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4
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3
**PIB, PRS & Other
newspaper**



2
**The Indian
Express**



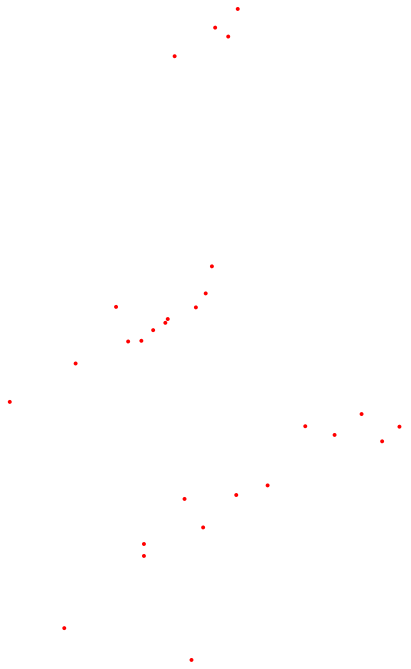
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1
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10 MCQ QUIZ



- “Believe in your infinite potential. Your only limitations are those you set upon yourself.”

Trump envoy meets PM, raising hopes of a thaw

Ambassador-designate meets with Jaishankar, Doval and Misri, holds a series of discussions

Talks cover bilateral issues including defence, trade, technology, and cooperation on critical minerals

The meetings take place amid strains in ties caused by U.S. tariffs on Indian goods

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

In an effort to repair bilateral ties and fast-track the India-U.S. trade agreement, U.S. Ambassador-designate to India and President Donald Trump's special envoy for South and Central Asian Affairs, Sergio Gor, arrived in Delhi on Saturday and met with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Mr. Gor, who will be in India for a few days, is scheduled to take charge "in the New Year", the U.S. Embassy said, raising speculation that he is here to firm up details for a meeting between Mr. Trump and Mr. Modi on the sidelines of the upcoming ASEAN-related summits in Kuala Lumpur on October 26 and 27.

"I'm confident that his

tenure will further strengthen the India-U.S. Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership," Mr. Modi said on X.

In a post, Mr. Gor said he was confident the U.S.-India relationship would "only strengthen over the months ahead".

Mr. Gor told presspersons that he discussed bilateral issues with Mr. Modi, including defence, trade, and technology. "We also discussed the importance of critical minerals and the importance of that to both of our nations."

Raising hopes

In a series of meetings on Saturday, Mr. Gor met with Mr. Modi, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri.

The intensity of the



Strengthening relations: Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Sergio Gor during a meeting in New Delhi on Saturday. PTI

meetings with India's foreign policy leadership is an indicator of the U.S. government's eagerness to get India-U.S. relations back on the rails after months of strain over the 50% tariffs on Indian goods, visa crackdowns, U.S. pressure over ending

India's Russian oil imports, and differences over the narrative on Operation Sindoor. However, Mr. Modi and Mr. Trump have had two telephone calls in the past month, which have raised hopes they can repair the rupture in ties.

In particular, any move

by India to reduce its intake of Russian Ural will be watched closely, with the import level having dipped already despite larger discounts being offered in recent weeks.

Mr. Modi's praise of Mr. Trump's Gaza peace proposal and tweets in seven different languages are believed to be aimed at addressing Mr. Trump's obvious annoyance that India did not join other countries in endorsing him for the Nobel Peace Prize and has denied that the U.S. had any role in ending the Operation Sindoor conflict with Pakistan.

'Productive exchange'

"Discussed the India-U.S. relationship and its global significance," Mr. Jaishankar posted on social media after the meeting with Mr. Gor, wishing him for his

new responsibility in Delhi.

According to the Ministry of External Affairs Spokesperson, Mr. Gor and Mr. Misri had a "productive exchange on the India-U.S. Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership and its shared priorities".

Mr. Gor is accompanied by Deputy Secretary for Management and Resources Michael J. Rigas, arriving days after the U.S. Senate confirmed his appointment as the U.S. Ambassador to India. His visit is unusual, as according to normal protocol, he would arrive in Delhi and conduct meetings only after he has presented his credentials to President Droupadi Murmu.

However, the timing of the meeting, just weeks before the ASEAN summit, as well as the unorthodox

manner of U.S. diplomacy, are seen as reasons for the sudden visit. In particular, Mr. Gor is believed to have conveyed the urgency of finalising the India-U.S. trade agreement at the earliest, before the leaders meet.

According to a U.S. State Department release, Mr. Gor was to be in India from October 9 to 14. However, he attended the Indian Embassy Deepavali party in Washington on October 10 before arriving in Delhi on Saturday for the meetings. According to sources, Mr. Gor will stay on for the next few days for meetings inside the U.S. embassy as well as with other stakeholders in Delhi. He is expected to return at a later date to present his credentials and take charge of the U.S. embassy in Delhi, as well as his role in the region.

Trade and Market Access: Removing tariffs on Indian steel, aluminium, textiles.

Defence Cooperation: Expanding joint R&D under the Defense Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI).

Technology & Critical Minerals: Ensuring secure supply chains for rare earth elements and semiconductors.

Energy & Oil Imports: Discussion on India's purchase of Russian crude and U.S. energy exports.

Regional Security: Afghanistan, Indo-Pacific, and Operation Sindoor coordination.

Bilateral Mechanisms: Reviving the Trade Policy Forum and 2+2 Dialogue.

Issue

Status / Tension

U.S. Tariffs

Additional duties on Indian steel & textiles hurt exports.

Visas

Restrictions on H-1B extensions affect Indian tech workers.

Russian Oil Imports

U.S. pressure on India to cut purchases of Russian crude.

Operation Sindoor Narrative

Different public positions over India's Afghan engagement.

Trade Deficit

U.S. seeks market access for agriculture & medical devices.



Parameter	Detail
Envoy Name	Sergio Gor
Designation	U.S. Ambassador-designate to India / Special Envoy for South & Central Asia
Meeting Date	October 2025
Indian Leaders Met	PM Modi, EAM Jaishankar, NSA Doval, FS Misri
Focus Areas	Trade, Defence, Technology, Critical Minerals
Upcoming Event	ASEAN Summit – Kuala Lumpur (Oct 26–27 2025)
Issue Backdrop	Tariffs + visa strains + Operation Sindoor differences

[illegible]

Invites
ends Minister to
for Gaza summit

The NIC, established in 1976, is the technology partner of the Union government and provides technology-driven solutions to it and the state governments.

Asked about the security framework of the aid services, the official said,

"We took reports from security agencies and bodies such as NIC and CERT in computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) while procuring quality systems regularly audit the Zoho platform. "We have ensured that the data are safe and secure," the of-

Open to Pak. talks, but have options: Muttaqi

Taliban say Pakistan harbouring IS fighters from West Asia and must look into its 'internal failures'

Pakistan has been claiming that the TTP is using Afghan support and territory to launch attacks

Minister says women journalists were left out of Friday's press conference due to 'technical error'

Kallol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

Afghanistan is open to dialogue and diplomacy for a peaceful resolution of its conflict with Pakistan, but if the efforts do not succeed, it has "other means", said the acting Foreign Minister of the Taliban administration, Amir Khan Muttaqi, on Sunday in response to the border clashes between the two countries.

"There are some special groups in Pakistan that are trying to disturb our relations. After they initiated hostile activities last week, we responded to defend our territory, and after that, our friends Saudi Arabia and Qatar intervened. Our doors are open for dialogue, but if Pakistan does not take this opportunity, then we have other

means," he said.

Mr. Muttaqi was holding a second press conference in the Embassy of Afghanistan here after facing a backlash for not including women media professionals in his Friday interaction with the media. He said the previous interaction was organised at "short notice, and the exclusion of women journalists happened from a "technical error".

Retaliatory strikes

Pakistan carried out air-strikes against targets in Kabul on Thursday, and in response, the Afghan Defence Forces conducted operations across the Durand Line in which 58 Pakistani soldiers were killed, said Zabiullah Mujahid, spokesperson of the Taliban administration.

Mr. Mujahid accused Pakistan of sheltering IS fighters from multiple coun-



Talking tough: Taliban Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi, left, addressing a press conference in New Delhi on Sunday. PTI

tries in West Asia, and said Pakistan-based IS elements were behind the attacks in Russia and Iran.

Following heavy clashes on Sunday, Pakistan has captured 19 Afghan border posts, and the border crossings between the two countries have been shut temporarily in view of the prevailing tension.

Pakistan had claimed that Thursday's air strikes in Kabul eliminated the leader of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Mufti Noor Wali Mehsood, a claim that was denied by sources in the TTP.

Pakistan has been claiming that TTP is drawing support from the Afghan Taliban administra-

tion and is using Afghan territory to launch attacks against it. Responding to the accusations, Mr. Muttaqi said the real problem is Pakistan's inability to maintain law and order along the Durand Line and the forced expulsion of the Afghan refugees from Pakistan.

"There are no terror groups inside Afghanistan. We have removed them all over the last four years. Pakistan, which carried out attacks deep inside Afghanistan, is unable to stop attacks that are taking place deep inside its own territory. They should look into their internal failures," said Mr. Muttaqi, urging Pakistan to control the law and order situation along the Durand Line.

"We have established our control inside Afghanistan after four decades of war. Why is Pakistan un-

able to establish control on its own territories?" asked Mr. Muttaqi who addressed the press conference with a large flag of the Taliban-run Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) and expressed "regret" for many of the deaths that took place during the war in Afghanistan.

Condition of women

Faced with multiple questions on the condition of women in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan, Mr. Muttaqi said, "Afghanistan has Islamic rule. In Islam, everyone's rights are protected, be it men or women. Everyone has rights. There is no restriction on anyone."

He said Afghanistan has 10 million students attending schools and other educational institutes, of which 2.8 million are women and girls, adding,

"There are limitations in specific parts, and that does not mean that we oppose education. We have not declared it to be 'haram'".

Continuing his remarks on the women in Afghanistan, Mr. Muttaqi said the "Taliban's first priority was to bring an end to the war. "We have adopted such policies that will slowly bring change so that no conflict arises in the future. We have to carry everyone along with us and make policies accordingly," said Mr. Muttaqi in his first extensive remarks about the harsh anti-women policies that the Taliban has adopted since returning to power in August 2021.

He is expected to hold a meeting in FICCI on Monday where Afghan-Indian trade interests will be in focus.

- Afghanistan's **acting Foreign Minister, Amir Khan Muttaqi**, announced that the **Taliban government is open to dialogue with Pakistan** for peaceful resolution of recent **border clashes**, but warned that Kabul has **"other means"** if diplomacy fails.
- The statement comes after **retaliatory strikes** between Pakistan and Afghanistan near the **Durand Line**.

2. Key Developments

Event	Details
Trigger Incident	Pakistan carried out airstrikes in Kabul on Thursday, claiming to target Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) leaders.
Afghan Response	Taliban forces retaliated with ground operations , killing 58 Pakistani soldiers and capturing 19 posts.
Pakistan's Claim	Said the airstrikes eliminated TTP chief Mufti Noor Wali Mehsood (denied by TTP).
Afghanistan's Claim	Pakistan shelters IS (Islamic State) fighters and blames Kabul to hide its "internal failures."

- **Women's Rights & Governance Remarks**

- Muttaqi addressed global criticism of **Taliban's restrictions on women**, calling earlier exclusion of women journalists from press events a "technical error."
- Stated:
 - "Afghanistan has 10 million students, including 2.8 million women."
 - "There are limitations in specific areas, but education is not declared *haram*."
 - Promised gradual easing of restrictions "to avoid internal conflict."

6. Broader Implications

Regional Diplomacy

- Saudi Arabia and Qatar are attempting quiet mediation.
- India hosted Muttaqi in New Delhi — indicating growing **India–Afghanistan engagement** under Taliban rule.

Security Risks

- Prolonged hostilities could escalate into a **border war**, destabilizing South-Central Asia.
- Possibility of **IS resurgence** amid chaos between Kabul and Islamabad.

Geopolitical Realignment

- Taliban signals **independence from Pakistan's control**, contradicting earlier dependence.
- Kabul's outreach to **India** reflects a bid for legitimacy and diversification of allies.

Parameter	Details
Leader	Amir Khan Muttaqi (Afghanistan Acting FM)
Country Accused	Pakistan
Accusation	Harboring IS fighters; destabilizing border
Retaliation	Afghan forces attacked 19 Pakistani posts
Mediators	Saudi Arabia, Qatar
Venue of Remarks	Embassy of Afghanistan, New Delhi
Focus Issue	Durand Line conflict and TTP's use of Afghan territory

Email accounts of 12 lakh Central govt. employees, including the PMO, have now migrated to Zoho

Vijaita Singh
Aroon Deep
NEW DELHI

Over the past one year, all 12 lakh email addresses of Union government employees, including those of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), have migrated from a National Informatics Centre-based system to a platform developed by Zoho, officials told *The Hindu*. Zoho is headquartered in Tamil Nadu.

A senior official said Zoho's suite had also been activated to ensure that government employees did not use open source applications to create text files, spreadsheets and presentations.

Though the suite was



Threat to data: A senior official said use of open source tools could compromise security of files. Representative photo. GETTY IMAGES

available earlier, not many employees were using it.

"It was found that many government employees were using open source tools, which could compromise security of files, and it was decided to make them aware of, and dis-

play, the suite's features prominently on the internal mail platform," the official said.

On October 3, the Union Education Ministry issued an order to its officials to use the Zoho suite "in alignment with the Go-

vernment of India's broader vision of transforming the nation from a service economy into a product nation, and in pursuit of building a self-reliant ecosystem in technology, hardware, and software solutions".

It said the Zoho Office Suite was already incorporated in the NIC mail system and "by embracing Zoho's indigenous office productivity tools, we take a bold step in the Swadeshi movement, empowering India to lead with home-grown innovation, strengthen digital sovereignty, and secure our data for a self-reliant future."

Another official added that the domain name of the emails remained the

same – nic.in or gov.in – but the host storing and processing the data has changed from NIC to Zoho.

The NIC, established in 1976, is the technology partner of the Union government and provides technology-driven solutions to it and the State governments.

Asked about the security framework of the said services, the official said,

"We took reports from security agencies and bodies such as NIC and CERT-In [Computer Emergency Response Team-India], while SQSs [Software Quality Systems] regularly audit the Zoho platform. "We have ensured that the data are safe and secure," the official added.

- Over the past year, **12 lakh email accounts** of **Union government employees**, including those of the **Prime Minister’s Office (PMO)**, have migrated from the **National Informatics Centre (NIC)** mail system to an **indigenous platform developed by Zoho**.
- The move is part of the **Government of India’s broader vision of digital self-reliance (Atmanirbhar Bharat)** and reducing dependency on foreign or open-source systems.
- **Zoho** is a Tamil Nadu–based software company known for its **Zoho Office Suite**, including email, documents, spreadsheets, and presentation tools.

