

Daily Current Affairs





5
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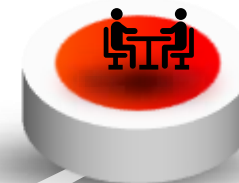
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10 MCQ QUIZ

- 
- “If today feels ordinary, you are probably doing it right.”

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BY BHUNESH SIR

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Iran defies U.S. threat, clamps down on protests

At least 65 killed, over 2,300 detained in protests that continue amid Internet and phone blackouts

Protesters are 'enemies of God'; proceedings will be conducted without any leniency, says Tehran

U.S. Secretary of State extends support, reiterates President's threat; he means what he says: Rubio

Associated Press
DUBAI

Protests sweeping across Iran neared the two-week mark on Saturday, with the country's government acknowledging the ongoing demonstrations despite an intensifying crackdown and as the Islamic Republic remains cut off from the rest of the world.

With the Internet down in Iran and phone lines cut off, gauging the demonstrations from abroad has become more difficult. But the death toll in the protests has grown to at least 65 and over 2,300 others have been detained, according to the U.S.-based Human Rights Activists News Agency. Iranian state television is reporting on security force casualties while portraying control over the nation.

Iran's Supreme Leader

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has signalled a clamp-down, despite U.S. warnings.

Tehran escalated its threats on Saturday, with Attorney-General, Mohammad Movahedi Azad, warning that anyone taking part in protests would be considered an "enemy of God". The statement carried by Iranian state television said even those who "helped rioters" would face the charge.

"Prosecutors must carefully and without delay, by issuing indictments, prepare the grounds for the trial and decisive confrontation with those who, by betraying the nation and creating insecurity, seek foreign domination over the country," the statement read. "Proceedings must be conducted without leniency, compassion or indulgence."

U.S. Secretary of State



Growing dissent: Vehicles set on fire during the anti-government unrest in Zanjan, Iran, on Friday. AP

Marco Rubio offered support for the protesters. "The United States supports the brave people of Iran," Mr. Rubio wrote on Saturday on the social platform X. The State Department separately warned: "Do not play games with President [Donald] Trump. When he says he'll do something, he means it."

Saturday marks the start of the work week in Iran, but many schools and universities reportedly held online classes, Iranian state television reported.

State TV repeatedly played a driving, martial orchestral arrangement from the "Epic of Khorramshahr" by Iranian composer Majid Entezami,

while showing pro-government demonstrations.

The song, aired repeatedly during the 12-day war launched by Israel, honours Iran's 1982 liberation of the city of Khorramshahr during the Iran-Iraq war.

It has been used in videos of protesting women cutting away their hair to

protest the 2022 death of Mahsa Amini as well.

"Field reports indicate that peace prevailed in most cities of the country at night," a State TV anchor reported.

Chaotic scenes

"After a number of armed terrorists attacked public places and set fire to people's private property last night, there was no news of any gathering or chaos in Tehran and most provinces last night." That was directly contradicted by an online verified video that showed demonstrations in northern Tehran's Saadat Abad area, with what appeared to be thousands on the street. "Death to Khamenei!" a man chanted.

The semi-official Fars news agency, believed to be close to Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard and one of the few media outlets able to publish to

the outside world, released surveillance camera footage of what it said came from demonstrations in Isfahan. In it, a protester appeared to fire a long gun, while others set fires and threw gasoline bombs at what appeared to be a government compound.

The Young Journalists' Club, associated with State TV, reported that protesters killed three members of the Guard's all-volunteer Basij force in the city of Gachsaran. It also reported a security official was stabbed to death in Hamadan province, a police officer killed in the port city of Bandar Abbas and another in Gilan, as well as one person slain in Mashhad.

The State television also aired footage of a funeral service attended by hundreds in Qom, a Shia seminary city just south of Tehran.

1) Core development / मुख्य घटनाक्रम

- **Protests continue:** Iran is witnessing ongoing protests that have reached nearly the **two-week mark**.
विरोध जारी: ईरान में विरोध-प्रदर्शन लगभग दो हफ्ते पूरे करने के करीब हैं।
- **Government acknowledges but tightens control:** Authorities are acknowledging demonstrations while simultaneously intensifying the crackdown.
सरकार मान रही है, पर सख्ती बढ़ा रही है: सरकार प्रदर्शन स्वीकार भी कर रही है और साथ ही दमन/सख्ती भी बढ़ा रही है।

2) Communication blackout / संचार बाधा

- **Internet and phone disruptions** have been reported, making it difficult for people outside Iran to verify events and for protesters to coordinate.
इंटरनेट/फोन बाधा के कारण बाहर से घटनाओं की पुष्टि मुश्किल होती है और अंदर समन्वय/संगठन भी प्रभावित होता है।
- This also creates an "information gap," where state narratives become more dominant than independent reporting.
इससे "सूचना अंतर" बनता है, जिसमें सरकारी नैरेटिव स्वतंत्र रिपोर्टिंग पर भारी पड़ सकता है।

3) Deaths and detentions / मौतें और हिरासत

- Reports indicate **dozens killed** and **thousands detained** during the unrest.
रिपोर्टों के अनुसार दर्जनों मौतें और हजारों लोग हिरासत में लिए गए।
- While some reporting focuses on civilian casualties and arrests, state media emphasizes casualties among security forces and claims the situation is under control.
जहाँ कुछ रिपोर्टिंग नागरिकों की मौत/हिरासत पर केंद्रित है, वहीं स्टेट मीडिया सुरक्षा बलों के नुकसान और "स्थिति नियंत्रण में" का दावा उभारता है।

4) Hardline warning from authorities / अधिकारियों की कठोर चेतावनी

- Iran's Attorney-General issued a strong warning that participants could be treated with the harshest possible legal-religious framing, including being labelled as **"enemies of God."**
ईरान के अटॉर्नी-जनरल ने कड़ी चेतावनी दी कि प्रदर्शनकारियों पर अत्यंत कठोर धार्मिक-कानूनी भाषा/धारा लग सकती है, जैसे **"ईश्वर के दुश्मन"**।
- The message: legal action will be fast and severe—"no leniency"—to deter participation and scare potential supporters.
संदेश साफ है: कार्रवाई तेज़ और कठोर होगी—"कोई नरमी नहीं"—ताकि लोग पीछे हटें और समर्थन कम हो।

5) Competing narratives: "calm" vs "crowds" / दो नैरेटिव: "शांति" बनाम "भीड़"

- State television suggested that **peace prevailed** in most cities at night.
स्टेट टीवी ने कहा कि रात में अधिकांश शहरों में शांति रही।
- However, other accounts referenced large crowds in parts of Tehran and anti-government slogans, suggesting unrest remained active.
दूसरी तरफ कुछ रिपोर्टों में तेहरान के कुछ इलाकों में बड़ी भीड़ और सत्ता-विरोधी नारों का उल्लेख है—यानी असंतोष सक्रिय रहा।

6) Violence claims and visual evidence / हिंसा के दावे और दृश्य सामग्री

- The report describes **chaotic scenes** in some areas: attacks on public places, fires, damage to private property, and allegations of incendiary devices.
रिपोर्ट में कुछ स्थानों पर अराजक दृश्य बताए गए—सार्वजनिक स्थानों पर हमले, आगजनी, निजी संपत्ति को नुकसान, और ज्वलनशील चीज़ों के आरोप।
- State-linked outlets released surveillance footage to claim protesters were armed or engaged in violent acts, reinforcing the government's framing of protests as disorder or sabotage.
राज्य-समर्थित माध्यमों ने सीसीटीवी/सर्विलांस फुटेज जारी कर प्रदर्शनकारियों को हथियारबंद/हिंसक दिखाने का प्रयास किया, ताकि आंदोलन को "अव्यवस्था/साजिश" के रूप में पेश किया जा सके।

7) Social context and symbolism / सामाजिक संदर्भ और प्रतीकात्मक विरोध

- The story also indirectly ties into the wider social tension seen in recent years, including women-led protest symbolism and cultural resistance.
यह खबर हाल के वर्षों के सामाजिक तनाव से भी जुड़ती दिखती है—खासकर महिलाओं द्वारा प्रतीकात्मक विरोध और सांस्कृतिक प्रतिरोध जैसे संकेतों के संदर्भ में।

8) International response: U.S. messaging / अंतरराष्ट्रीय प्रतिक्रिया: अमेरिकी संदेश

- The U.S. Secretary of State publicly voiced support for Iranian protesters.
अमेरिकी विदेश मंत्री ने ईरानी प्रदर्शनकारियों के समर्थन की बात कही।
- The U.S. side reiterated that the President's warning/threat should be taken seriously, adding pressure and widening the issue into a geopolitical confrontation.
अमेरिका ने यह भी दोहराया कि राष्ट्रपति की चेतावनी/धमकी को गंभीरता से लिया जाए—जिससे मुद्दा घरेलू संकट के साथ भू-राजनीतिक तनाव भी बन जाता है।

9) What this means (exam-ready takeaways) / इसका मतलब (एग्जाम पॉइंट्स)

- **State strategy:** intimidation through harsh legal language + speedy prosecution + information controls.
राज्य रणनीति: कठोर कानूनी भाषा से डर + तेज़ अभियोजन + सूचना नियंत्रण।
- **Information war:** blackout conditions increase reliance on official narratives and reduce independent verification.
सूचना युद्ध: ब्लैकआउट में सरकारी नैरेटिव मजबूत, स्वतंत्र पुष्टि कमजोर।
- **Escalation risk:** as arrests rise and violence claims spread, the chance of further escalation increases.
तनाव बढ़ने का जोखिम: गिरफ्तारियाँ बढ़ें, हिंसा के आरोप बढ़ें तो स्थिति और बिगड़ सकती है।
- **Internationalization:** U.S. statements add external pressure and can harden positions on both sides.
अंतरराष्ट्रीयकरण: अमेरिकी बयान बाहरी दबाव बढ़ाते हैं और दोनों पक्षों के रुख को कठोर कर सकते हैं।

Term/Topic

Extra facts (English)

१ श्रलप्रघः लू (Hindi)

Strait of Hormuz

Narrow chokepoint between **Iran and Oman**; links **Persian Gulf** → **Gulf of Oman/Arabian Sea**; crucial for global energy flows.

हघवः-इ खवः इ इ ँहद् दूत्रइ हर्ब्र
न चमखचरे; ँवघद् इह दूवनह इझ इ खवः इह
दूवनहः घ ँ दूवघ दून्झल्ल; अचशCइ
र न वब्र ष हजशल्ल इ इ शचइ १ इत्रल
खणदुहजर्ब्रदु

Why Hormuz matters

About **one-fifth of global oil** passes through it; disruption can impact oil prices and trade routes.

चणकण दूग गव इइ लू इव खणइ गणवद् दू
णक्षल्ल घल्ल पच; ँवश्व दूइ लूच-इ हखल्ल
र घ ँवहवघ खवणब्र ब्रवशत्रल पझ दूइ लू
पप्रदु

OPEC HQ

OPEC Secretariat is in **Vienna, Austria** (since 1965).

OPEC इ व खक्षद्वचग श्रगः छसगव खळ
(1965 दूइ)दु

IRGC & Basij (context)

IRGC is Iran's elite military force; **Basij** is a paramilitary volunteer force often used for internal security.

IRGC हघवः इ ह इचहः दूचौ ट्रसः; ँदू न
१ इब्रदूचशः Sगत्रदूअह ँच, १ षघ
ष त्रलप्रघइ दूक्षल्ल खळदु

Qom

A major Shia religious/seminary city south of Tehran; often appears in Iran-related news.

त्रझखः लूणघवः इ इ ँशल्ल खळ ब्रक्षदु
शट्रगव श्वशखब्रड् /दूइशखघह ट्रणघ; हघवः
दूत्र ँशल्ल दू ँघझत्र खळ १ षघ ष ल्व पचदु

Exam (Date/Shift)	Question (as asked)	Answer
UPSC CSE Prelims GS (2017)	<i>What is/are the most likely advantages of implementing GST? (Statement 2 mentions crude oil imports & OPEC cartel)</i>	1 only
RRB NTPC CBT-I (9 Jan 2021, Shift 1)	<i>Where is the headquarters of OPEC located?</i>	Vienna
RPF SI (2018) (16 Jan 2019, Shift 3)	<i>Which water reservoir connects the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman?</i>	Strait of Hormuz
OSSC CGL (17 Oct, Shift 2)	<i>Where is the HQ of OPEC located?</i>	Vienna
BPSC DSO (03 Aug 2025)	<i>Strait of Hormuz is situated between which Gulfs?</i>	Persian Gulf + Gulf of Oman
MP Police Constable (10 Sept 2023, Shift 2)	<i>Strait of Hormuz connects the Persian Gulf with the ____.</i>	Gulf of Oman
UKSSSC Forest Guard (16 Feb 2020, Shift 2)	<i>Headquarters of OPEC is situated in:</i>	Vienna
UPPCL JE (Feb 2018, Shift 1)	<i>Where is the HQ of OPEC located?</i>	Vienna

Govt. launches drive to reduce road accident deaths

Jagriti Chandra

NEW DELHI

The Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, in collaboration with the NGO Save Life Foundation, has identified 100 districts with the highest number of road crashes to launch a data-driven zero-fatalities programme, in line with the government's pledge to reduce road deaths by 50% by 2030.

The 100 districts span 15 States, with the programme already rolled out in all 20 identified districts in Uttar Pradesh, 19 in Tamil Nadu, 11 in Maharash-

tra, and nine in Karnataka.

"Districts have been identified as key units of change, as 63% of road accident fatalities occur outside National Highways, such as on State Highways and State expressways, major district roads and local roads. Since crash deaths are often influenced by local factors such as road design, traffic enforcement, and hospital preparedness, effective interventions are best coordinated at the district level, where administration converges through measures like traffic policing and emergency medical care,"



The Transport Ministry will focus on 100 high-risk districts that account for the highest number of accidents. FILE PHOTO

said Founder and CEO of Save Life Foundation Piyush Tewari at a press conference held at the recently concluded two-day confe-

rence of Transport Ministers, Secretaries and Commissioners of all States and Union Territories.

