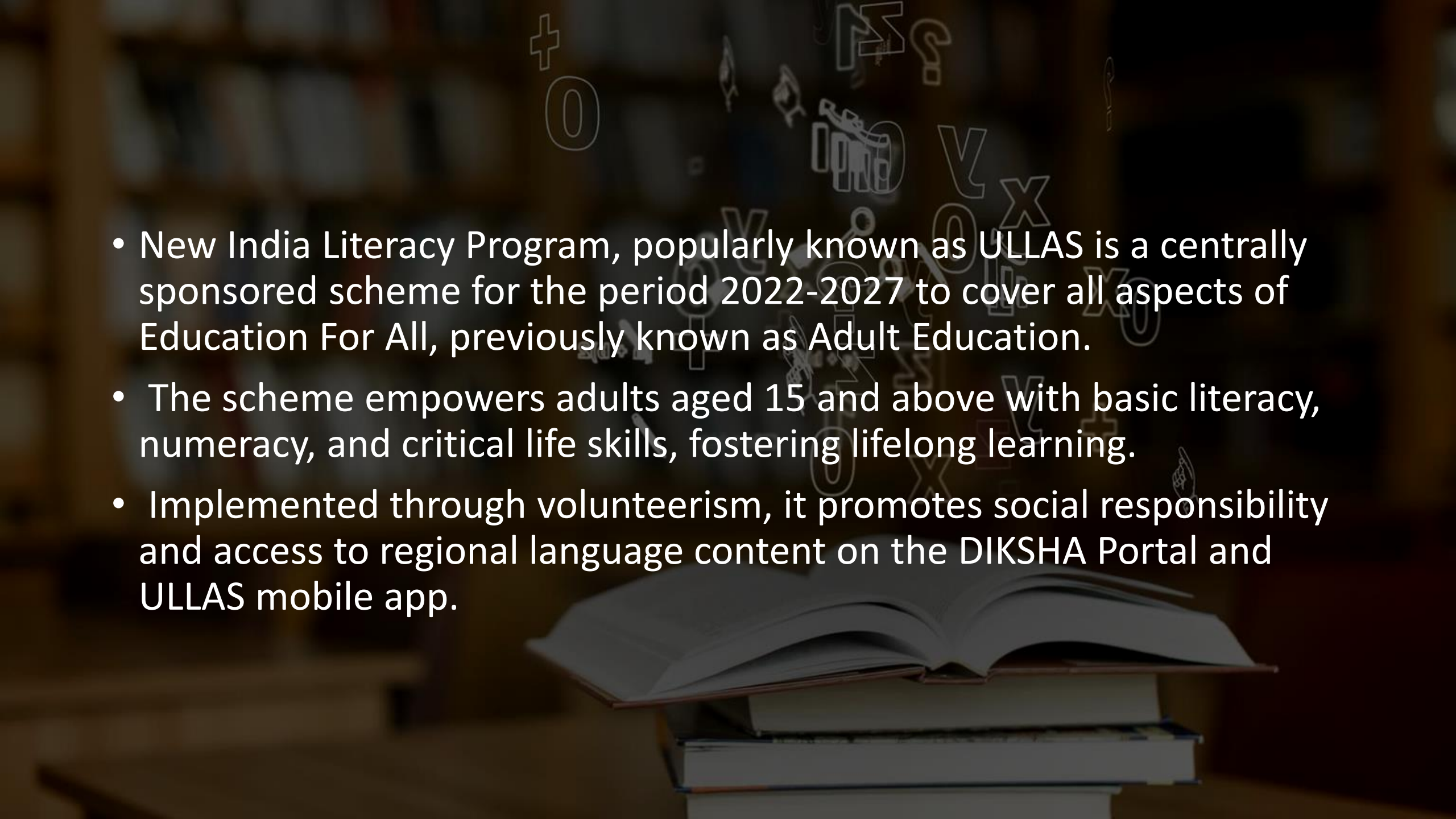
# Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Assessment Test

- Recently, the Department of School Education and Literacy (DoSEL), Ministry of Education, conducted a Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Assessment Test (FLNAT) as part of the ULLAS (Understanding Lifelong Learning for All in Society) - Nav Bharat Saaksharta Karyakram across 23 states, with an estimated 37 lakh learners participating.