2. Background: From NIC to Zoho

Aspect	Earlier (NIC)	Now (Zoho)
Email Hosting	National Informatics Centre (est. 1976)	Zoho Corporation, Tamil Nadu
User Base	12 lakh govt. officials (including PMO, ministries, state govts.)	Same users, migrated to Zoho
Domain Name	Remains @nic.in / @gov.in	Remains same, only host changed
Storage & Processing	NIC servers	Zoho’s indigenous secure platform
Integration	NIC mail system integrated with Zoho Office Suite	Fully functional across ministries

3. Rationale Behind the Migration

1. Security Concerns:

- Many govt. employees were using **open-source tools** to create files, risking **data leaks** and **file insecurity**.
- The govt. wanted a **controlled, audited, indigenous platform** for handling official communication.

2. Digital Sovereignty:

- Promotes **"Atmanirbhar Bharat"** and **Swadeshi digital solutions**.
- Strengthens **homegrown innovation** and **data sovereignty**.

3. Productivity Integration:

- Zoho's suite enables email, text, spreadsheet, and presentation creation on one secure platform.
-

4. Implementation & Monitoring

- The **Union Education Ministry** (on October 3) ordered all officials to use Zoho tools in alignment with the Government's "self-reliant technology vision."
- **NIC and CERT-In** (Computer Emergency Response Team – India) conducted security checks.
- **SQS (Software Quality Systems)** audits Zoho regularly.
- Officials confirmed that "the data are safe and secure."

Parameter	Detail
Platform Adopted	Zoho Office Suite
Migrated From	NIC email system
Users Covered	12 lakh central govt. employees (including PMO)
Headquarters of Zoho	Chennai, Tamil Nadu
Supervising Agency	National Informatics Centre (NIC)
Auditing Bodies	CERT-In, SQS
Key Vision	Atmanirbhar Bharat in Digital Ecosystem

Initial findings point to Iron Age origins at new excavation site in T.N.

N. Sai Charan
CHENNAI

The first season of excavations carried out by the Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology (TNSDA) at Thirumalapuram in Tenkasi district has brought to light the presence of Iron Age culture close to the Western Ghats in Tamil Nadu.

According to tentative estimates, the site could date back to the early to mid-third millennium BCE, similar to Adichanallur and Sivagalai. Official sources said the exact period would be confirmed through scientific analyses.

Burial site

According to the recently released report, *Archaeological Excavations in Tamil Nadu: A Preliminary Report*, the burial site at Thirumalapuram covers nearly 35 acres and lies about 10 km northwest of the present-day village, between two seasonal streams that rise from the Western Ghats near the Ku-



Rich yield: An urn burial site at Thirumalapuram in Tamil Nadu's Tenkasi district. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

lasegarapereri tank. During the first season of excavations started last year, TNSDA archaeologists dug 37 trenches and unearthed several artefacts, including a rectangular stone slab chamber with urn burials and urns, a first-of-its-kind discovery in Tamil Nadu.

The chamber, made of 35 stone slabs, was filled with cobblestones up to a depth of 1.5 metres.

The excavations also yielded a rich collection of ceramics found in graves and among grave goods. These included white-

painted black-and-red ware, red ware, red-slipped ware, black-polished ware, and coarse red ware.

Unique feature

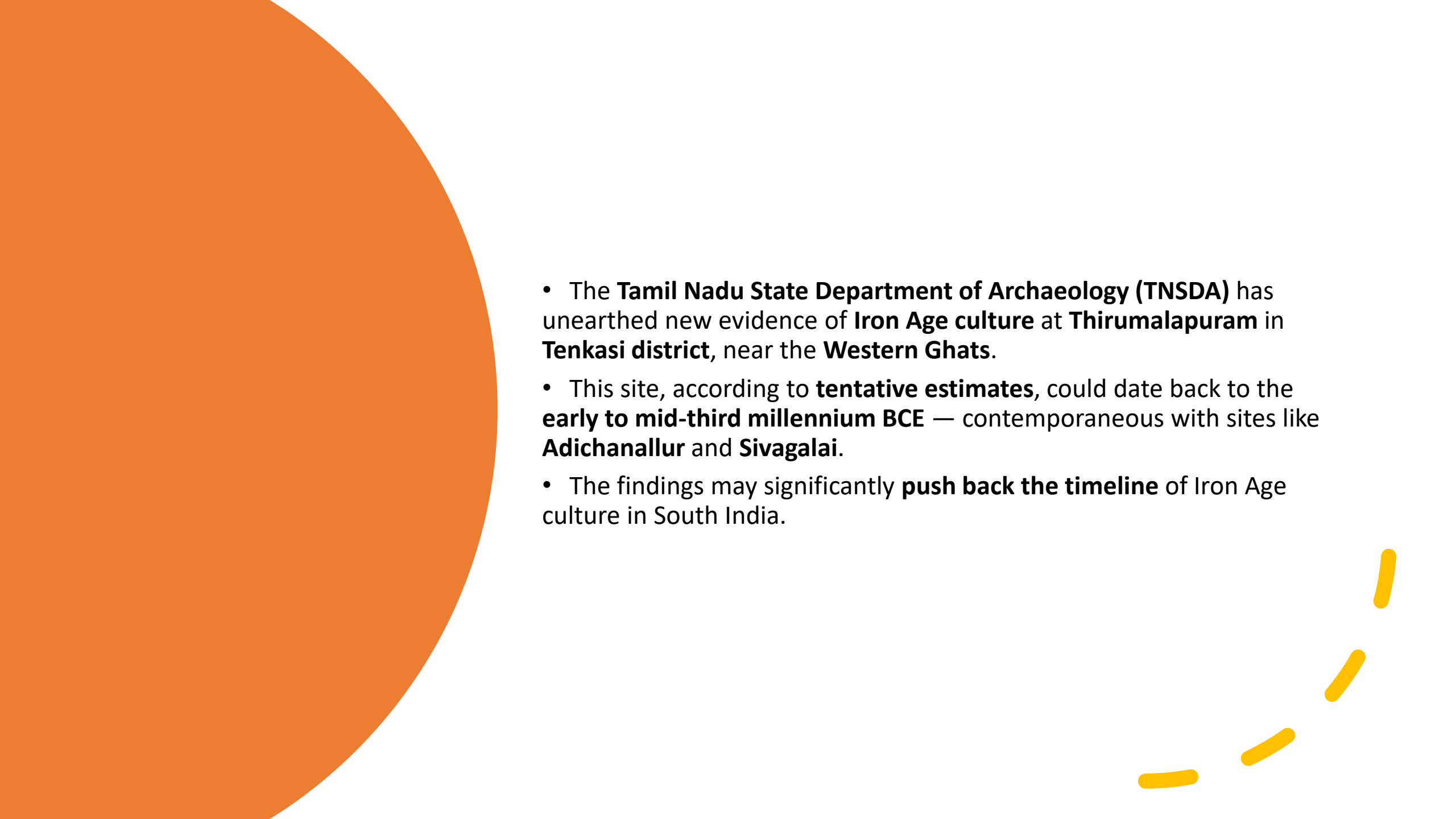
The black-and-red ware, black ware, and black-slipped ware types had white-painted designs, a unique feature first reported from T. Kallupatti and later from Adichanallur, Sivagalai, Thulukkarpatti, and Korkai, the report said.

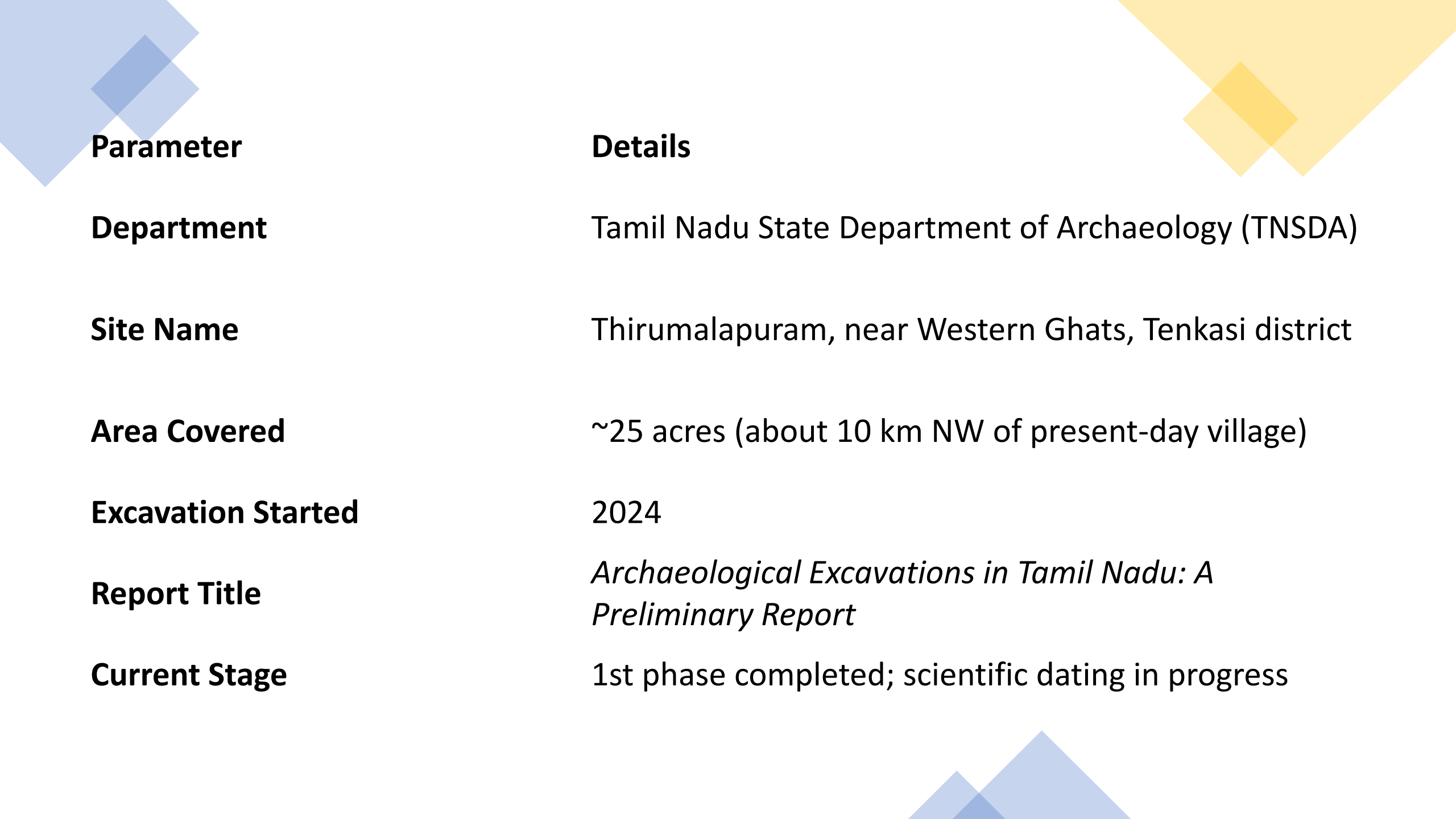
According to the report, symbols on the urns were

among the most striking discoveries at Thirumalapuram. One red-slipped pot featured dotted designs showing a human figure, a mountain, a deer, and a tortoise.

A total of 78 antiquities made of bone, gold, bronze, and iron were also found. They include a tweezer, sword, spearhead, gold ring, axe, dagger, chisel, bonehead, and arrowhead. Three tiny gold rings were found in an urn at a depth of 0.49 metres. Each ring measures 4.8 mm in diameter and weighs less than one milligram.

Based on the unearthed materials, archaeologists believe this site dates to Iron Age. Official sources said the dating remains tentative as studies are still under way. Comparisons with sites such as Sivagalai and Adichanallur, dated between 3,345 BCE and 2,513 BCE respectively, suggest that Thirumalapuram could be placed in the early to mid-third millennium BCE.

- 
- The **Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology (TNSDA)** has unearthed new evidence of **Iron Age culture** at **Thirumalapuram** in **Tenkasi district**, near the **Western Ghats**.
 - This site, according to **tentative estimates**, could date back to the **early to mid-third millennium BCE** — contemporaneous with sites like **Adichanallur** and **Sivagalai**.
 - The findings may significantly **push back the timeline** of Iron Age culture in South India.



Parameter

Details

Department

Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology (TNSDA)

Site Name

Thirumalapuram, near Western Ghats, Tenkasi district

Area Covered

~25 acres (about 10 km NW of present-day village)

Excavation Started

2024

Report Title

Archaeological Excavations in Tamil Nadu: A Preliminary Report

Current Stage

1st phase completed; scientific dating in progress

3. Major Discoveries

(a) Burial Chamber

- **Rectangular stone slab chamber** with urn burials and urns — **first-of-its-kind** in Tamil Nadu.
- Chamber built with **35 stone slabs** and **cobblestones** (1.5 m depth).
- Located between two **seasonal streams** near the **Lasagaparaperi tank**.

(b) Pottery and Ceramics

- Over **37 trenches** unearthed rich pottery collection:
 - **Black-and-red ware**
 - **Black ware**
 - **Red ware**
 - **White-painted slipped ware**
 - **Coarse red ware**
- Notable artefacts:
 - **Red-slipped pot** with **dotted designs** depicting *a human figure, mountain, deer, and tortoise*.

(c) Metal & Bone Artefacts

- **78 antiquities** of **bone, gold, bronze, and iron**:
 - Tweezers, sword, spearhead, dagger, axe, chisel, bonehead, arrowhead.
 - **Gold rings (3 tiny rings)** – each 4.8 mm diameter, less than 1 milligram weight.