An analysis across the

100 districts recorded nearly 89,000 road deaths in 2023 and 2024. The foundation mapped 17,331 critical crash locations, which together accounted for 58% of the total fatalities. It also identified high-risk time windows during which most crashes occurred, enabling law enforcement agencies to better target resource deployment. An analysis of the crashes showed that rear-end collisions accounted for 26% of fatalities, head-on collisions for 23%, and pedestrian crashes for another 23%.

The framework for the

zero-fatalities programme includes engineering audits and the implementation of low-cost, quick-build safety interventions, such as correcting faulty road intersections. A key pillar is trauma care response, with measures to improve ambulance response time standards and train first responders.

Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari said the District Collectors, Transport Ministers, and MPs from the 100 districts will be part of an accident prevention committee and will be invited to New Delhi for a conference.

- **Who launched & with whom / किसने शुरू किया और किसके साथ**
 - The Union Ministry of Road Transport & Highways (MoRTH), in collaboration with SaveLIFE Foundation (NGO), has launched a data-driven "zero-fatalities" drive.
 - सड़क परिवहन एवं राजमार्ग मंत्रालय (MoRTH) ने SaveLIFE Foundation (NGO) के साथ मिलकर डेटा-आधारित "ज़ीरो-फैटेलिटी" अभियान शुरू किया।
- **Target & national goal / लक्ष्य और राष्ट्रीय टारगेट**
 - The programme aligns with the government's pledge to **reduce road deaths by 50% by 2030**.
 - यह कार्यक्रम 2030 तक सड़क मौतों में 50% कमी के सरकारी लक्ष्य के अनुरूप है।
- **Where the focus is / फोकस कहाँ है**
 - **100 high-risk districts (across 15 States)** have been identified because they report the **highest number of crashes/deaths**.
 - 15 राज्यों के 100 हाई-रिस्क ज़िलों को चुना गया है क्योंकि वहाँ दुर्घटनाएँ/मौतें सबसे ज्यादा हैं।
 - Rollout examples mentioned: programme already rolled out in **all 20 identified districts in Uttar Pradesh, 19 in Tamil Nadu, 11 in Maharashtra, and 9 in Karnataka**.
 - उदाहरण: उत्तर प्रदेश के 20, तमिलनाडु के 19, महाराष्ट्र के 11, कर्नाटक के 9 ज़िलों में लागू/रोलआउट की बात कही गई है।

- Why "district" is the unit of action / "ज़िला" क्यों चुना गया
 - Districts are treated as **key units of change** because about **63% of road accident fatalities occur outside National Highways**—on **State Highways, State expressways, major district roads and local roads**.
 - ज़िलों को बदलाव की **मुख्य इकाई** माना गया क्योंकि लगभग **63% मौतें राष्ट्रीय राजमार्गों के बाहर**—राज्य राजमार्ग, राज्य एक्सप्रेसवे, जिला/स्थानीय सड़कों पर होती हैं।
 - Many determinants are local: **road design, enforcement quality, and hospital/trauma readiness**, so interventions work best when coordinated at district level.
 - कई कारण स्थानीय हैं: **रोड डिज़ाइन, प्रवर्तन (enforcement), अस्पताल/ट्रॉमा तैयारी**—इसलिए ज़िला स्तर पर समन्वय सबसे प्रभावी माना गया।
- What the data mapping found / डेटा से क्या निकला
 - These 100 districts recorded **nearly 89,000 road deaths across 2023 and 2024** (as cited in the report).
 - इन 100 ज़िलों में **2023–2024 में लगभग 89,000 सड़क मौतें दर्ज** होने की बात कही गई।
 - The foundation mapped **17,331 critical crash locations**, which together accounted for **58% of total fatalities** (in the mapped set).
 - **17,331 क्रिटिकल क्रैश लोकेशन** चिह्नित किए गए, जो मिलकर **कुल मौतों के 58%** के लिए जिम्मेदार बताए गए।
 - High-risk **time windows** were also identified so enforcement agencies can deploy resources better.
 - दुर्घटनाओं के **हाई-रिस्क समय-खिड़की (time windows)** भी चिह्नित की गई ताकि पुलिस/एजेंसियाँ संसाधन बेहतर तरीके से लगाएँ।
 - Crash-type analysis: **rear-end collisions (26%), head-on (23%), and pedestrian crashes (23%)** formed major shares of fatalities.
 - क्रैश प्रकार: **पीछे से टक्कर (26%), आमने-सामने टक्कर (23%), पैदल यात्री दुर्घटनाएँ (23%)**—मौतों का बड़ा हिस्सा।

- What the “zero-fatalities” framework includes / “ज़ीरो-फैटेलिटी” फ्रेमवर्क में क्या है
 - Engineering audits and low-cost, quick-build safety fixes (example: correcting faulty intersections/black spots).
 - इंजीनियरिंग ऑडिट और कम लागत वाले त्वरित सुरक्षा सुधार (जैसे खराब/खतरनाक चौराहों को ठीक करना)।
 - A key pillar is trauma care response: improving ambulance response time standards and training first responders.
 - एक मुख्य स्तंभ ट्रॉमा केयर रिस्पॉन्स है: एम्बुलेंस रिस्पॉन्स टाइम मानक बेहतर करना और फर्स्ट रिस्पॉन्डर्स को ट्रेन करना।
- Governance & coordination / प्रशासनिक व्यवस्था
 - The Transport Minister said District Collectors, Transport Ministers and MPs from these districts will be part of an accident prevention committee and will be invited to New Delhi for a conference.
 - मंत्री के अनुसार इन ज़िलों के डीएम/कलेक्टर, परिवहन मंत्री और सांसद एक एक्सीडेंट प्रिवेंशन कमेटी में होंगे और नई दिल्ली में कॉन्फ्रेंस के लिए बुलाए जाएंगे।

- **According to the report on the government's road safety drive, consider the following statements:**
- The 100 identified districts recorded nearly 89,000 road deaths in 2023 and 2024. / 100 શ્રદ્ધેશીલ શ્રદ્ધેશીલ રાજ્ય 2023–2024 રાજ્ય ચળકળ 89,000 રાજ્યલ્લેખિત રાજ્ય રાજ્ય
- 17,331 critical crash locations together accounted for 58% of total fatalities (in the mapped analysis). / 17,331 શ્રદ્ધેશીલ ચળકળ રાજ્ય શ્રદ્ધેશીલ 58% રાજ્યલ્લેખિત રાજ્ય શ્રદ્ધેશીલ રાજ્ય રાજ્ય
- Rear-end collisions accounted for less than 10% of fatalities. / રાજ્ય રાજ્ય 10% રાજ્ય રાજ્ય રાજ્ય રાજ્ય
- **Which of the above is/are correct?**
- A) 1 and 2 only
- B) 2 and 3 only
- C) 1 and 3 only
- D) 1, 2 and 3



has aired images of buildings, including a mosque on fire, with authorities blaming members of the so-called forces have been killed.

'Escalating unrest'

Moh. Pasharhiza accuses the United States and Israel of "trying to escalate the unrest with regard to the situation in Jerusalem and our town we are working on."

Ram's Parliament Speaker, Sheikh Mohammad Baghat, Qatari wanted on Sunday that the United States military and Israel would be "not engaged in any U.S. strikes the Islamic Republic public over the ongoing protests rolling the country," he stated by U.S. President Donald Trump.

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Centre seeks access to phone source codes

Tech firms object to the proposed 'vulnerability analysis' standards proposed by the Union govt.

The Centre revoked an order mandating a cyber safety app, Sanchar Saathi, on phones last month

Apple declined Chinese attempts to access code; and U.S. law enforcement also tried and failed

Reuters
NEW DELHI

The Centre is considering legally imposing a set of requirements for smartphone makers in Indian markets as part of a raft of "security measures", prompting behind-the-scenes opposition from tech giants such as Apple and Samsung.

Among the most sensitive requirements for "vulnerability analysis" in the new Indian Telecom Security Assurance Requirements, drafted in 2023, is access to source code – the underlying programming instructions that make phones work and closely guarded by the manufacturers.

This will be analysed and possibly tested at designated Indian labs, the documents show. Apple had declined China's request for its source code between 2014 and 2016, and U.S. law enforcement has also tried and failed to get it.

The proposals require automatic and periodic malware scanning on phones and storing of records of a phone's activities in the device for at least one year.

IT Ministry and tech executives are due to meet on Tuesday for more discussions, sources said.

"Any legitimate concerns of the industry will be addressed with an open mind," IT Secretary S. Krishnan said, adding it

Surveillance tools

The Indian Telecom Security Assurance Requirements propose 83 security standards including source code disclosure for smartphone manufactures in Indian markets



Gray area: Tech companies say the proposal lacks any global precedent.

- **Background permission restriction:** Apps cannot access cameras, microphones or location services in the background when phones are inactive

- **One-year log retention:** Devices must store security audit logs for 12 months

- **Periodic malware scanning:** Phones must automatically scan and identify potentially harmful applications

- **Informing govt. of major updates:** Phone makers must notify a govt. body before releasing any major updates or security patches

was "premature to read more into it".

Tech companies have countered that the package of 83 security standards, which will include a re-

quirement to alert the government to major software updates, lacks any global precedent and risks revealing proprietary details, according to four pe-

ople familiar with the discussions and a Reuters review of confidential government and industry documents.

Indian government requirements have irked technology firms before. Last month the Centre revoked an order mandating a state-run cyber safety app, Sanchar Saathi, on phones amid concerns over surveillance.

The new proposal is part of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's efforts to boost security of user data as online fraud and data breaches increase in the world's second-largest smartphone market, with nearly 750 million phones.

Manufacturers will also have to make software changes under the require-

ments to allow pre-installed apps to be uninstalled and to block apps from using cameras and microphones in the background to "avoid malicious usage".

Device makers will have to inform the National Centre for Communication Security about major software updates and security patches before releasing them to users, and the centre will have the right to test them.

Tech companies Apple, Samsung, Google, and Xiaomi, and the Manufacturers' Association for Information Technology (MAIT) did not respond to requests for comment.

However, MAIT had asked the Ministry last week to drop the proposal,

a source with direct knowledge said.

"This [source code review and analysis] is not possible... due to secrecy and privacy," MAIT had said in a confidential document drafted in response to the government proposal, and seen by Reuters. "Major countries in the EU, North America, Australia, and Africa do not mandate these requirements." MAIT's document says regular malware scanning significantly drains a phone's battery and seeking government approval for software updates is "impractical" as they need to be issued promptly.

"There is not enough room on device to store 1-year log events," MAIT said in the document.

Term/Topic	Extra facts (English)	१ शलुप्रघरू लूू (Hindi)
Source Code	Human-readable instructions that define how software works; companies guard it as proprietary IP.	दूँीअडुगघ डू व खरुअरू “डू डूू” नू डूू डूू डू डू वरू डू घडू डू व लूहडू व लू डू घलू डू; डू तूहशूगवदू सुडू डूू डूू डूू IP खरूडू घ डूूहूग घडू लू डूू
Vulnerability Analysis	Process of checking software for security weaknesses that attackers could exploit.	दूँीअडुगघ खलू दूूघलू डू खनू डूूगवदू (vulnerabilities) दू डूू डूू वरूडू डू ह डूूग, शनू डू व दूूहूगडू डूू दूू लू डूू
Security Audit Logs	Records of security-related events (app permissions, system actions, alerts) used for investigation/compliance.	दूूघलू-दूूतूशू तूूडू तू डू व डू डूू (हूशखरू, शूख डूू, १ डूू) नू डूू वरूडू/१ डूूहूग खलू डू वरू ॡ लू डूू
Malware Scanning	Detecting harmful apps/files; can affect battery/performance and raises privacy/false-positive concerns.	डूूशडू वडू डूू/वसू हूडूवषू; डूूहू/हूूखशू हू १ दूू, डूूडूू डू डूू हूडूवषू (false positives) डू हू शूतूलू
Background Permissions	Controls whether apps can access camera/mic/location while running in background.	गू लू डू घलू डूू शू डूू डूू डूूखतू खलू घलू डूू डूू डूू खरूगव/खरूडू/डूू डूू डूू डूू डूू डूू लू डूू गू व डूू
Update/Patch Governance	Security patches need speed; delays can increase cyber risk window.	दूूघलू हूडू नूू नूू डूू डूू डूू; दूूघलू दूू दूू डूू डूू ख डूू “शूतूडूू” डूू नूूलू डूू

1) What is the Centre proposing? / केंद्र क्या प्रस्ताव कर रहा है?

- The Centre is considering **legally imposing new "security measures"** for **smartphone makers in India**, which has triggered behind-the-scenes resistance from major tech firms (like Apple, Samsung).

केंद्र भारत में स्मार्टफोन निर्माताओं पर नए "सुरक्षा उपाय" कानूनी रूप से लागू करने पर विचार कर रहा है, जिस पर बड़ी टेक कंपनियों (Apple, Samsung आदि) की अंदरूनी आपत्ति सामने आई है।

- These proposals are part of the **Indian Telecom Security Assurance Requirements (drafted in 2023)** and include around **83 security standards** for smartphones sold in India.

ये प्रस्ताव **Indian Telecom Security Assurance Requirements (2023 ड्राफ्ट)** का हिस्सा हैं, जिनमें भारत में बिकने वाले स्मार्टफोन्स के लिए लगभग **83 सुरक्षा मानक** शामिल बताए गए हैं।

2) The most sensitive demand: source code access / सबसे संवेदनशील मांग: सोर्स कोड एक्सेस

- A key requirement under "vulnerability analysis" is **access to source code**—the underlying programming instructions that make phones work and are closely guarded by manufacturers. "Vulnerability analysis" के तहत सबसे संवेदनशील मांग है **सोर्स कोड तक पहुंच**—यही वह मूल प्रोग्रामिंग निर्देश हैं जो फोन को चलाते हैं और कंपनियाँ इन्हें बेहद गोपनीय रखती हैं।
- The source code may be **analysed and possibly tested in designated Indian labs** as per the proposal.