- 
- A hand holding a blue pencil is shown writing on a document with a grid pattern. The background is a blurred image of a person's face, suggesting a focus on education and learning. The text is overlaid on the image in a white, bold font.
- **The FLNAT assesses Reading, Writing, and Numeracy skills, to evaluate foundational literacy and numeracy skills.**
    - **The test will be conducted in all districts of participating States/UTs at District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) and Government/aided schools.**

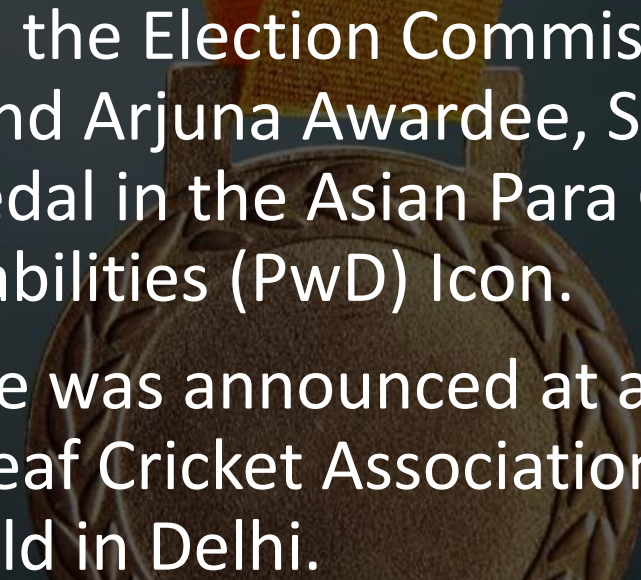
- FLNAT aims to certify non-literate learners and promote multilingualism by conducting the test in regional languages, aligning with National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.
- Learners who qualify will receive a certificate from the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) recognising their achievement in foundational literacy and numeracy skills.



- 
- The background features a dark, textured surface with various white educational icons such as a plus sign, a question mark, a bar chart, and the letters 'V' and 'X'. At the bottom, there is a stack of books, with the top one being an open book.
- New India Literacy Program, popularly known as ULLAS is a centrally sponsored scheme for the period 2022-2027 to cover all aspects of Education For All, previously known as Adult Education.
  - The scheme empowers adults aged 15 and above with basic literacy, numeracy, and critical life skills, fostering lifelong learning.
  - Implemented through volunteerism, it promotes social responsibility and access to regional language content on the DIKSHA Portal and ULLAS mobile app.

The background features a complex network diagram with numerous nodes and connecting lines. The nodes are represented by small, colored circles in shades of blue, orange, green, purple, and black. The lines are thin and grey, creating a dense web of connections. The overall aesthetic is technical and digital.

Para Archer Sheetal Devi  
Named ECI National PwD Icon

- 
- Recently, the Election Commission of India has announced Para Archer and Arjuna Awardee, Sheetal Devi (winner of 2 gold and 1 silver medal in the Asian Para Games 2022) as its National Person with Disabilities (PwD) Icon.
  - Her name was announced at an Exhibition Cricket Match between the Indian Deaf Cricket Association Team and District Cricket Association team, held in Delhi.



# National Action Plan for Prevention and Control of Snakebite Envenoming (NAP-SE)

- 
- The Union Health Ministry launched a National Action Plan for Prevention and Control of Snakebite Envenoming (NAP-SE) in India.
  - **Snakebite Envenoming**
  - The snakebite envenoming (poisoning from snake bites) was classified by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as a high-priority **neglected tropical disease**.
  - An estimated **1.8 – 2.7 million** people worldwide are envenomed annually.



- **Snake bites in India**

- In India, around 90% of snake bites are caused by the ‘**big four**’ among the crawlers – **common krait, Indian cobra, Russell’s viper and saw scaled viper.**
- In India, around **50,000 deaths** occur of an estimated **3-4 million** snake bites annually which accounts for half of all snakebite deaths globally.
- India accounts for almost **50%** of global snakebite deaths.