Site

Estimated Period (BCE)



Cultural Phase

Adichanallur

3,345 – 2,513 BCE

Iron Age / Early
Historic

Sivagalai

3,000 – 2,600 BCE

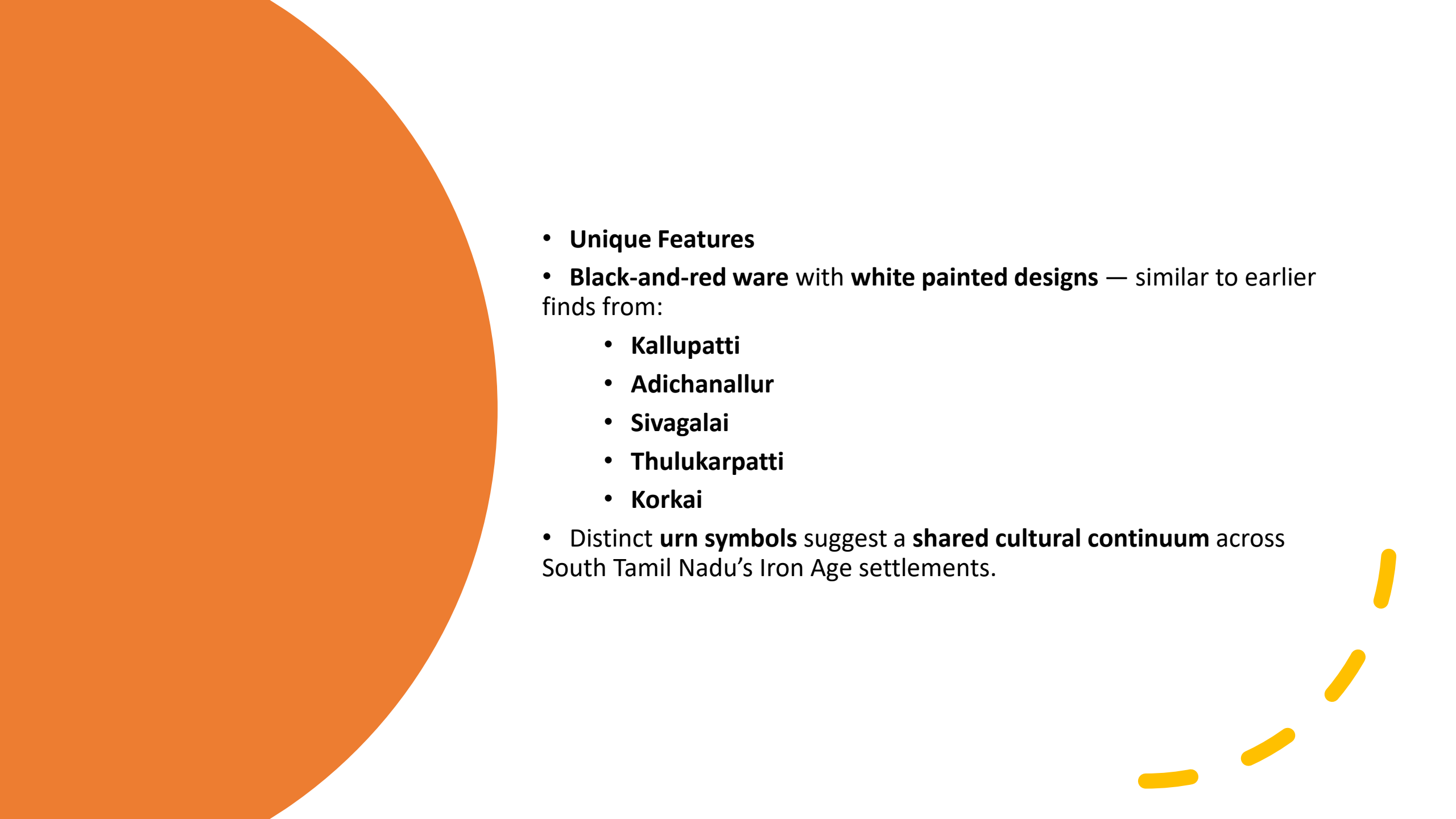
Iron Age

Thirumalapuram
(Tenkasi)

*Early to mid-3rd
millennium BCE*

Proto-Iron Age (based
on tentative
estimates)



- 
- **Unique Features**
 - **Black-and-red ware** with **white painted designs** — similar to earlier finds from:
 - **Kallupatti**
 - **Adichanallur**
 - **Sivagalai**
 - **Thulukarpatti**
 - **Korkai**
 - Distinct **urn symbols** suggest a **shared cultural continuum** across South Tamil Nadu's Iron Age settlements.



Parameter

New Site

Department

Estimated Period

Key Discoveries

Artefacts Found

Similar Sites

Cultural Phase

Region Feature

Detail

Thirumalapuram (Tenkasi District, TN)

Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology (TNSDA)

Early to Mid-3rd Millennium BCE

Urn burials, black-red ware, gold rings, bone artefacts

78 (Bone, Iron, Bronze, Gold)

Adichanallur, Sivagalai, Korkai

Iron Age / Proto-Iron Age

Western Ghats, Lasagaparaperi tank vicinity



Canadian Foreign Minister set to meet Jaishankar today

Peace Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Canadian Foreign Minister Antona Amund arrived in the national capital on Sunday, a day before talks with her Indian counterpart, S. Jaishankar.

The discussions are expected to focus on setting up a framework for bilateral "strategic" cooperation in areas of trade, energy and security.

It is Ms. Amund's first visit to India after assuming charge as the Foreign Minister in May. She is also scheduled to meet Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal to discuss ways to boost two-way trade ties.

This visit will help build on the positive momentum in India-Canada relations by revitalising bilateral mechanisms, deepening economic cooperation, and further strengthening the enduring people-to-people ties that anchor our partnership.

The renewed vibrancy in the ties between the two countries followed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's talks with his Canadian counterpart Mark Carney on the margins of the G7 Summit at Camp David's Kananaskis in June.

In Singapore, Ms. Amund will meet with her counterpart Vivian Balakrishnan, to further strengthen Canada's cooperation with "one of its most important partners" in Southeast Asia, the readout said.



It is Canadian Foreign Minister Antona Amund's first visit to India after assuming the position.

energy transformation and security", a Canadian readout said on Saturday.

The Canadian foreign minister's visit comes more than three weeks after Canada's National Security Adviser Nathalie Deschênes visited India and held extensive talks with his Indian counterpart Ajit Doval. Days after the meeting, the Canadian destroyed the Lawrence Bishnoi gang as a terrorist entity for "violence, targeting" certain communities and creating a "climate of fear".

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In Singapore, Ms. Amund will meet with her counterpart Vivian Balakrishnan, to further strengthen Canada's cooperation with "one of its most important partners" in Southeast Asia, the readout said.

India sends Minister to Egypt for Gaza summit

New Delhi will be represented by Minister of State for External Affairs Kiritvardhan Singh in place of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who declined the invitation from Egypt due to the short notice

Shahrukh Hashmi
NEW DELHI

India will send Minister of State for External Affairs Kiritvardhan Singh to represent the country at the Peace Summit on Gaza in Sharm el-Sheikh on Monday, which Egypt and the United States on Monday, officials confirmed to *The Hindu*.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was among more than 20 world leaders invited over the weekend to attend the summit, which will be co-hosted by Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi and U.S. President Donald Trump, to discuss the ceasefire deal between Israel and Hamas.

However, given the short notice, Mr. Modi, whose invitation was delivered from Egyptian ambassador Kamel Ghalal, declined the invitation.

Mr. Modi had also met a special envoy and Ambassador of Egypt in New Delhi on Saturday.

Mr. Singh left for Cairo on Sunday and will travel to Sharm el-Sheikh on Monday, the officials said. Mr. Modi is, however, expected to meet Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelaty through Sharm el-Sheikh with India, given the security issues with Israel's Gaza blockade. The current alignment lies.



Key gatherings: More than 20 world leaders are expected at the Sharm el-Sheikh Summit for Peace on Monday, October 13.

Among those who have confirmed their participation at Monday's event in Sharm el-Sheikh are UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and the leaders of France, Italy, Spain, and the U.K. A number of leaders from Egypt, the Arab region, and other parts of Asia are expected to be there as well.

The summit seeks to help restore regional stability and address the Palestinian leadership, which received a surprise invitation, has declined it, as has Hamas.

It is still unclear whether Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu or his Palestinian Authority President, Mahmoud Abbas, would attend.

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Three arrested for gang rape of medical student in Bengal

Shikha Singh
KOLKATA

The West Bengal Police on Sunday arrested three persons in connection with the alleged gang rape of a medical student in Durgam on Friday night.

All the accused are local persons and were apprehended from the forest area where the incident occurred, the police said.

A subdivisional court later remanded the accused to police custody for 10 days. The police are conducting searches to apprehend the other accused.

The student, who hails from Odisha, had reportedly gone out of the private college with a male friend on Friday night. She was allegedly gang-raped by two men near the college campus.

Meanwhile, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's remarks on Sunday asking girl students residing in hostels not to venture out at night triggered a fresh controversy.

While expressing shock over the sexual assault on the medical student, Ms. Banerjee urged boys and girls to come to study in West Bengal not to venture out at night. Speaking to presspersons, she said, "Specially girl children at night time... they should not be allowed to come outside. They have to protect themselves also."

She said that private medical colleges should also take responsibility of their students as the public cannot keep a watch all the time. "If someone goes out at 12.30... anyone can go anywhere that is their right, but there is a system for those who stay in hostels... In Bengal we have zero tolerance against such criminal and I will appeal to the boys and girls who come to study here not to venture out at night. This is because the police are not aware who is coming out [of hostels] when," she added.



Mamata Banerjee

State BJP president Nanku Bhattacharya said Ms. Banerjee's comment proved that the Trinamool Congress government "has no accountability regarding women's safety".

Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Mahapatra urged his West Bengal counterpart to take swift action against the perpetrators.

Later in the evening, Ms. Banerjee said that her address was "deliberately distorted".

WTI report highlights crucial role played by India's forest protectors

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

A report on 25 years of support for wildlife warriors by the Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) has highlighted the role of India's forest protectors.

The report, "Guardians of the wild: supporting India's frontline forest staff", features 540 rangers who were killed or injured in the line of duty. It includes personal narratives from the field.

The WTI spokesperson said the report was released by Kiritvardhan Singh, Union Minister of State for Environment, Forest, and Climate Change, in Abu Dhabi on Saturday. The report spotlights the critical role and immense challenges faced by India's frontline forest staff, the "unsung heroes" safeguarding the rich biodiversity in the country.



Crestal sentinel: Van Rakshaks are responsible for protecting more than 1,100 protected areas and natural habitats. TWC Photo

India's Van Rakshaks, known globally as forest rangers, are responsible for protecting more than 1,100 protected areas and numerous other forests and natural habitats. Their duties include round-the-clock patrolling, wildlife monitoring, mitigating human-wildlife conflict, combating wildlife crime, and responding to emergencies, often under life-threatening conditions.

WTI is the Supplementary Accident Assistance Scheme, which offers immediate financial assistance to frontline forest staff in the event of injury or death in the line of duty. Since 2001, financial aid has been provided to 367 frontline staff or their families, with nearly 74% of these cases involving fatalities.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, WTI extended support to 174 families of forest staff who lost their lives, and motivated Conservation Heroes CO-VIH Casualty Fund.

This report honours the courage, resilience, and sacrifice of India's Van Rakshaks and highlights the urgent need for more investment, recognition, and support for those who protect our natural heritage. WTI's Executive Director and RUCN Councilor Vivek Menon said:

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Congress has reached out to constituents of the Indian National Development Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) to take a final call on whether or not to join the Joint Committee that will review the bills on the removal of the Prime Minister, Chief Ministers, and Ministers arrested on serious criminal charges for 30 days.

Sources on Sunday told *The Hindu* that the government has reached out to the principal Opposition party to name its members to the Joint Committee of Parliament.

The Lok Sabha has passed a resolution to refer the Bills to the Joint Committee of Parliament.

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Union Home Minister
Amit Shah has

introduced the Bills in the Lower House on August 20.

Minister Amit Shah introduced the bills in the Lower House on August 20 this year.

The three Bills are the Constitution, and Ministers arrested on serious criminal charges for 30 days.

Those who favour joining the committee say it would help review the Opposition's objections to the bills.

We are speaking to our allies to take a united position as we don't want Opposition unity to be disrupted over this issue," a senior Congress leader said.

Congress reaches out to alliance partners over Bills to remove PM, CMs, Ministers

Minor girl gang-raped in Lucknow, four arrested

The Hindu Bureau
LUCKNOW

A 16-year-old Dalit girl was gang-raped allegedly by five persons in the Banarasi area of Lucknow. Four of the accused have been arrested, the police said on Sunday.

The incident took place on Saturday, when the victim left home to visit her older sister, and was travelling on a motorcycle with an acquaintance.

The police said the acquaintance stopped to talk at a mango orchard near a petrol pump in the Banarasi police station limits, when five men approached them. They beat up her acquaintance, who fled the scene. The men then raped the girl," the police said.

BJP chief Mayawati said the government must urgently take effective steps to prevent such incidents.

BJP, SGPC take dig at Cong. after Chidambaram remarks

The Hindu Bureau
CHANDIDAH

The Bharatiya Janata Party and the Shikharan Gurdwara Pariksha Committee (SGPC), the body responsible for the management of historical gurdwaras, on Sunday took a dig at the Congress, saying the late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was ahead with "Operation Blue Star" for political reasons.

BJP national spokesperson R.P. Singh said Operation Blue Star was completely available, as rightly mentioned by former Home Minister P. Chidambaram.

"Mrs. Indira Gandhi, for political reasons, chose the path of confrontation for electoral gain, seeking to ignite nationalist fervour before the 1984 parliamentary elections by portraying the most pathos-ridden community of India, the Sikhs, as anti-national," he said in a tweet.

The reaction came after senior Congress leader Mr. Chidambaram said on Saturday, "There was a way to handle the Sikh militants, but Operation Blue Star was the wrong way, and I agree that Mr. Gandhi paid with her life for the mistake but the mistake was cumulative decision of the Army, intelligence, police and civil defence and you cannot completely blame Mrs. Gandhi."

SGPC secretary Gurbachan Singh Grewal said the remark made by Mr. Chidambaram "speaks about the truth".

"He has revealed the truth about the historical parks and protected areas sustainability," he said.

He received the Kirti B. Miller Award, constituted by the BJP and the Union on Protected Areas (WCPA), along with Ecominister. The action (Operation Blue Star) was done by the Indian Army to clear the area of the Golden Temple in Amritsar, it added.

Kaziranga director receives award for sustainability model

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

Ronali Ghosh, the director of Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve, has become the first Indian to receive an international award for sustainability.

He received the Kirti B. Miller Award, constituted by the BJP and the Union on Protected Areas (WCPA), along with Ecominister. The action (Operation Blue Star) was done by the Indian Army to clear the area of the Golden Temple in Amritsar, it added.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), a GUWAHATI global conservation organisation, has recognised the conservation of nature and the sustainable use of natural resources.

A statement from the IUCN said Mr. Ghosh was recognised for championing a "model of conservation, research and community engagement, awareness, and leadership in the integration of traditional ecological knowledge with modern science and technology".

The model has been impactful in the landscape of Kaziranga National Park in Assam, it added.