प्रस्ताव के अनुसार सोर्स कोड का **विश्लेषण** और संभवतः **निर्धारित भारतीय लैब्स में परीक्षण** हो सकता है।

3) Other major requirements mentioned / अन्य प्रमुख शर्तें

- **Automatic & periodic malware scanning on phones.**
फोन में ऑटोमैटिक और नियमित (periodic) मालवेयर स्कैनिंग।
- **One-year log retention: storing phone security/audit records for at least 12 months.**
1 साल लॉग रिटेंशन: कम से कम 12 महीनों तक सिक्योरिटी/ऑडिट लॉग्स स्टोर करना।
- **Background permission restriction: apps should not access camera/mic/location in background when phones are inactive.**
बैकग्राउंड परमिशन प्रतिबंध: फोन निष्क्रिय होने पर ऐप्स कैमरा/माइक/लोकेशन बैकग्राउंड में एक्सेस न कर सकें।
- **Informing govt. of major updates: phone makers must notify a government body before releasing major software updates/security patches; the Centre can have the right to test them.**
बड़े अपडेट की सूचना: बड़े सॉफ्टवेयर अपडेट/सिक्योरिटी पैच रिलीज़ से पहले सरकार को सूचित करना; केंद्र को इन्हें टेस्ट करने का अधिकार।
- **Control over apps: allowing pre-installed apps to be uninstalled, and blocking apps from using camera/microphone in background to avoid "malicious usage."**
ऐप नियंत्रण: प्री-इंस्टॉल्ड ऐप्स को अनइंस्टॉल करने की अनुमति, और "दुरुपयोग" रोकने के लिए ऐप्स को बैकग्राउंड में कैमरा/माइक इस्तेमाल करने से रोकना।

4) Why the government is pushing this / सरकार यह क्यों कर रही है?

- The report links this push to rising concerns about **online fraud and data breaches** in India's huge smartphone ecosystem (India is described as the world's **second-largest smartphone market** with nearly **750 million phones**).

रिपोर्ट के अनुसार यह दबाव ऑनलाइन फ्रॉड और डेटा ब्रीच जैसी चिंताओं से जुड़ा है, और भारत के विशाल स्मार्टफोन इकोसिस्टम (लगभग 75 करोड़ फोन, दुनिया का दूसरा सबसे बड़ा बाजार) के संदर्भ में रखा गया है।

5) Recent related development: Sanchar Saathi / हाल की संबंधित घटना: संचार साथी

- The Centre **revoked an earlier order** last month that would have mandated a **state-run cyber safety app "Sanchar Saathi"** on phones, after concerns around **surveillance**.

पिछले महीने केंद्र ने फोन में सरकारी साइबर सेफ्टी ऐप "संचार साथी" अनिवार्य करने वाला आदेश वापस ले लिया, क्योंकि निगरानी (surveillance) को लेकर चिंताएँ थीं।

6) Industry objections / इंडस्ट्री की आपत्तियाँ

- Industry groups and companies argue **source code review/analysis is not feasible** due to **secrecy, privacy, and proprietary risks**.

कंपनियाँ/इंडस्ट्री समूह कहते हैं कि सॉर्स कोड की समीक्षा/विश्लेषण गोपनीयता, प्राइवैसी और प्रॉप्राइटरी रिस्क के कारण व्यावहारिक नहीं।

- They say **major regions** (EU, North America, Australia, Africa) generally **do not mandate** such requirements.

उनका दावा है कि **EU, North America, Australia, Africa** जैसे बड़े क्षेत्रों में आम तौर पर ऐसी बाध्यताएँ अनिवार्य नहीं हैं।

- Practical concerns raised:

- **Regular malware scanning can drain battery** significantly.
- Seeking **government approval / pre-clearance for software updates** is impractical because security patches must be released quickly.
- Devices may have **insufficient storage** to keep **one-year logs**.

व्यावहारिक आपत्तियाँ:

- नियमित मालवेयर स्कैनिंग से बैटरी तेजी से घट सकती है।
- अपडेट/पैच के लिए सरकारी अप्रूवल लेना अव्यावहारिक है क्योंकि पैच तुरंत जारी करने पड़ते हैं।
- 1 साल के लॉग्स के लिए डिवाइस में स्टोरेज कम हो सकता है।


7) International comparison mentioned / अंतरराष्ट्रीय तुलना

- The report notes Apple previously **declined attempts** by China to access source code (2014–2016), and **U.S. law enforcement** also tried and failed to obtain it.

रिपोर्ट में उल्लेख है कि Apple ने पहले चीन की सोर्स कोड एक्सेस कोशिशें (2014–2016) ठुकराई, और अमेरिकी कानून-प्रवर्तन ने भी कोशिश की लेकिन असफल रहा।

8) What happens next / आगे क्या होगा

- IT Ministry officials and tech executives were scheduled to meet for further discussions; the IT Secretary is quoted saying legitimate industry concerns would be addressed with an **open mind**.
IT मंत्रालय और टेक कंपनियों की बैठक/चर्चा का उल्लेख है; IT सचिव ने कहा कि उद्योग की वैध चिंताओं को खुले मन से सुना/सुलझाया जाएगा।



- **With reference to the report on proposed smartphone security requirements in India, consider the following statements:**

- The draft standards include a requirement for **source code access** for vulnerability analysis and may involve testing in designated Indian labs.
- The proposed standards include measures such as **one-year log retention** and **periodic malware scanning** on phones.
- The Centre has continued to mandate the “Sanchar Saathi” cyber safety app on all phones, without any change.

- **Which of the above is/are correct?**

- A) 1 and 2 only
- B) 2 and 3 only
- C) 1 and 3 only
- D) 1, 2 and 3

Bhairav Battalions to debut in Army Day parade in Jaipur on January 15

Saurabh Trivedi

NEW DELHI

The Army's newly raised modern warfare force, the Bhairav Battalions, will participate in the Army Day parade for the first time in Jaipur on January 15.

A senior Army officer confirmed that two Bhairav Battalions will participate in this year's parade—Southern Command's 2 Bhairav Battalion, known as the 'Desert Falcons', and South Western Command's 4 Bhairav Battalion. The war cry of the 2 Bhairav Battalion is *Raja Ramchandra ki Jai*.

On Sunday, the Army shared a video on its official X handle, showcasing the Bhairav battalions. Highlighting the Army's focus on unmanned warfare, the officer said, "We are creating a pool of over one lakh drone operatives across the force. These operatives are capable of handling drones and employing them in real operations



Bhairav Battalions are high-speed, offensive units capable of executing Special Forces' tasks at multiple levels. ANI VIDEO GRAB

to target bases and formations inside the enemy territory."

Raised by Army headquarters by drawing lessons from global conflicts as well as India's own operational experience, including the recent Operation Sindoor, the Bhairav Battalions are designed as high-speed, offensive units capable of executing Special Forces' tasks at multiple levels, depending on operational requirements, the officer added.

So far, the Army has

raised 15 Bhairav Battalions, deployed across formations along borders, the officers said, adding plans are under way to raise about 25 such battalions in total in the near future.

Bridging the gap

The battalions are intended to bridge the gap between Para Special Forces and regular infantry units, enabling them to conduct special operations from tactical to operational depth.

"Modern warfare is

changing at a very rapid pace. Today's conflicts are hybrid in nature, and forces must be fully equipped with modern technology to meet these challenges," the officer added. "The Bhairav Battalions are part of force restructuring and have been raised in line with new technologies, evolving thought processes, and emerging operational requirements," the officer said.

As part of a broader transformation, the Army has also created Rudra Brigades—integrated all-arms formations combining infantry, mechanised units, tanks, artillery, special forces, unmanned aerial systems, along with dedicated logistics and combat-support elements.

Additionally, the Artillery, Mechanised Infantry and Armoured Corps are being equipped with advanced capabilities, including drones and modern battlefield systems, to enhance operational effectiveness in future conflicts.

1) What's the news / खबर क्या है

- India Army's newly raised modern-warfare force, "Bhairav Battalions," will make their first appearance in the Army Day parade in Jaipur on January 15.

भारतीय सेना की नई आधुनिक-युद्ध इकाई "भैरव बटालियन्स" 15 जनवरी को जयपुर में आर्मी डे परेड में पहली बार हिस्सा लेंगी।

2) Which units will participate / कौन-कौन सी यूनिट्स शामिल होंगी

- A senior Army officer said **two Bhairav Battalions** will participate:
 - **Southern Command's 2 Bhairav Battalion** (nicknamed "**Desert Falcons**")
 - **South Western Command's 4 Bhairav Battalion**
- वरिष्ठ अधिकारी के अनुसार दो भैरव बटालियन भाग लेंगी:
 - **सदर्न कमांड की 2 भैरव बटालियन** (उपनाम: "**डेज़र्ट फाल्कन्स**")
 - **साउथ वेस्टर्न कमांड की 4 भैरव बटालियन**
- The war cry of 2 Bhairav Battalion is "**Raja Ramchandra ki Jai.**"

2 भैरव बटालियन का युद्ध-नारा: "राजा रामचंद्र की जय"।

3) Why Bhairav Battalions were raised / भैरव बटालियन्स क्यों बनाई गई

- The report frames them as **high-speed, offensive units** built for **modern/hybrid warfare**, where conflicts evolve rapidly and forces must be equipped with **modern technology**.

यह इकाइयाँ तेज़-गति वाली आक्रामक (offensive) यूनिट्स हैं, जिन्हें हाइब्रिड/आधुनिक युद्ध के लिए तैयार किया गया है—जहाँ युद्ध के स्वरूप तेजी से बदलते हैं और नई तकनीक जरूरी है।

- They are described as part of **force restructuring**, aligned with **new technologies, evolving doctrines/thought processes, and emerging operational requirements**.

इन्हें फोर्स रीस्ट्रक्चरिंग का हिस्सा बताया गया है—नई तकनीक, बदलते सिद्धांत/सोच और नए ऑपरेशनल रीक्वायरमेंट्स के अनुरूप।

4) Role & capability / भूमिका और क्षमता

- Bhairav Battalions are designed to **execute Special Forces–type tasks at multiple levels**, depending on operational needs.

भैरव बटालियन्स को स्पेशल फोर्सेज जैसे कार्य अलग-अलग स्तरों पर (ज़रूरत के अनुसार) करने योग्य बनाया गया है।

- They are intended to **bridge the gap between Para Special Forces and regular infantry**, enabling **special operations from tactical to operational depth**.

इनका उद्देश्य पैरा स्पेशल फोर्सेज और सामान्य इन्फैंट्री के बीच की क्षमता-खाई को भरना है, ताकि टैक्टिकल से ऑपरेशनल डेप्थ तक विशेष ऑपरेशन किए जा सकें।

5) Drones & unmanned warfare focus / ड्रोन और अनमैन्ड वॉरफेयर पर फोकस

- The Army highlighted its push toward **unmanned warfare**, mentioning creation of a pool of **over one lakh drone operatives** capable of handling drones and using them in real operations.

सेना ने अनमैन्ड वॉरफेयर पर जोर दिखाते हुए एक लाख से अधिक ड्रोन ऑपरेटिव्स का पूल बनाने की बात कही—जो ड्रोन संचालन और वास्तविक ऑपरेशनों में उपयोग कर सकते हैं।

- The narrative implies drones can support operations to **target bases/formations inside enemy territory**.

रिपोर्ट के अनुसार ड्रोन का उपयोग दुश्मन क्षेत्र के भीतर ठिकानों/फॉर्मेशनों को टारगेट करने जैसे कार्यों में मददगार हो सकता है।

6) Scale-up plan / विस्तार की योजना

- The Army has **raised 15 Bhairav Battalions** deployed across formations along borders, and plans are underway to raise **about 25 in total** in the near future.

सेना अब तक **15 भैरव बटालियन** खड़ी कर चुकी है (सीमावर्ती फॉर्मेशनों में तैनाती) और निकट भविष्य में **कुल लगभग 25** तक बढ़ाने की योजना है।

7) Broader transformation mentioned / व्यापक परिवर्तन का संदर्भ

- The article also mentions creation of **"Rudra Brigades"**—integrated all-arms formations combining **infantry, mechanised units, tanks, artillery, special forces, unmanned aerial systems**, plus dedicated logistics and combat support.

रिपोर्ट में **"रुद्र ब्रिगेड्स"** का भी जिक्र है—जहाँ **इन्फैंट्री, मैकेनाइज़्ड यूनिट्स, टैंक्स, आर्टिलरी, स्पेशल फोर्स, अनमैन्ड एरियल सिस्टम्स** को एकीकृत किया गया है, साथ में **लॉजिस्टिक्स/कॉम्बैट सपोर्ट** भी।

- It adds that **Artillery, Mechanised Infantry and Armoured Corps** are being equipped with advanced capabilities including **drones and modern battlefield systems** for future conflicts.

Q. With reference to the "Bhairav Battalions" mentioned in the report, consider the following statements:

1. They are high-speed offensive units designed to execute Special Forces–type tasks at multiple levels.
/ ये तेज़-गति वाली आक्रामक इकाइयाँ हैं जो स्पेशल फोर्सेज जैसे कार्य कई स्तरों पर कर सकती हैं।
2. They are intended to bridge the gap between Para Special Forces and regular infantry, enabling special operations from tactical to operational depth. / इनका उद्देश्य पैरा स्पेशल फोर्सेज और नियमित इन्फैंट्री के बीच गैप भरना है।
3. The report says the Army has already raised 25 Bhairav Battalions and plans to reduce them to 15. / रिपोर्ट के अनुसार सेना ने 25 खड़ी कर ली हैं और इन्हें 15 तक घटाने की योजना है।

Which of the above is/are correct?

- A) 1 and 2 only
- B) 2 and 3 only
- C) 1 and 3 only
- D) 1, 2 and 3

IN BRIEF

RSS evolving with time, taking new forms: Mohan Bhagwat

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) is not changing but "gradually evolving" and "simply unfolding" with time, Mohan Bhagwat said on Sunday. The RSS chief was addressing an event held at the organisation's office in New Delhi to launch the song album of the upcoming film *Shanku*, which chronicles the 100-year journey of the RSS. Singer Subhashree Singh, director Adish Mall, co-producer Ashish Tiwari, and RSS functionary Bhagwat Joshi were present on the occasion. "The organisation (RSS) is celebrating its centenary. But as the organisation evolves and takes on new forms, people perceive it as changing. However, it's not actually changing; it's simply unfolding gradually," Mr. Bhagwat said in his address.