-



- **About NAPSE**

- **Vision:** “To prevent and control snakebite envenoming in order to halve the numbers of deaths and cases of disability that it causes by 2030”
- **It aims at systematic reduction** of snakebite envenoming risk through sustained availability of anti-snake venom, capacity building, referral mechanism and public education.
- NAPSE provides a broad framework for states to develop their own action plan for management, prevention and control of snakebites through the **‘One Health’ approach.**



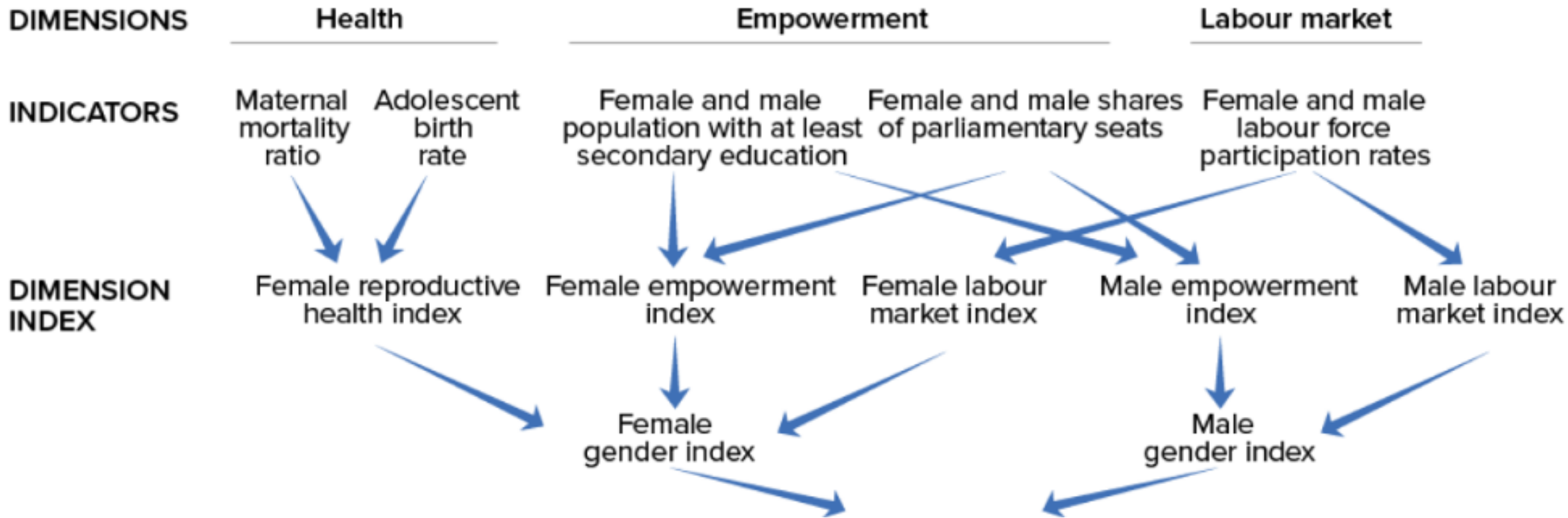
# Gender Inequality Index 2022





- The Gender Inequality Index 2022 has been released by UNDP in their Human Development Report 2023/2024.
- **About the index**
- GII is a composite metric of gender inequality using three dimensions:
  - reproductive health, empowerment and the labour market.
- A low GII value indicates low inequality between women and men, and vice-versa.
-

# Dimensions and Indicators

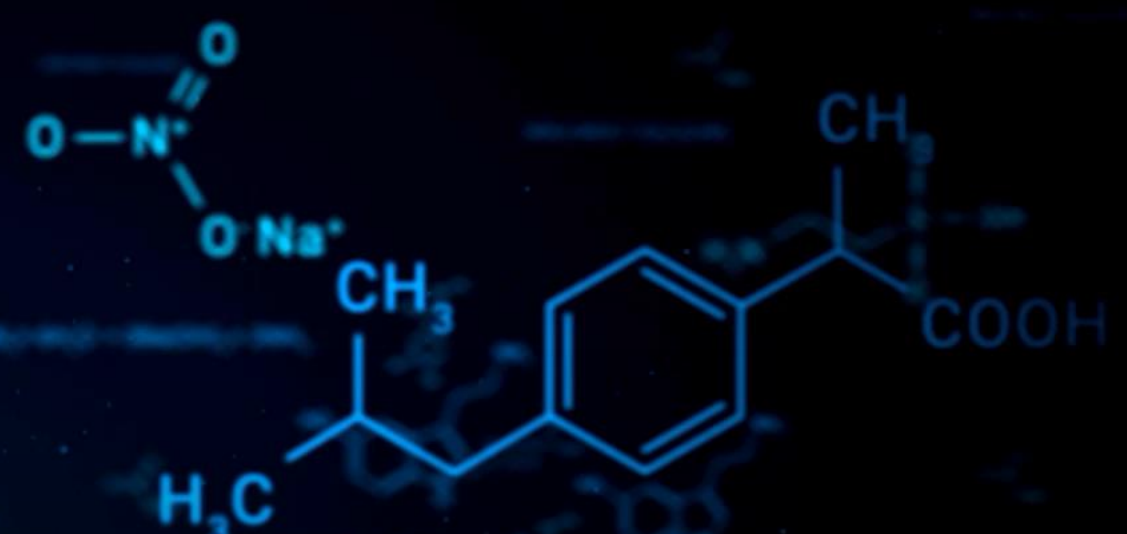
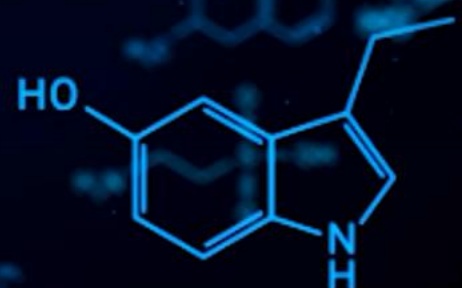