Seeranda Asha
BHOJNAGAR

The BJP on Sunday announced three candidates for the Rajya Sabha elections in Jammu and Kashmir scheduled for October 24.

"The names were decided by the Jammu and Kashmir Board of the party. Today, all 27 MLAs held a meeting to discuss and plan the upcoming elections," said the BJP's Jammu and Kashmir in-charge.

The Congress decided against fielding any candidate for a "less safe" seat and accused the coalition partner of betrayal.

J&K is witnessing the first Rajya Sabha elections since the erstwhile State was reduced to a Union Territory in 2019.

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India sends Minister to Egypt for Gaza summit

New Delhi will be represented by Minister of State for External Affairs Kirtivardhan Singh in place of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who declined the invitation from Egypt due to the short notice

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

India will send Minister of State for External Affairs Kirtivardhan Singh to represent the country at the Peace Summit on Gaza in Sharm el-Sheikh to be co-hosted by Egypt and the United States on Monday, officials confirmed to *The Hindu*.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was among more than 20 world leaders invited over the weekend to attend the summit, which will be co-hosted by Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi and U.S. President Donald Trump, to discuss the ceasefire deal between Israel and Hamas, brokered mainly by negotiators from the U.S., Egypt, and Qatar.

However, given the short notice, Mr. Modi, whose invitation was delivered by Egyptian Ambassador Kamel Galal, declined the invitation. Mr. Modi had also met U.S. special envoy and Ambassador-designate Sergio Gorrin in Delhi on Saturday.

Egypt's FM to visit Delhi
Mr. Singh left for Cairo on Sunday and will travel to Sharm el-Sheikh on Monday, the officials said. Mr. Modi is, however, expected to meet Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty later



Key gathering: More than 20 world leaders are expected at the Sharm el-Sheikh Summit for Peace on Monday. REUTERS

ter this week, who is travelling to Delhi to hold the India-Egypt Strategic Dialogue.

According to sources, Mr. Abdelatty's visit is part of the Sisi-Modi Strategic Partnership Agreement signed in January 2023, and this is his first visit to India since taking over in 2024. Mr. Abdelatty has been in frequent contact with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, including during Operation Sindoor in May, and Egypt had strongly condemned the Pahalgam terror attacks.

Mr. Abdelatty is also expected to brief the government on the plans for the reconstruction of Gaza.

Although Egypt is not a member of the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC), it has been keen to discuss alternative route alignments

through Sharm el-Sheikh with India, given the security issues with Israel's Haifa port, where the current alignment lies.

Among those who have confirmed their participation at Monday's event in Sharm el-Sheikh are UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and the leaders of France, Italy, Spain, and the U.K. A number of leaders from Europe, the Gulf region, and other parts of Asia are expected to be there as well.

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will attend. Iran's leadership, which received a surprise invitation, has declined it, as has Hamas.

It is still unclear whether Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu or the Palestinian Authority President, Mahmoud Abbas, would attend.

On Monday morning, Mr. Trump will be in Jerusalem to address the Israeli parliament as he and Mr. Netanyahu await the release of 20 Israeli hostages still alive and the return of remaining bodies of those who have died since they were abducted by Hamas during the 2023 terror attacks. Israel will release about 2,000 Palestinian prisoners.

Finalise truce deal

Mr. Abdelatty spoke by telephone to his counterparts in a number of countries, said the Egyptian Foreign Ministry on Sunday, and conveyed the invitation from President Sisi and President Trump to witness the signing of a peace agreement.

"During the calls, Minister Abdelatty discussed the substantive arrangements of the summit, which is a historic summit aimed at ending the war on the Gaza Strip," said the statement.

"The summit seeks to help restore regional stability and alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people in Gaza, in line with U.S. President Donald Trump's vision for peace in the region," it added.

Mr. Modi had welcomed the Gaza ceasefire agreement last week and spoke to Mr. Trump over the telephone to congratulate him.



India will be represented at the **Peace Summit on Gaza** in **Sharm el-Sheikh (Egypt)** by **Minister of State for External Affairs Kirtivardhan Singh**, in place of **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**, who declined due to **short notice**.

The summit is **co-hosted by Egypt and the United States** and seeks to consolidate the **ceasefire agreement** between **Israel and Hamas**, brokered earlier by **Egypt, Qatar, and the U.S.**

Aspect

Detail

Conflict Context

The 2023 Gaza War left thousands dead; the recent ceasefire has seen exchange of hostages and prisoners.

Summit Venue

Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt

Summit Hosts

President **Abdel Fattah el-Sisi (Egypt)** & U.S. President **Donald Trump**

Objective

Cement ceasefire, initiate reconstruction of Gaza, ensure regional stability

Participants

20+ world leaders from the U.S., Europe, Gulf, and Asia; UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and leaders from France, Italy, Spain, U.K.

. Egypt–India Bilateral Component

Egyptian FM **Sameh Shoukry** is visiting India later this week for the **India–Egypt Strategic Dialogue**.

His visit is the first since January 2023 under the **Sisi–Modi Strategic Partnership Agreement**.

Discussions include:

- Reconstruction of Gaza
- Maritime security (Haifa port alignment)
- Counter-terror cooperation (Operation Sindoor)

Interest Area**India's Objective****Diplomatic Balance**

Maintain neutrality—support humanitarian cause without alienating Israel.

Energy Security

Stability in the Middle East ensures uninterrupted oil supplies.

Global South Voice

Project India as a peace-building partner under “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam”.

Defence & Tech

Strengthen India–Egypt defence cooperation (joint production of LCA Tejas & MRO deals).

Home > Business > Markets > International > India > World > Environment > Technology > Sports > Entertainment > Health > Education > Culture > Opinion > Editorials > News > Local > Regional > Special > Photo > Video > Audio > Podcast > RSS > Feedback > Contact Us > Advertise > Subscriptions > Privacy Policy > Terms of Use > About Us > Help > Search

TOUGH SYRUP BEATS
Tamil Nadu shuts
down Sresan Pharma
STATES > PAGE 2

Nobel for economics
Mokyr,
Aghion and
Howitt win
the prize
BUSINESS > PAGE 13

FRESH IMPETUS
India, Canada agree
to restart trade talks
NEWS > PAGE 4

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
Accelerating
green transition
of Railways
Decarbonisation plan
can become benchmark
EDITORIAL > PAGE 5

DOMINATION CONTINUES
India on the cusp
of a series sweep
SPORT > PAGE 16

INSIDE



All five accused in
West Bengal gang
rape case nabbed

KOLKATA
Two more persons were held
on Monday in connection with
the gang rape of a medical
student in Burdwan district of
West Bengal. The other three
accused were arrested a day
earlier. > PAGE 2

Birth registration
declines, deaths
increase: report

NEW DELHI
India registered 2.52 crore
births in 2022, around 2.39
lakh fewer than in 2021, the
Vital Statistics of India based
on Civil Registration System
report for 2023 shows. It stated
that 88.5 lakh deaths were
registered in 2022, a marginal
increase from 2021. > PAGE 8

PF pension hike
under Cabinet
review Minister

NEW DELHI
Union Minister Mansukh
Mandavkar told a meeting of
the Central Board of Trustees
of the Employees Provident
Fund Organisation (EPFO) here
on Monday that the Cabinet
was actively considering
increasing the minimum PF
pension. > PAGE 9

Pak. troops on
high alert after
border clashes

PESHAWAR
Pakistani troops were on high
alert on the border with
Afghanistan on Monday after
sneak fighting between the two
sides at the weekend left
dozens dead and drew the
attention of U.S. President
Donald Trump. > PAGE 14

SC orders CBI investigation into stampede that left 41 people dead in Karur

Aaratiika Bhamini

NEW DELHI
Describing the September
27 stampede in Tamil Na-
du's Karur as one that
"shook the national con-
science", the Supreme
Court on Monday ordered
a probe by Central Bureau
of Investigation (CBI). As
many as 41 people died at a
rally organised by the Ta-
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Gaza declaration inked as Hamas sets hostages free

Trump, leaders of Egypt, Qatar and Türkiye sign document meant to cement the peace plan; Hamas releases last of 20 surviving hostages and Israel hands over 1,968 mostly Palestinian prisoners; Hamas is due to return bodies of 27 hostages

REUTERS
JERUSALEM/CAIRO/OTOMIA

US President Donald Trump hailed a "tremendous day for the Middle East (West Asia)" as he and regional leaders signed a declaration on Monday meant to cement a ceasefire in Gaza, hours after Israel and Hamas exchanged hostages and prisoners.

Arriving to a hero's welcome earlier in Israel, Mr. Trump had said, "This is a great day. This is a new beginning." Asked if the two-year Gaza war was over, he said, "Yes."

Later in the day Mr. Trump sat down at a resort in Egypt's Sharm el-Sheikh with more than two dozen world leaders to discuss the deal. The U.S. President along with leaders of Egypt, Qatar and Türkiye signed the declaration as co-authors to the deal.

"The document is going to spell out rules, regulations and lots of other things," Mr. Trump said before signing, repeating twice that "It's going to hold up."

As part of Mr. Trump's plan to end the Gaza war, Hamas on Monday freed the last 20 surviving hostages it held after two years of captivity in Gaza, in exchange, Israel released 1,968 mostly Palestinian prisoners held in its jails.

Under the ceasefire agreement, Hamas is also due to return the bodies of 27 hostages who died in exchange, Israel released 1,968 mostly Palestinian prisoners held in its jails.

Israel has said it does not expect all of the potential hostages to be returned on Monday, though it said it had received the bodies of two captives that were handed over to the Red Cross by Hamas, and



Hostages hugging a relative after his release from an Israeli jail. (Left) A freed Palestinian hugging a relative after his release from an Israeli jail. (Right) A freed Palestinian hugging a relative after his release from an Israeli jail. (Left) A freed Palestinian hugging a relative after his release from an Israeli jail. (Right) A freed Palestinian hugging a relative after his release from an Israeli jail.

that it was still expecting the remains of two more. Of the prisoners it freed in return, around 250 were security detainees, including many convicted of killing Israelis, while about 2,700 were taken into custody by the Israeli army in Gaza during the war.

On October 7, 2023, militants seized 251 hostages during Hamas's unprecedented attack on Israel, which led to the deaths of 1,200 people, most of them civilians.

All but 47 of those hostages were freed to earlier ceasefires, with the families of those who have remained in captivity leading lives of constant pain and worry for their loved ones.

Stricking points Among the potential sticking points are Hamas's refusal to disarm and Israel's failure to pledge full withdrawal from the devastated territory.

The U.S. leader, however, repeatedly signalled he was confident the ceasefire would hold, saying at a joint appearance with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi in Sharm el-Sheikh that talks on the next steps of the plan were underway. "It's started, as far as we're concerned, phase 2 has started," he said. "The phases are all a little bit mixed in with each other," he added.

At his appearance with Mr. Sisi, he lauded the Egyptian leader as having been "very instrumental" in talks with Hamas.

Mr. Sisi, for his part, said Mr. Trump was the "only one capable of bringing peace to our region."

Mr. Trump also briefly met with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas at the summit, which represented a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas came into effect.

song as news broke of the first releases, though the pain at the loss of those who had not survived was palpable. In the occupied West Bank city of Ramallah, huge crowds gathered to welcome home the first buses carrying prisoners, with some chanting *Allahu akbar*, or God is the great est.

Violent clashes Separately, several people were killed over the weekend in Gaza City in violent clashes between Hamas security forces and the members of an armed clan, multiple sources reported on Monday.

Skirmishes first broke out last week between the Palestinian Islamist group and the Daghman clan affiliated with Israeli forces and of having carried out several murders, the ministry source said around six members of the family had been arrested.

On Sunday evening, gunshots took place in the Salfia neighbourhood of Gaza City, according to witnesses who spoke with AFP on condition of anonymity, citing fears for their safety.

"About 200 members of the (Hamas) security force were present and fought until they completely subdued" the clan members, a local resident said. "There were dead and wounded among the (Daghman) family members, but also martyrs," he added.

A source within Gaza's Hamas-run Interior Ministry acknowledged that there had been fatalities on both sides. Accusing the Daghman clan of being affiliated with Israeli forces and of having carried out several murders, the ministry source said around six members of the family had been arrested.

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Retail inflation hits 8-year low of 1.54% in Sept.

Historic low India's retail inflation slipped to 1.54% this month, the lowest since June 2015. The chart shows year-on-year inflation rate in %



T.C.A. Shradha Raghavan
NEW DELHI

Retail inflation fell to a more than eight-year low of 1.54% in September on falling food and fuel prices, official data showed on Monday. This is once again below the Reserve Bank of India's lower comfort bound of 2%.

Inflation, as measured by the Consumer Price Index released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, was last lower in June 2012, when it stood at 1.46%. Inflation had fallen below the RBI's lower comfort bound in July 2020, before rising marginally to 2.1% in August.

The food and beverages grouping saw a contraction of 1.4% in September, compared with a growth of 0.85% in August and 0.4% inflation in September last year.

Food inflation "Looking ahead, food inflation is likely to stay benign supported by a favourable base and good monsoon," Rajat Sinha, chief economist at CareEdge Ratings, said.

"That said, risks remain from the late withdrawal of the monsoon and heavy rain in certain regions, which could risk crop damage."

In addition, Mr. Sinha said that persistently high global oil prices and volatile oil markets could pose a risk to the economy, given weak growth trends, despite the persistence, and elevated

global edible oil prices. Inflation in the oil and gas category stood at 16.3% in September, the 11th consecutive month of double-digit inflation in the sub-grouping.

Inflation in the fuel and light category came in at 1.08% in September, down from 2.3% in August. Save for one month, inflation in this category has been easing since April.

The moderation in food and fuel prices has provided much needed relief to households and improved purchasing power," Rajeev Jena, president of the PHDCI, said.

Inflation in the clothing and footwear category was 2.38% in September, marginally lower than the 2.3% seen in August 2022 and the 2.7% in September last year. This is the fifth consecutive month of slowing inflation in this category.

Inflation in the grain, tobacco and other agricultural categories, however, quickened to 4% in September from 3.1% in the previous month.

Economists say that the low inflation figures, with the RBI's Monetary Policy Committee revising down its inflation forecast for the year for the fourth straight time, are a sign of its most recent monetary policy meeting, raises hopes of a rate cut in the next meeting in December.

stage and that no credible allegations had been made suggesting interference by the state government. "If aggrieved persons come to this court, we will resolve. Don't treat this court as the political arena," the Bench said.

Forming the development a "matter of controversy," the apex court sought an explanation from the Registrar General of the High Court on how a petition seeking the formation of SCOP and guidance for regulating political rallies came to be registered.

A criminal judge writ petition instead of a public interest litigation petition, it also sought to know whether the petition would have been filed before the state judge or a Division Bench.