Congress leader Sonia Gandhi discharged from hospital

Congress Parliamentary Party Chairperson Sonia Gandhi was discharged from hospital at 5 p.m. on Sunday, with advice to continue further treatment at her residence. The senior Congress leader was admitted to Sir Gangaram Hospital in Delhi on the evening of Jan 9 with a complication of bronchial asthma due to chest infection. She has responded well to treatment with a good recovery, according to Ajay Swaroop, chairman, Board of Management, Sir Gangaram Hospital.

Environment Ministry funds sought for forest management committees

Alakhnesh Lakshman

NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs is in talks with the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change for funding the management of community forest reserves, which rights have been vested to gram sabhas in tribal communities and other forest-dwellers across the country under the Forest Rights Act (FRA), government officials said.

Officials of both Ministries met over it recently, and the Tribal Affairs Ministry is also planning to write to the Environment Ministry formally on this matter, a top official told *The Hindu*, adding that this was necessary to "correct the perception" that the forest bureaucracy was at odds with the goals of community-led forest resource management.



Officials of the Tribal Affairs and Environment Ministries discuss the funding issue recently. (I.A.S. Prasad)

For the last 20 years, the FRA has recognised the historical rights of Scheduled Tribes communities and other forest-dwellers on the forests they have lived in and around and vested these rights in them through FRA titles for specific sets of rights. Under the FRA, gram sabhas are entitled to include community forest resource rights (CFR) over areas they have been traditionally protecting, regenerating, conserving and managing for sustainable use.

The Union government is now looking to cope in the Environment Ministry to fund the CFR management committees that are being set up under the FRA.

One senior official said, "The CFRM committees will need resources and help in functioning. They will need the inputs from tribal officials, prepare plans, and even train their own community's."

A meeting at the level of Secretaries of both Ministries was held over the last month. "If needed, additional funds will be allocated to ensure that the planning of forest conservation and management plans be drawn up by the community-led and is not government-led and is not aligned with the Environment Ministry's work-

will be injected into a Sun Synchronous Orbit and KID Capsule into a re-entry trajectory," the ISRO said.

It added that after the injection of EOS-01 and its satellites, the P04 stage will be re-started to de-boost and enter a re-entry trajectory, followed by KID Capsule separation. "Both P04 stage and KID Capsule will re-enter into Earth's Atmosphere and impact will

be in the South Pacific Ocean," the ISRO said.

The 15 co-passengers of the KID Capsule are the 15 co-passengers of the EOS-01 satellite built jointly by Thales and the U.K. CASTAR by Dhruva Space (India), TOTAT by Dhruva Space, MOH by Dhruva Space and Takenspace (India), LACHT by Dhruva Space and Don Bosco University (India). The-both by Dhruva Space.

Mural by Nepal university Anurkshya Prasthan (Nepal) and MGA, GRI, KID Capsule by Orbital Padam (Spain) and RIDEI (France).

The CH called upon the Centre to announce a roll-out of three or four privatisation pipelines, outlining which enterprises are likely to be taken up for privatisation during this period while recognising that privatisation of all non-strategic PSUs is a complex and time-consuming pro-

Countdown to launch of PSLV-C62 mission begins

The vehicle, carrying an earth observation satellite and 15 co-passengers developed by Indian and overseas customers, is set to lift off at 10:17 a.m. today, it is the 105th launch from Sriharikota

The Hindu Bureau

BENGALURU

The 22.5-hour countdown to the launch of the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV), carrying an earth observation satellite and 15 co-passengers, commenced at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota on Sunday.

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is scheduled to launch the PSLV-C62/EOS-01 Mission at 10:17 a.m. on Monday from the first launch pad of the Satish Dhawan Space Centre. This will be the 105th launch from Sriharikota. It will also be the 64th flight of the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle and the 6th mission of the PSLV.



The ISRO said that after the injection of EOS-01 and its satellites, the P04 stage will be re-started to de-boost and enter a re-entry trajectory, followed by KID Capsule separation. (I.A.S. Prasad)

Faster, demand-led approach needed for PSE privatisation: CII

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has suggested an accelerated four-pronged strategy to unlock value from the divestment of public sector enterprises (PSEs), calling for a demand-driven approach in selecting units for privatisation, and following a predictable road map.

In its proposals for the Union Budget 2020-21, the industry lobby urged the Union government to mobilise resources through a calibrated approach to privatisation focusing on sectors where private participation can enhance efficiency, technology infusion, and global competitiveness, to sustain capital expenditure and address developmental priorities amid global economic uncertainties.

The CII wants the Centre to announce a roll-out of three or four privatisation pipelines, outlining which enterprises are likely to be taken up for privatisation during this period while recognising that privatisation of all non-strategic PSUs is a complex and time-consuming pro-

cess. It argued that this visibility would encourage deeper investor engagement and more realistic valuation and price discovery, which would contribute towards expediting the privatisation process.

Releasing value

"Government could reduce its stake in listed PSUs in a phased manner to 25% initially, allowing it to remain the single largest shareholder while releasing significant value into the market. Over time, this stake could be brought down further to between 33% and 26%," the CII stated in its proposal.

Reducing the government's stake to 25% and even lower is a pragmatic step that balances strategic control with value creation. Unleashing nearly ₹10 lakh crore of productive capital would provide vital resources to accelerate physical and social infrastructure development and support fiscal consolidation," CII Director-General Chandrajit Banerjee said.

Reliance to invest ₹7 lakh crore in Gujarat over next five years: Ambani

Alakhnesh Deshpande

MUMBAI

Reliance Industries chairman Mukesh Ambani on Sunday said Gujarat was more than just a business for the group.

"For Reliance, Gujarat is our home, heart, and soul. We are a Gujarati company," he said at the Vibrant Gujarat Regional Conference in Rajkot.

Mr. Ambani said he was making five firm commitments to the State. He said that Reliance was already Gujarat's largest investor, having invested over ₹3.5 lakh crore in the past five years. "We will double this investment to ₹7 lakh crore over the next five years."

"I am building the world's largest integrated clean energy ecosystem, covering solar power, battery energy storage, green hydrogen, green fertilisers, sustainable aviation fuel, maritime fuel, and advanced materials," Ambani said. "I am building the world's largest integrated clean energy ecosystem, covering solar power, battery energy storage, green hydrogen, green fertilisers, sustainable aviation fuel, maritime fuel, and advanced materials."



Mukesh Ambani

clean energy and green materials. At Jamnagar, Reliance is building the world's largest integrated clean energy ecosystem, covering solar power, battery energy storage, green hydrogen, green fertilisers, sustainable aviation fuel, maritime fuel, and advanced materials.

"I am building the world's largest integrated clean energy ecosystem, covering solar power, battery energy storage, green hydrogen, green fertilisers, sustainable aviation fuel, maritime fuel, and advanced materials."

among the largest in the world," would deliver a round-the-clock clean power through advanced storage and modern grid integration, powering India's growth and reinforcing Gujarat's leadership in renewable energy.

Indigenous AI platform

Ravi Kant, managing director of Adani Ports and SEZ Limited, said that for the Adani Group, Gujarat "is not just a State of investment; it is our foundation."

"Gujarat is where our journey began, and Gujarat is where our long-term commitment remains unwavering."

"We will launch India's first people-centric AI platform, built in India for India and the world. It will enable every citizen, starting from Gujarat, to access AI services in their own language, on their own devices, every day, making them more efficient and productive," he said.

The fifth commitment

was partnering with the Gujarat government's Olympic ambitions and social initiatives. Mr. Ambani said the Reliance Foundation fully supported the Prime Minister's vision of bringing the 2036 Olympic Games to Ahmedabad.

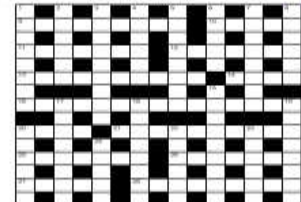
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The fifth commitment

THE CROSSWORD 14689



- Across
- One who reproves seditious sub attacker (5)
 - Under new form of rule (3)
 - Universal good and a new person (the US Anti) (7)
 - Almost indubitable (the US Anti) (7)
 - Not old! Learning level (I) is wrong, cold and biggest (10)
 - First class backward place (4)

- Lady there perhaps with sadness (15)
 - Fair in female languages (4)
 - Climbing and throwing one art club tag, perhaps (5,7)
 - Medieval dynasty welcomed English royal, a deadly killer of gore (7)
 - A timeline followed by facts, leaving small city in USA (7)
 - Manuscript value (a) a gift (4)
 - Honour contract misty and million rain (8)
- Down
- Isling and P4 in bar is a plan to devote (3,2,2)
 - Get old British coast right away (8)
 - Large and royal, complete car (3)
 - American professor is a handsome young man (8)
 - Patrol Star (a) regularly ignored brand (8)
 - Trunk made of tin on sale (5)
 - Choke vehicular capacity, perhaps for dark chocolate (8)
 - Sip drinks not bearing a disappointing expression (8)
 - Clear (a) possibly for dinner (8)
 - Talk for the most part on line, endless turmoil and a piece of religious music (8)
 - Controversial, a backsliding scandal, he's a typical part (4)
 - Disturbed horse cart with hands and parts of a sail (8)
 - Starts to exploit new charming accountant, someone helping to make money (8)
 - Black reptile retreat, covering distance of an American state (6)
 - Tongues caught in melting resolution (6)
 - One who runs back to run through again (5)

SUDOKU



- Solution to previous puzzle
- | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | 2 | 7 | 9 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 8 | 5 |
| 1 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 2 | 7 | 9 |
| 7 | 3 | 9 | 6 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 1 | 2 |
| 3 | 8 | 2 | 7 | 1 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 9 |
| 4 | 1 | 6 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 7 | 9 | 8 |
| 9 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 8 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 7 |
| 2 | 6 | 8 | 3 | 7 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 9 |
| 5 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 7 | 6 | 3 | 4 |
- Solution to yesterday's Sudoku
- | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | 2 | 7 | 9 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 8 | 5 |
| 1 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 2 | 7 | 9 |
| 7 | 3 | 9 | 6 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 1 | 2 |
| 3 | 8 | 2 | 7 | 1 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 9 |
| 4 | 1 | 6 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 7 | 9 | 8 |
| 9 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 8 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 7 |
| 2 | 6 | 8 | 3 | 7 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 9 |
| 5 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 7 | 6 | 3 | 4 |

FAITH

Gift we seek from Krishna

Thrippuvai means many things to many people today. For many, it is the pull of Andai's poetic Tamil and effortless presentation of Isakhi. For many, it is the enduring appeal of M.L. Vasanthakumari's masterly musical presentation. For a few, it is the attraction of Pongal, especially on the day of *Koodam Vellam Seer Govinda* and the *sakkara Pongal*. However, Thrippuvai, hailed as the Tamil vedam, is the song of Srivilliputhur, where Andai emphasises on togetherness in finding eternal happiness (Perumal), said Omkar Parandevi. After saluting Him with various names, Andai calls upon Govinda, three times in this pauranam (27th). Following the early morning austerities and listening to discourses on Krishna avtar (which itself comes about only if one is truly blessed), one should surrender to Perumal by saying Govinda three times and He will take care. Krishna Himself gives this assurance in the Bhagavad Gita, when he says forsake earthly needs and surrender to me, I will accept that surrender. In the Ramayana, when everyone is gathered for the Sita Rama Patahabhishekam and Nishadas is about to commence the ceremonies, Perumal, who manifested as Rama, tells the sage to wait as He was unable to find the most important person. He was referring to Arjuna, who however, chose to take his seat at the bottom of the coronation throne, in order to be able to carry the same on his shoulder. Genuinely touched, Rama offers a precious pearl necklace to Arjuna. Andai seeks a similar, world-renowned gift, from Krishna. When he says He had gifted her everything (the insight in Thrippuvai), Andai says she and her friends (devotees) only want to serve Him regardless of how many rebirths they take.

Countdown to launch of PSLV-C62 mission begins

The vehicle, carrying an earth observation satellite and 15 'co-passengers' developed by Indian and overseas customers, is set to lift off at 10.17 a.m today; it is the 105th launch from Sriharikota

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The 22.5-hour countdown to the launch of the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV), carrying an earth observation satellite and 15 co-passenger satellites, commenced at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota on Sunday.

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is scheduled to launch the PSLV-C62/EOS-N1 Mission at 10.17 a.m. on Monday from the first launch pad of the Satish Dhawan Space Centre. This will be the 105th launch from Sriharikota. It will also be the 64th flight of the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle and the fifth mission of the PSLV-DL variant.

The 15 co-passenger satellites have been developed by start-ups and academic institutions from India and abroad. The EOS-N1 satellite is said to have been built for strategic purposes.

"It is a commercial mission of NewSpace India Limited (NSIL). EOS-N1 and 14 co-passenger satellites



The ISRO said that after the injection of EOS-N1 and 14 satellites, the PS4 stage will be re-started to de-boost and enter a re-entry trajectory, followed by KID Capsule separation. @isro/X

will be injected into a Sun Synchronous Orbit and KID Capsule into a re-entry trajectory," the ISRO said.

It added that after the injection of EOS-N1 and 14 satellites, the PS4 stage will be re-started to de-boost and enter a re-entry trajectory, followed by KID Capsule separation. "Both PS4 stage and KID Capsule will re-enter into Earth's Atmosphere and impact will

be in the South Pacific Ocean," the ISRO said.

The 15 co-passengers are: Theos-2 earth observation satellite built jointly by Thailand and the U.K.; CGUSAT by Dhruva Space (India); DSUSAT by Dhruva Space; MOI-1 by Dhruva Space and Takeme2Space (India); LACHIT by Dhruva Space and Don Bosco University (India); Thybolt-3 by Dhruva Space;

Munal by Nepal university Antharkshya Pratishthan (Nepal) and MEA, GoI; KID Capsule by Orbital Paradigm (Spain) and RIDE! (France); Edusat by AlltoSpace (Brazil); Uaisat by AlltoSpace; Galaxy Explorer by AlltoSpace; Orbital Temple by AlltoSpace; Aldebaran-1 by AlltoSpace; Sanskarsat by Laxman Gyanpith (India); and AyulSat by OrbitAid (India).