Denmark topped the index followed by Norway, Switzerland and Sweden.

India has registered a significant jump of 14 ranks in Gender Inequality Index 2022.

- It ranked 108 out of 193 countries with a score of 0.437 in GII 2022.
- In 2022, India saw improvements across all HDI indicators — life expectancy, education, and gross national income (GNI) per capita and life expectancy rose from 67.2 to 67.7 years, expected years of schooling reached 12.6, mean years of schooling increased to 6.57 and GNI per capita saw an increase from USD 6,542 to USD 6,951.

# HbA1C Test



- To diagnose pre-diabetes and diabetes (both type 1 and type 2), the hemoglobin A1C (HbA1C) test, also known as the glycated hemoglobin or glycosylated hemoglobin test is used.
- **Background**
- India accounts for **17%** of all diabetes patients in the world.
- Over **35%** of Indians suffer from hypertension and nearly 40% from abdominal obesity, both of which are risk factors for diabetes.
-

- **How does the test work?**
- Sugar or glucose enters the bloodstream from the food it attaches to the hemoglobin in the red blood cells.
  - **Hemoglobin is a protein** that transports oxygen to all the cells of your body.
- Everybody has some sugar attached to their hemoglobin. Those with pre-diabetes and diabetes, however, have more.
- **The HbA1C test measures the percentage of the red blood cells that have sugar-coated, or glycated, hemoglobin.**



- **Test Results**

- The HbA1C levels are provided as either a percentage or in **mmol/mol** (which stands for millimoles per mole).
- An Hb1A1C **below 5.7% is considered normal**; between 5.7 and 6.4% may indicate you are pre-diabetic; and 6.5% or higher can indicate diabetes.

## HAEMATOLOGY

### GLYCOSYLATED HEMOGLOBIN(HBA1C), EDTA WHOLE BLOOD

HBA1C	5.3	Non-diabetic: < 5.7 Pre-diabetics: 5.7 - 6.4 Diabetics: > or = 6.5 Therapeutic goals: < 7.0 Action suggested : > 8.0 (ADA Guideline 2021)	%
METHOD : HIGH PERFORMANCE LIQUID CHROMATOGRAPHY (HPLC)			
ESTIMATED AVERAGE GLUCOSE(EAG)	105.4	< 116.0	mg/dL
METHOD : CALCULATED PARAMETER			

#### **Interpretation(s)**

GLYCOSYLATED HEMOGLOBIN(HBA1C), EDTA WHOLE BLOOD-Used For:

1. Evaluating the long-term control of blood glucose concentrations in diabetic patients.
2. Diagnosing diabetes.
3. Identifying patients at increased risk for diabetes (prediabetes).

The ADA recommends measurement of HbA1c (typically 3-4 times per year for type 1 and poorly controlled type 2 diabetic patients, and 2 times per year for well-controlled type 2 diabetic patients) to determine whether a patient's metabolic control has remained continuously within the target range.