In his October 3 order, Justice Santhosh Kumar had described the stampede as a "huge man-made disaster" and said the court could not remain a "mute spectator" in the face of such a calamity, particularly since several women and children had died.

He also remarked that the party leadership had shown "no remorse" even after the tragedy.

The single judge's order came hours after a Division Bench of the Madras High Court dismissed a batch of petitions, including one filed by BJP leader Anandaram, seeking a CBI probe. A Bench of Justice M. Dhananjay and M. Jadhav had then observed that the investigation was still at a nascent

Gaza declaration inked as Hamas sets hostages free

Trump, leaders of Egypt, Qatar and Türkiye sign document meant to cement the peace plan; Hamas releases last of 20 surviving hostages and Israel hands over 1,968 mostly Palestinian prisoners; Hamas is due to return bodies of 27 hostages

Reuters
JERUSALEM/CAIRO/DOHA

U.S. President Donald Trump hailed a "tremendous day for the Middle East (West Asia)" as he and regional leaders signed a declaration on Monday meant to cement a ceasefire in Gaza, hours after Israel and Hamas exchanged hostages and prisoners.

Arriving to a hero's welcome earlier in Israel, Mr. Trump had said, "This is a great day. This is a new beginning." Asked if the two-year Gaza war was over, he said: "Yes."

Later in the day Mr. Trump sat down at a resort in Egypt's Sharm el-Sheikh with more than two dozen world leaders to discuss the deal. The U.S. President along with leaders of Egypt, Qatar and Türkiye signed the declaration as guarantors to the deal.

"The document is going to spell out rules and regulations and lots of other things," Mr. Trump said before signing, repeating twice that "it's going to hold up."

As part of Mr. Trump's plan to end the Gaza war, Hamas on Monday freed the last 20 surviving hostages it held after two years of captivity in Gaza. In exchange, Israel released 1,968 mostly Palestinian prisoners held in its jails.

Under the ceasefire agreement, Hamas is also due to return the bodies of 27 hostages who died or were killed in captivity, as well as the remains of a soldier killed in 2014 during a previous Gaza conflict.

Israel has said it does not expect all of the dead hostages to be returned on Monday, though the army said it had received the bodies of two captives that were handed over to the Red Cross by Hamas, and



Sweet relief: A released Israeli hostage, held in Gaza since the October 7, 2023 attack by Hamas, with his mother; and (right) a freed Palestinian hugging a relative after his release from an Israeli jail. *Reuters*



that it was still expecting the remains of two more. Of the prisoners it freed in return, around 250 were security detainees, including many convicted of killing Israelis, while about 1,700 were taken into custody by the Israeli army in Gaza during the war.

On October 7, 2023, militants seized 251 hostages during Hamas's unprecedented attack on Israel, which led to the deaths of 1,219 people, most of them civilians.

All but 47 of those hostages were freed in earlier ceasefires, with the families of those who have remained in captivity leading lives of constant pain and worry for their loved ones.

Sticking points

Among the potential sticking points are Hamas's refusal to disarm and Israel's failure to pledge full withdrawal from the devastated territory.

The U.S. leader, howev-

er, repeatedly signalled he was confident the ceasefire would hold, saying at a joint appearance with Egypt President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi in Sharm el-Sheikh that talks on the next steps of the plan were underway. "It's started, as far as we're concerned, phase 2 has started," he said. "The phases are all a little bit mixed in with each other," he added.

At his appearance with Mr. Sisi, he lauded the Egyptian leader as having been "very instrumental" in talks with Hamas.

Mr. Sisi, for his part, said Mr. Trump was the "only one capable of bringing peace to our region".

Mr. Trump also briefly met with Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas at the summit, which representatives of Israel and Hamas did not attend.

In Tel Aviv, a huge crowd that had gathered to support hostage families erupted in joy, tears and

song as news broke of the first releases, though the pain at the loss of those who had not survived was palpable. In the occupied West Bank city of Ramallah, huge crowds gathered to welcome home the first buses carrying prisoners, with some chanting *Allahu akbar*, or God is the greatest.

Violent clashes

Separately, several people were killed over the weekend in Gaza City in violent clashes between Hamas security forces and the members of an armed clan, multiple sources reported on Monday.

Skirmishes first broke out last week between the Palestinian Islamist group and the Doghmush clan after a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas came into effect.

On Sunday evening, gunfights took place in the Sabra neighbourhood of Gaza City, according to wit-

nesses who spoke with AFP on condition of anonymity, citing fears for their safety.

"About 200 members of the [Hamas] security forces were present and fought until they completely subdued" the clan members, a local resident said. "There were dead and wounded among the (Doghmush) family members, but also martyrs and injured among the security forces," he added.

A source within Gaza's Hamas-run Interior Ministry acknowledged that there had been fatalities on both sides. Accusing the Doghmush clan of being affiliated with Israeli forces and of having carried out several murders, the ministry source said around sixty members of the family had been arrested.

(With inputs from Reuters in Jerusalem)

RELATED REPORTS

» PAGES 14 & 15

- 
- The “**Gaza Declaration**”, a multilateral peace accord mediated by the **U.S. (Donald Trump)**, **Egypt**, **Qatar**, and **Türkiye**, has formally **ended the two-year Gaza war** between **Israel** and **Hamas**.
 - The declaration followed a **large-scale prisoner-hostage exchange**:
 - Hamas released 20 surviving Israeli hostages** and pledged to return the **bodies of 27 more**.
 - Israel freed 1,968 Palestinian prisoners**, mostly from Gaza and the West Bank.

2. Key Features of the Agreement

Aspect	Details
Name	Gaza Declaration / Gaza Ceasefire Agreement
Mediators / Guarantors	U.S., Egypt, Qatar, Türkiye
Primary Signatories	Israel & Hamas (with regional and international witnesses)
Objective	To cement ceasefire, enable prisoner exchange, initiate Gaza reconstruction
Hostage Exchange	20 Israelis released ; 1,968 Palestinians freed ; return of 27 bodies pending
Next Phase (Phase 2)	Gradual demilitarization of Gaza and reopening of border crossings
Ceasefire Oversight	Monitored by a joint regional–UN mechanism

Parameter**Detail****Ceasefire Agreement Name**

Gaza Declaration (2025)

Mediators

U.S., Egypt, Qatar, Türkiye

Hostages Released

20 Israelis ; 27 bodies to follow

Prisoners Freed

1,968 Palestinians

Conflict Duration

2023 – 2025 (2 years)

Next StepPhase 2 – Demilitarization +
Reconstruction talks

IN BRIEF



SC refuses to quash FIR against folk singer over posts

The Supreme Court on Monday refused to quash the First Information Report (FIR) against folk singer and activist Neha Singh Rathore, accused of using derogatory remarks towards Prime Minister Narendra Modi and promoting hatred between communities with her allegedly provocative social media posts following the Pabalgarh terror attack. A Bench said it was not inclined to interfere at this stage, but clarified that Ms. Rathore could raise her objections when charges are framed before the trial court.

Appearing for Ms. Rathore, senior advocate Kapil Sibal questioned how provisions relating to mobility and wage war against the state could be invoked for her social media posts.

Over 3 lakh schools register for Viksit Bharat Buildathon

The Union Education Ministry's Viksit Bharat Buildathon 2023 was inaugurated on Monday by Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, with about 1 crore students from across 3 lakh schools in the country participating in what the government has billed as "India's largest synchronised innovation hackathon for school students". Students from Classes 6 to 12 were asked to come up with ideas and product prototypes for Viksit Bharat. The two-hour "live innovation event" on Monday saw teams of 3-8 students gather to brainstorm ideas.

HC grants interim relief to actor in deepfake case

In a strongly worded order that addresses the growing threat of artificial intelligence-driven impersonation and misrepresentation, the Bombay High Court has granted actor Sunil Shetty urgent ex parte interim relief against the unauthorised use of his personality through deepfakes and AI-generated content. Justice A.K. Patil, in an order passed on October 10 and made available on October 13, stated that the infringing material is "a lethal combination of a depraved mind and the misuse of technology, recklessly causing harm to the plaintiff's personality rights."

Baramulla bans use of drones after Army raises alarm

The Baramulla administration in north Kashmir on Monday ordered a complete ban on drones operating across the district. The order will be in effect until October 31. This follows intelligence inputs on a potential threat of drone attacks. District Magistrate, Baramulla, Mingsh Sherga (IAS), said the prohibition was ordered "Under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023, and follows a request from Headquarters 19 Infantry Division C/o Bt APC." The Army has expressed fears that there was a possibility that drones would be smuggled into the Kashmir Valley and "potentially be used against the security forces and vital installations during the upcoming festive seasons."

Number of births declines; deaths rise slightly: report

The Vital Statistics of India, based on the Civil Registration System report for 2023, shows 86.6 lakh deaths were registered that year, recording a marginal increase from the 86.5 lakh in 2022.

Vikala Singh
NEW DELHI

India registered 2.82 crore births in 2023, around 2.32 lakh fewer than in 2022. The Vital Statistics of India based on the Civil Registration System (CRS) report for the year 2023 shows.

The report, compiled by the Registrar-General of India (RGI) and released on Monday, stated that 86.6 lakh deaths were registered in 2023, a marginal increase from 86.5 lakh deaths in 2022.

The report shows that there was no major spike in deaths in 2022 and 2023, despite the COVID-19 dashboard maintained by the Health Ministry at 900, that the total number of pandemic-induced deaths stood at 5,33,656 as on May 5.

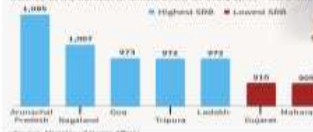
However, there was a significant rise in deaths in 2023. The second year of COVID-19 lockdowns, which recorded an excess of 21 lakh deaths from the 2020 count.

There were 81.2 lakh deaths in 2020 and 82.2 lakh in 2021.

The report also said that

Gender imbalance

The chart shows how States/Union Territories each with the highest and lowest sex ratios in 2023. EBR is numerically defined as the number of females for every 1,000 male births.



Jharkhand recorded the lowest sex ratio at birth at 899, followed by Bihar at 900, followed by Andhra Pradesh at 900, Maharashtra at 900, Gujarat at 900, Madhya Pradesh at 900, and Mizoram at 900. Since 2020, Bihar has been recording the lowest sex ratio, which is defined as the number of females born per 1,000 males.

The highest sex ratio was reported by Arunachal Pradesh at 1,085, followed by Nagaland at 1,087, Goa at 973, Ladakh and Tripura at

972, and Kerala at 967. The share of institutions at births in total registered births is 78.7% in 2023. However, the report did not include information from Sikkim. Overall registration of births for the year 2023 stood at 86.4%.

Maternity data
The report said that 11 States/Union Territories registered a total of 21.45 lakh live births in the prescribed time limit of 21 days.

These states are Gujarat, 973, Ladakh and Tripura at 972, and Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Tamil Nadu, Lakshadweep, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Goa and Punjab. Five states — Odisha, Mizoram, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh — reported 80-90% registration, while 14 States — Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Tripura, Telangana, Kerala, Karnataka, Bihar, Rajasthan, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Meghalaya and Uttar Pradesh — The registration stood at 80-85%.

Authorities meet officer's wife over autopsy

The Hindu Bureau
CHANDIGARH

A week after Haryana IPS officer V. Purnan Kumar was found dead, his autopsy remains pending.

His family has refused to allow the postmortem to proceed until two key accused in the case — Haryana Director-General of Police (DGP) Shriyug Rapur and former Sub-Inspector (SI) of Police Naren-

dra Bilgani — are arrested. Officials of the Haryana government were seen visiting the residence of Kumar's wife in an attempt to persuade her to agree to the autopsy.

The Chandigarh Police said the Special Investigation Team had sent a letter to Mr. Kumar, asking her to come forward for identification of the body to be in-creased the investigation of the investigation.

Achieving Centre's rooftop solar targets to remain a challenge: study

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

Despite a near four-fold increase in applications between March 2024 and July 2025, the PM Surya Ghar Yojana (PMGSY) has been achieving, and just 44% of the allocated 665,700 crore in subsidies released till July 2025, a report said.

In this scenario, the PMGSY target (of 1 crore installations) continues to be viewed as a considerable challenge," said the report on the performance of the scheme, jointly published by the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial

Analysis (IEFA) and the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE). The report said that the government provides capital upfront via loans, from 45 to 120 days, stem-



ming largely from "meter shortages, lack of coordination between consumers, installers, and DISCOMs, and procedural inefficiencies at the utility level," it noted.

The PMGSY is a Centrally sponsored scheme to encourage the installation of rooftop solar capacity till July 2025 across various States and Union Territories, indicating "robust on-ground execution", the report said.

Subsidy disbursements

Hike in PF pension under consideration of Cabinet: Minister

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Union Labour Minister Mansukh Mandavia told a meeting of the Central Board of Trustees (CPT) of the Employees Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) here on Monday that the Cabinet was actively considering increasing the minimum PF pension.

Though the issue was not on the agenda, trade union members in the CPT said during the discussions that the minimum PF pension should be revised from the present ₹1,000 a month. "The Minister did not rule it out and said the Cabinet is actively considering the proposal," a CPT member told *The Hindu* after the meeting.

The meeting also discussed the issue of delay in distributing higher pension as per the Supreme Court order. Senior CPT members argued that the EPFO must withdraw the guidelines framed on the matter, and said that new guidelines should be implemented in line with the top court order. "The resolution was not positive," another member said.

The Labour Ministry, in a release, said the meeting took a number of path-breaking decisions, includ-

To enhance ease of living, EPFO Trust decided to simplify the provisions for partial withdrawal

ing simplification and liberalisation of the EPF partial withdrawal provisions.

"To enhance ease of living of EPF members, CPT decided to simplify the partial withdrawal provisions of EPF Scheme by merging 13 complex provisions into a single, streamlined rule categorised into three types namely, Essential Needs (illness, education, marriage), Housing Needs, and Special Circumstances. Now, members will be able to withdraw up to 100% of the eligible balance in the Provident Fund, including employer and employer share," the Ministry said.

Withdrawal limits have been liberalised — education withdrawals will be allowed up to 10 times (from existing limit of 10 times) and for marriage up to five times (from existing limit of 5 times).

"Requirement of minimum service has been uniformly reduced to only 12 months for all partial withdrawals," it added.

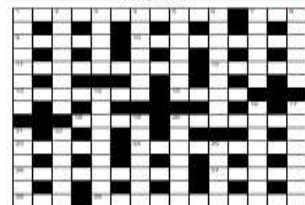
Singur land meant for defenceless people: SC

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday held that land acquired for Tata Motors 'Nano' car project in Singur, West Bengal would not be restored to the industrial entities that had been operating there prior to its acquisition.