- **Countdown started:** A 22.5-hour countdown has begun for the **PSLV-C62** mission at **Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC), Sriharikota**.

काउंटडाउन शुरू: श्रीहरिकोटा स्थित सतीश धवन अंतरिक्ष केंद्र (SDSC) में PSLV-C62 मिशन का 22.5 घंटे का काउंटडाउन शुरू हुआ।

- **Launch time & pad:** ISRO is set to launch **PSLV-C62 / EOS-N1** mission at **10:17 a.m.** from the **First Launch Pad**.

लॉन्च समय/पैड: ISRO PSLV-C62 / EOS-N1 मिशन को सुबह 10:17 बजे फर्स्ट लॉन्च पैड से लॉन्च करेगा।

2) What the rocket carries / रॉकेट क्या ले जा रहा है

- **Main payload:** An Earth Observation Satellite: **EOS-N1**.

मुख्य पेलोड: पृथ्वी अवलोकन उपग्रह: EOS-N1।

- **Co-passengers:** 15 co-passenger payloads developed by Indian and overseas customers (start-ups and academic institutions are mentioned).

को-पैसेंजर: 15 सह-पेलोड, जिनमें भारत और विदेश के ग्राहक/स्टार्टअप/शैक्षणिक संस्थान शामिल बताए गए हैं।

- **EOS-N1 purpose:** The report mentions EOS-N1 is built for **strategic purposes**.

EOS-N1 का उद्देश्य: रिपोर्ट के अनुसार EOS-N1 रणनीतिक (strategic) उद्देश्यों के लिए बनाया गया है।

4) Commercial angle / कमर्शियल पहलू

- The report describes it as a **commercial mission of NewSpace India Limited (NSIL)**.

रिपोर्ट में इसे **NSIL (NewSpace India Limited)** का कमर्शियल मिशन बताया गया है।

5) Orbit insertion & post-deployment sequence / ऑर्बिट और डिप्लॉयमेंट के बाद की प्रक्रिया

- **Orbit:** EOS-N1 and 14 satellites are planned to be injected into a **Sun-Synchronous Orbit (SSO)**.

कक्षा: EOS-N1 और 14 उपग्रहों को सन-सिंक्रोनस ऑर्बिट (SSO) में स्थापित किया जाएगा।

- **Re-entry demonstration:** The **KID Capsule** is to be placed into a **re-entry trajectory**.

री-एंट्री: KID कैप्सूल को री-एंट्री ट्रैजेक्टरी में डाला जाएगा।

- **PS4 stage restart:** After injecting EOS-N1 and 14 satellites, the **PS4 stage** will be **re-started to de-boost**, followed by **KID Capsule separation**.

PS4 री-स्टार्ट: EOS-N1 व 14 सैटेलाइट्स की इंजेक्शन के बाद **PS4 स्टेज** को डी-बूस्ट के लिए दोबारा स्टार्ट किया जाएगा, फिर KID कैप्सूल सेपरेशन होगा।

- **Impact area:** It is mentioned both **PS4 stage** and **KID Capsule** will re-enter Earth's atmosphere and impact in the **South Pacific Ocean**.

इम्पैक्ट क्षेत्र: रिपोर्ट के अनुसार **PS4 स्टेज** और **KID कैप्सूल** री-एंट्री के बाद साउथ पैसिफिक ओशन में गिरेंगे/इम्पैक्ट करेंगे।

- Mission significance / **श्रमट् ष इव खणदु**
 - **Milestones:** This is stated to be the **105th launch from Sriharikota**, the **64th flight of PSLV**, and the **5th mission of the PSLV-DL variant**.
- खणदु षः** : गण वृणप्रघड्डाव दड 105अवचउ, PSLV इह 64अवचनवउ ,
 ः घ PSLV-DL अवचड्ड इव 5अवश्रमट् ष णिवेगव णगेव णचड्ड

- Co-passenger list mentioned (high-value names) / **सहयात्री सूची (उच्च-मूल्य नाम)**

- The report lists co-passengers including: **Theos-2 (Thailand–U.K.)**, multiple payloads by **Dhruva Space**, payloads by **AlltoSpace (Brazil)**, **Munal (Nepal university + MEA, Gol)**, **Sanskarat (Laxman Gyanpith, India)**, **Ayul-Sat (OrbitAid, India)**, and **KID Capsule (Spain + France partners)**.

प्रमाणित सूची में सहयात्री शामिल हैं: **Theos-2 (थाईलैंड-यू.के.)**, **Dhruva Space** द्वारा कई पेलोड, **AlltoSpace (ब्राज़ील)** द्वारा पेलोड, **Munal (नेपाल विश्वविद्यालय + MEA, गोवा)**, **Sanskarat (लखमन ग्यानपिथ, भारत)**, **Ayul-Sat (OrbitAid, भारत)** और **KID Capsule (स्पेन + फ्रांस के साथी)**।

Topic	Key idea (English)	रक्षक ढल (Hindi)
Sun-Synchronous Orbit (SSO)	Orbit where the satellite passes the same area at nearly the same local solar time—ideal for consistent Earth imagery.	ढल इ लर शनदुरल कहरण चणकण इड ढल “चड्डड च डडडड बुरर” हर शड डल लडड इ ड र हर डड ढकन घलर ढल—१ कड छ डडरडड इ ड शडड कहरणडड
De-boost	Controlled reduction of orbital speed/altitude to bring a stage/object into re-entry.	इ लर इ ह र डडरड/ढलर डलर घ अडक इ ड शडडरडलर र डड घल- इडलर ह घ चरडड
PS4 restart concept	Restart capability allows precise orbital adjustments and controlled disposal / experiments after payload deployment.	घल-अडलर लरलर डड हरडडड इ ड ढलर डलर छ शडलर डडरडलर र घ अड शडडधर/डडरडडरडलर डडकड ढडलरड ढडड
NSIL role	Commercial arm that markets/executes space missions and services.	डड शडरड/डडरड र ड र इ रशरडडर शडरड/रडरड रशरड इ घडड अररल सड रड

- **With reference to the PSLV-C62 / EOS-N1 mission described in the report, consider the following statements:**
 - The mission is scheduled for liftoff at **10:17 a.m.** from the **First Launch Pad** at Sriharikota. / चरु 10:17 ँ नु ँ क
चरुहृ ढु णरुणरु णरुहृ
 - EOS-N1 and **14 satellites** are planned for injection into a **Sun-Synchronous Orbit**, while the **KID Capsule** is to be placed on a **re-entry trajectory**. / EOS-N1 + 14 ढरुहृरुहृ SSO खरु, ँ घ KID इरुहृ घह-इरुहृहृ हृरुहृ इरुहृहृ खरुहृ
 - The report says this is the **105th launch from Sriharikota** and the **5th mission of the PSLV-DL variant**. / गण 105अरुहृरु घ PSLV-DL इरु 5अरुहृरु ँ ढरुगव णरु णरुहृ
 - **Which of the above is/are correct?**
- A) 1 and 2 only
B) 2 and 3 only
C) 1 and 3 only
D) 1, 2 and 3

Toothpaste makers have reasons to smile more



Peeth Prasad: Market leader Colgate Palmolive (India) is looking up its beauty proposition, not even

Meenakshi Verma Ambwani

In November, Haryana Consumer picked up a 28% stake in Couch Commerce Pvt. Ltd., the company that owns Fong Oni Care. This was an unlikely acquisition by a company more focused on beauty and skincare, but it is fine with the shifts taking place in the country's highly penetrated oral-care segment.

Beyond just hygiene, Indian consumers are increasingly seeking solutions for teeth sensitivity, whitening and gum care, among other needs. New-age as well as established brands are sinking their teeth into this new opportunity, launching products to truly take the premeditation way. From teeth whitening serum to strips, affluent Indian consumers are lapping it all up for better teeth and radiant smiles. Announcing the acquisition on an investor call, Varun Agnih, Co-Founder and CEO, Haryana Consumer, pointed out that Indian consumers are increasingly associating oral care with overall wellness and confidence, which is driving the demand for whitening and cosmetic oral-care products. He pointed out that oral care, which has been perceived as "functional hygiene" for the past 80 years, is now seen as "targeted wellness and self-expression".

From and natural formulations that address sensitivity and bleeding gums. Haryana's big bet is that, over the next decade, oral care will transition to the aesthetic expression stage, where the focus on teeth-whitening and "smile enhancement" will overlap with beauty and self-expression. "We believe that over the next couple of years, one of the strong participants which will get created in the oral-care category is aesthetic and aesthetic expression, where your smile will be a core part of your beauty and how you take care of your smile through oral care. And it will be a play that can happen in beauty and oral care," he added. Last year, Haryana Oral Care, a rising D2C brand, secured \$1 million investment from Lotus Healthcare (a sister Herbalife family office) in a pre-Series A round.

The brand, co-founded by Karan Raj Kohli and Viraj Kapur in 2023, said it would use the funding for new product innovation, research and development, branding and marketing initiatives, team expansion, and achieving economies of scale.

While D2C brands are building their portfolio around the shifting oral-care needs, established players are armed to the teeth too. Market leader Colgate Palmolive (India) is brushing up its beauty proposition. Colgate White Purple serum was launched "to make oral care meet beauty". Other premium propositions include Colgate Visible White Purifying Toothpaste and Max Fresh Sensual, besides its therapeutic range.

In India, oral care, which includes toothpaste and tooth powder, is a universally penetrated product. "Toothpaste volume has a CAGR of 2.4% in the last four years, while tooth powder has grown by 1.5%," says Anand Kumar, Managing Director, Numerator (formerly known as Kantar).

(The writer is with The Hindu Businessline)

Will India soon have 3 new airlines?

Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu, Kinnarapu's recent meeting with the promoters of Shankh Air, Al Hind Air and FlytExpress has rekindled hopes of new airlines taking to the skies. Air Kerala and Trujet, too, are waiting in the wings

NEWS ANALYSIS

Anesh Phadnis

Will India soon have three new airlines? While the country's airline startup story so far has been about big promises and missed deadlines, Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu, Kinnarapu's recent meeting with promoters of Shankh Air, Al Hind Air and FlytExpress has rekindled hopes of new airlines taking to the skies.

India is amongst the fastest growing aviation markets in the world. Government schemes like UDAN have enabled smaller carriers Star Air, Indigo One Air and Flyt to play an important role in the country's regional connectivity and there is scope for further growth, Mr. Naidu said in his social media post on December 23.

Alongside Shankh Air, Al Hind Air and FlytExpress, Air Kerala and Trujet, too, are waiting in the wings. All of them have received the ministry's "no objection clearance" for their operations. But have been facing issues in raising funds, however, there could be some good news around the corner.

Cautious restart

"We hope to sign a letter of intent to lease one Airbus A320 aircraft this month," said Umesh Vankayalapati, MD of Trujet. Trujet flew

its first test flight on December 22 before running out of funds. This time around, Managing Director Umesh Vankayalapati wants to play safe, not risky

during 2025-26 before running out of funds. This time around, Mr. Vankayalapati wants to play safe. "We plan to begin operations with at least three aircraft, as that will help us in maintaining schedule reliability in case of adverse weather or snags... Business can be viable only if there is a certain scale. This year we hope to get five aircraft and have 20 flights in three years," he said. Trujet will be based in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.

In contrast, Uttar Pradesh-based Shankh Air's chairman, Shrawan Kumar and Vankayalapati, said Shankh Air will offer flat fares through the year. He said the airline is well funded and has even received loans from foreign banks.

For now, however, Shankh Air's plan to start operations by the first quarter of 2026 appear unlikely. It does not have the

crucial air operator certificate needed to start commercial operations. There is no information on its aircraft deliveries, or pilot hiring, among other things. Another startup, Al Hind Air is also on a sticky wicket with reports of staff being sent on leave without pay from November 15, due to delays in securing regulatory approvals.

Rigorous process

As per norms, companies seeking civil aviation ministry NOC for an airline must have minimum paid-up capital of ₹150 crore. The requirement is ₹1 crore for a cargo airline, ₹5 crore for scheduled commuter (regional), and ₹50 crore for scheduled airlines.

Besides submitting a business plan to the civil aviation ministry, airlines waiting to launch must secure security clearance from

the government.

The more rigorous task, however, involves securing an air operator certificate (AOC) from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). Companies have to prepare manuals on engineering, operations and safety, specifying the exact aircraft, each airline intends to operate.

An important aspect of this exercise is the inspection of facilities and a tabletop exercise to simulate various operational scenarios, ranging from service recovery following an aircraft hijack. The final step is a proving flight to assess the operational readiness of the new airline. While in an ideal scenario an AOC process can be completed in six months, typically it takes 9-12 months.

We have completed one step of the DGCA AOC process and prepared the manuals. We will be moving to our new office this month. We intend to start operations in the summer season. Initially we plan to invest ₹500 crore in the airline," Mr. Vankayalapati said.

While domestic passenger growth slowed last year, around 4% in the first 11 months, the opportunities are immense. India is the third largest air transport market in the world behind the U.S. and China. Nearly 174 million passengers travelled from and within India in 2024, according to International Air Transport Association

data. Policies like UDAN have brought air connectivity to tier 2 and 3 towns, and fuelled the growth ambitions of startups.

Aviation sector experts say startup airlines need to demonstrate confidence to aircraft lessors and original equipment manufacturers. That, in turn, calls for a sound business plan and a strong management team. "Airlines don't make money until they reach a certain scale and thus need to provision for losses. From a lessor perspective, the most important questions are, 'How will the startup pay the lease rent?' and 'What will the cash flows be like?'" says aviation consultant Vihok Maranghi.

"Start-ups in high-growth markets like India are logical, but it is going to be tough, given the market structure. For a national-level airline, start-ups would require close to \$1 billion funding for the first five years to survive and remain relevant," said Kaul, CEO of consultancy CAPA India.