1. eAG (Estimated average glucose) converts percentage HbA1c to mg/dl, to compare blood glucose levels.
2. eAG gives an evaluation of blood glucose levels for the last couple of months.
3. eAG is calculated as  $eAG (mg/dl) = 28.7 * HbA1c - 46.7$

#### **HbA1c Estimation can get affected due to :**

1. Shortened Erythrocyte survival : Any condition that shortens erythrocyte survival or decreases mean erythrocyte age (e.g. recovery from acute blood loss, hemolytic anemia) will falsely lower HbA1c test results. Fructosamine is recommended in these patients which indicates diabetes control over 15 days.
2. Vitamin C & E are reported to falsely lower test results. (possibly by inhibiting glycation of hemoglobin.
3. Iron deficiency anemia is reported to increase test results. Hypothyroidism, uremia, hyperbilirubinemia, chronic alcoholism, chronic injection of calcitriol &



$$F = G \frac{m_1 m_2}{d^2}$$

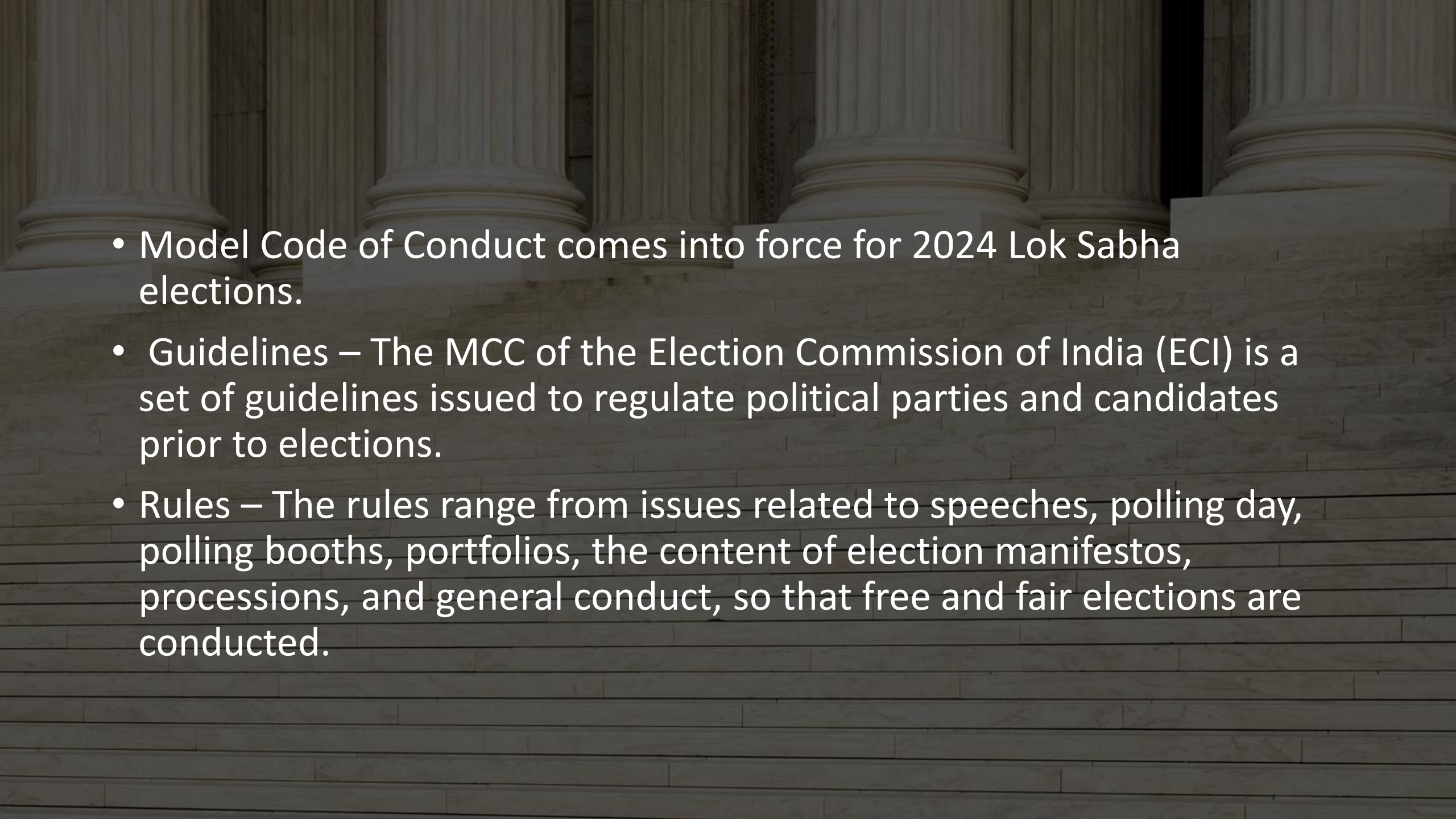
$$\phi(x) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi\sigma}} e^{-\frac{(x-\mu)^2}{2\sigma^2}}$$