A Bench of Justices Surya Kant and Jayashree Bagchi clarified the scope of the court's 2016 ruling, which had quashed the acquisition proceedings for the Tata Motors plant and directed that the land be returned to its original owners within 12 weeks.

The Bench said the 2016 verdict was intended to protect the "genuinely defenceless", and that such protection could not be invoked by entities with the financial resources to contest governmental actions.

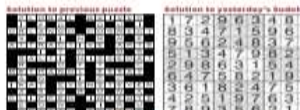
CROSSWORD 14613
(Set by Arvind)

- Across
- Act of doing something wrong in decline — managed the borders (2,9)
 - Talk control on the left (2)
 - Superb but not for large supreme (2)
 - Development game show — reduced charge to enter (9)
 - Excitable online — say, it's cooked with onions (9)
 - Agree to a relationship with an animal (9)

- To solve this puzzle online, get access to our convenient site at <https://www.hindu.com/crossword>

- Down
- Struggle to get out — it's part of habit (7)
 - Plant grown in hectares (9)
 - Starts increasing harm interest — suffering for one with a fall (9)
 - Could be lost again for cooperation (7)
 - Appeal to catch over fish (5)
 - State reminiscent randomly (9)
 - Unhappy man in old creating a mass (9)
 - Resolving a game observed half way (9)
 - Not mother tongue song (9)
 - Henry Morgan's taking care of Cassandra's, perhaps (11)
 - Common leaves full on a table (9)
 - Under French law, work out modalities initially with the service (9)
 - Completely exhausted after exposing mission (8,8)
 - On involved in great competition of such music genre (7)
 - His captured nine is a great competition of such music genre (7)
 - In love with a misleading deceiver (9)
 - After an marathon with one supports a country (9)
 - Can probably get inside free showing rank (9)
 - A point raised by a baggage train is a psychological burden (9)
 - Forming self-admission from a medal about work (9)
 - Cause to involve and impact (9)
 - Years on low, taking interest in a group of reality, birds and mammals (7)
 - Material any time you want (2,4)
 - Perhaps found over an unknown character — what do you call it? (9)
 - Time to support a hand (9)

SUDOKU



FAITH

Lessons from Nala's life

The Mahabharata is hailed as the fifth Veda and when one listens to discourses from it, or simply reads the text at home will reap rich rewards. There are numerous life guides to be had from it. The Pandava too gained valuable lessons from the life of Nala when they heard a discourse during some sage, said Damodhara Deshabhatta. Nala, the king of Nishadha, and Duryodhana, the Viceroy of Hastinapur, were acquainted with each other's sterling character although they had never met. When Duryodhana's coup d'état was held, he chose Nala, who held her hand and promised to never let go of her as long as he lived.

Nala and Duryodhana lived happily for 12 years. All the while, Nala was waiting for a chance to enter Nala, but to no avail, since Nala adhered to dharma. However, one day, in a rash, he failed to watch his foot in a fire, as ordained in a sutra; the unwashed portion of the foot was all the entry Nala needed. Due to his negligence, Nala lost everything in a game of dice and left for the forest with his wife. There, he lost his upper garment and Duryodhana, who had promised to never let go of her, cut the binding cloth and escaped from her, after pointing her to the road to Vidarbha.

For the next 12 years, he lived as a charioteer and cook in Ayodhya King Shishupala's palace. A rose by Duryodhana forced Nala to Vidarbha. En route, Nala taught Shishupala how to drive a chariot fast, at which point Nala killed Nala. Those who follow dharma can survive in this life or the next.

Number of births declines; deaths rise slightly: report

The Vital Statistics of India, based on the Civil Registration System report for 2023, shows 86.6 lakh deaths were registered that year, recording a marginal increase from the 86.5 lakh in 2022

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

India registered 2.52 crore births in 2023, around 2.32 lakh fewer than in 2022, the Vital Statistics of India based on the Civil Registration System (CRS) report for the year 2023 shows.

The report, compiled by the Registrar-General of India (RGI) and released on Monday, stated that 86.6 lakh deaths were registered in 2023, a marginal increase from 86.5 lakh deaths in 2022.

The report shows that there was no major spike in deaths in 2022 and 2023, despite the COVID-19 dashboard maintained by the Health Ministry showing that the total number of pandemic-induced deaths stood at 5,33,665 as on May 5.

However, there was a significant rise in deaths in 2021, the second-year of COVID-19 lockdown, which recorded an excess of 21 lakh deaths from the 2020 count.

There were 81.2 lakh deaths in 2020 and 102.2 lakh in 2021.

The report also said that

Gender imbalance

The chart shows five States/Union Territories each with the highest and lowest sex ratios at birth (SRB) in 2023. SRB is commonly defined as the number of female births for every 1,000 male births



Source: Ministry of Home Affairs

Jharkhand recorded the lowest sex ratio at birth at 899, followed by Bihar at 900, Telangana at 906, Maharashtra at 909, Gujarat at 910, Haryana at 911 and Mizoram at 911. Since 2020, Bihar has been recording the lowest sex ratio, which is defined as the number of females born per 1,000 males.

Sex ratio count

The highest sex ratio was reported by Arunachal Pradesh at 1,085, followed by Nagaland at 1,007, Goa at 973, Ladakh and Tripura at

972, and Kerala at 967.

The share of institutional births in total registered births is 74.7 % in 2023. However, the report did not include information from Sikkim. Overall registration of births for the year 2023 stood at 98.4%.

Statewise data

The report said that 11 States/Union Territories achieved more than 90% registration of births within the prescribed time limit of 21 days.

These States are Gujarat, Puducherry, Chandigarh,

Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Tamil Nadu, Lakshadweep, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Goa and Punjab. Five States – Odisha, Mizoram, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh – reported 80-90% registration, while in 14 States – Assam, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Tripura, Telangana, Kerala, Karnataka, Bihar, Rajasthan, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Meghalaya and Uttar Pradesh – the registration stood at 50-80%.

Indicator	2022	2023	Change
Total Births Registered	2.54 crore	2.52 crore	↓ 2.32 lakh fewer
Total Deaths Registered	86.5 lakh	86.6 lakh	↑ Slight rise
Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB)	—	—	Varies widely across states

Source & Background

Report prepared by the **Registrar General of India (RGI)** under the **Ministry of Home Affairs**.

Data drawn from the **Civil Registration System (CRS)** – the official national mechanism for recording **births and deaths**.

Released annually as part of the **Vital Statistics of India** series.

Highest SRB (Females per 1000 males)

Arunachal Pradesh – **1085**

Nagaland – 1007

Goa – 973

Tripura – 972

Ladakh – 972

Lowest SRB (Females per 1000 males)

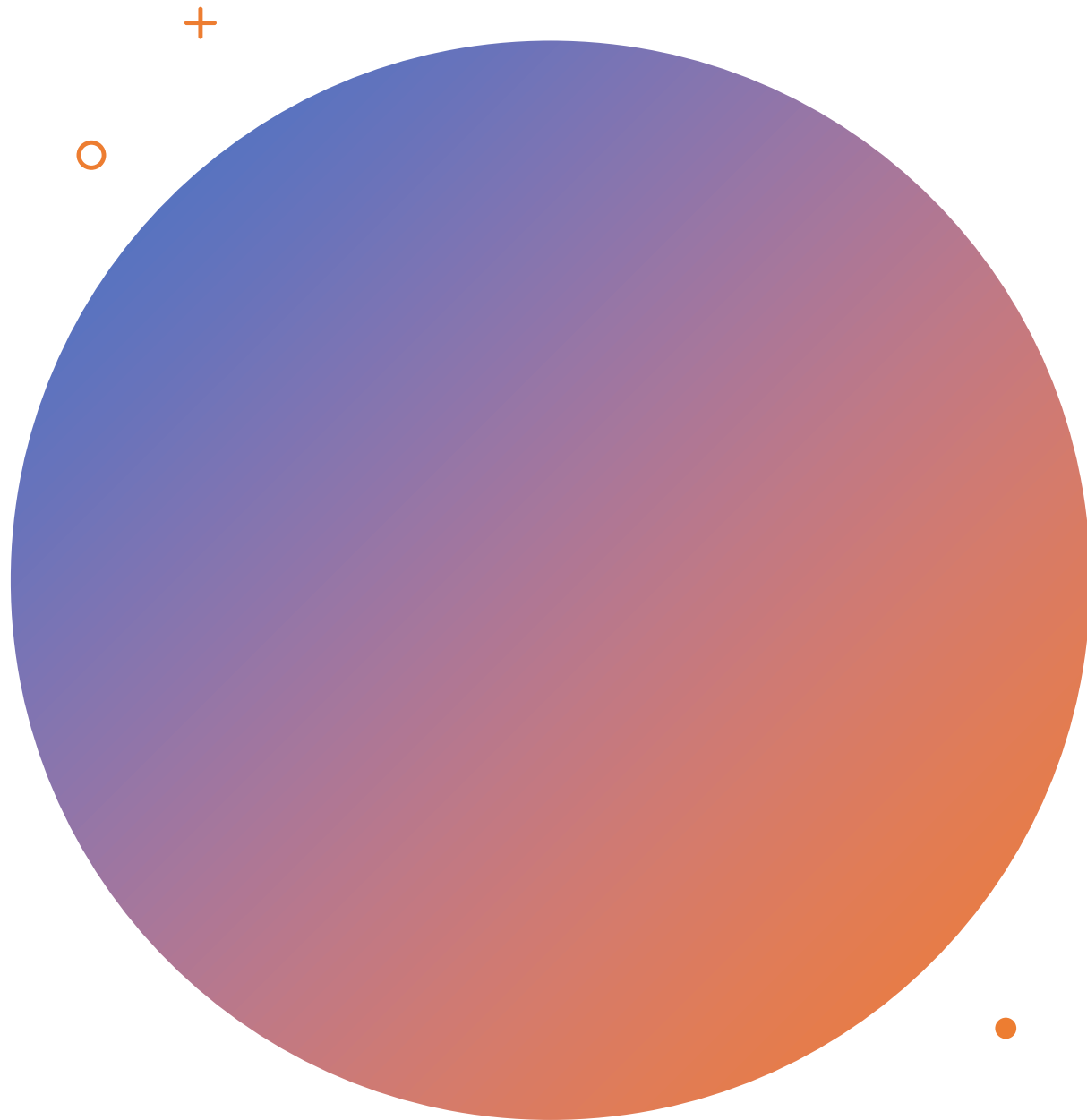
Jharkhand – **899**

Bihar – 900

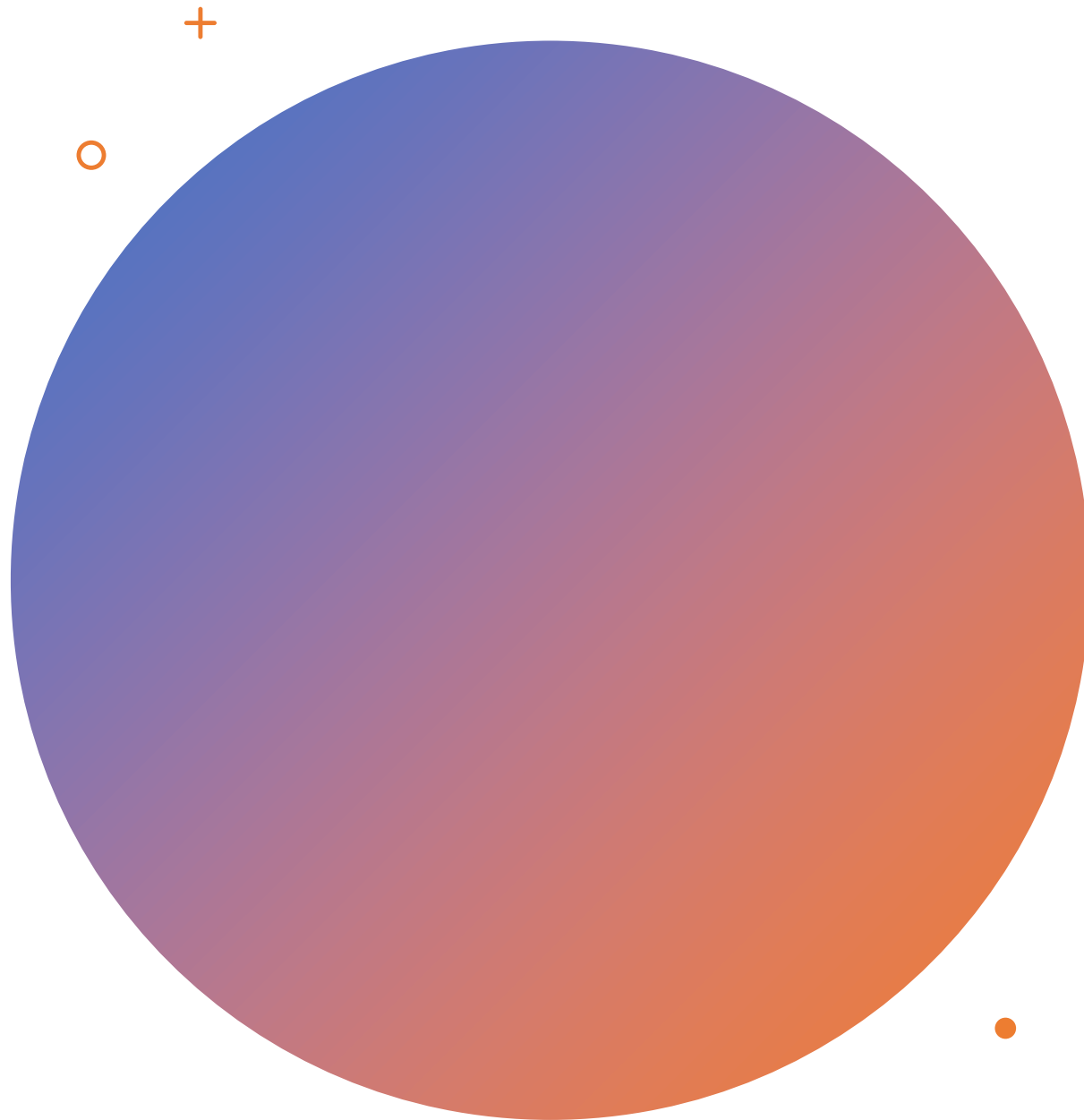
Telangana – 906

Maharashtra – 909

Gujarat – 910



- **Observations:**
- **Arunachal Pradesh** tops the list for female births (1,085).
- **Jharkhand, Bihar, and Telangana** record severe gender imbalance — below 910 females per 1,000 males.
- **Bihar** has consistently remained at the bottom since 2020.