While Go First's bankruptcy and SpiceJet's challenges have made lenders cautious, larger players continue to supply planes to India, Maranghi said. "Each company has its own risk appetite based on its exposure to an airline or the country," he remarked. Will the newcomers be lenders' confidence? We will have to look skywards for the answer.

(The writer is with The Hindu Businessline)

Evergreen loyalty with cakes, puffs, khara buns

Harish Bhat

During the last week of 2025, I was in the Bandra area of Mumbai to attend a marriage. I took the opportunity to walk into the bakery that I never miss when I am in that area. The Hearsch Bakery, which is tucked away behind an old bungalow on Hill Road.

There was a long queue of people waiting to get in to the bakery. This was not surprising at all, because I Hearsch serves the tastiest burgers, rolls and puffs. As it has been doing for many decades, the bakery has a few customers in the queue about why they come, and they taste some of them told me, "Did you not know that Hearsch makes burgers made in heaven?"

Then, on New Year's Day, my wife and I walked down the roads of South Mumbai to one of our favourite bakeries in the city - VB Bakery. It was teeming with people waiting to attend a marriage. I took the opportunity to walk into the bakery that I never miss when I am in that area. The Hearsch Bakery, which is tucked away behind an old bungalow on Hill Road.

Many of these bakeries use their heritage as USP. These outlets are so obsessed with authentic products that they often continue to use the traditional and manual methods to make their products. Each of these bakeries has one or more signature products that are legendary. For instance, Kanyani Bakery has its love for chocolate buns. Vardant Bakery has its buttery *brunswick*, best ever since 18 years ago. Even the man in charge there has remained the same since 18 years ago. Even the man in charge there has remained the same since 18 years ago.

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The future of logistics is tech-driven, intelligent ecosystem

Hemant Bhatia

Technology is the transformative force in every sector of the economy today. Digital solutions are driving innovation, expanding operational scale, and redefining business models across industries. From healthcare and education to manufacturing and retail, the pace and depth of this technological revolution are unlocking new possibilities and elevating benchmarks for efficiency, transparency, and agility.

The government's Digital India initiative continues to accelerate technological

logical penetration, creating new avenues for growth. According to the State of India's Digital Economy Report 2024, India is the third most digitally used economy globally and ranks 12th among 120 nations in its digital adoption. This digital momentum is reshaping the nation's economic landscape, transforming supply chains into intelligent, interconnected ecosystems.

End-to-end capability
As India achieves its goal of a digital first economy with a \$5-trillion ambition, logistics stands at the intersection of technology and economic progress. For logistics to realise its full potential, it requires a

Chain ecosystem. At Mahindra Logistics, automation, AI, and advanced analytics enable predictive maintenance, intelligent demand forecasting, and optimised route planning. In essence, it's about creating a digitally unified ecosystem capable of tracking and tracking shipments, forecasting demand, optimising routes, and controlling

through cloud-based platforms. Logistics, the backbone of economic growth, must, depends on timely, seamless, and accurate coordination across multiple touchpoints, linking warehousing operations, fleet management, last-mile delivery, and customer service.

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NEWS ANALYSIS

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India is amongst the fastest growing aviation markets in the world. Government schemes like UDAN have enabled smaller carriers Star Air, India One Air and Fly91 to play an important role in the country's regional connectivity and there is scope for further growth, Mr. Naidu said in his social media post on December 23.

Alongside Shankh Air, Al Hind Air and FlyExpress, Air Kerala and TruJet, too, are waiting in the wings. All of them have received the ministry's 'no objection clearance' — some over a year ago — but have been hamstrung by their inability to procure aircraft and delays in raising funds. However, there could be some good news around the corner.

Cautious restart

"We hope to sign a letter of intent to lease one Airbus A320 aircraft this month," said Umesh Vankayalapati, MD of TruJet. TruJet flew



Fresh takeoff: TruJet flew during 2015-22 before running out of funds; this time around, Managing Director Umesh Vankayalapati wants to play safe. FILE PHOTO

during 2015-22 before running out of funds; this time around, Mr. Vankayalapati wants to play safe. "We plan to begin operations with at least three aircraft, as that will help us in maintaining schedule reliability in case of adverse weather or snags... business can be viable only if there is a certain scale. This year we hope to get five aircraft and have 20 aircraft in three years," he said. TruJet will be based in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.

In contrast, Uttar Pradesh-based Shankh Air's chairman, Shravan Kumar Vishwakarma, seems to be a man in a hurry.

He told a wire agency on December 30 that the airline is likely to start operations in the first half of January, with an initial fleet of three Airbus aircraft. The airline will connect Lucknow with Delhi, Mum-



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UMESH VANKAYALAPATI
MD of TruJet

bai and other metros. Two days later the airline said it plans to commence operations around March.

In another interview, Mr. Vishwakarma said Shankh Air will offer flat fares through the year. He said the airline is well funded and has even received loans from foreign banks.

For now, however, Shankh Air's plan to start operations by the first quarter of 2026 appear unlikely. It does not have the

crucial air operator certificate needed to start commercial operations. There is no information on its aircraft deliveries, or pilot hiring, among other things.

Another startup, Al Hind Air is also on a sticky wicket with reports of staff being sent on leave without pay from November 15, due to delays in securing regulatory approvals.

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An important aspect of this exercise is the inspection of facilities and a tabletop exercise to simulate various operational scenarios, ranging from service recovery following snags to aircraft hijack. The final step is a proving flight to assess the operational readiness of the new airline. While in an ideal scenario an AOC process can be completed in six months, typically it takes 9-12 months.

"We have completed one step of the DGCA AOC process and prepared the required operations manuals. We will be moving to our new office this month and plan to start operations in the summer schedule. Initially we plan to invest ₹500 crore in the airline," Mr. Vankayalapati said.

While domestic passenger growth slowed last year (around 4% in the first 11 months), the opportunities are immense. India is the third largest air transport market in the world behind the U.S. and China. Nearly 174 million passengers travelled from, and within India in 2024, according to International Air Transport Association

data. Policies like UDAN have brought air connectivity to tier 2 and 3 towns, and fuelled the growth ambitions of startups.

Aviation sector experts say startup airlines need to demonstrate confidence to aircraft lessors and original equipment manufacturers. That, in turn, calls for a sound business plan and a strong management team.

"Airlines don't make money until they reach a certain scale and thus need to provision for losses. From a lessor perspective, the most important questions are, 'How will the startup pay the lease rent' and 'What will the cash flows be like'," says aviation consultant Vishok Mansingh.

"Start-ups in high-growth markets like India are logical, but it is going to be tough, given the market structure. For a national-level airline, start-ups would require close to \$1 billion funding for the first five years to survive and remain relevant," said Kapil Kaul, CEO of consultancy CAPA India.

While Go First's bankruptcy and SpiceJet's challenges have made lessors cautious, larger players continue to supply planes to India, Mansingh said. "Each company has its own risk appetite based on its exposure to an airline or the country," he remarked.

Will the newcomers win lessors' confidence? We will have to look skywards for the answer.

(The writer is with The Hindu businessline)

- **TruJet (cautious restart)**

- Flew during **2015–22**, then ran out of funds; now wants to restart carefully.
- Plan: sign a **letter of intent to lease one Airbus A320** this month; start operations with **at least 3 aircraft** to maintain schedule reliability.
- Target: **5 aircraft this year, 20 aircraft in 3 years**; base in **Visakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh)**.
- Also mentions: has completed **one step** of DGCA AOC process, prepared operations manuals, plans to start in the **summer schedule**, and aims to invest about **₹500 crore** initially.

TruJet (सावधानी से री-स्टार्ट)

- **2015–22** में उड़ानें, फिर फंड खत्म; अब सावधानी से वापसी।
- योजना: इस महीने **Airbus A320** के लिए **LOI**; शुरुआत कम से कम **3 विमानों** से ताकि शेड्यूल भरोसेमंद रहे।
- लक्ष्य: इस साल **5 विमान**, **3 साल में 20 विमान**; बेस **विशाखापट्टनम (आंध्र प्रदेश)**।
- DGCA AOC प्रक्रिया का एक स्टेप पूरा, ऑपरेशंस मैनुअल तैयार, **समर शेड्यूल** में शुरुआत की योजना, शुरुआती निवेश **₹500 करोड़**।

- **Shankh Air (ambitious claims, timeline uncertainty)**

- Chairman said (earlier) operations could start with **3 Airbus aircraft**, connecting **Lucknow with Delhi, Mumbai and other metros**; later the airline indicated operations may begin around **March**.
- It also talked about **flat fares** and claimed it is well-funded (even loans from foreign banks).
- Yet the report flags that starting operations by early targets looks difficult because it lacks the crucial **AOC** (Air Operator Certificate) and there's no clear info on aircraft deliveries/pilot hiring.

Shankh Air (बड़े दावे, टाइमलाइन अनिश्चित)

- 3 Airbus विमानों से शुरुआत, लखनऊ-दिल्ली/मुंबई व अन्य मेट्रो कनेक्ट करने की बात; बाद में मार्च के आसपास शुरुआत का संकेत।
- "फ्लैट फेयर" और फंडिंग/विदेशी बैंक लोन के दावे।
- फिर भी रिपोर्ट के अनुसार बिना **AOC** के शुरुआत कठिन; विमान डिलीवरी/पायलट हायरिंग पर स्पष्टता नहीं।

- **Al Hind Air (regulatory delays hurting operations readiness)**

- Report mentions staff being sent on **leave without pay** from **Nov 15**, linked to delays in securing regulatory approvals.

Al Hind Air (रेगुलेटरी देरी का असर)

- **15 नवम्बर** से स्टाफ को बिना वेतन छुट्टी पर भेजने जैसी खबरें—रेगुलेटरी मंजूरी में देरी से जुड़ा संकेत।

◆ 1. Core Reasons for Airline Losses | एयरलाइन घाटे के मुख्य कारण

A. Extremely High Fixed Costs | बहुत ज़्यादा स्थायी लागत

- Aircraft purchase/lease, maintenance, insurance
विमान ख़रीद/लीज़, मेंटेनेंस, बीमा
- Staff salaries (pilots, cabin crew, engineers)
कर्मचारियों की ऊँची सैलरी
- Airport charges, parking, landing fees
एयरपोर्ट शुल्क

➡ Even if planes fly **half-empty**, costs remain almost same.

➡ आधी सीटें खाली होने पर भी लागत लगभग वही रहती है।

B. Fuel Cost Volatility | ईंधन की कीमतों में भारी उतार-चढ़ाव

- Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) = **30–45% of total cost**
- Fuel prices depend on **global crude oil + geopolitics**

➡ टिकट सस्ते, लेकिन ईंधन महँगा = नुकसान

C. Price Wars & Thin Margins | टिकट युद्ध और कम मुनाफ़ा

- Passengers choose **cheapest ticket**, not airline brand
- Low-cost carriers force price cuts

➡ Average global airline margin: **2–4% only**

◆ 2. Why Some Airlines Still Make Profits? | कुछ एयरलाइंस मुनाफ़े में कैसे हैं?

Profitable airlines usually have:

- Scale (large fleets & networks)
- Strong domestic markets
- Ancillary revenue (baggage, seat selection, loyalty programs)
- Fuel hedging & cost control
- Cargo + passenger mix

D. Cyclical Demand & Shocks | अचानक झटके

- Pandemics (COVID-19), wars, terrorism
- Economic slowdown reduces air travel

➡ Demand crashes instantly, costs don't

E. Heavy Debt & Leasing | ज़्यादा कर्ज

- Most airlines **don't own aircraft** → lease payments in USD
 - Currency depreciation hurts non-US airlines
-

F. Regulatory & Tax Burden | टैक्स और नियम

- High aviation taxes (especially in India, Europe)
- Environmental costs (carbon taxes, green fuel mandates)

Rank	Airline	Country	Business Model	Why Profitable
1	Ryanair	Ireland	Ultra Low-Cost	Lowest costs, high aircraft utilization
2	Delta Air Lines	USA	Full Service	Strong domestic demand, loyalty revenue
3	United Airlines	USA	Full Service	Global network + premium passengers
4	Emirates	UAE	Full Service	Hub advantage, long-haul dominance
5	Southwest Airlines	USA	Low-Cost	Fuel hedging, simple operations

KAWHNU

Myanmar votes in second phase of junta-controlled general election



Myanmar's junta held the second phase of elections on Sunday that democracy watchdogs warn is the military paving its rule. The Union Solidarity and Development Party described by many analysts as the military's prime proxy, won nearly 90% of lower house seats in the first phase late last month. AP

WASHINGTON

Venezuela's Machado cannot give Peace Prize to Trump, Nobel body



The Nobel institute said on Friday that the Nobel Peace Prize once awarded, can't be revoked, transferred or shared with others. The statement comes after Venezuelan leader Nicolás Maduro said he would like to give or share her prize with Donald Trump, after U.S. forces captured Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro. AP

BANGKOK

Four injured in bomb detonations across southern Thailand: Army



Assailants detonated bombs at 11 petrol stations across Thailand's southern provinces of Narathiwat, Pattani and Yala on Sunday, injuring four people, an Army statement said. A low-level conflict since 2004 has killed thousands as rebels in the Muslim-majority region bordering Malaysia battle for greater autonomy. AP

ALEPPO

Syria govt. forces take control of Aleppo's Kurdish neighbourhoods



Syria's government took control of Aleppo on Sunday after taking over the city's Kurdish neighbourhoods and surrounding fighters in Kurdish autonomous areas following days of deadly clashes. In all, 300 Kurds had been arrested and over 400 Kurdish fighters were transferred from the Hama Masjid neighbourhood. AP

More protesters killed in Iran unrest as concerns grow over 'crackdown'

Tehran vows to strike back if the United States launches attacks, President Trump has been offered military options, say U.S. media. Demonstrations have lasted for two weeks now; state media broadcasts funeral processions of security forces

Associated Press
DUBAI

Iran's Parliament Speaker warned on Sunday that the U.S. military and Israel would be "legitimate targets" if the U.S. strikes the Islamic Republic over the ongoing protests rocking the country, as threatened by President Donald Trump.