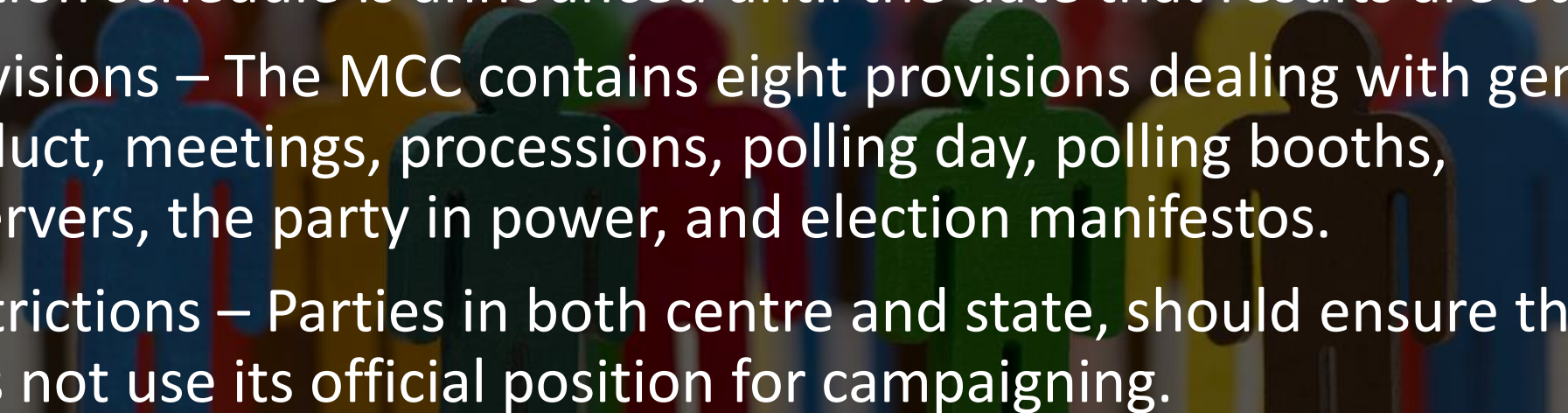
$$i\hbar \frac{\partial}{\partial t} \psi = \hat{H} \psi$$

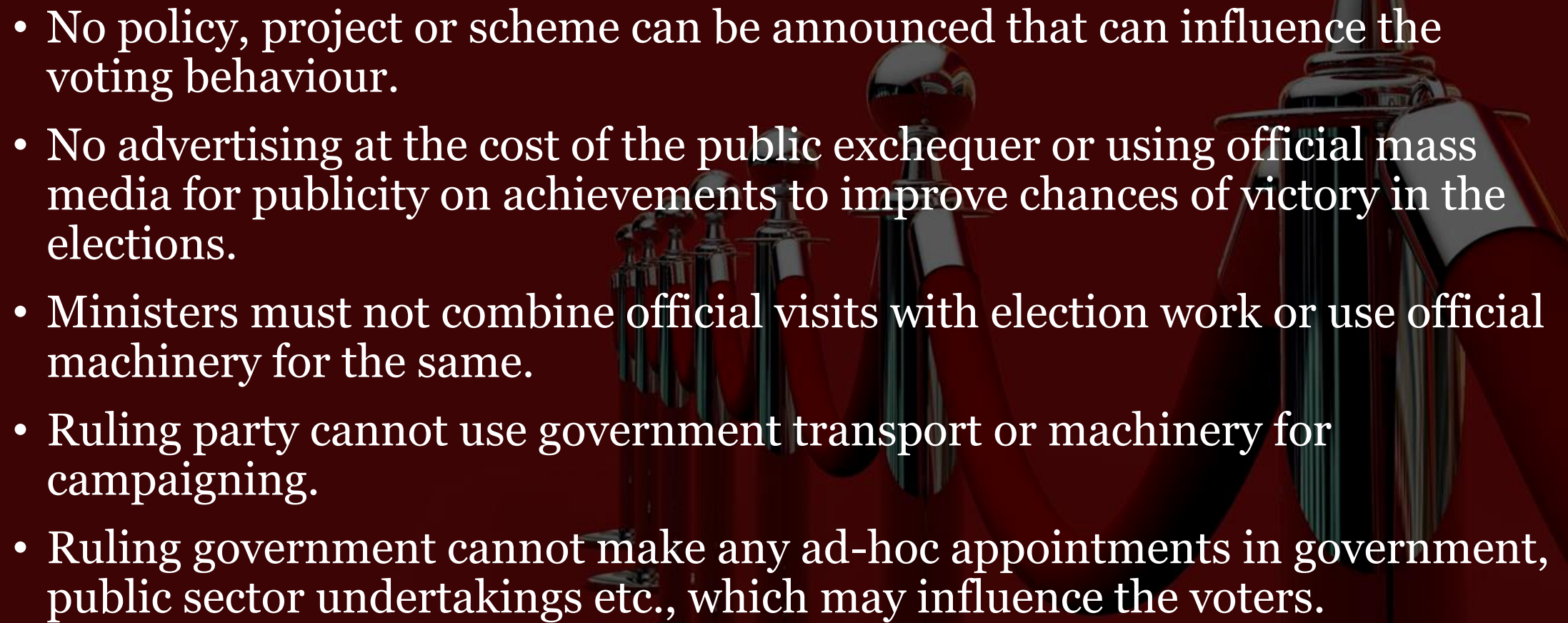
# Model Code of Conduct (MCC)