- **Registration Coverage**
- **Overall Birth Registration:** 98.4% in 2023.
- **States with >90% registration within 21 days:**
Gujarat, Puducherry, Chandigarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Goa, Punjab, Odisha, Mizoram, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh.
- **States with 50–80% registration:**
Assam, Delhi, MP, Tripura, Kerala, Karnataka, Bihar, Rajasthan, J&K, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Meghalaya, UP.

Sector

Implication

Population Planning

Reinforces focus on health & education over coercive population control.

Gender Equality

Need for targeted schemes in low-SRB states (Bihar, Jharkhand, Gujarat).

Public Health

Higher institutional birth rates → better maternal outcomes.

Data Governance

CRS strengthening shows improved administrative reliability for vital stats.

Parameter	2023 Data
Total Births	2.52 crore
Total Deaths	86.6 lakh
Highest SRB	Arunachal Pradesh – 1,085
Lowest SRB	Jharkhand – 899
Institutional Births	74.7%
Overall Registration Coverage	98.4%
Report Published By	Registrar General of India (RGI)
System Used	Civil Registration System (CRS)

Achieving Centre's rooftop solar targets to remain a challenge: study

Jacob Koshy

NEW DELHI

Despite a near four-fold increase in applications between March 2024 and July 2025, only 13.1% of the targeted 1 crore solar rooftop installations, under the PM Surya Ghar Yojana (PMSGY), has been achieved, and just 14.1% of the allocated ₹65,700 crore in subsidies released till July 2025, a report said.

"In this scenario, the FY2027 target [of 1 crore installations] continues to be viewed as a considerable challenge," said the report on the performance of the scheme, jointly published by the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA) and JMK Research and Analytics on Tuesday.

Reasons included tardy approval processes, which could stretch anywhere from 45 to 120 days, stem-



The scheme has facilitated the installation of 4,946 MW of rooftop solar capacity till July 2025 across States and Union Territories.

ming largely from "meter shortages, lack of coordination between consumers, installers, and DISCOMs, and procedural inefficiencies at the utility level," it noted.

The PMSGY is a Centre-led endeavour to encourage more homes to install rooftop solar connections. The government provides capital upfront via loans.

As of July 2025, the pe-

riod until which the report tracked progress, the PMSGY had received 57.9 lakh applications for residential rooftop solar installations. The scheme has facilitated the installation of 4,946 MW of rooftop solar capacity till July 2025 across various States and Union Territories, indicating "robust on-ground execution", the report said. Subsidy disbursements

have crossed ₹9,281 crore (\$1.05 billion), benefiting over 16 lakh households. As of July 2025, the 4.9 GW of installations added under the PMSGY accounted for approximately 44.5% of the country's total residential rooftop capacity.

The PM solar scheme only incentivises solar installations, whose component parts are entirely manufactured in India. Called "DCR-compliant modules", they are on average costlier by ₹12/watt over imported variants. "These higher prices are making larger residential installations less economically attractive," the report said.

"Establishing clear, time-bound rooftop solar capacity targets at the State level is essential for creating a coherent vision," said Vibhuti Garg, Director, IEEFA-South Asia, and a contributing author, in a statement.

-
- A joint study by the **Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA)** and **JMK Research and Analytics** highlights **serious implementation delays** in the **PM Surya Ghar Yojana (PMSGY)** — India's flagship rooftop solar initiative.
 - Despite increased applications, only **13.1% of the target (1 crore households)** has been achieved by **July 2025**.

Feature	Details
Launched	2023
Objective	Install rooftop solar in 1 crore households (FY 2027 target)
Implementing Agencies	MNRE (Ministry of New & Renewable Energy), DISCOMs, State Nodal Agencies
Subsidy Outlay	₹65,700 crore
Achievement (as of July 2025)	13.1% of target; 14.1% subsidy utilized
Installed Capacity	4.946 GW (4,946 MW)
Beneficiaries	~16 lakh households
Contribution to Total Rooftop Capacity	~44.5% of total residential rooftop solar capacity

a. Slow Progress

- Only **13.1 lakh of 1 crore target households** installed systems.
- Subsidy disbursed: **₹9,281 crore (14.1% of total fund)**.

b. Administrative Delays

- Approval and installation period expanded from **45–120 days**, leading to applicant dropouts.
- Issues: *meter shortages, weak consumer–installer coordination, inefficiencies in DISCOM processes.*

c. Cost Barriers

- Scheme mandates **100% India-made solar modules and components** — called **DCR-compliant modules**.
- These are **₹12/watt costlier** than imported alternatives, making large installations less viable for middle-class households.

d. Policy Implementation Gaps

- Lack of **State-wise solar capacity targets**.
- Poor monitoring and inconsistent coordination among central, state, and local bodies.



Parameter	Status (as of July 2025)
Applications Received	57.9 lakh
Installed Capacity	4.946 GW
Subsidy Disbursed	₹9,281 crore
Total Outlay	₹65,700 crore
Beneficiary Households	16 lakh
Share of National Rooftop Solar	44.5%

Challenge Area

Description

Procedural Delays

Lengthy approval and metering; fragmented communication.

Utility Inefficiency

DISCOMs slow in rooftop integration, citing grid safety.

Cost Competitiveness

Domestic modules expensive vs. Chinese imports.

Consumer Awareness

Low understanding of application & subsidy processes.

State-Level Targets

Absence of granular capacity goals hampers accountability.

National Goal (India)

500 GW renewable capacity by 2030

280 GW solar energy target (2030)

Rooftop solar share target (40%)

Net-zero emissions by 2070

Progress/Status

~197 GW achieved (as of mid-2025)

~87 GW achieved

Currently ~18% of total solar capacity

Dependent on acceleration in distributed solar energy

Parameter	Value / Note
Scheme Name	PM Surya Ghar Yojana (PMSGY)
Target Year	FY 2027
Total Target	1 crore rooftop installations
Total Subsidy Outlay	₹65,700 crore
Installed Capacity (till July 2025)	4,946 MW
Beneficiaries	16 lakh households
Implementing Agency	MNRE
Study Published By	IEEFA & JMK Research
Top State (as per earlier reports)	Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu

IN BRIEF



Jio Payments Bank wins contract for MLFF project

Jio Financial Services on Monday said its subsidiary Jio Payments Bank has secured a contract to implement the FASTag Automated Number Plate Recognition (ANPR)-based MLFF collection system at two toll plazas between Gurugram and Jaipur. With this, Jio Payments Bank Ltd. has forayed into new-generation tolling services for Multi-Lane Free Flow road projects, which is an electronic toll collection system that eliminates physical toll booths. **scribd**

BMS introduces selective cardiac myosin inhibitor drug

Bristol Myers Squibb (BMS) has unveiled a selective cardiac myosin inhibitor drug (Mavacamten). BMS builds on the company's strong presence in oncology and haematology, the firm said in a release on its decision to launch the drug to treat adults with symptomatic obstructive hypertrophic cardiomyopathy. Mavacamten was approved by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation with an import license issued on March 6, 2025.

Tata Capital makes subdued debut, valuing at \$15.78 billion

Tata Capital, India's third-largest non-bank lender by revenue, was muted in its debut trade on Monday, valuing the firm at \$14.1 trillion (\$15.78 billion), with investors seemingly not that keen on the first listing by the state group in nearly two years. Tata Capital's subdued debut has come in a busy IPO market, where analysts say investors appear to favour LG Electronics India's \$1.3-billion share sale as they expect stronger listing gains and near-term growth. **scribd**

Indian refiners cut Russian oil imports by 45% between June and Sept.: Kpler data

Santosh Ghosh
NEW DELHI

State-owned refiners trimmed down purchases of Russian oil by more than 45% between June and September this year, according to data from real-time maritime and analytics provider Kpler. Speaking to *The Hindu*, Navin Das, Senior Crude Oil Analyst at Kpler said, state-owned refiners took 600 thousand barrels/day (ktbd) of oil from Russia in September, a "fairly substantial" cut from 1.1 million ktbd they took in June this year. The trimming down of Russian oil imports fall against a larger geopolitical setting centred around U.S.



Private refiners like and Nayara Energy, have increased their uptake, mirroring President Donald Trump imposing 80% tariff on imports from India this August. This included a 20% penalty for buying Russian oil. Washington has been adamant that New Delhi halt their crude purchases from Moscow as a precondition to negotiate a fa-

avourable trade deal. India has been steadfast on its commitment to maintaining domestic energy security. New Delhi has been procuring Russian oil at a discount after the latter found itself mired in sanctions following their actions in Ukraine. While Indian state-run refiners have cut purchases from Moscow, India's privately-owned refiners, Reliance Industries and Nayara Energy, have raised their uptake. According to Kpler data, RIL, now imports 850 ktbd of Russian oil, more than double the 420 ktbd it was importing in January. Nayara imported nearly 400 ktbd in October — its highest this year.

Taliban Minister calls for easing visa regime, enhanced trade

Khalid Kandi
Kabul
NEW DELHI

Taliban administration's Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttapi called for greater connectivity between India and Afghanistan and said the visa regime between the two sides must be liberalised to facilitate greater people-to-people contact. Speaking at a business event at the FICCI house, Mr. Muttapi called for enhanced trade in fresh fruits and in the mining sector.



Mr. Muttapi said the Taliban administration will ensure peaceful atmosphere for Indian entrepreneurs and called upon the Indian government to ease the entry of Indian tourists to Afghanistan. "We should consider it as it will certainly be a profitable venture," he added.

Auto spare parts start-up Partnr plans to expand to 50 cities

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Partnr, a quick-commerce platform for automotive spare parts, currently for two-wheelers, and catering to neighbourhood mechanics, has announced plans to expand its operations from the current 30 cities to 50 cities in India. "We are expanding our footprint to over 50 cities, with the plan to reach each of the cities by the end of the year," said the founder and CEO of Partnr, Vikas Doshi. "We are also scaling doorstep servicing nationwide so riders can book a mechanic via the Partnr app. The platform will be serviced at home, work place, or on the go," he added. Partnr works with over 20,000 garages across India to serve a wider work of 90 dark stores.

Partnr works with over 20,000 garages across India and operates a network of 90 dark stores.

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Business as usual



Market rebounds: Traders work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) on Monday, in New York City. Markets were up sharply Monday morning after Donald Trump hinted over the weekend that the U.S. will work out a trade deal with China. **AP**

Tata MF suspends fresh investment in Silver ETF Fund of Fund amid high silver prices

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Tata Mutual Fund has announced a temporary suspension of purchases and switch-ins, fresh SIPs, and fresh STPs into the scheme. Tata Silver ETF Fund of Fund, effective Tuesday.

Physical silver shortage: This decision comes amid a global and domestic shortage of physical silver, resulting in sustained premiums in silver spot prices. The domestic market, silver is trading at a premium to international silver prices. Therefore, the pre-

mium in domestic silver prices directly impacts the valuation of the Scheme." "In light of the current market scenario, Tata Mutual Fund has decided to temporarily suspend all purchases and switch-ins into the scheme and fresh registration of systematic investment plan (SIP) and systematic transfer plan (STP) into the scheme from the effective date," it said.

All existing SIP and STP registered under the scheme shall remain operational.

HCLTech posts flat Q2 net profit at ₹4,235 cr.; revenue rises 11%

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

HCL Tech on Monday reported a flat net profit of ₹4,235 crore during the July-September quarter of FY20. However, sequentially, its net profit and revenue grew 10% and 8.2%, respectively. The company's Q2 revenue grew at ₹4,042 crore, up 10%, against ₹28,862 crore. It posted in the same quarter a year earlier. The company also declared an interim dividend of ₹2 per equity share for the financial year 2025-26.

On FY26 guidance, the company executives said at a press conference that its revenue growth was expected to be between 3-5% YoY in this year and 5-7% in 2026, while the services revenue growth is expected to be between 4-6% YoY in 2026. The Earnings Before Interest and Taxes (EBIT) margin is likely to remain at 18%.

CEO & COO C. Vijayakumar, in his commentary, called the quarter "a standout quarter on every front — marked by strong execution, robust demand for our AI-powered solutions, and Advanced AI revenue exceeding ₹100 mn this quarter." He further said the company's revenue grew 2.4% sequentially in constant currency with a strong recovery of operations.

HCLTech reported a net profit of ₹4,235 crore, up 10% from ₹3,840 crore in the same quarter a year earlier. The company's revenue grew 8.2% sequentially in constant currency with a strong recovery of operations. HCLTech reported a net profit of ₹4,235 crore, up 10% from ₹3,840 crore in the same quarter a year earlier. The company's revenue grew 8.2% sequentially in constant currency with a strong recovery of operations.

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MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

Index	Change	% Change
Nifty 50	25.15	0.04
Sensex	12.75	0.01
BSE-100	25.15	0.04

NIFTY 50

Index	Change	% Change
Nifty 50	25.15	0.04
Nifty Bank	25.15	0.04
Nifty IT	25.15	0.04
Nifty Midcap	25.15	0.04
Nifty Smallcap	25.15	0.04
Nifty Dividend	25.15	0.04
Nifty ESG	25.15	0.04
Nifty 100	25.15	0.04
Nifty 200	25.15	0.04
Nifty 500	25.15	0.04
Nifty 1000	25.15	0.04
Nifty 1500	25.15	0.04
Nifty 2000	25.15	0.04
Nifty 2500	25.15	0.04
Nifty 3000	25.15	0.04
Nifty 3500	25.15	0.04
Nifty 4000	25.15	0.04
Nifty 4500	25.15	0.04
Nifty 5000	25.15	0.04
Nifty 5500	25.15	0.04
Nifty 6000	25.15	0.04
Nifty 6500	25.15	0.04
Nifty 7000	25.15	0.04
Nifty 7500	25.15	0.04
Nifty 8000	25.15	0.04
Nifty 8500	25.15	0.04
Nifty 9000	25.15	0.04
Nifty 9500	25.15	0.04
Nifty 10000	25.15	0.04

continuing to increase our revenue per employee 1.8% YoY aligned with our AI growth strategy."

HCLTech declared strong FY26 revenue growth of 5.2% QoQ and 10.7% YoY in Q2 FY26, and this revenue growth was accompanied by enhanced profitability and solid cash generation, said Chief Financial Officer Rishi Wadia.

According to HCLTech's CEO, the company's revenue growth is expected to be between 3-5% YoY in this year and 5-7% in 2026, while the services revenue growth is expected to be between 4-6% YoY in 2026. The Earnings Before Interest and Taxes (EBIT) margin is likely to remain at 18%.