Mohammad Bagheri Qalibaf made the threat after nationwide protests challenging Iran's theocracy saw protesters flood the streets in the country's capital Tehran and Mashhad, its second-largest city, into Sunday morning, crossing the two-week mark.



Image grab from a footage circulating on social media shows protesters taking to the streets in Tehran, Iran on Friday. AP

With the internet down in Iran and phone lines cut off, gauging the demonstrations from abroad has proved more difficult.

According to its latest figures, the U.S.-based rights group Human Rights Acti-

vists News Agency said 490 protesters and security personnel have been killed, with more than 10,000 people arrested.

Mr. Trump offered support for the protesters, saying on social media that

"Iran is looking at FREE DOM, perhaps like never before. The USA stands ready to help!"

The New York Times and Wall Street Journal, citing anonymous U.S. officials, said that Mr. Trump had been given military options for a strike on Iran, but had not made a final decision.

Israel "watching closely" Iran, meanwhile, is "watching closely" the situation between the U.S. and Iran, said an Israeli official, who spoke on condition of anonymity. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Sunday that he hoped Iran would soon be freed from what he de-

scribed as the "yoke of tyranny".

State TV aired funerals of slain security force members while reporting another six had been killed in Barmahab. In Fars province, violence killed 13 people, and seven security forces were killed in North Khorasan province, it added, as authorities considered "riots" and "violence".

Iran's security chief Ali Larijani drew a line between protests over economic hardship, people called "completely understandable", and "riots", accusing death of actions "very similar to the methods of terrorist groups", Tehran news agency reported.

Venezuelans await release of more political prisoners; Maduro 'doing well', says son

Agence France-Presse
CARACAS

Venezuelans were waiting for more political prisoners to be released on Sunday, as ousted President Nicolás Maduro, defiantly claimed from his U.S. jail cell that he is "doing fine" after being seized by U.S. forces a week ago.

Interim President Delcy Rodríguez has begun to free prisoners jailed since Mr. Maduro, saying a "large" number would be released in a gesture of appeasement.

Mr. Maduro has started the process, in a BIG WAY, of releasing their political prisoners. Thank you! Mr. Trump said in a post on his Truth social platform on Saturday.



Family members held candles and posters during a vigil outside a prison on Sunday. Rights groups estimate there are 600 to 1,200 political prisoners held in Venezuela. Only 21 people had been released by Saturday evening. A detained police officer accused of "treason" had died in custody, the opposition and rights groups said on Saturday.

day. Anxious relatives have camped outside jails, awaiting the promised release of political prisoners. Families held candlelight vigils outside El Rodero prison and El Helicóptero, a notorious prison run by the intelligence services, displaying signs with the names of jailed relatives.

Loyalists stage rally Mr. Maduro claimed he was "doing well" in jail in New York, his son Nicolás Maduro Guerra said in a video released by his party on Saturday.

Around 1,000 protesters, waving flags and placards with the face of the ousted leader, rallied in the west of Caracas and a few hundred in the eastern Petare district.

Trump delivers oil warning, urges Cuba to 'strike a deal with U.S. before it is too late'

Agence France-Presse
WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump urged Cuba on Sunday to "make a deal" or face unspecified consequences, warning that the flow of Venezuelan oil and money to Havana would now stop.

"THERE WILL BE NO MORE OIL, NO MONEY GOING TO CUBA, ZERO!" Mr. Trump said on his Truth social channel. "I strongly suggest they make a deal, BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE."

Earlier on Sunday, Mr. Trump repeated a message suggesting that U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio would become the President of Cuba. Mr. Trump shared that post with the comment: "Sounds good to me!"

U.S. President repeats a message suggesting that Marco Rubio could become the President of Cuba

In his own post soon afterwards, Mr. Trump said that "Cuba lived, for many years, on large amounts of OIL, and MONEY from Venezuela. In return, Cuba provided 'security services' for the last two Venezuelan dictators, BUT NOT ANYMORE!"

Cuba rebuffs threat Díaz-Canel on Sunday rejected Mr. Donald Trump's threat against his country, vowing to go to the defense. "Cuba is a free, independent and sovereign nation.

no one tells us what to do," Mr. Díaz-Canel wrote on X, adding that the Caribbean island was "ready to defend the homeland to the last drop of blood."

Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez said Cuba has not received compensation for security services provided to any other country, according to a post on X on Sunday. He said that Cuba has the right to import fuel from any country willing to export it.

Mr. Rodríguez accused the U.S. of behaving in a "criminal" manner that threatens global peace. Under a U.S. trade embargo, Havana since 2000 has increasingly relied on Venezuelan oil provided as part of a deal struck with Nicolás Maduro's predecessor Hugo Chávez.

Darkest hour



Over 1,000 apartment buildings in the Ukrainian capital Kyiv are without heating following a Russian attack earlier this week. "Restoration work is ongoing; however, the energy supply situation remains very difficult," Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko said on Sunday. RU/USA

Israeli forces shoot dead three in Gaza, tension rises

Reuters
CAIRO

Israeli fire killed at least three Palestinians in two separate incidents across the enclave, local health authorities said, as tension rises over continued violence.

Medics said one Palestinian was killed in the Tuffah neighbourhood in Gaza City, in an area under Palestinian control, while two others were killed in the town of Rafah. A third died in Khan Younis, an area Israel still occupies.

More than 440 Palestinians, most of them civilians according to Gaza health officials, have been killed since Israel and Hamas agreed to a ceasefire in October, two years into the war, as well as three Israeli soldiers.

U.S., allies launch retaliatory strikes on IS targets in Syria after deadly ambush

Agence France-Presse
WASHINGTON

U.S. and allied forces carried out "large-scale" strikes against the Islamic State (IS) jihadist group in Syria on Saturday, the U.S. military said, the latest response to an attack last month that killed three Americans.

U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), which oversees American military forces in the region, said multiple strikes "targeted IS throughout Syria," using an acronym for the jihadist group. The strikes were part of



Screen grab from a video released by the U.S. Central Command shows strikes carried out against IS targets in Syria. AP/Reuters

Operation Hawkeye Strike, which was launched "in direct response to the deadly IS attack on US and Syrian forces in Palmyra." CENTCOM said.

of targets... in several areas within Syria territory."

Two U.S. soldiers and a U.S. civilian were killed on December 13 after a lone gunman, whom Washington described as an IS militant, ambushed them in the town of Palmyra. Syria's Interior Ministry later said the gunman was a member of the security forces who had been set to be fired for extremism.

The United States and Jordan carried out strikes last month in response to the Palmyra attack, with CENTCOM saying at the time that "more than 20 targets" had been hit.

Hamas says it will dissolve Gaza govt. when new Palestinian body takes over

Associated Press
CAIRO

Hamas said on Sunday that it will dissolve its existing government in Gaza once a Palestinian "technocratic leadership" committee takes over the territory as mandated under the U.S.-brokered peace plan. But the group gave no specifics on when the change will occur.

Hamas and the rival Palestinian Authority, the PA, estimate, internationally recognised representative, have not announced the names of the technocrats, who are not supposed to



Displaced tens of thousands of Palestinians walk along a road amid destroyed buildings in Jabalia, in the northern Gaza Strip, on Saturday. AP

be politically affiliated, and it remains unclear if they will be cleared by Israel and the U.S.

The "Board of Peace," an international body under U.S. President Donald Trump, is supposed to oversee the government and other aspects of the ceasefire that took effect on October 10, 2025, in-

cluding disarming Hamas and deploying an international security force. The board's members have not been announced.

The ceasefire began with the release of hostages held in Gaza in exchange for thousands of Palestinians held by Israel. The deal is still in its first phase as efforts continue to recover the remains of the first hostages in Gaza.

Meanwhile, the post-ceasefire death toll continued to rise in Gaza, with Israeli gunfire killing three Palestinians, according to hospital officials.

Trump delivers oil warning, urges Cuba to 'strike a deal with U.S. before it is too late'

Agence France-Presse

WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump urged Cuba on Sunday to "make a deal" or face unspecified consequences, warning that the flow of Venezuelan oil and money to Havana would now stop.

"THERE WILL BE NO MORE OIL OR MONEY GOING TO CUBA - ZERO!" Mr. Trump said on his Truth Social channel. "I strongly suggest they make a deal, BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE."

Earlier on Sunday, Mr. Trump reposted a message suggesting that U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio could become the President of Cuba. Mr. Trump shared that post with the comment: "Sounds good to me!"

U.S. President reposts a message suggesting that Marco Rubio could become the President of Cuba

In his own post soon afterwards, Mr. Trump said that "Cuba lived, for many years, on large amounts of OIL and MONEY from Venezuela. In return, Cuba provided 'Security Services' for the last two Venezuelan dictators, BUT NOT ANYMORE!"

Cuba rebuffs threat

Cuba's President Miguel Diaz-Canel on Sunday rebuffed Mr. Donald Trump's threat against his country, vowing to defend.

"Cuba is a free, independent and sovereign nation.

No one tells us what to do," Mr. Diaz-Canel wrote on X, adding that the Caribbean island was "ready to defend the homeland to the last drop of blood."

Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez said Cuba has not received compensation for security services provided to any other country, according to a post on X on Sunday. He said that Cuba has the right to import fuel from any country willing to export it.

Mr. Rodriguez accused the U.S. of behaving in a "criminal" manner that threatens global peace.

Under a U.S. trade embargo, Havana since 2000 has increasingly relied on Venezuelan oil provided as part of a deal struck with Nicolas Maduro's predecessor Hugo Chavez.

Causes of the Cuban Crisis



Cold War Rivalry

Ideological conflict between capitalism and communism



Cuban Revolution

Castro overthrows Batista and aligns with Soviet ideology



Soviet Alliance

Cuba becomes a close ally of the Soviet Union



Bay of Pigs Invasion

Failed U.S.-backed attempt to overthrow Castro



Soviet Missile Deployment

Discovery of Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba



Khrushchev's Motives

Khrushchev deploys missiles to deter U.S. invasion and address strategic imbalance

Aspect

Duration

Country

Leader

Key Revolutionary

Ruling Regime Overthrown

Nature of Movement

Ideology

Final Victory

Immediate Outcome

Long-term Outcome

Details

1953 – 1959

Cuba

Fidel Castro

Che Guevara

Fulgencio Batista

Armed guerrilla revolution

Socialism → later **Communism**

1 January 1959

Batista fled Cuba

Establishment of a socialist state

Year	Event
1953	Attack on Moncada Barracks (failed)
1955	Castro released from prison
1956	Castro & Che land in Cuba via <i>Granma</i>
1956–58	Guerrilla warfare in Sierra Maestra
1959	Batista flees → Revolution succeeds

Aspect

Impact

Political

One-party socialist state

Economic

Nationalisation of industries

Foreign Policy

Alignment with Soviet Union

USA Relations

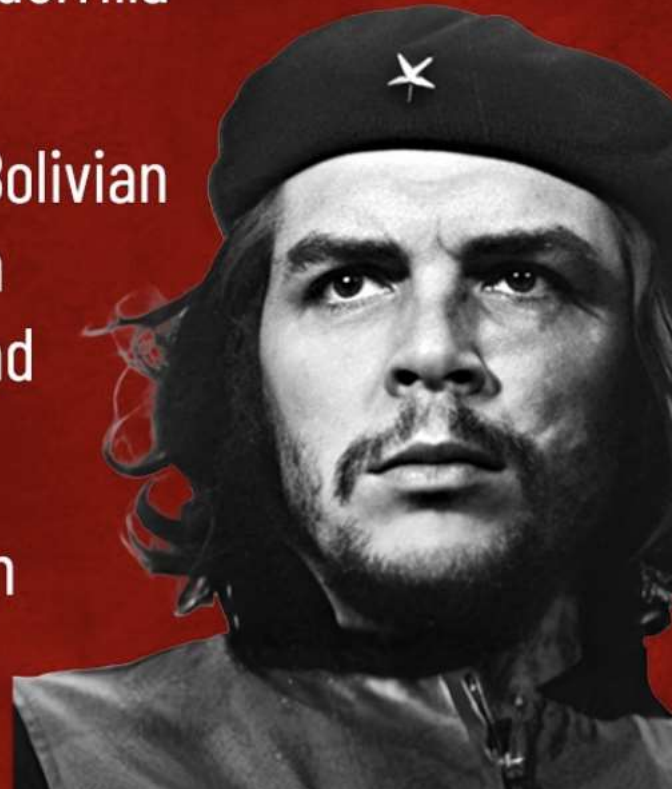
Diplomatic ties broken (1961)

Cold War

Led to **Cuban Missile Crisis (1962)**

Who is Che Guevara?

- ❖ An Argentinean-born, Cuban revolutionary leader who became a left-wing hero
- ❖ He was prominent communist figure in the Cuban Revolution (1956–59), and guerrilla leader in South America.
- ❖ After his execution by the Bolivian army, his image became an icon of leftist radicalism and anti-imperialism.
- ❖ An Argentinean-born, Cuban revolutionary leader who became a left-wing hero



Che Guevara's India Connection



India was among the first nations to recognize Cuba following the 1959 Cuban revolution. Shortly after, Fidel Castro sent Ernesto Che Guevara on a three-month tour of several countries in Asia and Africa, most of which were a part of the Bandung Pact. India was part of the Bandung Pact. Bandung Pact was a coalition of countries that had recently achieved independence from colonial powers.

Year	Event
1959	Cuban Revolution
1961	US cuts diplomatic ties
1962	Cuban Missile Crisis
1962	US imposes trade embargo
2015	Diplomatic relations restored (Obama era)
2017–2024	Sanctions re-tightened (Trump–Biden era)







Topic

Key facts (English)

खण्डदुहजर्ब लष्टू (Hindi)

U.S.–Cuba embargo

The U.S. embargo began in the early 1960s and has shaped Cuba's trade/finance access for decades.

१ खण्डप्रघडु ह ब्रश्ल॥त्र१ 1960s डु डु
टूक्षडु ल्ह अडुक्र डुडु चरणज पण;
वटुडु डुडु डुडु डुडु डुडु
डुडुडु/वस्डुडु हडुडु डुडुडुडु
डुडु पणडु

Oil-for-services logic

Venezuela–Cuba ties often described as energy support in exchange for services (commonly medical/technical/security in different narratives).