$$\frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial t^2} = c^2 \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial x^2}$$

$$\frac{df}{dt} = \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{f(t+h) - f(t)}{h}$$

- 
- The background of the slide features a row of classical, fluted columns, likely from a government building, rendered in a dark, muted color. The columns are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the image, creating a sense of structure and formality.
- Model Code of Conduct comes into force for 2024 Lok Sabha elections.
  - Guidelines – The MCC of the Election Commission of India (ECI) is a set of guidelines issued to regulate political parties and candidates prior to elections.
  - Rules – The rules range from issues related to speeches, polling day, polling booths, portfolios, the content of election manifestos, processions, and general conduct, so that free and fair elections are conducted.

- 
- Comes into Force – The MCC comes into force from the date the election schedule is announced until the date that results are out.
  - Provisions – The MCC contains eight provisions dealing with general conduct, meetings, processions, polling day, polling booths, observers, the party in power, and election manifestos.
  - Restrictions – Parties in both centre and state, should ensure that it does not use its official position for campaigning.

- 
- No policy, project or scheme can be announced that can influence the voting behaviour.
  - No advertising at the cost of the public exchequer or using official mass media for publicity on achievements to improve chances of victory in the elections.
  - Ministers must not combine official visits with election work or use official machinery for the same.
  - Ruling party cannot use government transport or machinery for campaigning.
  - Ruling government cannot make any ad-hoc appointments in government, public sector undertakings etc., which may influence the voters.

- 
- Political parties can be criticised based only on their work record and no caste and communal sentiments can be used to lure voters.
  - Mosques, Churches, Temples or any other places of worship should not be used for election campaigns.
  - Bribing, intimidating or impersonation of voters is also barred.

- Election Silence – Holding public meetings during the 48-hour period before the hour fixed for the closing of the poll is also prohibited.
- The 48-hour period is known as election silence.
- Binding Nature – It has no statutory backing, meaning anybody breaching the MCC cannot be proceeded against under any clause of the Code. Everything is voluntary.

The ECI can issue a notice to a politician or a party for an alleged breach of the MCC either on its own or based on a complaint by another party or individual.

Once a notice is issued, the person or party must reply in writing, either accepting fault and tendering an unconditional apology or rebutting the allegation.



# Bhutan's Gelephu project



Bhutan's Gelephu project, a regional economic hub, aims to build a "Gelephu Mindfulness City" as a special administrative zone, focusing on non-polluting industries like IT and education.



This initiative, led by Bhutan's Prime Minister, seeks support from India for financing and expertise.

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- The Gelephu Project is significant for Bhutan as it aims to promote tourism by upgrading the Gelephu airport, boosting employment, and addressing geopolitical concerns with China.
  - For India, it strengthens ties with Bhutan, aligns with regional infrastructure plans, and facilitates demand for power supply through initiatives like the South Asian power grid.



TIBET

SIKKIM

BHUTAN

**DOKLAM**

GELEPHU

ASSAM

KOKRAJHAR

TIBET

INDIA

BHUTAN

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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 solid orange horizontal bar.

Thank you  
guys.

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