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Mokyr, Aghion and Howitt win Nobel economics prize

Winners are professors in U.S., French and British universities; prize worth \$1.2 mn highlights work on innovation-driven economic growth

Reuters
STOCKHOLM

Joel Mokyr, Philippe Aghion and Peter Howitt won the 2025 Nobel economics prize for "having explained innovation-driven economic growth", the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences said on Monday.

The prestigious award, formally known as the Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel, is the final prize to be given out this year and is worth 11 million Swedish Kronor (\$1.2 million).

"The laureates have taught us that sustained growth cannot be taken for granted," the prize-awarding body said in a statement. Economic stagnation, not growth, has been the norm for most of human history. Their work shows that we must be aware of, and counteract, threats to continued growth."

Mr. Mokyr is a professor at Northwestern University, in Evanston in the United States, while Mr. Aghion is professor at the College de France and INSEAD, in Paris, and at the London School of Economics and Political Science, in Britain. Mr. Howitt is a professor at Brown University, in Providence in the United States. Mr. Mokyr was



Moment of pride: Visuals of Joel Mokyr, Philippe Aghion and Peter Howitt, recipients of the Nobel Economics prize. REUTERS

awarded half the prize with the other half being shared between Aghion and Howitt.

"Joel Mokyr used historical observations to identify the factors necessary for sustained growth based on technological innovations," John Hassler, member of the Nobel Committee, said.

Creative destruction

"Philippe Aghion and Peter Howitt produced a mathematical model of creative destruction, an endless process in which new and better products replace the old."

The awards for medicine, physics, chemistry, peace and literature were announced last week.

Those prizes were established in the will of Swedish dynamite inventor and businessman Alfred Nobel and have been handed out since 1901, with a few interruptions mostly due to the

world wars.

The economics prize was established much later, being given out first in 1969 when it was won by Norway's Ragnar Frisch and Jan Tinbergen from the Netherlands for work in dynamic economic modelling. Tinbergen's brother Nikolaas also won a prize, taking home Medicine in 1973.

While few economists are household names, relatively well-known winners include former U.S. Federal Reserve chairman Ben Bernanke, and Paul Krugman and Milton Friedman. Last year's economics award went to U.S.-based academics Simon Johnson, James Robinson and Daron Acemoglu for research that explored the relationship between colonisation and the establishment of public institutions to explain why some countries have been mired in poverty for decades.

- **Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences (2025) awarded to:**
 - **Joel Mokyr (Northwestern University, USA)**
 - **Philippe Aghion (College de France & INSEAD, Paris; London School of Economics)**
 - **Peter Howitt (Brown University, UK)**
- Prize citation:
 - "For having explained innovation-driven economic growth."
- Total prize: **11 million Swedish Kronor (\approx \$1.2 million)**
- Announced by **The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences.**




2. Key Contributions

A. Joel Mokyr

- **Approach:** Historical and empirical analysis of **technological innovation** as a driver of sustained growth.
- **Focus:** How societies that embraced knowledge, curiosity, and science experienced **sustained prosperity**.
- Used **historical data** to explain how **innovation ecosystems** — not just capital or labor — fuel long-term growth.

Mokyr demonstrated that sustained growth is not automatic — it depends on institutions that foster innovation.



B. Philippe Aghion & Peter Howitt

- Jointly developed the “**Schumpeterian growth model**” — a mathematical model of **creative destruction**.
- **Core idea:** Economic progress happens through **continuous innovation**, where new ideas replace old technologies.
- Their model explains:
 - Why **competition stimulates innovation**.
 - How **research & development (R&D)** drives productivity.
 - The policy trade-off between **short-term disruption** and **long-term gains** from innovation.

“Creative destruction” — the endless cycle in which new and better products replace the old — remains central to modern innovation policy.

3. Broader Economic Context

- The Nobel Committee noted that the laureates’ work is especially relevant in an era of:
 - **Slowing global productivity,**
 - **Technological disruption (AI, automation), and**
 - **Climate transition economics.**
- Their research helps policymakers design **innovation-based industrial strategies** that sustain economic growth.



Parameter

Full name

First awarded

First winners

Prize money (2025)

Established by

Selected by

Distinct from

Detail

Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel

1969


Ragnar Frisch (Norway) & Jan Tinbergen (Netherlands)

11 million SEK (\approx \$1.2 million)

Sveriges Riksbank (Swedish Central Bank)

Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences

Original five Nobel Prizes (Physics, Chemistry, Medicine, Peace, Literature)





Year

Laureates

Work/Theme



2024

Simon Johnson, James
Robinson, Daron Acemoglu

Institutions & economic
development

2021

David Card, Joshua Angrist,
Guido Imbens

Empirical labor economics

2018

William Nordhaus & Paul
Romer

Climate economics &
endogenous growth

2008

Paul Krugman

Trade theory & economic
geography





Parameter

Nobel Economic Prize 2025

Prize Theme

Country Affiliation

Prize Money

Key Theory

Institution

Answer



Joel Mokyr, Philippe Aghion, Peter Howitt

Innovation-driven economic growth

USA, France, UK

11 million SEK (~\$1.2 million)

Creative Destruction Model
(Schumpeterian Growth)

Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences



Maitri II Research Station in Antarctica



- The Ministry of Finance has given in-principle approval for setting up Maitri II, India's new research station in east Antarctica.

- What is Maitri II?

- About: Maitri II is India's upcoming and fourth research station in Antarctica, scheduled to be completed by January 2029. It strengthens India's long-term scientific presence under the Antarctic Treaty System (ATS, 1959).

- Purpose & Need: It is being built to replace the old Maitri station (1989), which has surpassed its original design life of 10 years and has issues like flawed waste management.

- **Nodal Agency:** The project is led by the **National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR)** in **Goa**, under the **Ministry of Earth Sciences**.

- **Key Features:**

- **Larger and Greener:** Bigger than the original **Maitri**, planned as a "**green research base**."
- **Renewable Energy:** Uses **solar power** for summer and **wind energy** to harness Antarctic winds.
- **Advanced Technology:** Equipped with **automated instruments** to record and relay data to **mainland India** even when unmanned.
- **Improved Infrastructure:** Features **upgraded living conditions** and **improved toilets**.

- **Significance:**

- **Antarctica** contains **75% of Earth's freshwater**, and studying its **ice sheets** is crucial for **forecasting sea-level rise**.
- Critical for understanding **untapped mineral deposits**, **marine biodiversity**, and **ecological baselines**.
- Reinforces **India's voice** in **global climate** and **polar governance discussions**.

- India's Other Research Stations in Antarctica

- **Dakshin Gangotri (1983):** Dakshin Gangotri, established under the Indian Antarctic Program in **1983**, was India's first **scientific research base in Antarctica**, but it was **submerged in ice** and **decommissioned in 1990**.
- The **Indian Antarctic Programme**, led by **NCPOR**, began in **1981** to conduct **scientific research** and protect **India's interests** in the **polar region**.

- **Maitri (1989):** Maitri is India's **second permanent research station in Antarctica**, established in **1989**.

- It is located in the **rocky mountainous Schirmacher Oasis**, and India also created a **freshwater lake** nearby, called **Lake Priyadarshini**.

- **Bharti (2012):** Located about **3,000 km east of Maitri**, the '**Bharati**' research station lies between **Thala Fjord** and **Quilty Bay**.

- Commissioned in **2012**, it has a **compact design** and supports **year-round scientific research** under the **Indian Antarctic Program**.

International Blue Flag Certification



-
- Five beaches in Maharashtra have received the **international Blue Flag certification**.

- The list includes Shrivardhan and Nagaon beaches, Parnaka, and Guhagar and Ladghar beaches.

- **What is Blue Flag Certification?**

- Blue Flag is a **globally recognized eco-label for beaches**, marinas, and sustainable boating operators that meet strict environmental, safety, educational, and accessibility standards, often termed the gold standard of beach cleanliness.



It is **administered by the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE)**, a Denmark-based non-profit recognized by **UNEP and UNESCO**.



India implements **Blue Flag under BEAMS** (Beach Environment & Aesthetics Management Services) within the **Integrated Coastal Zone Management Programme**.



The nodal agency In India is the Society of Integrated Coastal Management (SICOM) under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC).

Blue Flag beaches in India (2025)

India has 12 certified beaches: Shivrajpur (Gujarat), Ghoghla (Diu), Kasarkod (Karnataka), Padubidri (Karnataka), Kappad (Kerala), Rushikonda (Andhra Pradesh), Golden Beach/Puri (Odisha), Radhanagar (Andaman & Nicobar Islands), Kovalam (Tamil Nadu), Eden Beach (Puducherry), Minicoy Thundi (Lakshadweep), and Kadmat (Lakshadweep).

Kenton R. Miller Award



- Dr Sonali Ghosh, Field Director of Kaziranga National Park became the first Indian to receive the prestigious WCPA-Kenton Miller Award at the IUCN World Conservation Congress held in Abu Dhabi, UAE.

- **About Kenton R. Miller Award**

- Established in **2006**, the Kenton R. Miller Award for Innovation in National Parks and Protected Area Sustainability is presented **every two years** by the **World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA)**.

- WCPA is one of the six technical commissions of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

- The award honors individuals who demonstrate innovation and leadership in conserving national parks and protected areas, particularly in ensuring their long-term sustainability.

- The **award is named after Dr. Kenton R. Miller**, a former IUCN Director General and a prominent global leader in protected area management.

Abel Prize 2025



- **Japanese mathematician Masaki Kashiwara** was awarded the **Abel Prize 2025** for contributions to algebraic analysis and representation theory.
- **Contributions of Masaki Kashiwara**
 - He pioneered the theory of **D-modules**, an algebraic framework to study systems of linear partial differential equations (PDEs).
 - He developed tools like **microsupport** and **characteristic varieties**, which reveal how singularities in equations propagate.
 - His work on **sheaf theory**, deepened understanding of how local analytical data connects to global geometric structure.

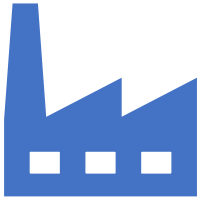
- **About Abel Prize**

- The Abel Prize is an international award recognizing outstanding scientific work in mathematics, often considered the equivalent of a **Nobel Prize for mathematicians**.
 - It is named in honor of the 19th-century Norwegian mathematician **Niels Henrik Abel**.
- **Awarded by:** The Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters on behalf of the Government of Norway.
- **Selection process:** An expert committee of **five internationally recognized mathematicians** recommends the laureate(s) to the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters.
- **The prize was established** by the Norwegian Parliament in **2002** and first awarded in **2003**.
 - It can be awarded to mathematicians of any age and nationality.



- **Some Notable Laureates**
- **Jean-Pierre Serre: First laureate (2003)** for contributions in algebraic geometry and topology.
- **Srinivasa S. R. Varadhan:** Indian-origin mathematician, won in **2007**.
- **Michel Talagrand (France)** For contributions to probability theory and functional analysis won in **2024**.

Base Year Revision of Index of Industrial Production (IIP)



- The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) is set to revise the base year of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) to 2022–23, aligning it with the new base year proposed for GDP estimation.



- **Need for Revising the Base Year**
- The IIP is a key **short-term indicator** of industrial activity, used by the government, RBI, and researchers for policymaking, forecasting, and national accounts.
- The last IIP base year revision was 2011–12 and since then, major **technological changes, product diversification, and digitalization** have reshaped industrial production.
 - India's economic structure has transformed: services contribute **62.5% of GVA**, agriculture **15%**, and industry **22%**, indicating scope for growth.

- **Index of Industrial Production (IIP)**

- The IIP is an index which shows the **growth rates in different industry groups of the economy** in a stipulated period of time.
- The IIP is compiled as a simple weighted arithmetic mean of production relatives by using **Laspeyre's formula**.
- It is a composite indicator that **measures the growth rate of industry groups** classified under:
 1. **Broad sectors:** Mining, Manufacturing, and Electricity.
 2. **Use-based sectors:** Basic Goods, Capital Goods, and Intermediate Goods.
- **Released by:** The Central Statistical Organisation (CSO) , Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.
- **Base year:** 2011-2012
- **Periodicity:** Monthly basis

Operation Golden Sweep



-
- The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) has launched “Operation Golden Sweep”, cracking down on a transnational gold smuggling syndicate at Mumbai’s Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport.

- **What it is?**

- A strategic intelligence-led operation by DRI aimed at dismantling a global gold smuggling network using transit passengers and airport insiders to transport contraband gold into India.

- **Agency Involved:** Conducted by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) under the Ministry of Finance.

- **Aim:** To disrupt organized smuggling cartels, safeguard India's economic security, and curb illicit gold inflows that undermine legitimate trade and drain foreign exchange reserves.

- Features:

- Gold seized: 10.488 kg of 24-carat gold valued at ₹12.58 crore.
- Modus operandi: Transit passengers from Dubai, Singapore, Bangkok, and Dhaka concealed gold in **egg-shaped wax capsules inside their bodies.**

-



- International Purple Fest 2025

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- The International Purple Fest 2025 was recently concluded in Goa, showcasing India's commitment to inclusion, accessibility, and empowerment of persons with disabilities (PwDs).

-
- **Hosted by:** Department for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), Government of India.
 - **Organised by:**
 - **Office of the State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities**, Government of Goa.
 - In collaboration with Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment and United Nations India.
 - **Aim:**
 - To mainstream disability inclusion in governance, education, and employment.
 - To foster empathy-based awareness and encourage universal design in public spaces.
 -

Armenia Joins IUCN

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- Armenia has officially joined the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) during the IUCN World Conservation Congress 2025 in Abu Dhabi, marking its entry into the global coalition for biodiversity protection.

- **What it is?**

- A **landlocked transcontinental country** situated in the **South Caucasus region**, at the crossroads of **Europe and Asia**.

- **Capital:** Yerevan (Erevan).

- **Bordering Nations:** Georgia, Azerbaijan, Iran, Turkey and Nakhchivan exclave (Azerbaijan) to the southwest.

UNESCO launches the World's First Virtual Museum of Stolen Cultural Objects

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- UNESCO has recently launched the world's first Virtual Museum of Stolen Cultural Objects at the MONDIACULT 2025 Conference in Barcelona, Spain.



-
- India's Representation: Features two 9th-century sandstone sculptures from Mahadev Temple, Pali (Chhattisgarh) — a Nataraja and Brahma figure — stolen during colonial-era looting.

Word of the day

Languish:

lose vigour, health, or flesh, as through grief;
have a desire for something or someone who is
not present; become feeble

Synonyms: pine away, waste, ache, yearn,
fade

Usage: *The prisoner has been languishing for
years in the dungeon.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/languishpro

International Phonetic

Alphabet: /'læŋ.gwɪʃ/





Thank you 😊