अडुडुधुडुडुडुडुडुडु डुडुडुडुडुडुडु
डुडु १ डुडु “लुडुडु डुडु डुडुडु
डुडुडुडुडुडु” खडुडुडु डुडु डुडु खडु
वडुडु व नुवडुडु पण (डुडुडुडुडु डुडु डुडु
डुडु डुडुडु १ डुडु-१ डुडु डुडुडुडुडुडु
शखडुडुडु पण)डु

Why oil is leverage

Energy supply affects transport, electricity, industry; oil disruption can quickly create economic pressure.

लुडुडु/हडुडु डुडु डुडु डुडुडुडु
हडुडुडुडु, शडुडुडु, डुडुडु—डुडु डुडु
१ डुडु डुडुडुडु पण; डुडु वडुडु डुडु
लुडुडुडु डुडु डुडुडु डुडुडु डुडुडु
पणडु

Diplomatic signaling

“Deal or consequences” is coercive diplomacy; “sovereignty + defiance” is counter-signaling to domestic and foreign audiences.

“डुडुडु डुडुडु अडुडुडु...” डुडुडु-
डु १ वडुडुडु डु डुडुडुडु पण;
“डुडुडुडु/डुडुडुडु” डुडुडुडु अ
१ डुडुडुडुडु डुडुडु डुडुडु डुडु
डुडुडुडु पणडु

India Post Launches Speed Post 24 & Speed Post 48



Objective | उद्देश्य

- Modernisation of **India Post logistics system**.
भारतीय डाक की लॉजिस्टिक्स प्रणाली का आधुनिकीकरण।
 - Competing with **private courier & e-commerce delivery services**.
निजी कूरियर और ई-कॉमर्स डिलीवरी सेवाओं से प्रतिस्पर्धा।
-

◆ 4. Infrastructure Development Linked with Launch | आधारभूत ढाँचा विकास

- Renovation of **Pichhor Sub-Post Office** (Cost: ₹2 lakh).
पिछोर उप-डाकघर का नवीनीकरण (लागत: ₹2 लाख)।
 - Foundation stone laid for a **new sub-post office building** (Cost: ₹1.11 crore).
नए उप-डाकघर भवन की आधारशिला (लागत: ₹1.11 करोड़)।
 - Focus on **rural & semi-urban connectivity**.
ग्रामीण एवं अर्ध-शहरी क्षेत्रों पर विशेष ध्यान।
-

Aspect	Details (English + Hindi)
Organisation	India Post (क्रयघल्हग म्ब्रङ्ग)
Ministry	Ministry of Communications (द्वत्रद्वघ्र खत्रद्वत्रघ्रग)
New Services	Speed Post 24, Speed Post 48
Delivery Timeline	24 hrs & 48 hrs
Launch Date	12 January 2026
Launch Location	Pichhor, Shivpuri (MP)
Renovation Cost	₹2 lakh
New Building Cost	₹1.11 crore
Sector Impact	Logistics, e-commerce
Nature of Service	Premium, time-bound

Exam	Year	Question	Answer
UPSC CSE (Prelims)	2018	India Post functions under which ministry?	Ministry of Communications
SSC CGL	2019	Speed Post is a service of which organisation?	India Post
IBPS PO	2020	Which service ensures time-bound postal delivery?	Speed Post
RPSC RAS Prelims	2022	India Post was established in which year?	1854
Railway NTPC	2023	Postal services in India come under which ministry?	Ministry of Communications



- **With reference to Speed Post 24 and Speed Post 48, consider the following statements:**

- Speed Post 24 ensures delivery within 24 hours on selected routes.
- Speed Post 48 ensures delivery within 48 hours.
- These services are operated under the Ministry of Home Affairs.

- **Which of the statements given above are correct?**

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

IIT Madras Launches “Param Shakti” Supercomputer





Aspect

Details (English + Hindi)

Supercomputer Name

Param Shakti (ऍघरख ट्रस्रऱ)

Institution

IIT Madras

Collaborating Agency

C-DAC

Peak Performance

3.1 Petaflops

Calculations

3.1 quadrillion/sec

Server Series

RUDRA

Software

Open-source

Nature

Indigenous

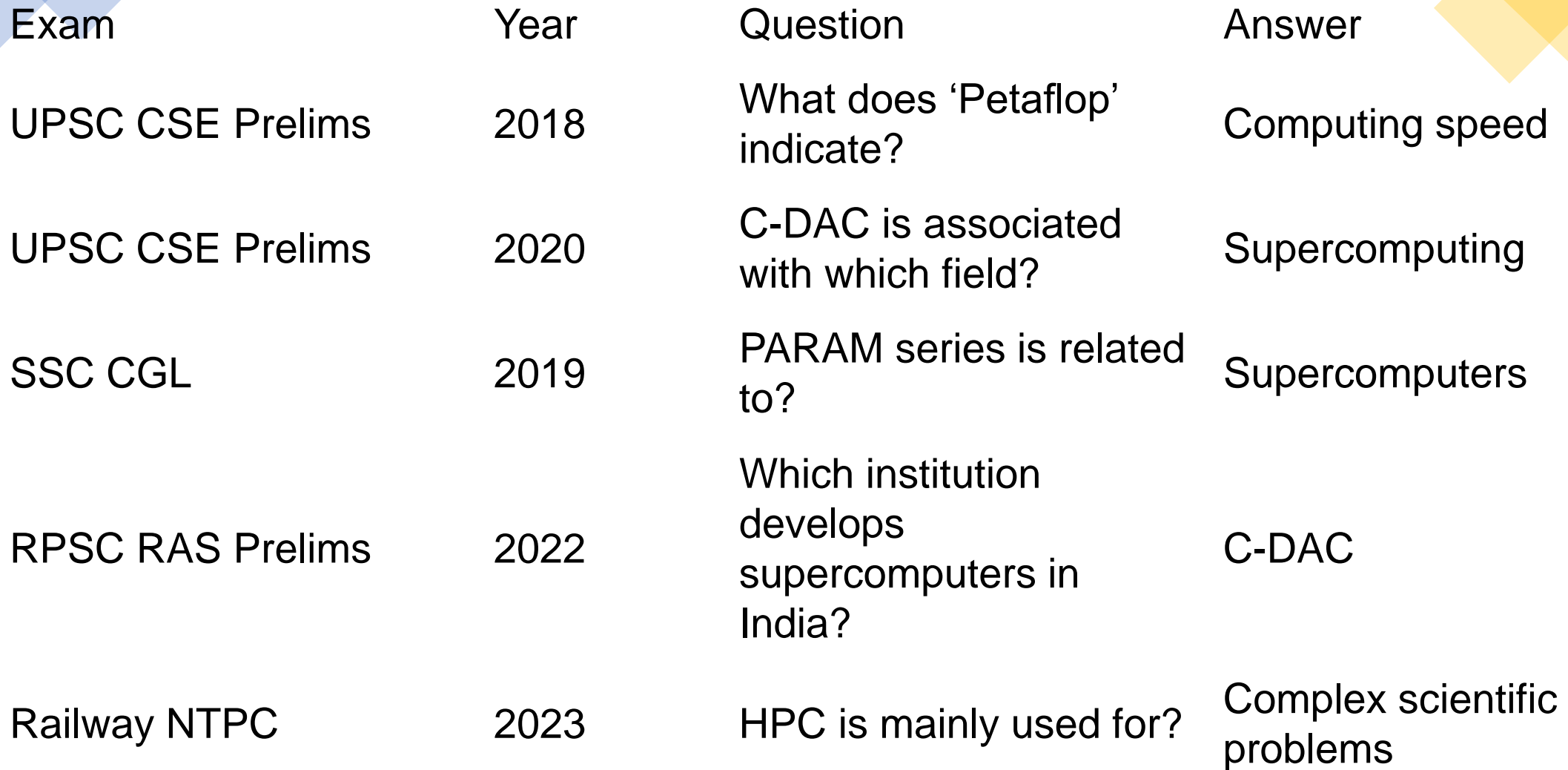
Domain

High-Performance Computing


National Relevance

Atmanirbhar Bharat





Exam	Year	Question	Answer
UPSC CSE Prelims	2018	What does 'Petaflop' indicate?	Computing speed
UPSC CSE Prelims	2020	C-DAC is associated with which field?	Supercomputing
SSC CGL	2019	PARAM series is related to?	Supercomputers
RPSC RAS Prelims	2022	Which institution develops supercomputers in India?	C-DAC
Railway NTPC	2023	HPC is mainly used for?	Complex scientific problems

- 
- **With reference to the 'Param Shakti' supercomputer, consider the following statements:**
 - It has a peak performance of about 3.1 petaflops.
 - It has been developed in collaboration with the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC).
 - It operates entirely on proprietary foreign software.
 - **Which of the statements given above are correct?**
 - A. 1 and 2 only
 - B. 2 and 3 only
 - C. 1 and 3 only
 - D. 1, 2 and 3



National Youth Day 2026



Aspect

Details (English + Hindi)

Observed on

12 January

Dedicated to

Swami Vivekananda

Declared in

1984

Popular Name

Yuva Diwas

Core Message

Youth empowerment

Key Values

Character, discipline, service

Type

National Observance

Relevance


Culture + Ethics + Youth Policy

Famous Quote


Arise, awake...

Focus Area


Nation building



Exam	Year	Question	Answer
UPSC CSE Prelims	2013	National Youth Day is observed on?	12 January
SSC CGL	2017	Yuva Diwas is related to which leader?	Swami Vivekananda
IBPS Clerk	2019	Birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda is celebrated as?	National Youth Day
RPSC RAS Prelims	2021	Swami Vivekananda emphasized strength of India lies in?	Youth
Railway NTPC	2022	National Youth Day was declared in which year?	1984

- 
- **With reference to National Youth Day, consider the following statements:**
 - It is observed every year on 11 January.
 - It commemorates the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda.
 - It was first declared by the Government of India in 1977.
 - **Which of the statements given above are correct?**
 - A. 1 and 2 only
 - B. 2 and 3 only
 - C. 1 and 3 only
 - D. 2

What is the EU– Mercosur Deal

A solid orange horizontal bar is positioned below the title text, spanning a significant portion of the width of the slide.

- **EU–Mercosur FTA** is a **free trade agreement** between the European Union and Mercosur.
EU–Mercosur FTA यूरोपीय संघ और मर्कोसुर देशों के बीच मुक्त व्यापार समझौता है।
 - Negotiations started in **1999** and concluded in **December 2024** (after ~25 years)।
बातचीत 1999 में शुरू हुई और लगभग 25 वर्षों बाद 2024 में पूरी हुई।
 - It is the **EU's largest trade deal in terms of tariff reduction**.
यह टैरिफ कटौती के लिहाज से EU का सबसे बड़ा व्यापार समझौता है।
-

◆ 2. Mercosur: Members | मर्कोसुर के सदस्य

- **Full Members | पूर्ण सदस्य**
 - Brazil
 - Argentina
 - Paraguay
 - Uruguay
 - Bolivia (Newest member | नवीनतम सदस्य)
- **Suspended Member | निलंबित सदस्य**
 - Venezuela – suspended due to democratic backsliding
लोकतांत्रिक गिरावट के कारण निलंबित

◆ 3. Key Features of the Agreement | समझौते की प्रमुख विशेषताएँ

Trade & Economy | व्यापार व अर्थव्यवस्था

- Removal/reduction of **tariffs on 90%+ goods**.
90% से अधिक वस्तुओं पर टैरिफ में कटौती।
- EU gains access to **agricultural markets** (beef, sugar, poultry).
EU को कृषि उत्पादों के बाज़ार में प्रवेश।
- Mercosur gains access to **EU industrial & automobile markets**.
मर्कोसुर को औद्योगिक व ऑटोमोबाइल बाज़ार में लाभ।

Standards & Rules | मानक व नियम

- Includes **sanitary & phytosanitary standards (SPS)**.
स्वास्थ्य व पादप सुरक्षा मानक शामिल।
 - Protection of **Geographical Indications (GI)** like cheese, wine.
भौगोलिक संकेतकों का संरक्षण।
-

◆ 4. Why is the Deal Contested? | विवाद के कारण

Political & Environmental Concerns | राजनीतिक व पर्यावरणीय चिंताएँ

- **France** and some EU farmers fear **cheap farm imports**.
फ्रांस सहित कई देशों को सस्ते कृषि आयात की चिंता।
- Environmental groups worry about **Amazon deforestation**.
अमेज़न वर्षावन की कटाई पर चिंता।
- Questions on **enforcement of climate commitments**.
जलवायु प्रतिबद्धताओं के पालन पर संदेह।



Aspect

Founded (Mercosur)

Mercosur Meaning

Negotiation Start

Deal Conclusion

EU Vote

Largest Economy in Mercosur

Nature of Deal

Key Sensitive Sector

Environmental Focus

Type of Integration

Details (English + Hindi)

1991

Mercado Común del Sur (Southern Common Market)

1999

December 2024

21–5 in favor

Brazil

Free Trade Agreement

Agriculture

Amazon rainforest

Inter-regional trade bloc agreement





Exam	Year	Question (Brief)	Answer
UPSC CSE Prelims	2016	What is Mercosur?	A South American trade bloc
SSC CGL	2019	Mercosur includes which country?	Brazil
IBPS PO	2020	Which is not a Mercosur member?	Chile
RPSC RAS Prelims	2021	EU is an example of?	Economic & political union
Railway Group-D	2022	Mercosur was formed in which year?	1991





- **With reference to the EU–Mercosur Free Trade Agreement, consider the following statements:**

- Mercosur was formed in 1991.
- Venezuela is currently a full active member of Mercosur.
- The EU–Mercosur deal is the EU’s largest agreement in terms of tariff reductions.

- **Which of the statements given above are correct?**

- A. 1 and 3 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 2 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

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Word of the day

Corpulent:

excessively fat

Synonyms: obese, rotund, weighty

Usage: *Even though I have been on a diet, I am still rather corpulent.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/corpulentpro

International Phonetic

Alphabet: /'kɔ:pjələnt/, /'kɔ:pjʊlənt/



Thank you 😊

